

CHAPTER IV. YOGIC REALISM I : THE POETIC WAY.

After writing fiction, Sasenarine Persaud switches over to poetry. It marks a shift from narrative mode of expression to poetic mode of expression. In the narrative mode, human mind focuses more on factual details of the world and pay little attention to pondering over facts. As a result, writing remains mostly extrovert. In the poetic mode, the mind and the heart seem to be fused with lucidity and melody of music of poetry and the fusion works to evoke pondering and gets mind involved in it to explore the inner world of reality. This marks the writing as mostly introvert. With this view in mind Persaud writes poetry that has been published in several collections titled, *Demerary Telepathy* (1988), *The Wintering Kundalini* (2002), *A Surf of Sparrow's Songs* (1996), *The Hungry Sailor* (2000) and *A Writer Like You* (2002). The first two books form one group for similarity of subject of discussion. The remaining three books form a second group that marks it a poetry trilogy for its corresponding value to accomplish the process of Yogic Realism. Since Persaud views writing as yoga and poetry as “cross-over to self/Self” an analogy with yoga is inevitable. Following the stages of purgation, cleansing and purification of mind that Persaud deals with in fiction, the narrative of evolution moves ahead with the first group of poetry to explore a theme of withdrawal or retreat from the world and concentration on the energy centre in the body in order to awaken it. The poetry trilogy of the second group explores the final three stages of evolution called concentration, meditation and realisation. Therefore, the discussion of poetry is presented in the two chapters following the scheme of argument. The title of the present chapter, “Yogic Realism: The Poetic Way” suggests a writer-yogi’s movement through poetry on the path to realization. The title of the next chapter is “Yogic Realism: The

Poetry Trilogy” suggests that poetry processes a writer-yogi’s mind through the last three stages of evolution.

The first book of poetry is *Demerary Telepathy* (1989). Its title speaks of the shift in the mode of expression. Particularly the word, ‘telepathy’ connotes the world of mystery and it marks Persaud’s preference to withdraw from the physical world to go introvert. It is distinctly reflected in his view of writing as yoga. The river Damerara supports his preference by providing a site and environment conducive to explore the inner world. Earlier in Persaud’s stories, there are quite a few references to the river Demerara, particularly the story, “When Men Speak That Way” in the collection, *Canada Geese and Apple Chatney* (1998). The river serves a vital option to the landscape. It remains the narrator’s choice to resort to for a telepathic communion with nature that allows contemplation on mystical experiences. It also provides him links to the mother culture of Indian ancestry (52). The poems in *Demerary Telepathy* carry on such preferences in the interest of Yogic Realism.

The book collects poems in three parts. Part I contains nine poems that deal with the theme of retreat. Part II contains thirteen poems that deal with a theme of memory of migration. Part III has fifteen poems that deal with a theme of seclusion. The poems in Part I convey the poet’s wish to take a departure from the mundane world of reality to the riverscape. He feels more comfortable in the company of the river. The poem, “From Timber Party” expresses his choice, “Let the timber- spotting- party/ Tramp uphill and turn off the trail/.../ And set up their complex.” and, “At any rate let me reverse my course/ Detach myself and go alone downhill (8). The poet does not mind going through a dense forest with rough landscape that hides poisonous snakes and animals in it. He does not fear wildness in nature but feels affinity with it.

The poet is greatly pained at selfish motives and deeds that man commits. They cause much disturbance to nature. He perceives nature's reaction in the poem, "Rain Storm", "This rage of waterangels/ On zinc/ Occurs when cloud touch/ River" (7). In its continuation he says that the culprits that arouse the anger are 'the clouds of smoke' that hover over the river as a result of air pollution in the city and 'the rotten gutter' that vomits dirty water into the river and pollutes it, makes it diseased. Its powerful pouring in to the river with thundering sound and dirty foam disintegrates crystal clear water drops that spin and dance like jets over the silvery edge of the water. Against these perils of human world, the poet reminds the man that God and nature reside in every drop, in its smallest part. He tells him that at every touch he would get a divine feel. The poet finds divine vision in every streak of lightning and in every slap of thunder. Such things help his communion with nature. Eventually it forms the vision of the Trinity, 'nature, God and man', 'Sees you and God/ And I/ Melt into each other' (7). Communion is a significant aspect of a yogi's spiritual experience.

The poem, "Rain River" continues with the poet's deep concern over the disturbance caused to nature by worldly activities. He says that the elements in nature like, 'Thunder in the sky', 'Mist on the river', and 'River-pebbles' are greatly disturbed when fishermen and hunting birds like swallows ignore their presence. They are killers who remain busy at their business of hunting and cruelty. They are so involved in their businesses that they pay hardly any attention to beautiful nature. Like smugglers who indulge in illegal businesses ignore the law of the land, they ignore the law of nature and exhibit insensible attitude to nature. Their inhuman and illegal acts cause impediments to one's enjoyment of nature. The poet therefore offers another trinity to prevent their wrong deeds, "But/ We offer impediments/ Patience, / Knowledge of Sun/ Beyond clouds, And ourselves!" (10) He says that the trinity of patience, the knowledge of the Sun and

man may prevent evils from spreading. He means that one needs to have patience to know the truth and his self.

The poet's lamentation on man's acts of hunting and cruelty continues in the poem, "Once there was a God". He says that they alter the very conception of God. One understands God as 'the wisp of the river', or as 'a light on a distant bank/ fighting the mist'. In the present context, this conception is altered and God becomes the image of a 'glass river', crystal clear enough to expose fish and other creatures of prey below its water to the eyes of a hunter fisherman. Or God becomes a land on which living creatures are butchered and aggressive devils prosper by it. Men engaged in fishery work are the culprits. They hunt fish, kill them, chop their flesh and cater it to hungry palates. He indulges in such a business for the sake of earning huge profits (12). Thus, God in the present connote to cruelty.

The poem, "Dusk and the City" describes another scene. It gives a gloomy picture of the city. The poet is standing at the turn of the seacoast of South America. He finds people anxious to migrate northward for progress. The city on the other hand is enwrapped in the 'Graveyard dusk' in the sense that it abounds in the activities of corruption committed by government officers who sell their honesty and moral for dance, liquor and sex. The nights swarm with smugglers who are busy transferring their smuggled goods to a suitable place or premises. They are no better than bandits. The ministers too are busy at a cocktail party granting import licenses on receiving bribe (13). The picture continues in the poem, "PRIME MINISTERS take nightly rides". The Prime Minister is a custodian of a state. His high office has to behave with responsibility. But it shocks him to find him indulged in acts of corruption. The Prime Minister moves out at night and commits illegal acts. In such condition, the poet gets little ray of hope from tiny streetlights (14).

Such a perspective of the world leads the poet to evolve an equation of 'perception' and 'perfection'. The poem, "Perception" presents the equation through a play on the words. The poet refers to 'perception' and 'perfection' of the Moon in the sky (11). The words are different by just one letter, i. e. 'c' in 'perception' and 'f' in 'perfection'. The letter 'c' stands for an act of 'seeing' and the letter 'f' stands for an act of 'finding'. The two acts of 'seeing and finding' that the words 'perception' and 'perfection' convey are radically different. The former implies that one sees things, as they are. It is a pure act of seeing. Perception is innocent and it leads to realistic reading. Perfection is one's expectation or his imposition of how things should appear. With it, a reading ceases to be innocent or realistic.

The poet says that nature abounds in fascinating things. One has to learn to see them in a true perspective. The poem, "Coming of The Wren", describes a singing bird Wren that sprinkles sweet sound around on a dewy winter morning. Through it, it sprays colour of recognition on souls and living beings. One has to hear the bird's singing for true recognition of his self. But he regrets that such a magical experience occurs just fleetingly to give a temporary feel. Then one is back to the world of mundane reality and forgets it (15). The poet suggests that this is a kind of revelation that a yogi gets during contemplation. It is temporary like a flickering of light fleeting quickly. This is his seeing or his darshan. He has to capture it. Persaud views that a writer-yogi too has to capture the vision of reality (life). Virginia Woolf's defines reality or life, "Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is *a luminous halo*, a semi-transparent envelop surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end", and "*Life escapes*". She further appreciates James Joyce for being spiritual, "he is concerned at all costs to reveal *flickerings of that innermost flame* which flashes its message through the brain," (emphasis added, 219- 221)

The River Demerara with its natural surrounding acquires great significance to the poet. In its company he gets a feel of 'solitary musing' like Wordsworth felt in the company of nature. The last poem of the part I, "Demerary Telepathy" conveys that the river has many fascinating things to offer to man like 'wrinkling worms on wave tops/ Celebrating sword-glints on water bubbies', 'That apparent morning mist', 'blue smoke seeking dissipation/Among leaves' and the swaying picturesque body of the bird called Egret. He perceives these objects in perfect communion, 'And atmospheric amalgamation!' (16) The communion in the nature lays a deep impact on him. Persaud's experience is identical to Wordsworth's to feel 'solitary musing' in the company of nature. In solitary musing or in daily conversing with the face of nature "Wordsworth exemplifies in an eminent degree the power of *association*", says William Hazlitt quoting from his poem, "To him the meanest flower that blows can give/ Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" (*Lyrical Ballads*). Further, in the company of nature, he experiences moment of tranquility, 'emotion recollected in tranquility', says A. C. Bradley quoting from his poem, "They flash upon that inward eye/ Which is the bliss of solitude" (emphasis retained, qtd. in Cowell, 13, 24). This speaks of telepathic communion. Hence, they both prefer to retreat from it and be in a company of nature. Persaud feels that a mind merges with a mind to have the telepathic communion. The telepathy may allow him to erect links with distant culture of his motherland, India.

The poems of the part II deal with the history of migration and exile. With the help of memory he recaptures the moments of trauma from the history that rendered to him pain, suffering, discrimination, humiliation and betrayal. It turns out to be a kind of his self-reflection. Vijay Mishra emphasises "a need for intense self-reflection" with the contention that "The reflection demands that we constantly revisit our trauma" through memory (28). He further says, "I suggest the necessity of understanding their agony, their trauma, their pain of adjustment with reference to

other pasts, other narratives...An impossible mourning of the moments of trauma... remains for me the decisive center of diasporic imaginary" (29). The poet's self-reflection intends to review his history in the light of moments of trauma. He seeks universal recognition to his moments of trauma them by referring to similar traumatic moments in other histories of Palestinians and Africans. He also seeks a ground of justification for his decision to retreat from the world that he announces in the poems of the first part.

The poems in the second part deal with the history of Asian immigration in to the Caribbean land. Each poem seems to unfold a page of history in its chronology to evoke the immigrant experience in its different facets. The chronology begins with the first poem, "Report to Home Office". The poem refers to the first stage of recommendation of an early migrant that a migrant has to obtain. It acquires lot of significance in the present context. Therefore, the poem sounds like a note of recommendation to set a ground for an Indian's entry into the land, "O let them come" (17). The poet explains to the home office that an immigrant from India will not be a burden on the land. They will bring everything with them, their religion, dress, food, etc. After coming here they will grow their own food. They will manage their things. They will never bother the local office for anything. What is more significant about them is that they will help local businesses to increase their profits with hard labour. The poet, however, warns the office that the brahmins and pandits who are already in the land may object to their coming, because they connive at a new entry into the land as a cut on their share of happiness and good living conditions. But in good human spirit, he recommends to the office to allow their entry. The poem hints at the fact that Indians in exile are also troubled by their own selfish people.

The second stage is that of acquiring identity in the new land. An Indian who migrated earlier and who possesses enough experience of migration imparts advice to a new comer. The

poem, "The West Indian" sounds like a piece of advice. He says that he too travelled in a British ship to reach there. He was not forced to migrate, but his masters fooled him. When he arrived in the land he had an idea to adopt it and make it his homeland. But it was his mistake and as the time passed he knew the truth of living there. The more disturbing fact is that his masters gave him a name, 'coolie' before he arrived there. It was pre-decided and imposed on him. It sounded much humiliating to him and yet he had to come to that land. Now with time and experience, he can claim to be a 'West Indian'. The name connotes to three-fold identity: a citizen of the West Indies, a migrant from the western coast of India, and an Indian in the West. It suggests that with time he has acquired a distant identity of an Indian in the western world (18).

The third stage is to define a ruler in that land. The poem, "The New Ruler" defines a ruler in the West Indies with a tone of regret and betrayal. An Indian finds to his shock that an African is the new ruler. He was once his fellow-sufferer in the struggle for independence and shared a dream of a free land. Now he replaces the British ruler to capture the power of the land. The Indian community suffers betrayal, "And I who came/ Two hundred years before/ Have nothing/ And mounting fear/ He might have everything" (19). The poem refers to the story of discrimination and atrocities inflicted by Afro-Caribbeans. The poet defines the African rule as being in, "Atone-/ Ment/ For three hundred/ Years frustration" (19). The poet plays on the word, 'atonement' by breaking it in to two, 'atone' and 'ment' and putting them separately. The breaking of the word implies mockery of feeling of unity. Secondly, 'atone' is put with the word 'frustration'. It intensifies the feeling still further. The poem closes with a note of hope, "And we shall rule/ I/ Absolutely" (20).

The poem, "the Riggers" continues with an image of the ruler. The story of tortures and atrocities continue under him. Indians are like pieces of rope that support the mast of the present

rule upright. The sun in the sky is like a ruler that inflicts tortures on his subjects below. The phrases like 'missile-binding mirrors'; 'razors' and 'puddles of rising tears' evoke the experience. The line, "Water drinks razors/ And deflects the same" (21) highlights degrees of tortures. The ruler is capable of doing or undoing everything, but he does not change the 'already read/ Orwellian spectacles!' that imparts the Orwellian vision of socialism. It is a popular western political theory. The ruler rather perpetuates it through snobbish character. Further the poem, "And Another Minted President" continues with an image of a ruler in the president. He sounds sweet, 'minted'. But he is like 'a gust', 'a wild wind', 'the cayman', a poisonous reptile of South America, and 'the hawk', a hunting bird. These images are associated with the state and politics. For instance, the reptile 'Glides off the flag' (22). It struggles to move in the air and then on the land as if to exert control. The hawk makes any limb of the body his throne. The president swallows snakes and eats mongoose, in a hawk-like manner, while he is on decent dinners as a part of political strategy. In addition to his cruelties, the president rapes women and ignores God and human beings in the interest of lucrative business in the forests. The poet imparts these facts as an assumed proxy to the vice-president who is standing on a balcony and ponders over the fate of the city. He is very unhappy at the state-of-affairs and bids good-bye to the ruler.

The image of an atrocious and wicked ruler is carried further in the poem, "The Vultures and The Eagle" with an image of hunting birds that circle on 'the royal lamb'. The hunting bird is the state authority and the lamb is his subjects, the people of the state who become the prey. Vultures' waiting on the prey is described as waiting in 'black ambassadorial patience'. They display the 'round-table courtesy' appropriate for political negotiations. The phrases carry heavy political connotations. The poet reflects on the ruler's cruelties by employing another image of a phantom in the sky that targets on meek people and dives down to catch them and tear open their

blood veins with their sharp claws. The people behold this horrible sight and applaud with cheers. The poet is critical of the people too for their cowardice to resist such a ruler and to support his atrocities instead. The poet takes a vow to live longer to face the ruler and never to give in and die at the intention of such a ruler (24).

The poem, "Old Man In a Palestinian Refugee Camp" gives a different bearing on the poet's feeling of betrayal. Palestinians too suffered sharp discrimination in the west like Indians in exile. The poet views them as co-sufferers. Yet he regrets: "And so tortured became torturer!" (25) The poem, "'Stewards of Excellence' (Derek, Edward, Martin)" refers to the champions of the African spirit in the Caribbean lands. Derek, Edward and Martin were the chief Afrosporic writers who worked vehemently to create a strong base for the African nationalism. The African nationalism then operated vengefully with racist biases against the Indian people and ever sought to eradicate the Indian presence at least to oblivion, if not to extinction. The poet, therefore, says, "So looking through a map/ Of the islands/ We see ourselves/ Ink on paper" (27). In a public domain the Indian presence is as negligible as a tiny ink-drop on paper. In a private domain, "Standing on our varandahs", they may imagine their lives bright like a "star-appled kingdom" (27). But it is illusive like a nightmare, "Sitting on our fears/ And our university of hunger/ We see-/ Saw" (27). Indians seem to be sitting on a volcano of fear and hunger. Their education and eligibility do not make any difference to their starving conditions. 'Starving' connotes beyond physical starving to psychological starvation of one's aspirations. This intensifies their pain and suffering. The poem perceives the fates of the Indian race in the wake of the African nationalism in the Caribbean land.

The story of racial discrimination continues in the poem, "Writer, Publisher, Public". It focuses on the field of writing and publishing. A writer seeks recognition of his writing in the

literary circles. But a western publisher is an almighty to exploit the state-of affairs in his interest. A writer receives scant attention from him. The poet explains it with an image of a dog and a mouse. (28). The poem, "The Award Ceremony" too records the poet's criticism of writers in the west, particularly of Indian origin. The poet assumes a position of a listener in the audience who is a witness to the award ceremony. The listener- 'I'- finds the writer-'you'- delivering a speech at the award ceremony. The writer seems to be displeased at the decision of awards announced. His displeasure is reflected in his presentation. The listener remarks, "I hear scraps of displeasure" (30). In his presentation, the writer exposes all facts that are designed to marginalise the people of Asian ancestry. He alleges that Indians' memory is ignored against the memory of the African races and the races of European origin. He shouts in high volume that Asians too possess strong memory.

The writer feels like being trapped in a centre of culture. The centre is created by none other than an immigrant's aspiration for 'recognition in the west'. He regrets that certain facts like atrocities, murder or suicide, death of a writer's creative clarity and their marginalisation in the Caribbean land are working against his race. He says that he had to swallow atrocities. He was not allowed to speak out his agonies. If he attempted to do it no one listened to him. He suffered a condition of 'aphasia' (30). The listener agrees with the writer's observation that those who came and occupied the land did not talk facts. He refers to celebrated Caribbean writers of the Indian origin like V. S. Naipaul. They too fall in the trap with fictionalization and fabrication and writing from the hearsay. He alleges these writers for not being serious about what they write. As a result, their writing bears the least authenticity. Such writers are nominated for awards in the west and carry an illusion of being acclaimed or celebrated. A truly sincere writer is discriminated against them for any recognition in the west (31). He says that this condition is worse than that of exile or

suicide. It is like death to him. The writer concludes, "And nothing/ O nothing can touch/ Distilled conscience/ Or the voice/ Deep within us" (32). The poet wishes to retreat from the world with such justification. The "Distilled conscience" is his pure mind that remains untouched or detached.

The story of discrimination reaches the climax in the poem, "In the Heat" with a heating tone. He assumes a position of a common immigrant, very different from a special status of a writer or a poet, a listener or a publisher, a political activist or a social reformer. He says that he shares the Blacks the same equatorial region of extreme heat. He shares with them experiences of injustice in a Caribbean land. He declares that as a brown person he will record all facts of injustice and atrocities inflicted upon his people. He also knows that though he lives in a tiny corner of the cosmos where the ruler tries to lure him with small bits of benefits the ruler is no good at managing the affairs of the state (33). The poem reflects that the poet remains alert even in adverse condition. It gives a message to an immigrant to be alert to survive.

The poem, "Air Letter" is a letter from the poet to a 'self-exile'. The words produce sizzling effect with straightforward and emphatic address. He declares that when he writes or speaks there has to have politics in his words and accordingly a reader has to get heavy political connotation. If one fails to get it rightly the fault is his. Either his wisdom is blind to the sense, or he is bound with his slavish loyalty to the white ruler. He further warns others not to take his people's silence as their cowardice. It is the Atlantic-like silence that has the capacity to put the torturers in deep shame. The poet takes pride that his people are bold enough not to speak out their pains or seek sympathy from the ruler, "Blue-sakies". He rather claims that they rather oblige the ruler by keeping silence over their injustice. The poet sounds ironical. Finally, when he says that his people are accustomed to flight he means that the conditions of migration and exile are routine experiences for them never to be scared of (34).

The final poem in the Part II, "Look O Stranger! (Letter to Canada)" gives another letter from the poet to the people of Canada. These people are strangers to him. When he wants to migrate to their land they need to be assured that they will not be harmed with his entry in their land. He tells them that he is unable to forget the humiliation that he suffered at the first entry in Canada with bad-tempered staring of the inspectors and cold and shivery wintry queries of the immigration officers at the airport. Although he received cool welcome in Canada he is sure to be neither an invader nor a refugee, nor he would wish to hide his dignity and disgust in the legal status of the Canadian citizenship. The poet assures them that he has come to their land with positive mind. He will forget and forgive if he is called a backward from South America who calls the game of 'football' as 'handball'. But he will never forget and forgive if he is called a stranger, 'a glad alien' in that land of seasons. He, however, admits that he is unable to forget and forgive the corruption that he witnessed in his former land, ironically the sunny land of the Caribbeans (35-6). The poet reminds the people of Canada that they too are immigrants in Canada and strangers to the land. Hence, they share a similar status (36).

The poems tell the story of exile once again but with one difference. Earlier the story was told in Persaud's fiction in a prosaic mode to give perception of human mind. The story here bears a poetic mode to present perception of human heart. As a result, a reader gets perspectives on a story of exile rendering two-fold projection of human psyche and two-fold perception of reality. With such perspective, the poems in the Part III will take a reader to seclusion that is the poet's self-created and self managed space. It is his private space that the Indian diaspora can provide him. It is his personal domain. Seclusion serves him as an oasis in exiled conditions.

The opening poem, "Island" gives an image of 'island' to convey the poet's wish for seclusion. The poem presents a dichotomy between the land and the island, the city and nature. On

a more personal term, it is a yogi's seclusion from the world to contemplate on his self. Thus, a metaphor of an island signifies for the poet a sense of 'arriving'. The Sargasso Sea is another element in nature that the poet feels intimacy with. The poem, "Sargasso Sea" opens with the line, "This is then my Sargasso Sea" (39). The possessive adjective 'my' conveys the poet's intimacy. The sea is personified as a man in exile, sluggish and with salty taste. Against it, the Atlantic Ocean that it meets is energetic and spirited with God's full and free laughter. God's presence imparts new spirit to the Sargasso Sea. It turns perspiration into pleasant moisture of warmth of love. The tide causes vibration in mind. The poet identifies any change in nature, pleasant or unpleasant, as mirrored in his heart, "Any dancing of the water/ Any boiling in your ears/ Is the boiling in our bosoms" (39). The result of this communion with nature is that the sweetness mirrors the divine calmness to permeate every moment of his meeting with God. The poet indicates his choice, "I turn to my turbulent/ Wild, swinging Sargasso sea/.../ And above, the limitless sky/ Your infinite smile" (40). Infinity and divinity are the poet's preferences to permeate his mind with love and calmness.

In such a state, the poet looks back on his past. In the opening lines of the poem, "From Pairs of Eyes" he says, "Through imitation Gothic door/ I stare down time" (41). The poet's retrospection on the past is blurred with "rain", "mud" and "dim recess of vision", and haunted by a distant roaring sound in the dark skies. Rain, mud, etc. signify corruption and discrimination in the public life and the sound signifies Euro-centric authorities. They are like a nightmare to him. He denies succumbing to such conditions.

A change follows then. Under the impact of "looks of love" that "can melt madness in heart", he speaks of the power of love that can bring about a change for better. He assumes him to be a fly that gets into a web of longing. He nurtures longing of being lost in love. Each moment he

waits eagerly for a spider the master of the web that signifies the master above, God. He wants to be a martyr on the altar of love. This note of sacrifice echoes of his will to surrender to God (41).

The poet reaches a point of merger with nature. The poet describes the merger in the opening line of the poem, "Sea Song", "The sea swallows the groyne and me" (42). The poet imagines that the sea and the river Demerara are friends. They flow together into the sea to submerge their identity into the sea. At this point, a call of kiskadees and Sea gull fill his heart with melodious music. The poet reaches a point of revelation. The setting sun looks to him like an overripe orange with golden rays to adorn the sandy shore with enchanting golden look. The tiny waves of the sea turn vermilion with red colour on their ripples. The sight is, 'Sindhoor on your head' (42), on God's forehead. It reminds him of the red coloured Jhandi flag that flickers in the sky at the time of the puja. Consequently, the entire night of the Friday becomes red. On such a night, the poet feels the divine presence, "And Friday night dye while you/ Flit in my head, dance in my eyes, balloon in my breasts" (42).

Kiskadees calling the poet marks a moment of awareness that may lead to revelation. Raj, the protagonist of the novel, *The Ghost of Bellow's Man* (1986) too gets it at the close of the novel. It guides him further to retreat from the world and to concentrate on writing. Awareness and revelation acquire significance in the process of evolution of self. Further, the phrases, "sindhoor on your head", "the puja flag" mark reference to Indian culture. Such references increase gradually in the poems to follow to reflect his faith in his culture and confidence in self to grow gradually.

The poet gets a vision of the future. The poem, "A Look at the Future" opens with the mood of the 'Holi', the Indian festival of fun and frolic. The festival marks the beginning of Vasant, the Spring season in India. The poet finds the 'Holi' mood all around, in the sky, at the dawn, at the dusk, on the sea and on the river. It spreads the spring all around, "There are flowers

and bees/ Butterflies and breeze, nectar and trees” (43). Remarkably enough, the poet dwells straightway on the Indian cultural references to relate optimism in life. Unpleasant things like a toss, a turn, a sigh, glances overturning things and unconscious truths fall to the impact of the hour like the waves of the ocean. The pleasant mood of the hour brings to the poet’s mind an auspicious vision of an Indian woman, “A ‘tika’ on forehead centring brows,” (43). ‘Tika’ signifies the good in life. A woman stands for ‘a blossomed love’, ‘a grafted care’, ‘a dare of institution’ and ‘a scare’ (43) to form a part of the poet’s dream with nature. He is sure that nature will be sweeter and softer than swallows’ glides on the river. It will bring about a fusion of man, time and movement. The poet wishes for a similar dream (43).

The poem, “Love’s Other Face” gives a surprising turn to the mood by showing another face of love in contrast of the divine. It is ‘a lie’. The poet says that in the present time a lie glitters brighter than the Golden Temple of Amrutsar in India. Its glitter misleads a person to take it as more sacred than the sacred strips of Gaza. It shines whiter, i.e. more convincing, than the ‘snowy’ peaks of the Himalayas or the Everest peak. Its consequence is witnessed over as a conquest. Its height frustrates adventurous persons like Hillary to feel like a loser (44). The poem conveys that a lie is a binary opposite to the truth and it enhances the value of the truth even when it wins. Such awareness helps him to acquire faith in truth, *Satyameva jayate*, that is Truth shall prevail.

The poem, “Love Song” conveys the experience of love. The poet finds the presence of God in every object of the world. The vision brings to him an experience of love. He gets it after a long wait over ages and centuries. The poet beholds God’s smile to haunt his eyes. He finds God’s hands spinning the wheel of the time. God puts everything in motion. God revives people’s lives with love. He views God’s wish in bad happenings too as blessings in disguise. At a fatal accident even while he was lying in a pool of blood he beholds God behind the windshield of the car. It

helps him to overcome weaknesses of his mind. He knows God as the omnipresent, the omniscient and the omnipotent. He sees God in his heart like one million love-poems. He feels it like liquid over-saturated with love. His entire ego merges in this liquid (45). The vision here bears the imprints of the Vishwaroop delineated in the Canto XI of the *Gita*. The poet wants to sprinkle the liquid of love on major cities of the world to turn those wastelands in to pleasant lands. Thus he seeks solution to the problem that T. S. Eliot delineates in his poem, *The Waste Land* (1922). He wishes that the sprinkle of love-liquid would bring about revival of life by charging it with love. He also wishes to sprinkle love-liquid over the space and the time infinity (45). This evokes universal concern of love as God's blessing on man to revive spirit in all living beings. Man has to pass it on to all beings in the world.

Then follows a series of poems namely, "Visit I" to "Visit VI". These poems reveal different phases in which the poet attains revelation. On his first visit, the poet finds a fusion of man and the nature in seclusion. This fusion is irrevocable and it turns everything into pleasure, 'cows nibbling grass look like dots, birds like egrets look colourful, cows in the field and ploughing of the field'. All activities on 'rice-fields turned pasture' are carried out with three purposes, food for body, food for mind and food for heart, 'Of food, or wisdom or love' (46). The poet looks for a 'web of love' that spreads music beyond the time, past and future, "Of love whistling through ages gone/ Ungone" (46).

The fifth poem in the series, "Visit V (Suraj Puran)" marks the stage of knowing the sun. The sub-title, 'Suraj Puran' evokes Indian mystical experience. The flicker of the morning sun's beams looks like the flicker of God's eyes. He takes it as a boon that he gets after a long search, "I searched and could not see/ I felt and could not feel/ Your eyes in mine and you in me," (50). The poet refers to an Indian fable of a woman who loses her pin inside her house. But she searches it

outside. On being asked she says that since there is bright sunlight outside the house she conducts her search outside the house. The fable indicates that a search has to shift from extrovert to introvert. The fable also reflects on the irony that man searches outside while it resides within his heart. The need is to go introvert. Nature helps the vision of the Divine Trinity of God, nature and man. In the context of Yoga, it suggests a shift from the *Saguna* state of mind to the *Nirguna* state of mind, or from the *Savikalpa samadhi* to the *Nirvikalpa samadhi*. The poet feels God's omnipresence with the wisp or thin streak of God's smile lurking in nature and filling all directions. He finds a reflection of his self in God's smile. The poem closes on a note of confidence and contentment.

The poem, "Visit VI" gives another metaphor of communion. It is marriage. Marriage calls for fusion of two components or identities of human existence, the masculine and the feminine to signify the merging of the body, the mind, the heart and the ego. It also signifies merging of identities, melting of egos, tuning of the mindsets to echo each other's sentiments in communion. With it, biases and barriers on gender and other considerations fade away. The poet says that man forgets that the 'soul' is his true identity and gets trapped in other fake identities like the male or the female. It causes conflicts, tension and eventual disintegration of his self. The two ideologies that prevail strongly in the west are the male domination versus the feminism. A western mindset, therefore, represents a conflicting mindset that disintegrates his self in the form of divorce. One has to overcome gender biases to feel the communion. The poet reiterates Dookie's appeal to Shaira in the story, "Dookie" (*Canada Geese and Apple Chatney*, 63-93) for communion going beyond its social reference to attain its spiritual value. The poem describes a marriage as a last smile of the bachelorhood on the bridegroom's face. The bride too gives a last smile to women-torch-bearers moving away. It suggests end of innocence. But ironically it generates knowledge of



final communion of self with the Superior Soul, God, and 'jiva' with Shiva. The poet says, "and I see two unmarried smiles melt into/ Each other and illuminate/ The night" and, "We all see Fingers of our lost flame of innocence" (51). The fusion of egos and identities is the pre-requisite for communion with God. It is a significant stage in one's evolution.

Then follows a long awaited and highly aspired moment of vision. The poet conveys the vision in the last poem of the book, "Let the Past Go Pass, My Love". The poet says that the past is insignificant like the past of the log of wood, "How the log came to the mill, / How the tree was defeafed and/ Lapped to log/ Really/ Does not matter now" (52). The present is valuable like a log of wood that is used to make furniture in some school, because it carries a noble cause of children's education. The result too is very fascinating. Its tiny particles of sawdust reach a kingly status to adorn the crown, "Let each kingly grain of sawdust/ Spin jubilantly to the crown of the heap" (52). The poem conveys a vision of change or transformation of mind through upward movement of self. Persaud discusses the vision of change in the story, "Dookie" through an example of a great Indian sage Valmiki (*Canada Geese and Apple Chatney*, 88). The poem ends on a note of caution, "Until the jubilant past /Overtakes everything!" (52). The book too ends on a note of caution not to allow past follies and weaknesses to affect one's thinking through memory. It may hamper his evolution. At this point, one's alertness becomes the most crucial components in the process to ward off weaknesses from invading his mind. This goes well with *Gita's* Karmayoga.

Persaud's second book of poetry, *The Wintering Kundalini* (2002) proclaims very distinctly the poet's Indian connection through the word 'Kundalini'. It refers to the Kundalini Yoga, a system of yoga. Yoga has two parts, the first is disciplining the mind through the Hatha Yoga with the limbs like *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama* and *pratyahara*. the second is the arousal of the

energy in the body through the Raja Yoga with three limbs, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Swami Vishnu-Devananda explains the Hatha Yoga in his *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (1999) that the word "Hatha" has two letters, "Ha" and "tha" that stand for two energies, "prana" and "apana". These energies represent the sun and the moon. "Prana" is a vital force with five major forms like 'prana', 'apana', 'samana', 'udana' and 'vyana'. It governs the cervical portion of the autonomic nervous system, the verbal mechanism and the vocal apparatus, the respiratory system and the movement of the gullet. Its seat is the heart and the colour is red gem. "Apana" is the downward moving manifestation of "prana". It controls excretion and all functions of the lumbar region of the autonomic nervous system. Its seat is anus and its colour is a mixture of red and white. The Hatha Yoga is the knowledge of controlling these two energies. It helps to gain control over the mind. Hatha Yoga is a practical way to control mind through control of the prana. The "prana" and the "apana" are the motions of the mind or its thoughts. They are invisible like winds. The Hatha Yoga asks, "How do you stop these waves?" Raja Yoga, on the other hand, deals with the mind. According to it, the mind is like a lake and thoughts are the waves or "vrittis" (in Sanskrit). Raja Yoga is controlling and eventually stopping these waves or thoughts, "*Yogah chittavrittinirodhah*" (*Yogasutram* 1.2). Vishnu-Devananda says that Raja Yoga is impossible without the practice of Hatha Yoga ("Preface"). Persaud's first book of poetry, *Demerara Telepathy* deals with the first part of the Kundalini Yoga with lessons of detachment from the world and attachment with the self through telepathic links. The present book occupies a second space in the poetic way to Yogic Realism as it deals with the awakening of the "Kundalini". As discussed earlier, thematically and in terms of the yogic discipline, the arousal of the Serpent Power or the prana in the body follows the stage of withdrawal of energy from human senses. The aim is to divert the prana inward for concentration on the Kundalini. Kundalini is the center of energy that lies at the base of the

Shushumna nerve channel located in the central part of human body. Normally it is closed with layers of desires, passions and human weaknesses. Through concentration of the prana the layers are shattered open and the prana or bio-energy is released to flow upward through the Shushumna nerve channel. It helps for elevation of human self in to the higher consciousness. The title, "The Wintering Kundalini" suggests that the awakening of the Kundalini.

The concern of the poetry is that the seductive environment in the west does not allow the awakening of the Kundalini. Its chilly cold cools down the energy. Likewise, sex and other allurements too work adversely on the energy to prevent its activation. Such may be the experience in an initial stage of yoga. The poetry presents the theme in poems presented in three sections: The first section gives a theme of wintering of Kundalini in the west. The second section conveys the poet's earnest search for a form of the divine to fix his mind so as to create poetry of music and poetry of yoga. The third section expresses the poet's determination to release his prana through the awakening of the Kundalini.

The poems in the first section evoke the poet's dilemma in the west. The poem, "In the Garden" states Rama's utterances to Sita to explain a dilemma of a Hindu in exile through juxtaposition and mythic parallels. Rama regrets that he cannot return home because he has not been able to kill Ravana yet (26). The poet introspects on the exile to sprout weaknesses in a person through the metaphoric references from Hindu mythology, "Has Hanuman deserted me, / And Lanka smokes in my head?" (26); or, "For having found Ravan so late, / How he laughs at me/ And how my fingers shake, / How unsteady my aim! / How many heads has he! And / Is it the one/ That bears my face?" (26) These lines evoke depression of his mind like Arjuna's 'Vishadyoga' in the *Gita*. He mirrors his weaknesses in the west and regrets that he turns out to be

no different from Ravana whom he despised so long. Hence, the exile is a fight lost. The poem presents the poet's lamentation like, what Vijay Mishra calls, "an impossible mourning", "Since the "truth" of mourning never arrives" with no possibility of return, a mere myth of return (30), as a result of which, he says, "In the imaginary of diasporas both mourning and melancholia find a place, sometimes mutually exclusively but often they intertwine and co-exist in the same individual" (35).

The poem, "Audience with God" presents another face of the dilemma. The poet witnesses the world in the company of Lord Brahma, the Creator. He shares the Lord's regret that how his divine creation is turned to Kala Yuga, a time of degeneration and decay. God endowed man with marvellous imagination, intellect and faculty to create new things. He can make things ranging from a pin to rockets and robots. But he regrets degeneration and decay of his energy and imagination as "emptiness of illusion" (20). The poem, "No New World" describes the world as the same since the old times. He has a dialogue with the soul, "You". He gets a reminder, "There are evergreens too" (9) and wishes to follow his soul to make a "pre-emptive stroke/ Before the Charioteer can finish his dialogue". The dialogue is the *Bhagavadgita* that Krishna sings. It tells him that in this world "the living's already dead" and there is nothing new about the world. This reveals to him a true knowledge about the world.

In the poem, "But For the O of All, Here of There" the poet says that he knows about the world. The poem has two parts, "This we know" and "And so we know". The first part explains that in this world the good and the bad, "Monster or Genius" are mixed up to cause confusion about knowing them distinctly, "Zero of nothingness yet is all". Such a world presents illusion as reality and reality as illusion. But once he knows the confusion and understands it correctly, he

knows the world correctly, "The leaves grow greener/ As we speak" (10), and "And tomorrow is now/ And never" (11). Again, "You I and I You/ Not the all of one/ But the O of all" (11).

But among all these different images of the world, the chief concern of the poems is the wintering of Kundalini. The poem, "Meditating on Ganesh in a Snowstorm" addresses the concern through an image of Ganesh in a snowstorm. The poet transplants the Indian mythic reference of Shiva cutting Ganesh's head in a Canadian context to suggest that in Canada one loses his head or mind. He reviews the situation by similarities and dissimilarities. The snow is common in both the stories, but it acquires different dimensions. In the Himalayan context, the snow evokes spiritual sentiments, while in the Canadian context, it evokes unending sexuality cooling down one's energy. Secondly, the snow on the Himalayas calms down sex, whereas in the Canadian snow sex 'swirls' like a white elephant. When the common seems dissimilar the uncommon that is 'cutting of Ganesh's head' acquires similar connotations to suggest the end of wisdom, Shiva's ignorance that Ganesh was his son and a person in Canada ignoring the spirituality. Thus, through dissimilarities in similarities in both the situations occurring remotely in the time the poet conveys the similarities in the similarity. Shiva could eradicate his ignorance about his son with the 'trishul', that signifies three-fold knowledge. An intellectual in Canada continues committing blunders with three-fold passion for sex, wealth and fame. He fears that the snow in Canada is 'swirling' like an elephant constantly in all seasons and the snow will kill his wisdom. He conveys his fear through recurrence of the line, "That day they gave me sword" (12). He also conveys probability of Shiva's story in his case particularly that his ignorance may end up with his wisdom, "He didn't know/ He didn't know", and "Who know" (12).

The poet deals with a theme of sex in number of poems, as it is a predominating instinct in the west that works on one's mind to cool down his energy. The poem, "Cobra in the Basket"

conveys sex suppressed in the subconscious through an image of a cobra closed in a basket. He dwells on a popular Indian scene of a street performer with a serpent and a wooden bugle to lure it. He confesses that sex visits him often and he indulges in sex more and more. It robs him of his wisdom. The sex is like a serpent that circles, tails, hisses, and puffs and drags one into sexual acts, "Hips hooded, skin stretched to-sex" (19). But then he determines to retreat from sex and waits for the master's flute, Krishna's music, "we perform" (19).

Further, a fountain reinforces an image of sex. The poem, "Around the Fountain in the Sun I", the poet plays upon an image of 'O' with it, "A circular pool, its multiple pissing penises/ in the public" (16). The Indian philosophy views that 'O' is the origin of all knowledge. The western thinking says that all sex spring from 'O'- the black 'O'. In the west, sex is a public act; or play or fun making. Men and women in a circle fling away their shoes, skirts and thighs and with them all their shame. It is difficult to escape such open indulgence of sex. He, therefore, prays to the Sun, God of Brightness to pierce his body and turn it powder-brown and sturdy enough to stand firm in the midst of shameless sexual indulgence. The poem ends with a note of wisdom, "That circled Zero's empty/ Has it all, content/ and uncontent are erect/ ejaculating sprouts" (16). Everything gets emptied in sexual indulgence, one's knowledge, wisdom and potency.

Sex does not spare anyone in the west, according to the poet. Even a guru or a preacher from India gets into sex indulgence. The Guru poems point at it through different images of a guru. The poem, "The Guru I" describes a guru as a smooth and healthy person who claims to keep away from meat. The poem, "The Guru II" ironically describes that a guru's eyes are stained red like eastern tea, and his tongue coated with sugar cane. He means that he seems to hold the spirit of his ancestry and his home-culture, but the fact is that he is under intoxication and he cannot remain unmoved by sex. He asks ironically, "love's call- Pyar pukaro" or "Mira-Love", platonic love or

spiritual love. With rattling sound of dog-sex, a guru loses the colour (of the eastern tea), the sweetness (of sugar cane) and the essence (of milk). He ceases to remain a true guru or a guide. The poet asks, "And who is he..." (22). The poet thus passes a severe criticism on Indian gurus who operate in the west.

The poem, "The Guru III" raises a pertinent points whether one needs to preach others. The first point is that a guru should not preach when he is not capable of it, "Do not give a fig/ if you have none, he said" (23). The second point is a guru's instinct to overpower or master others with wisdom. He asks, why should one seek to convert the world on his way? He objects to one's gesture at affecting or rather imposing reforms or improvement in other with a ting of satire, "Enlightened". The poem ends on a note of wisdom, "The syrup of maple is sweet/ But not sweeter than sweet!" (23). The poem, "The Guru IV" raises another issue related to knowledge as to which knowledge counts, that stored in books or that comes down the ages. He says that though books store wisdom of the age, "Peeping over the rim of words" (24) one has to go outside it to read the minds of those who conceived them. Wisdom in fact stayed in the time of writing. With valuing books one has also to value the time and the people that produced them for the knowledge and wisdom they impart through books. He means that India has to be valued as the real source of knowledge and wisdom that the west reproduces and repacks. He calls it an act of thieving knowledge and gurus operative in the west are party to it. In the process, the knowledge and wisdom lose the original flavour and essence. The poem ends on a note of wisdom, "He said, 'Rather/ The wisdom of books is in/ The Ages'" (24). It may be noted that several poems in this section end on a note of wisdom. The poet seems to follow the style of the *Panchatantra* tales.

In the severe cold of Canada, 'Waiting' is the only act that the poet can perform. The poem, "Shiva Descends From Kailash" conveys that he waits for Shiva's dance to remove cold with its

swirling heat and smiling fire. It revives life in him, "Transforms ice to blood" (30). He waits for the Raag that is unsung and that Shiva's dance can bring, "A thousand ecstasies of scents/ A thousand ecstasies of the ancient time" (30). He is also aware of the ferocity of severe heat that results from the Dance fearing which some people may "wish for winter". But his mind is getting excited with the hope of viewing a graceful Katak of Shiva. The rhythm recurs in the poem, "Dha dhin dhin dha". It evokes a sense that the poet acquires the rhythm and through it the Dance enters his mind metaphorically to capture him completely. Yet he doubts how he could have Shiva's dance in Canada's chilly cold that breeds spiders in every nook and corner. The poem, "Autumn Spiders" describes spiders as "frosty faced- and cold bottoms". They spread their slivery web. Spiders stand for sexual exploiters or rapists who trap women into their cobwebs when the temperature is "Zero degree Celcius" (32).

The poet is trapped in a state of indecisiveness. It is again a state of waiting. The poem, "Between the Dash and the Comma" presents two scenes: The first is milky sand and rain forests of South America, and the second is winter winds spreading snow in the north of Ontario, "Cotton balls on evergreens/ Cotton fluffs on naked trees,/ On hills, on slopes, in valleys". The second scene looks like "unmelting sand". The climate in Canada that makes a spouse's face disfigured with over sleep, and excessive care and anxiety. One would not expect love to appear on her sickly face. The climate in the South whereas makes her face lovely, "Face always seems to love". The comparison implies that in unfriendly climate of Canada he experiences a dilemma of being stuck between the dash and the comma (33)

Such a mood of disgust is altered with a trilogy of letter poems that shows silver lining. "From Abbreviated Letter" is the first letter that conveys through different pictures how the "Spring was conceived!" even in the chilly cold winter of Canada. The snow or ice looks beautiful

when it melts as if on a “thaw” (34). “Abbreviated Letter II” evokes another image, “The trees tout Negroïd limbs” (35). Trees insist annoyingly that spring gets back on their blackened branches. The revival of spring is the concern with which even “black” and “fall” may look beautiful. He dreams of the south, “fire-drenched / South American trees” against which public life in Canada is not his dream. The winter in Canada is unlike the Sita of his land a witch with white face “uncleaned, unwashed with strong odour of perfume and cologne” (35). But he calls it a diversion in his dreaming that can be forgiven. He rather remembers the Sun, ‘Surya Bhagawan’ whom he worshipped earlier. He prefers to keep to his private sphere in the interest of “his something safe” (36). He determines to ignore the public world in Canada and “compose himself” to his soul-calling, “So I must go now if” (36). “The Last of the Letters” gives a tone of regret, confession and determination. It opens with a note of regret on his story in Canada, “What have I left to tell you” (37). The poet confesses that he was rather walking in sleep, “Somnambulistic sleep”. He had exile’s apple stuck in his throat and was diseased with lust for pleasures of exile. It cut him off his home and his ancestry and he on his part had ignored his connections with his them. He, however, says “stuck-throat” does not mean, “stuck-brain”. He says that his mind is free and he now yearns to return home. He shows the red flag of puja. He determines not to share with the west mock democracies or communism like Pandavas’ share-taking. He views that ‘Vajrang Bali’, Hanuman is laughing at his modern ‘Tale’ of aspiring ‘to be Ravana’s eyeball’, of lust for pleasure and sex (37). In this context, he says, “I’ll have nothing left to tell”. His exiled soul is shattered like a pottery. He imagines himself to be an ‘old Kalash’ in the puja that kept water from the creek as fresh, sweet and cool. He wishes for spiritual peace, “OM SHANTI/ Shanti/ shanty om/ o...” (38). In this way, the series of letter poems present condition of hope and determination that rises in him gradually. In this condition, while Canada evokes frustration, India provides solace to his soul

The poem, "Metamorphosis" deals with the story of creation and regeneration, "The foetus of the East/ (lately of the south)" (39). The poet says that "the foetus" in the forms of his Indianness and Caribbeanism stirs the womb of the North. Having succumbed to western glitters, he had hurled his thoughts under concrete buildings and roads, sex and fake pleasures. He wrote poetry, but just to fill his belly. Hence, it was degenerative in motive. Now since the foetus causes stirring in the west, his soul awakens to the "Tomb of light" to restore wisdom. This conveys the awakening of the Kundalini.

The poem, "December: Tabla and Bharat Natyam Duet" continues with the sense of the awakening of the Kundalini. It presents a dialogue between North and South to reveal the real face of the west. The west claims, "A white Christmas is the seventh / Wonder of the world" (40). The poet calls it "Darker than December" with sex, 'flakes of soft snow dancing and declining on the earth'. The west is like a choked gutters and potholes with illusive shallowness where one has to wait for the fall like a suspicious victim. He now regains senses, "When I came up from my basement/ Just now/ I left the dark behind" (40). He finds torrents of the Demerara River to flood all places and he prefers to take a shelter on a higher ground. He means that when revolution from the Caribbean painting Christ as "black, as god deaf and dead" (41) spreads in Canada and America he prefers to resort to the Indian ancestry. The poem thus evokes picture of the dissolution in which he seeks shelter in the Indian ancestry. An image of the tabla and Bharat Natyam duet adds music to this image. The poem thus sums up the poet's waiting in the Canadian environment as an indication of change through dissolution and regeneration. It becomes the story of creation. The awakening of the Kundalini with arousal of the Serpent Power or energy implies the story with dissolution of passion, transformation of the mindset and regeneration of energy for evolution and elevation. In it, music arousing devotion has a vital role to play.

The poetry in section Two marks a change in tone with the first poem, "Obeah?"(45). Obeah is an occult science. An occultist charms people and helps them to ward off evils. The poet views his poetry to become his obeah to spin the charm of love to ward off evils and darkness of lovelessness from Canadians' hearts. But he does not think it as the art of magic or 'sorcery'. The poem, "Chance Encounter" (46) too marks a change in tone through the poet's meeting with a Canadian who has no light in his eyes. It reflects the blackout in his heart. The poet regrets it. He yearns to go near god. The poem, "Lost in the Colours" (47) gives out similar echo. It describes an exchange of colours between the poet and a Canadian in summer, "And we splashed our colours" (47). The poet likes brown and red, while a Canadian likes yellow and red-white. Both of them try hard to charm each other with their colours. They even indulge in sex with a view to creating something, "attempt to hurry spring". But they forget their sexual indulgence would lead them to degeneration and destruction rather than to elevation and creation, "dissolution's easier than creation" (47). The poem ends on a note of hope for a better future.

The poem, "If I must Find You" expresses the poet's yearning to find god. For it, he prefers heat to winter wind. Heat suggests burning of weaknesses causing cleansing and purgation of mind. It restores wisdom, "when all your green senses/ Dare my own to logic" (49). He is eager to find god, "If it must be/ Then let it be now" (49). With his yearning for god he becomes an unusual presence in a city or a town in the west. The poem, "'Madman' on the Streets of this City" describes him in this condition. He is like as 'a bum', a wandering beggar. He finds strange sights like women's excessive devotion to their dogs, European monks' strange singing "Hare Rama...", men's dog-like behaviour to women and women's strange playing upon them. Against these stereotypes in a western city, a bum plays at abstraction and gives out a maddening howl, "All men

are dogs, I tell you!//Dogs to the death of freedom" (51). He means that all men are slaves to their lust for women and wealth and they end their freedom in their lust.

On realising that the reality in the west is worthless, the poet turns to reflect on his poetrying and explains his love of poetry by a contrast with other forms of love in the west. The poem, "Long After the Affair has not Ended" gives an assessment of what he did in its first part. He thought that he would write more and more poems and his sentiments were influenced by Krishna's flute- "The tuner's fingers- and Arjuna- the Players" (52). He thought that he would write to please Goddess Saraswati, "Crashes the sitar's burst main string" (52). All ideals of poetry writing swarmed his mind like, "Writer should make love to their writing", "Our bodies devoid of baggage should meet", etc. He wanted to enrich his poetry with music. He got a whisper as warning, but he hardly bother to act upon it. The part two shows the result of what he did, "All your poems are a fraud-", "(So I lied)", "These lies we lived-/like loving to eternity", etc. (53). He explains that what he said was no lies, but what he could not do was his inability. He got a moment of eternity, but he could not capture it in words. It was his inability, "and we were unprepared" (53). Thus, the poem marks a real self-reflection on the poet's part. Instead of accusing the western world, he now introspects on his weaknesses and confesses his inability in a yogi-like manner.

The poem, "Another Day" describes the poet's meeting with the poesy at the "Vantage point". She takes the poet's act of penetrating into poetry as lovemaking, as yoga. But she gets annoyed when others in the west take poetry as sexual affair. Her companions and lovers, however, bring her back to freshness and cheerfulness of early morning (54). The poem, "Three Birds Flew from a Tree" gives a picture of changing season in favour of poetry. The poet imagines "rain", "trees", and "cold" as three birds. They fly and surprise other's dream of happiness. They

are rivals "to hurt others". They wait to hear a voice from a distant. It is a voice of the ancestry, of the soul- "Another more ancient, genderless voice" (55).

The poet ponders on his exile in Canada once again. The poem, "From this Tyranny of Love" conveys that it is his choice, "sweet as juice, or "sweet as pulp". The common-law domicile in Canada appeared to him like "blackened sugar-cane" or "uncertain grapes". But in sunless days of Canada he feared that he would melt in the darkness of ignorance pervading all around. He also realized that what he took as freedom was no real freedom. He can't even return home- "and you can't go home/ again" (57). He begins to reinvent him in the Canadian context of the 'cultural melting pot' as it happens to all the exiled. He finds fault not outside but within him. Having succumbed to the fashion of communist or capitalist thinking, he finds himself like a cripple or a creeping child and the pleasures as illusive as a "shadow". He arrives at a point to explore the pleasures that are untouched. The poem thus conveys the poet's introspection, self-reflection and revelation about love. Canada as "a nation-state created and upheld in the ethos of imperialism" (Vijay Mishra) fails to provide him an object of love (36). On realising the primal loss of the homeland in its physical entity, he seeks to replace the feeling of loss before the melancholia sets in. The replacement is his love of poetry through which he can keep on his association with his homeland. In Persaud's case, his desire to explore spirituality through poetry replaces any chance of impossible mourning. In this sense, Yogic Realism or 'writing as yoga' turns out to be his "new object of love" that saves him from getting into impossible mourning and the resulting melancholia.

The last two poems present two more revelations. The poem, "Cobra: The Wintering Kundalini" gives experience in two parts, each begins with "O my love" and yet gives diverse experiences. In the first part the poet again introspects on his wrongs that he kept his doors open to

let the coldness to spoil his dreams. He tried clumsily to tie his self with the ancestry. It did not help. He tried to write and clear his speech with innocence. It too did not work. He was even ready to face the chill. But he could not reach the essence of writing, nor could he move his vocal cord, larynx. His poetry remained a song of voluntary silence. In the second part he narrates an altered situation with the same "O my love". Love gives him heat and warmth to spur the tip of the kundalini and it awakens like a cobra standing on its tail. It is like a call of the divine that he is unable to ignore. He feels union with god- "Your eyes are mine", "Your kiss is mine", "Your flight is mine" (62-3). All these bring to him light- "Tastes of self", "And tastes of love" (62-3).

The final poem, "From Krishna's Flute" refers to the divine bliss and the soul's response to it. The poet says that no technology or no etching lines of graphs or lighted displays can explain it. It is visible in the magic of Krishna's 'basuri', flute. The divine music gives power to the disabled and enables the deaf to hear the music, the dumb to sing songs and the crippled to climb the mountains of memories, *Mookam karoti vachalam pangoom langhayate girim, Yatkripa tamaham vandeparamananda madhavam*, thus goes a prayer to Krishna. It is music of the soul that has universal appeal. A yogi hears the music often in an advanced stage of yoga.

The poems in the third section voice the poet's determination to overcome hurdles to release his Kundalini. The poem, "Denial" expresses his determined denial to surrender to any condition in the west. It narrates an imaginative interview between a giant fly, a big fly and a spider. A giant fly represents a white man in the west, a big fly represents a black man in the west and a spider stands for an expatriate writer of the Indian ancestry struggling to make a space, "spinning a little web" (67). The two flies interview the spider and the spider gives meek replies. This reflects on the superiority of the flies and the spider's subject position. The interview concludes with an emphatic pronouncement from the fly, "It's here that counts" (67). It scares the

spider, "The there/ And even more scared of the here/ That would deny the There". But then he also witnesses the fight between the flies and the spider denies being a party to it (67). It signifies the poet's selective involvement in the situation

The poem, "Ancient Immigrant Trail" presents the poet's dialogue with another immigrant in Canada who has been staying there for ages. She is a Jewish woman whom he calls sister. The poet suggests all possible compromises in the interest of healthy co-existence. He requests her, "Don't ask even/ Telling" (68), because asking is hurting and telling brings intimacy. He also requests not to be arrogant to him and avoid his company on a long and dreary path of unending exile. He reminds her that they are exiled and their "cyclic" travel is slow with a circular route. So they are "Faceless/ Formless, colourless/ Companion" (68). He hopes to find a true companion in her and like birds they would know the illusion (68).

The poet compares acts of creation in east and west. The poem, "The Gulls Aspire to be Gaulings" presents the comparison through words and phrases like "weave", "ragged precision", "And occasionally a brilliance of one flawless line/ From millions confirms the lie", "the surgeon performed Caesarean", "Calligraphic pen", "broken nibs-hand-me-down", etc. (74). He means that an act of creation in the west is like weaving to fabricate lies with brilliance. It is like a Caesarean to affect premature birth of ideas and imagination that involves mechanical excellence and microscopic surgery. Writers in the west are like seagull with skill at brutal Caesarean of poetry. These writers (gulls) aspire to be Gauling, a resident of an ancient city in Europe with confidence and steadiness of mind. Gauling stands for a writer of the east, "master pens". Such a striving condition perplexes him. He lacks confidence and suffers exclusion. But he has to know that he too has "the womb", "the center of their planet" (75) warm enough to conceive poetry. He also has to know that "the paradise is not in snow", not in the west. He thanks god that his pen of creation,

“sketching pen” is not artificial, “calligraphic ones” and that the wombs are “enlarged” and “richer” with knowledge, like “swollen sinhasana”. He can explore many worlds with the strength of imagination. Following a western image of ‘a gull aspires to be Gauling’, he also employs an eastern image to highlight the difference between writers in the east and the west. It is ‘a kshatriya aspires to be a Brahmin’. He refers to the story of Vishwamitra who was a kshatriya and raises a question, “Who can be a Brahmin, but a Brahmin!” Vishwamitra’s upgradation and equality too would be at the consent of the highborn Vashistha’s (75). But the poet says that it happened in India because Vishwamitra was determined and diligent. It still can happen in the east with strong base of character. But a western character with faulty base is incapable for it.

A series of poems, “Looking Back 1” to “Looking Back 6”, presents the poet’s reviews of his memory but with a different dimension. The poem, “Looking Back 1” presents past as the mother image. The poet feels a mother’s presence on “long, hot summer days” and pines for one look in her eyes and one look at her face. In her presence, he cannot tell a lie nor would he feel like a child without future and memory, “unfutures”, “unmemories”. It marks him different from any child in the west. The poem conveys a sense of pride for mother and the mother culture that marks the beginning of his narrative of evolution (*Dear Death*). He justifies his wish to suck summer days like sucking a mother’s breast for benefit of mutual health (76). The poem, “Looking Back 2” presents a picture of the poet’s humiliation at the hands of the whites. He finds one’s going to Toronto senseless- “Ah! Here/ To-ron-to. Men without meaning!” (77). He compares white people staying in high-rise buildings with seagulls “whirling in the sky”, enjoying superiority, and giving “the hand-me-downs” treatment to others. They toss at them scraps of bread and sleeping rugs contemptuously. Ironically enough he says that they do all these “with Metro precision” (77).

"Looking Back 3" presents a picture of a city adorned with thousands of lights. He views the city from a height and finds like "crawling fall" and "confusion of naked limbs" (78). It confuses, 'scratches' both the sky and his mind accustomed to nudity of the North. The city also looks like a fruit lighted with Christmas lamps. These three, the city, limbs and fruits look bright with thousands of electric lights, yet oil lamps or 'diyas' illuminating Diwali, "Diwali's eyes" are brighter. Diwali signifies hope for a Hindu in exile assuring 'homecoming'. The poet wishes to be a little oil in the 'diyas' to have a feel of the earthen bottoms. He associates 'diyas' with a 'Harijan' who is a downtrodden cleaner in the society, the 'untouchable'. A 'diya' holds spiritual light to mark divine revelation. It is ignored in the age of electricity and replaced with thousands of glittering electric lamps. As a result, the human life is deprived of its natural flavour.

"Looking Back 4" presents an image of a tyrant in the west through a seagull. Against the tyrant, the poet's people are like frightened pigeons, "Is tiger of urban refuse/ Tyrant of pigeons/ King of survival!" (79). The tyrant comes from the Ontario Lake and moves on the lawns of high-rise buildings of Toronto. It captures the poet's mind and gawks in his head even in hot summer. The seagull mixes with things without one's knowledge. He somehow finds him free of slavery and fear of a tyrant- "Free and free-slaved" (79). He finds in him emergence of fearlessness- 'Abhayam', the first virtue that the *Gita* and the *Vedas* expound.

The poet gives a call to preachers in the west to return home in the poem, "Porkknocker, Come Home". He criticizes these celebrated gurus for their pretence and lust by comparing them with a Guyanese prospector who explores Guyana's interior and northernmost part of the Amazon rainforest system for gold. In tune with his earlier criticism of gurus in "The Guru" series of poems, he compares gurus to "gaudy birds" lost in glitters of the west and "macaws", long-tailed American parrots that indulge in showmanship and senseless chatting. The poet appeals him to

return home and requests him to value his ancestry and culture. He assures him that he will get the knowledge, “Soon *Hanuman* will fly the sky above/ The city” (88). He calls a guru a misplaced person in the west like Vibhishana of the *Ramayana* in a city of Lanka. He has to get out of it. He reminds him of the time for the puja- “Sindhoor”, “Amrit” and the Indian food to follow it. He hopes for a change in a guru. He offers prayers chanting the Vedic hymn- “OM BHUR BHUWA: SWAAHAA” (89) to convey revival of knowledge in him.

The poet raises an interesting question on life in the poem, “Confluence of Demerara and Atlantic”, “Is this then life?” (90). He derives the reply through comparison of life with ‘hammer of a hull’, ‘woodpecker’s rhythmic butting’, ‘a fall of flakes’, ‘dance of mud from anchor’ and ‘a softly moving motor or ship’. The comparison does not work well. He seems to apply the Vedic philosophical system of *neti* – ‘not this, no this’ of obtaining knowledge through negations. The poet gets the reply, “This is just a rivered view, /A watered vision” (90). He associates life with water, river, or the ocean. Through these metaphors he conveys a sense of the mother, the giver of life with the vision of the eternal mother that is Indian ancestry. It is a vision of creation, ‘a rivered view’ and ‘a watered vision’ (90). The metaphor of water here carries a different connotation from that in the poem, “When the Land is Dry” (82). Persaud thus employs a metaphor of ‘water’ with its poly-focal potency.

The poet arrives at yearning for literary prophecy in the interest of yogic realism. The poem, “Prophet in His Time” conveys his yearning. It refers to the prophets of the English poetic tradition down the line of Chaucer. He says that he faces silence staring of the western world. The ‘silence’ is authoritative like Burnham’s commanding Orwellian cinema. The five persons, the poet, a cyclist, a pedestrian, a policeman and a farmer exchange a stare mingled with laughter. The laughter is ironic or cynical like that in the story, “Is There No Laughter in the Snow?” (*Canada*

Geese and Apple Chatney, 49-51). It meant to ignore the silence staring of the authority. These five persons share the laughter and they, on the contrary, catch glimpses of creation, 'the Atlantic waves creating fountains on the sea wall', "Swallows dived in to our souls", 'birds floating and gliding on a cricket ground looking for seeds' (91).

The poet coincides these glimpses of creation with those of Chaucer's. As a pioneer of a written English poetic tradition, he offers seeds and flowers of poetry, "Offering the seed-flower-grass-sea/ Scent to noses.." (91). The poet catches another glimpse of 'sharing wine' with a prophet 'in The Cloth'. It is a Christian image to suggest that the poet wishes to share the joy of poetry over the bounds of religion and culture. The glimpses convey his sincere wish to interact with other cultures. However, he also confesses his indulgence and the wintering of his energy despite possessing knowledge. He feels a need of control, restriction, "And Damyam" (92). He determines to control, "We left behind Gloucester/ on the cliffs" (92). The poet invites Chaucer to bring his poems and assures him that 'Lear', a flawed man is dead, "poisoned/ By himself". He witnessed the death of Lear, "Lear died before our eyes" (92).

The final poem, "In a Thousand Years" presents another glimpse of creation. It is a child's birth that calls for rain, night, fire and bursting of blood. He wishes that his soul will have redemption by 'some searching soul' who "Will stop and see and/ Listen and release/ My soul/ From within her own!" (93). He knows that it happens once in thousand years and so he will wait for the redemption of his soul. This evokes an image of Kevat waiting for Rama. The book ends on a note of redemption of soul and possibility of its evolution with a guru's guidance. The redemption carries a sense of release of one's creative energy through the arousal of Kundalini. The book, thus, begins with a concern over 'the wintering of Kundalini' end with a hope of 'the release of Kundalini' that is creative energy.

The fourth chapter thus deals with Persaud's poetic efforts in the direction of yogic realism. The poet's intention for the shift from a narrative mode to a poetic mode is specifically to cause affinity with the reader with lucidity, sweetness and rhythm that help him to generate faith in the reader. He knows that his poetry deals with a subject that is mystical and spiritual in nature and it calls for the reader's faith. The Indian ancestral tradition worked with faith to impart and transmit knowledge down the generations. Hence, the poet takes up the discussion of the process of evolution through poetry or in a poetic way. He finds that the world too is not conducive to yogic acts of contemplation on the Kundalini. It instead acts to cool down the Kundalini with seductive influence of sex and wealth. The poet, therefore, announces seclusion in nature. It is sure that it will help him to further the processes of concentration and meditation. The next chapter shall deal with these processes in the final phase of the yogic process as revealed from Persaud's poetry trilogy, that is his three recent books of poetry.