



## RESEARCH ARTICLE



## INTOLERANCE AND CULTURES OF WELCOME IN IMTIAZ DHARKER'S POETRY

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## ABSTRACT

Intolerance is unwilling to accept views, beliefs or behaviour that differs from one's own. Expression of this sort of bigotry, by the society faced by individuals has its own space in literature. This parochialism, or dogmatism is received with tolerance by some writers and their culture of reception finds expression in their works. The poet I have opted is Imtiaz Dharker. She is a Pak-Indo-Brit poet of a multitalented personality, an individual, poet, painter, film maker, and a conscientious human being. All her collections of poems (6) contain her drawings. She scripts and directs films, for non-government organisations in India, working in the area of shelter, education and health for women and children. Her poems have been widely broadcasted on BBC Radio 3 and 4, BBC World Service and on television. She is a poet on the UK school syllabus, performing at *Poetry Live* events across Britain to over 40,000 students a year.

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Dharker's poetic corpus is the best example which depicts the intolerance faced by women and especially Muslim women and also the Muslim community, not only in India but also in global context. The marks of injury and the scourge of intolerance in her works denote the cultures of suffering. The four sentiments found in her poetry are discussed under the categorisation depending on Promod K. Nayar's *States of Sentiment*. As a sufferer and observer of all sorts of 'scar culture' around,

Dharker responds and mentions this in her five collections of poetry. These emotions of 'scar culture' lead to 'cultures of aversion', which directs to sentiment of 'hope' for the betterment in the situation. This hope reflects the reception of the intolerance by the sufferer, yet hopeful of betterment. This hope leads to 'smile culture'/'culture of well-being', which is essential for a healthy society and community. Obtaining the culture of hope, benefits, man with positive feelings, and



cognitive beliefs towards life and society. Pramod K. Nayar terms scar culture or cultures of suffering as:

Scar culture's emotionally meaningful discourses of suffering and pain enable the creation of a moral imagination that generates an affective sociality, social responsibility and political response in contemporary public culture. The affective responses enable the making of new identities for victims, identities more in consonance with international and global laws than rooted in their ethnic or national locations.<sup>1</sup>

Dharker visualises the cultures of intolerance /suffering – social, psychological, communal, or cultural as an observer and voices out the emotions of the victims, while identifying the victimizers, leaving the judgment to the prudence of readers. Social suffering is the depiction of suffering in public life/culture that makes people aware of social disparity, manipulative social conditions and cultural factors. In this connection Dharker's poetic collections represent the suffering of women in the context of patriarchy, religion, evil practices like Purdah and 'honour killing'. She depicts the misery of people due to communal violence, racism, and poverty not only in Pakistani and Indian societies but also in the world

Imtiaz Dharker rebels against this implication of Islamic notion in her Islamic upbringing and scorns at the position in which women are incarcerated, in her poetry. In the poem "Purdah I" she sardonically comments the perception of the safety of purdah in Islamic societies. According to Ibn Masud "A woman is an object of concealment for when she goes out, the devil presents her in alluring looks before men."<sup>2</sup> So Hijab/veil/purdah is imposed on women 'so that covering herself does not attract the evil gaze of men'. (Hijab (Veil)Women's dress code). Dharker supports the system to a certain extent but describes the psychosomatic ordeal of the women inside the purdah in this poem brilliantly, 'Voices speak inside us/echoing in the spaces we

have just left.' Paying attention to the inner voice, the women in purdah try to come out discarding wariness. Dharker depicts:

She stands outside herself,  
sometimes in all four corners of a room.  
Wherever she goes, she is always  
inching past herself,  
as if she were a clod of earth  
and the roots as well,  
scratching for a hold  
between the first and second rib. (p.3)

Dharker further ironically comments 'purdah': We sit still, letting the cloth grow/a little closer to our skin./ A light filters inward/ through our bodies' walls./ Voices speak inside us,/ echoing the spaces we have just left (P.3). She encourages women to stand outside of these restricts, themselves, because purdah restricts their vision of the world as well as their experiences of life. Dharker finishes the poem relating how the 'suffering self' looks forward to get emancipation, while 'doors keep opening/inward and again/inward'. Thus the 'self' springs out of the space permitted to a woman within 'purdah'.

Dharker mentions the Honour Killing case of Samia (Pakistani) who wanted divorce from her spiteful spouse, was killed by her own mother in her lawyer's office in her third collection of poems / *Speak for the Devil*. She applies this term not to slay a woman for some sinful deeds that may dishonour her family, but to kill the taboos of culture and customs, to honour the society and traditions, to respect the 'self'. So the poet takes off the coat and veil that her religious conviction preaches, which makes her feel 'faithless to herself'. To get a new-fangled identity of an individual self, the poet proposes the elimination of even:

..... This skin,  
and then the face, the flesh,  
the womb. (P. 5)

Thus the poet is hostile towards honour killings encouraged by fanatics. She boldly faces the intolerance of the society and preaches the culture of reception to come out of it. So she stripteases all the symbols and traditions of religion that restrict women. She says:



I'm taking off these silks,  
 these lacy things  
 that feed dictator dreams,  
 the mangalsutra and the rings  
 rattling in a tin cup of needs  
 that beggared me. (p.5)

Thus the poet observes the honour killing of religion. In the poem "Another Woman" Dharker exemplifies domestic violence. The daughter-in-law, the protagonist executes her routine, still scolded by the mother-in-law and set to fire: Another torch, blazing in the dark./ Another woman./ We shield our faces from the heat (p. 39). She was burnt alive, and the society did not find anything atypical in this act, because it is common. The society treats this tragedy brusquely, not even identifying the woman with her name. So Dharker mentions this social evil and makes the society to think about the remedy considering the suffering of women.

In her second collection *Postcards from god* Dharker describes the suffering due to poverty and the existing conditions of people in slums. In the poems "Scaffolding", "Living Space", "Shell" and "One breath" the poet depicts the precarious conditions under which the poor struggle to live. The poem "Living space" is an example of uncertainty and a testimony to the courage of the people living in such dwellings. She describes:

There are just not enough  
 straight lines. That  
 is the problem.  
 Nothing is flat or parallel.

.....

The whole structure leans dangerously  
 towards the miraculous. (p.109)

Paradoxically in this space of insecurity, they seek security, which exemplifies the receptive culture. The women search for the aid of tradition of worshipping the 'Tulsi plant' for the safety of their husbands. They follow the culture of placing 'mirchi and lemon over the door' to protect their children and house from the evil eye. They believe in god, the protector and are optimistic about their wellbeing. Dharker as a bystander-speaker illustrates the abject situation of people in slums and chiefly, mothers and children in the poems "Namesake", "Adam's Daughter" "Adam from New Zealand", and "Zarina's

mother". In "Namesake" the poet refers to Adam, Zarina's brother, who accidentally bears the name of the visitor from New Zealand. Dharker reveals the contrast of their lives:

Adam, your namesake lives  
 In Dharavi, ten years old.  
 .....survives  
 with pigs that root  
 outside the door, (P 128)

Dharker gives the contrast picture of the namesake and asks god 'what's your price?' to free the children the poverty stricken filthy slums in the poem "Your price". In "Adam's Daughter" Dharker depicts the hunger of the child. She compares her eye to bird's watchful and twisted eye. The child is always alert to take aid from the women of charity. Dharker says that the girl is only three years old but has seen enough 'to live in dread'. This pitiable state is often pictured and commodifies and generates a compassion fatigue, a moral imagination that might persuade apathy.

Dharker's shift to cultural suffering from social suffering is depicted in the last poem of the collection. The poet describes the alienation and suffering of her 'self' as a minority both as a third world woman and Muslim. In the poem "Minority" the poet says:

I was born a foreigner.  
 I carried on from there  
 to become a foreigner everywhere  
 I went, even in the place  
 planted with my relatives,  
 six-foot tubers sprouting roots,  
 their fingers and faces pushing up-  
 new shoots of maize and sugar  
 cane. (p.157)

The poet's experience of multiple cultures and the alienation she feels in them is expressed here. Though she tries to mix in the host culture, she remains alone because of cultural variation. She feels a foreigner even among her relatives. She says:

I don't fit,  
 like a clumsily-translated poem;  
 like food cooked in milk of coconut  
 where you expected ghee or cream,  
 the unexpected aftertaste  
 of cardamom or neem. (P. 157)



She remains an alien wherever she goes because of her different philosophy. Her sense of loss is due to the shift in culture. In spite of her agony of alienation, she survives as a successful individual self due to her attitude of multiculturalism.

Dharker goes into history to recount the sufferings of Asian (Indian and Pakistan) Muslim community in Britain and Glasgow, Where they worked as lascars in the ports in the collection *The Terrorist at my table*. She speaks about the marginal status of a migrant and a Muslim in Western Societies in the post-colonial context. The Lascars faced hostility of their bosses because they are Muslims. Richard Lawless "No matter how bad conditions are aboard ship, Mohammed (Who can live on the smell of an oily rag or a stick of incense for a week) will not complain, but a Britisher always does. That's why poor, puzzled, ostracized, uncomplaining Mohammed is given preference to Britishers"<sup>3</sup>. Thus the community was demoralized due to poverty, and Islamophobia. The lascars/peddlers lived in memories and suffered in isolation because passport stop lists were introduced in the 1920s to exclude political activists with a history of anti- British activity in India. Restrictions were placed and the control of passport was directed primarily at Indian peddlers from the Punjab who sought to bring their families to Britain. Most of the lascars turned peddlers, when they lost their jobs. Either they cannot return home or bring their family abroad. So they began to form social relationships among the local communities.

Johnnie the protagonist of this section searches for such a relationship but still he recollects his wife: Door way. Standing there, my wife/jasmine in her hair, called me/Jaan, her life. (p.61). The self – esteem of the Indian Lascars is endangered by conflicts with the host culture, and their increasing alienation from the mother land made them nostalgic about their homeland. They dream about their land. Lascar Johnnie says:

This is when it lifts a little  
and the water slips  
into the road I travel every night,  
cradled by sugar cane, overhears  
with tamarind, the air  
has the sling of the songs we sing,

sharp with the taste of Jhelum.

("Lascar", P.57)

Dharker describes how the dislocation causes suffering and how fine feelings and sentiments arouse because of memories in the section "Lascar Johnnie". After establishing a liaison and accommodating himself, Johnnie transfers his self to the 'Other'.

Dharker expresses her views on 'Islamophobia' not only in terms of Lascars but also about Muslims in general. Islamophobia is a bigotry, hate or illogical fear of Islam or Muslims. It is a practice of discerning against Muslims by eliminating them from the financial, communal and public life of the nation. It includes the insight that Islam has no values in common with other cultures and is inferior to the west and is a violent political ideology rather than a religion. All these attitudes towards Muslims lead to the growth of terrorism in the world. The poem "The Right Word", is a best example for the opinions about terrorists and the dilemma to reach an end. She suspects:

Outside the door,  
lurking in the shadows,  
is a terrorist.  
Is that a wrong description?  
.....

Taking shelter in the shadows,  
is a freedom-fighter. (P. 25)

She is in confusion about the identity of the boy outside. Due to fear and confusion, she names him a terrorist 'a freedom fighter', 'a hostile militant' and a 'guerrilla warrior'. When she understands the realities behind terrorists under which the child is identified differently in different situations, she says:

God help me.  
Outside, defying every shadow, stands a  
martyr.  
I saw his face. (Ibid)

The poet moves from uncertainty to certainty. She finds the child resembles her own child. She suggests:

One word for you.  
Outside my door,  
his hand too steady,  
his eyes too hard  
is a boy who looks like your son, too.(Ibid)



She understands that terrorists are not born but made. She considers the problem at the political level; 'one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter' (Gerald Seymour: 1975). This leads to the aphorism. People who are described as "freedom fighters" are often also called assassins, rebels, insurgents, or terrorists. The degree to which this occurs depends on a variety of factors specific to the struggle in which a given freedom fighter group is engaged. Thinking in these terms, she invites him inside for dinner. Hence her fear and hatred is removed and in that place love, trust and recognition finds place. She suggests that if solutions are not sought, the threat of terrorism will be increased. She writes this poem after 9/11 attacks.

Imtiaz talks about the communal violence that took place at the time of Partition and after the demolition of Babri Masjid. The rhetoric of evil has always been a factor of the discourse of suffering, trauma and terror. In *Purdah and other Poems, The Terrorist at my Table*, and *Leaving Fingerprints* Dharker speaks about the cut off relations, shock, torment and terror the countries have undergone due to religion. The religious fury and violence killed nearly two million Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs during the Partition. Hatred towards religions had become a means of violence, and trauma became a usable criterion and category of judgment and subsequent actions. The country was divided into two, killed each other for trivial reasons and suffered the consequences of the evil and hatred. The sufferers remember their lost relations in the tragedy. The sound of train makes them recollect the event. The poet says:

When the train came in to its destination,  
the station drank up the names  
of their aunts and uncles,  
their neighbourhoods and cities  
and our mothers fathers swallowed  
the nightmares that sounded like trains  
*Gaddi aa gayi tation the Gaddi aa gayi  
tation the* ( *The Terrorist at my table*.P. 75)

Their aversion towards the communal violence is depicted through their nostalgia. Aversion is the result of a set of sensitively momentous discourses that construct- represent, project, picturise and narrativise- people, events, objects and

situations in explicit ways. Their feelings of fear, horror and hatred established the cultures of aversion in the minds of subsequent generations. Whenever they listen to sound of train, they recollect the trains filled with dead bodies during the times of Partition. Dharker describes the disgust of the people:

It happened like this. Their country  
slipped out of their hands and broke  
like a cup or an earthen pot  
they never spoke as if they remembered  
the shape it used to have. (P. 75)

Several years after the Partition, the two nations still trying to heal the wounds left behind and are in search of an identity and history in their new land. In mind still they claim:

It is my songs and dances.  
I tell you this for years.  
You say it is too late.  
You say this mud is your sons and  
daughters  
and their children, your sweat and blood  
your cities and your orange groves  
the pain you carried through so many  
centuries..

(*"Mine yours"*. *The Terrorist at my Table*,  
P. 16)

Often bereavement and loss are causes for suffering. Dharker gives explicit account of scar culture in her second collection *Postcards from God*. She picturises the aftermath and repercussions of communal violence, in Ayodhya and Mumbai, following the demolition of Babri Masjid. More than 2000 people were killed in the riots followings the demolition. Riots broke out in many major cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad. In the poems "6 December 1992", "8 January 1993", and "Cloth", she describes the intolerance faced by the people of all religions, though it is a suffering meant for a particular religion which leads to aversion towards the wrong-doers. Dharker narrates an incident in the poem "In the Name of god". She expresses all the three characteristics of aversion-fear, hatred and disgust. The narrator captives the hooliganism in the name of riots in Mumbai and graphically enumerates:

That was when they started  
pouncing at the door



banging with their sticks and swords.

Then the fire

spread across the floor. (P. 145)

The experiences of communal violence make people develop aversion towards god and religion. The poet comments in the poem "Absent without Leave":

But did I say

these were not my gods? (P. 147)

Dharker writes about this incident in "8 January 1993":

The bolt bangs in

A match is struck and thrown.

The burning has begun.

Afterwards

the bodies are removed

one by one. (P.142)

The communal violence is compared to monsters who 'stand patiently' to visit homes i.e. to attack homes. Dharker expresses this idea in the poem "1993". The words peace and brotherhood have lost their meaning and the age is characterized as the age of 'fire and blood'. In the poem "6 December 1992" she describes the condition:

..... Outside,

blood runs in transparent veins,

fragile bodies walk the streets.

Through glass clothes

it is clear:

some are circumcised, some

not,

but circumcised or not,

they are all glass. (P. 141)

She uses the symbol 'glass' both for 'transparency' and 'fragility' in the poem. The lives and assets are ruined as if they were glass. According to Srikrishna commission Report, when the News of demolition spread by 14.30 hours on 6<sup>th</sup> Dec, the cry of danger to Islam boomed. The Muslim fundamentalists seized this chance to belligerently proliferate that Islam was in imminent jeopardy. Since proponents of the Hindu nation had been allowed a free hand to obliterate the Masjid in broad day light under the very nose of the armed forces. Dharker ironically pictures the cruelty of leaders in the poem: Glass leaders laugh /and the whole world can see /right through their faces/into their black

tongues./ And though the crystal night/the bodies begin to burn. (P. 141).

In the poem "8 January 1993" Dharker narrates a gruesome incident...A match is struck and thrown./ The burning has begun. /Afterwards/the bodies are removed/one by one. (P.142). The communal violence is compared to monsters who 'stand patiently' to visit homes i.e. to attack homes. The words peace and brotherhood have lost their meaning and the age is characterized as the age of 'fire and blood'. She confirms this: The beast is upon us, /long areas dangling, /Squatting on our shell-bright dome (P.143). The religious violence like a beast with the face of hate and prejudice is ready to leap upon both the communities. In the poem "In the Name of god", the poet describes that to save their lives people of one creed utter the 'name of god' of the other religion. Justice Srikrishna indicted those who are responsible for the second phase of the carnage and to some level the first, the Shiv Sena. A pogrom was prearranged to attack the Muslims in a methodical manner. The leaders of the mob carried lists of voters and other documents with them, to identify the homes of Muslims. Dharker refers to this in the poem "The List":

Sudden impact.

The city flies apart,

bits of high-rise apartments,

scraps of slums,

all kinds of shops

empty themselves into the sky.

Loaves of bread explode from bakeries.

Buses, suburban trains and taxis

spit out their load.

Things lose their names.

.....

This must be how war feels:

when ordinary things lose

their sense of gravity.(p.151)

In the poem "Untitled" Dharker talks about nightmares about the violence, she witnessed. She says:

At night I turn out of sleep

into the smoke of reality.

It's not Bombay that burns,

but this specific child

screaming behind a bolted door;



this particular man on fire  
trapped inside his locked car. (P. 155)

The violent scenes disturb her though there is visible normalcy. Muslims were searched for, and killed ruthlessly. Obviously Muslims had their share of murders too. Neither she supports or criticises either the Hindus or the Muslims in this context. Both communities are targeted. The violence took place not because of religion but due to religious politics and vote bank politics, amalgamation of caste and religious groups to win electoral battles. Dharker's observations of this sort of violence make her develop a kind of aversion towards religion and politics.

Dharker enumerates the cultures of suffering and aversion in her poetry and at the same time she instils faith in hope of change in the attitudes of people. She believes that future will be bright and a time will come to erase all the prejudices among different religions and races. In the words of Mary Zournazi:

'Hope masquerades as a vision, where the passion and insecurity felt by people become part of a call for national unity and identity, part of a community sentiment and future ideal of what we imagine ourselves to be...'<sup>4</sup>

Dharker's model of 'hope' encloses bliss, utopianism, social agenda of emancipation, and equality. This the type of culture of reception she demonstrates in the following poems. She is troubled at the sight of the suffering of people due to Partition, communal riots, religion, Islamophobia and terrorism. She wishes for a utopian land or space, where one can find solutions to the problems and live happily. In one of her travels she finds Al-Andalus as her utopian home.

In the sub-section titled 'Remember Andalus' (Osama bin Laden) in the collection *The Terrorist at my table*, Dharker talks about the multiculturalism of Spain, which she imagines as a cure against the religious fundamentalism and cultural hybridity. Dharker says, 'I Wanted to take this territory back for poets, this modal of paradise that Bin Laden Claimed for Muslim supremacy'. She also wants to 'take the territory back for the women,

who weren't aiming for immortality' which refers to her feminist utopia. Dharker uses the symbol 'pomegranate' for birth i.e. the birth of religious tolerance and an ideal society and rule that existed in Andalusia. Hazar Ibdah and Lawrence Woods, in their article "Learning from al-Andalus" state:

'al- Andalus was not an ideal society. When it came to interreligious interaction, co-existence or forbearance, it does present an example of practical inter-faith dialogue that offers much food for thought, when it comes to contemporary interfaith and intra-faith discussions'.<sup>5</sup>

Dharker employs feminist utopia while replaying the history of al-andulus. Feminist utopian writing consists of yearning of standard utopian ideals such as abolishment of poverty, self-fulfillment, meaningful work, and peace. This sort of writing interrogates the notion of a citizenship based on the sexual contract, pre-assigned gender roles, the absence of the woman's reproductive rights. It thinks of an 'all-female space'. . Dharker brings forth women in the section 'Remember Andalus' to show a gender-free world and women partaking in the grief of Boabdil, when the palace is handed over to King Ferdinand. She imagines their life, style, architecture, gender roles, and sentiments and gives visualisation to their sentiments. In the poem "Women bathing", Dharker dramatizes the scenes where she brings those historical women to life and makes them live and experience the modern times. In the words of Wesseling it is one of the characteristics of the uchronian subversion where emphasis on subverting the past events and characters only to create alternative versions. . Best example is found in Dharker's poem "Aixa at the window". The narrator, Aixa, becomes at once present witness and past spectra. She says:

Inside is Paradise.  
But I am watching, from another century,  
tenses changing on the opposite hill. (P.  
72)

The narrator-poet witnesses the present standing in the middle of the past splendour. She listens to the voices from the bazaar, people



haggling, joking, and all bustling. Listening to all this noise, she foresees the future. She says:

The click of heels,  
the singing from a future century.  
Songs from films with dancing heroines.  
Songs from MTV  
laid like tissue over finer tissue,  
they find my mouth,  
whisper out of me. (Ibid)

Dharker mixes the time and space in all the three tenses. Her travelogue records her travel across Andalus in detail. 'Journey metaphor' exemplifies the basic problem of the diasporic psyche: 'of not belonging anywhere, of feeling dislocated'. The journey motif represents an essentially dynamic process of becoming rather than of being and plays a significant role by giving the poet an alternative ideology. Her travel is both physical and spiritual. In the poems like 'The Women', 'What women said', and 'What the moon saw', Dharker writes about all female world born out of pomegranate seeds in "The Women":

I scatter pomegranate seeds,  
and from each seed springs a woman.

.....

Just one more seed,  
flung a little further than the rest (P. 71)

In "Aixa at the Alhambra", Dharker subverts the idea of "Woman seduced by man". She says:

It wasn't the man. It was the garden  
that reduced me. The breeze  
glanced off the white mountains  
and blew secret messages to me. (P. 75)

She is seduced by the beauty of the gardens of Alhambra. Now all that glory of the past is gone. Dharker makes an attempt to recognize the similarities of current and past identity, struggles of Andalus and the cultural constructs. Like Rushdie, Dharker thinks that all culture is palimpsestic in nature and says:

All gone from me  
poems, words, the beauty of a turn of  
Phrase.....  
All blown away,  
.....  
Not a whisper now. (P. 80)

So she sighs over the disappearance of all splendor of the city, its religious tolerance and also over the catastrophic effects of Islamic fanaticism throughout the world. She says:

They will say I looked back  
from the Hill of Tears  
on a winter morning.  
Only they will not see my breath,  
left like a mist on Paradise.

I will know I left my breath behind.

They will say I sighed (P. 81)

'The sigh' refers to one of the popular legends that relate how Boabdil, a pacifist and the last king of the Moors surrendered Granada without a fight to king Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain in 1492. Boabdil began to weep as he handed King Ferdinand the keys of the city, because he realised that he was going to abandon paradise on Earth. Dharker, through the voice of Boabdil expresses the grief upon the loss of the Moor and also the end of the Muslim rule which stood as a model of cultural synthesis. Her sorrow is not only about the lost grandeur of the city but also about a vanished culture that gave women utmost liberty. Dharker writes about Boabdil's mother Aixa in the poem "Aixa at the window", expressing not her grief but as a critique of present day society in Al-Andalus. Her observations of change in lifestyles make her realise that change is inevitable still life continues. This expression of hope evinced by other writers makes Dharker differ in ideas, when compared with her contemporaries. Gil Anidjar in the article refers that:

The myth is of course associated with Bin Laden and the lamentation of the loss of Muslim Spain. The story [of Al-Andalus] offers the image of an isolated country, a solitary beacon of light and civilization in a dangerous world. The force of the story comes from the limited size of the window of hope it offers--a few hundred years of multicultural coexistence on a relatively small territory--and from the reasons given for its sad conclusion: Its end





and failure were and remain Islam's fault.<sup>6</sup>

Al-Andalus stands for a mitigated hope, and that hope is precisely the one that lives today: the uncertain hope--still worth fighting for, no matter how unsure the people are--that democracy, pluralism, and multiculturalism are possible against the force of barbarism.' Dharker is hopeful about a utopian world where there won't be any religious strife.

In some of Dharker's poems in the collection *Leaving Fingerprints* the poet expresses hope as an affect that emerges from a juxtaposing of the real with the not-yet which links with ecosystems. According to Sura 18:45 from Quran, 'each person has his/her place in the ecosystem (the divine plan and cosmic structure). Dharker refers to the idea of reincarnation in collection. The idea of reincarnation is accepted by a few Muslim sects, especially Sufis. It is a religious or philosophical concept that the soul or spirit after biological death begins a new life in a new body that may be human, animal or spiritual depending on the moral quality of the previous life's actions. This hope of life the permanence of prolongation is the main theme of this collection. In the poems written on Anarkali, the legendary slave girl, explain the theme brilliantly. Anarkali was reprimanded for her love towards Prince Saleem. The Emperor, Akbar ordered Anarkali to be buried/walled in alive. She was not sad but felt happy because she was given a chance to live with every worm and every living creature in the tomb. In "Anarkali, inside" she says:

I am learning to grow with the other creatures,  
the snails, the snakes, the slugs, the worms,  
my hair a net where ants save stories  
and stories save ants, where poets  
store the words of songs.

.....  
..... My eyes will be filled to the brim  
with living things, my hands rich  
with salamander bangles and lizard rings.

.....  
Of all that we are making here, nothing is lost.

The earth is keeping us safe  
till we take new shapes and live again.

.....  
Alive, inside you,  
I will be found. (P. 57)

Anarkali speaks about the company she keeps there in the tomb and her idea of reincarnation has social relevance. Her ideal of love towards the creatures grows from emotional level to higher level, i.e. love for all living things and mankind. 'Ultimately it comes to a love for the one Being in everyone, and finally reincarnating comes to an end.' Anarkali confirms her existence in all living creatures and especially in every human being. She also shows her respect to different species, and response to other races, classes, people, and forms of life.

The poet's hope of universal love is found in "The fish to the fisherman" The poet identifies herself with fish and says:

Play me, trap me, catch me,  
pull me up to you.  
.....  
Take me home alive. I will die for you.  
Make me more than I am.  
Divide me.  
Feed the multitude". (P. 129)

She expects the world to learn this culture for the hope of well being of the society. Thus Utopian fiction/literature by women encodes the emotional dominant of yearning for a new social order, gender roles and power relations. Thus hope is onward looking for the culture of happiness and smile culture, which hopes for the well being of not only the individual but also the universal.

Pramod K. Nayar says that 'well-being therefore, a state to aspire not only in terms of one's personal, mental or spiritual and physical health but also in terms of one's affective sociality'. So individual well-being is acquired through personalized efforts and then proceeds to construct cultural fables of collective well-being. This sort of hope is essential in the present day world of mistrust where people are moving away from each other without any substantial reason. So Dharker after experiencing all the states of sentiments: 'Suffering', 'Aversion' and 'Hope' reach the state of 'Well-being', which is an icon of success, happiness and satisfaction. The



transformational citizen is one who has reinforced her/his capabilities and thereby set new aspirations and goals.

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