

CHAPTER-IVB.S. MARDHEKAR AND THE STREAM OF
CONSCIOUSNESS TECHNIQUE4.1 INTRODUCTION :

The main purpose of this chapter is briefly to review the development of B.S. Mardhekar as an outstanding contributor to Marathi literature, in terms of his works in the field of poetry, short-plays, novels and aesthetics as well as literary criticism. He is one of the most acclaimed but at the same time one of the most controversial writers in the post-World-War-II period in Marathi. Though he has written poetry of a pioneering nature, expanded the scope of Marathi literature by composing short-plays on the lines of continental opera for radio and experimented in writing novels in a new style based on the theory of stream of consciousness, it was his contributions in the fields of aesthetics and literary criticism which has established his high reputation in modern Marathi literature.

In this chapter we first give a brief biographical note on Shri Bal Sitaram Mardhekar followed by a note on his literary output in his comparatively limited span of life. Next, an attempt will be made to critically examine his poetry, his short plays and his novels in order to identify the use of the stream of consciousness technique.

4.2 A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE¹:

Bal Sitaram Mardhekar, the founder of a new style of poetry, the pioneer in the field of opera type short plays, an original thinker in the field of aesthetics and literary criticism and an experimenter in the field of stream of consciousness novels; was born on 1st December, 1909 at Faijapur in Khandesh region (a part of present Vidarbha of Maharashtra State). His father was a primary teacher. The roots of his family are traced back to Shri Amriteshwar Gosavi, an eighteenth century disciple of Samarth Ramdas of Anewadi near Satara on the Poona-Bangalore National Highway. Just near this village the ancestral place of Mardhekar family, Mardhe is located. Amriteshwar Gosavi was a highly respected religious person who had written religious and philosophical books like Atmabodh, Tatvabattishi, Ganeshgita, Upasanaprakaran and Tatva-prakaran. In Mardhe, Amriteshwar Gosavi founded a religious centre of the Ramdasi tradition. One of the disciples of Amriteshwar Gosavi got into a wed-lock and subsequently the family became known by the surname Gosavi. However, one of the uncles of Shri Mardhekar, working as a high placed government officer (Collector) thought it necessary to change the surname Gosavi to Mardhekar as the former was not suitable to the government office that he held. Other members of the Gosavi family also started using the same surname. The family belongs to the Deshashtha Brahmin community.

Sitaram Pant, Shri Mardhekar's father started his career as a primary teacher and he retired as a deputy officer and died in 1945 at Pune. Shri Mardhekar was never formally christened by a particular name and as such the members of his family used to call him by the name Bal (a child) which stuck for life. In fact in some of his poems he calls himself Anamik (Anonymous).

रेशा टापूत चौफेर । नाही माहेर-सासर^२
कैचे गोत्र वा प्रवर । अनामिका ।।

Both his parents were religious minded; the worship of Purushottam Ram was the family tradition. Sitaram Pant was keenly interested in literature and philosophy and had a sharp analytical mind. Shri B.S. Mardhekar must have been influenced by these qualities of his father for whom he had reverential respect. Shri B.S. Mardhekar made it almost a rule to visit Mardhe and stay there for a month every year.

Education -

Shri Mardhekar's primary education was completed under the supervision of Shri Phadake, a teacher friend of his father at Faljapaur-Savade. The excellent facility in English language shown by Shri Mardhekar later on owes greatly to Shri Phadake's rigorous efforts in this primary stage. For his secondary education Shri Mardhekar moved to Garud high school, Dhule, where he stayed in a hostel in

the company of Shri Bande, Shri Rahalkar, Shri Nandedkar and Shri V.G. Joshi, a circle of friends with poetic inclinations. In 1924 Shri Mardhekar got his matriculation certificate. In his secondary education he always stood first and was averse to games and sports, a bookworm and an introvert. Subsequently he moved to Ferguson College, Poona from where he got his B.A. Degree from Bombay University in the year 1928. In College days he used to contribute to college magazines and in the junior year of his B.A., he worked as the Secretary of the Debating Union of the Ferguson College. However, due to some accidents and sickness he could not maintain his first class in the degree examination. He had to give up his M.A. education because of certain practical difficulties. The failure to achieve formal academic excellence created a feeling of dissatisfaction in his sensitive mind and made him to find out new avenues of success. This led him to the shores of England in search of I.C.S. qualification. For a primary teacher's son going to England was not easy. Finance was the main obstacle. However, he managed to get a loan from Shri Pratap Seth, a mill owner of Amalner and in 1929 at the age of twenty Shri Mardhekar left for England in search for the fulfilment of the I.C.S. qualification - his dream. He wanted to get enrolment in King's College, Cambridge University but again by quirk of fate he was enrolled in King's College, London where he had to study a complex and unpleasant subject of linguistics rather than the subject of modern literature in which he was keenly interested. Maybe this was the reason why he could not get into the select list of the I.C.S. candidates; though he got through the examination. His two more attempts also failed and in 1933 he came back to India with a shattered dream, a

a frustrated mind and a pressing burden of indebtedness.

However, his four years stay in England was not totally wasted. With his ears alert and eyes open Shri Mardhekar experienced the after effects of the first world war on the European culture, the strains and tensions of the science and technological culture, the complex problems of industrialization and at the same time the wreckages of the great depression. During these years he read a good deal of European literature and visited various art galleries in France and Italy as a part of his studies of asthetics.

4.3 OCCUPATIONAL UPS AND DOWNS :

The occupational career of Shri Mardhekar is a story of disappointments, desperation and discontinuity. Initially, he tried to get a lecturer's post in a College in Poona but without success. Because of deficiencies in educational eligibility, his desire to appear for the examination of Indian Audit and Accountancy Service also came to nothing. Thanks to a letter of recommendation of Prof. Sutherland, his English teacher, he was appointed as an asstt. editor in Times of India. However, because of the unexpected excessive burden of this job Shri Mardhekar resigned this job within an year and half. This again deepened his sense of frustration. From 1935 onwards he worked as tutor and even as asstt. lecturer in various government colleges at Bombay, Dharwad and Ahmedabad but he could not succeed as a teacher and started thinking of some new occupation. Ultimately in the year 1938, on the recommendation of one Mr. Hamil, Shri Mardhekar was employed in Radio by the Chief Controller of

Radio - Mr. Lionel Fielden. Fortunately Mardhekar stuck to his job and rose to the position of asstt. director, unfortunately, however, he had to suffer from mental torture because of frequent transfers from Bombay to Patna to Calcutta to Trichanapalli and to Delhi.

As an officer in All India Radio, Shri Mardhekar was known as a very disciplined and strict person, always out-spoken about lapses by his colleagues and subordinates. He was impartial and honest to his own conviction and never compromised at the cost of his integrity. Mardhekar initiated a number of new programmes in All India Radio e.g. programmes for children, reading of poetry on radio by the poets themselves, broadcasting of short plays and reading of novels which were widely welcomed by the listeners.

4.4 FAMILY LIFE :

The story of his family life is again full of vissicitudes and frustrations. There are references to two unfulfilled or unilateral feelings of affection which can be attributed mainly to the introvert and ambiguous nature of Shri Mardhekar. Most of the pangs of his heart have been expressed in his first collection of poems 'Shishiragam'. In 1940 Shri Mardhekar married Homay Nalla Seth, a ⁱⁿ parsi student of his/Elphiston College. Parents on both sides were opposed to this marriage and as a result the marriage rites had to be gone through in secrecy. Mrs. Homay had worked earlier in a Bombay College as a lecturer and later on in a Delhi College. She had an ambition of getting a B.A. degree from some British University and this must have

caused friction in their marital relations resulting into emotional isolation for Mardhekar. Mrs. Hoday eventually went to England in 1950 creating a feeling of void and bitterness in Mr. Mardhekar's mind. This coincided with his meeting Anjana Sayal, a Punjabi girl working in Patna Radio Centre. In fact, the relationship between Mardhekar and Anjana Sayal was known to Mrs. Hoday before she left for England which induced her to demand a divorce which Mardhekar rejected initially. After she went to England Mardhekar himself demanded a divorce, which was granted in 1950. Subsequently, Mardhekar married Anjana Sayal and in 1953 he had his first child whom he named as Raghav. The birth of his only son was perhaps the one moment of pure satisfaction and fulfilment that Mardhekar ever experienced in life. Despite this new source of joy, excepting last two-three years Mr. Mardhekar and Anjana Sayal could not live together because of frequent transfers which ultimately led to Anjana Sayal's resignation.

In the meanwhile Mardhekar faced the death of his mother in 1941 and the death of his father in 1945. The consequent feeling of loneliness and insecurity increased with the divorce in the year 1950. The crippling effects of the disintegrated family life were aggravated by the legal action taken by the government of Bombay against Mardhekar on the basis of alleged obscenity in some of the poems in his Kahi Kavita.

All this gradually started telling on his death. After 1951 his writing almost stopped. He became more and more withdrawn and started thinking of going back to his own place Mardhe where he would buy a pair of bullocks, and cultivate his ancestral land, live in his ancestral house near the temple of Rama in peace, giving him leisure for writing. It was an irony of fate that on March 20, 1956 he died of hypertension and jaundice in Delhi at the premature age of forty six, leaving his last dream also unfulfilled.

4.5 MAJOR WORKS :

B.S. Mardhekar was a versatile creative artist. His creativity took into compass the major literary forms poetry, novel, and drama as well as short stories and short plays. If it was his creative imagination which inspired him to embrace these creative forms, it was his sharp intellect which directed him to the field of theory of aesthetics and literary criticism. We give below a complete list of his writings -

1) Poetry -

Shishiragam (1939)
Kahi Kavita (1947)
Anakhi Kahi Kavita (1951)

1) Novel -

Ratricha Divas (1942)
Tambadi Mati (1943)
Pani (1948)

3) Aesthetics -

_____Arts and Man (1937)
 _____Basic English - A Dissertation (1938)
 _____Wangamayin Mahatmata (1941)
 Two Lectures on an Aesthetic of Literature (1944)
 Soundarya Ani Sahitya (1955)

4) Opera -

Karna : Maharashtra Sahitya Patrika, Jan. 1944
Sangam : Dhanurdhari, Nov. 1945
Aukshan : Maharashtra Sahitya Patrika, 1946
Badakanche Gupit : Sahitya, April, 1947

5) Play -

Natashreshta (1944)

6) Short Story -

Natashreshta Appasaheb Rele : Dhanuardhari, Diwali
 Ank (1944)

In the framework of this study the main purpose is the assessment of Mardhekar's works, in order to ascertain and pin-point, to the extent possible, the undercurrent of stream of consciousness technique of writing. This naturally enables us to exclude the writings of Mardhekar belonging to the fields of aesthetics and literary criticism. Our focus is on Mardhekar's poetry, Mardhekar's novels and his short plays and opera.

4.5.1 Poetry -

Mardhekar's main contributions in the field of poetry are Shishirgam (1939), Kahi Kavita (1947) and Anakhi Kahi Kavita (1951). Before we go to the actual examination, of his poems in search of stream of consciousness technique of expression it is necessary to say a few words about literary influences on Mardhekar. In this respect Balkavi and Madhav Julian stand out distinctly. It is generally accepted that in his Shishiragam there are some reflections of the influence of Balkavi in the style in which Mardhekar expresses himself. In fact in one of his essays explaining the forces which compelled him to write he quoted the following lines of Balkavi :

‘ मिळेल वैभव दिसतील जगती रत्नांच्या राशी,
 अश्रु दयामय मृत्युजगी या मोल नसे त्यासी
 मिळतिल कवने, मिळतिल दुर्मिळ तत्वांचे बोल,
 दिव्य अश्रुनो तुम्हापुढे परि ते साळे फोल

 परजीवास्त्व जेथ आतडे कळवळुनी येई,
 त्या हृदयाविण स्वर्ग दुजा या ब्रम्हांडी नाही.’^{१३}

(In these lines the poet highlights the incomparable value kindness and empathetic tears as against the futility of the material riches, philosophical sermon and verses of praise. For him the kind heart is the ultimate heaven in this universe.)

This can be further substantiated on the basis of following verse.

सूर कशाचे वातावरणी ?
 स्फुसफु पानांची ? वा झारणी
 खळखळ, आहोटीचे पाणी ?
 किलबिल शिरीरी कैविलवाणी ?

कुणास ठाऊक डोळ्या पाणी
 व्यर्थ आणता, नच गा-हणी
 अर्थ, हासुनी वाचा सजणी
 भास जरी हो सुत्यावाणी. १४

(The poet raises questions as to the source of the sounds that he hears. Once again he expresses his disillusionment with tears, complaints and smiles and states the anguish of deceptive feelings.)

Mardhekar had a profound respect for Balkavi and it is almost a kind of parallel frustrated individual life that is reflected in some of the poems of Shishiragam. In one case he felt highly elated after completing his poem number twenty (Shubhra Timir Mohan Vasana) of Kahi Kavita because of the realization that the poem was almost similar to the typical Balkavi style in presentation.⁵

Madhav Julian, one of the leading poets of the time also had influence on the style of writing of Mardhekar. In Shishiragam

most of his love poems show the influence of Madhav Julian and other poets of Ravikiran Mandal - Yeshwant and Girish, more particularly the five sonnets in Shishiragam are almost fully reflective of the influence of Madhav Julian both in respect of attitude and style.⁶

It is also claimed that Mardhekar's style of writing poetry is in a way, a confluence of the western and native tradition, though the native flow is not as strong. So far as the native tradition is concerned we see that there are influences of Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram and Ramadas way of expression particularly in Kahi Kavita. In fact it is claimed that Mardhekar is the first Marathi poet who could write in the style of Modern English poets and Marathi Sant Kavi simultaneously.⁷ For example, poem number twelve in Kahi Kavita shows the influence of the style of Dnyaneshwar. Similarly, poem number three in Kahi Kavita reflects the influence of Tukaram and poem number two and seven in Kahi Kavita that of Ramdas.

The poetry of Mardhekar is a vernacular echo of the new English poetry, mainly that of Pound, Yeats, Eliot, Auden and more particularly Hopkins. Shri Karandikar in fact states that Mardhekar is a poet writing in Marathi in the tradition of western new poets.⁸

4.5.2 The Stream of Consciousness in Mardhekar's Poetry -

So far as Mardhekar's poetry is concerned our attempt to identify the stream of consciousness flowing through it will be related mainly to the aspect of consciousness, subconsciousness or unconsciousness

that we experience while reading his poetry, the images and symbolism used by him, the points of view expressed by him, the monologues delivered and the resulting abruptness of the themes, the discontinuity and incoherence of expression and similar workings of the unconscious reflected in terms of sex.

It is non-controversial if we say that all poetry of subjective nature essentially springs from the stream of consciousness of the writer. The musings of the poet, his introspection, his remembrances and his visualizations as well as his spiritualization are different expressions of his stream of consciousness. It is indeed true that at the highest level of creativity when a poet endeavours to experience his own stream of consciousness, poetry becomes the allegory of the poet's own soul.⁹ According to Prof. Karandikar¹⁰ meditation is the basic attribute of Mardhekar's poetry. Minimum possible use of words, conveying the apt meaning is the other characteristic of Mardhekar's poetry. He avoids wordiness consistently and makes use of only those words that convey maximum meaning. The third characteristic of Mardhekar's poetry is its dual nature, on the one hand, going back to the pious, religious culture in which he was brought up in his early days and on the other reacting to the dehumanising materialism of industrialization, imperialism and ruthless technological change to which he was exposed at the most sensitive period of his life and continued to be exposed till his death.

If we take into consideration Shishiragam, Kahi Kavita and Anakhi Kahi Kavita as indicative of poetic development of Mardhekar, a distinct pattern of his use of the stream of consciousness technique becomes apparent. In Shishiragam he expresses an emotional journey of marginal satisfactions and of palpable agonies of a lover's frustrations whereas in Kahi Kavita these personal dimensions of his consciousness become overshadowed by pervading social sensibilities culminating (in Anakhi Kahi Kavita)¹¹ in a philosophical quest which is the hall mark of a great poet.

It is on this background that we consider some of the poems of Mardhekar to point out the use of the stream of consciousness in a perceptible or imperceptible manner.

So far as Shishiragam is concerned most of the poems show either moments of ecstasy of fulfilment or more frequently a poignant frustration in love. For example in poem number two of Shishiragam Mardhekar writes,

नजर नाचरी नागसुंदरी विलासिनी रोखुनी,
 झरझरा जार्ताना हासुनी,
 गालावरत्या गोड खलीने शराब जी सडिली
 मुशाफिर-तृष्णा तिने भागली

(The poet describes here the effect of a smiling glance that he receives from his beloved. It has the effect of wine quenching the thirst of a traveller.)

Reader gets a feeling of the inner happiness of the poet in these lines whereas in the following lines we become clearly aware of the pangs of unfulfilment in the very first poem of Shishiragam as well as in the introductory poem to Shishiragam. See for example-

‘ शिशिरर्तुव्या फनरागमे,
 स्केक पान गढावया
 कां लागतां मज येतसे
 न कळे उगाच रडावया.
 पानांत जीं निजलीं ह्यें
 इवलीं सुकोमल पांखरे
 जातील सांग अता कुठे ?
 निष्पण्ण झाडित कांपरे ’

(The coming of the winter indicated by falling of the leaves makes the poet weep and think about the birds (emotion) and the uncertainty about their shelter.)

and

‘ कुणास ठाऊक डोळ्या पाणी
 व्यर्थ आणतां, नव गा-हाणी
 अर्थ, हासुनी वाचा सजणी
 भास - जरी हो सुप्त्यावाणी. ’

In poems 8, 9 and 10 as well as 12 the despair, frustration and a sense of extreme isolation and rejection resulting from his unsuccessful love grows so acute that he ultimately states in poem number 12,

‘ निष्प्रेम-निराशा-दुःसह जीवन तरी,
याचना न केविलवाणी
मम वदेल कर्धि वैसरी. ’

(Even though the life is devoid of love, full of disappointment
and unbearable, I will never beg for these satisfactions.)

and in poem number 13, he says,

‘ प्रीतीची नव आच - सावधपणें सांभाळणें कातडी,
सर्वांनाच अशी करामत कुठें - जाती जळूनी मदीं. ’

(Pure love is rare. Most of the time most of the people are
selfish and relations are easily forgotten. But there are
some people who find this difficult.)

In fact Yeshwant Manohar calls these poems pictures of
burning memories (जळती स्मृतीचित्रे) and the painful journey of a
disillusioned lover.¹² And ultimately with the extreme feelings of
dissatisfaction mixed with bitterness, the poet talks about future possi-
bility of death. He speaks of his unfulfilled life in such abstract and
unexpected way of expression which is nothing but the revelation of
heightened stream of consciousness.

‘ चंद्र किरणांनो, तुम्ही
वाजते का कधी थंडी
स्वतःची ? मध्यरात्री
हिवाळ्यात हुडहुडी.
नाही ना ? मी म्हणुनीच
लावले मरणाळा

गार्दन जाल जेव्हा
चिदा हवी शोगोटीला ।।

(The poet asks the moonlight whether ^{it} has even felt its own cold or the cold of the winter midnight. He further suggests that he has prolonged his own death so that the moonlight will have the warmth of his pyre.)

4.5.3 Kahi Kavita -

In Kahi Kavita, Mardhekar moves from the personal level of unpleasant and bitter experiences to a higher level of social sensibility. Here he is reacting to the tensions of a capitalist system, the compulsions of loyalty to scientific attitude, the premonitions of impending communistic revolution by the down trodden sections of the society, the exploitation inherent in capitalistic organisation, a sense of anger for the established leadership and pretentious philosophy. He is trying to express a general feeling of meaninglessness and futility of human life.¹³

In this respect we take into consideration some of the poems from Kahi Kavita. In poem number one in Kahi Kavita he expresses in an explosive manner the inhuman situations created by a contemporary process of industrialization, war mongering of the imperialists, the destruction in wars, and the ever imminent danger of death. He writes,

प्रेमाचे लव्हाळें
 सौंदर्य नव्हाळें,
 शोधू ?
 - आस्पास
 मुढ्याची रास,
 र्यत्रातून आग,
 गोळ्यांचे पराग,
 विमानांचे हल्ले,
 बेचिरास जिल्हे,
 रक्ताची थारोळी,
 अर्पण आरोगी,
 बेमानले मन
 रोखता रंगीन,
 विरती ही काया
 :
 :
 :
 :
 :
 पाहिलें या डोळा
 विश्वंभर मोळा
 सळवी पाचोळी
 पुत्रविण्या ज्वाळा

Mardhekar is expressing various aspects of the responses of a sensitive human being to the miserable human situation arising out of the increasing mechanisation of both production and destruction and the extreme sense of insecurity and uncertainty of the age. Expressions like अर्पण आरोगी, बेमानले मन are indicative of

instantaneous formation which could take place only at the level of the stream of consciousness.

In many poems of Kahi Kavita various aspects of the stream of consciousness - incoherence, remembrance philosophical thinking, distorted expression of sex, ununderstandable order of words, cryptic composition, new words and significance of insignificant objects from the material world as also a reference to death and formation of shockingly new images - are scattered that create a feeling of uneasiness in the minds of the reader. In poem number 2 the incoherence and abruptness of changing thought are clearly seen.

संदर्कात ओल्या । दाख्खोळ्याचा रे
 नाही नारायण । कदापीही ।।
 कोरडी ठेवावी । दाख्ख सर्व काळ
 ओठावर माळ । हुकुमांची ।।
 पायाची वहाण । पायात ठेवावी
 चिन्ही अर्स घावी । मध्मर्ती ।।

(The explosive should always be kept dry. There should be a series of commands on the lips. People should be given the importance they deserve. One should always think of alcohol.)

Mardhekar is all the while dissatisfied with his lack of achievement which runs as a strong undercurrent in his stream of consciousness. This is revealed forcefully in his poem number 5 of Kahi Kavita. Take for example -

केला थोडा रोजगार । आणि अन्नाचा विचार,
आता शेवटी लाचार । माझा मीच

⋮

जार्ता मायेची माऊली । केली बापाने सावली,
आता बहीण-बाहली । धीर दिला ॥
हीही जातील गा देवा । मग सर्वांचा सुगावा
केसा केसा रे लागावा । अध्याला ॥

(The poet talks about his employment and livelyhood and the resulting helplessness. He remembers the love of his mother, the protection of his father and the support of his sister and wife. He is worried of the time when they will also perish.)

Similarly, the crypticness of his expression is very much evident in his poem number ten where he says,

कष्टा होता चढे पारा । नाही क्विनीन उतारा,
अंगा झांबे सारा वारा । अदृश्याचा ॥

(Hard work infuriates but guinine is no medicine for it. One has to bear the sweating imposed by the fate.)

or

रात्र-मापणीचे केस । तेव तारा-रश्मि-वेष
परि निद्रेचे साहस । करवेना ॥

(I am feeling sleepy. It is almost midnight but I am afraid of sleeping.)

His total disillusionment with the life of an individual is expressed most effectively in poem number 12 where he asks a question -

‘ तरी मा रोकडा सवाल: । कोरिती हाडांचा महाल,
ठेविशी त्यांत हरिचा लाल । नाशवंत ॥
वास्तुशास्त्र की बिलोरी । योजिशी येथेच मुरारी,
पडसी वस्तीला भाडेकरी । बिलोरीच ? ॥

(The poet is talking about the mortal nature of human body. He compares it with a glass-house and raises the question why He rents it to a transitory tenant.)

The same attitude is seen in poem number 15. In poem number 16 he uses a totally new word **संज्ञारिंग** and in the next poem he describes consciousness as a valley and ego as a mountain which are new ways of image formation.

‘ आमची संज्ञा ही दरड । रखरखीत देहापाड,
वरी अहंतेचा पहाड । लागलास ’

In many poems Mardhekar makes references to human anatomy which had sexual implications and if not so disgusting with a blandness of description. Take for example **बडवीत टि-या**(hips) (Poem No.19), and

‘ मुरकत दावी उरोज उन्नत,
(ढेमा जेसा तेल्याघरच्या. ’

(Poem No.52)

(Exposing tight breasts shamelessly.)

or

‘ दाखवितिल ते मोक रिकामें
जिथे असावे मांसल लिं. ’

(Poem No. 56)

(This has a reference to male and female sex organs.)

His poem number 21 of Kahi Kavita has been a matter of great discussion, learned interpretation and its sexual implications.

Poem number 31 of Kahi Kavita Phalatdada can be construed as an elaborate symbol of how the poet's stream of consciousness records significance of insignificant things like the changes in the type of railway engine, the railway signal, the touch of bare feet, of the hard leather boots, of delicate softness of ladies' footwear, the spitting of people, the appearances of partners, the different types of farewell, the shrieks of guard's whistle, the dignity of the through train, the lethargy of the goods-train etc. These are reflections of the poet's mind on the routine experience of a Bombay railway platform. In his poem number 59 of Kahi Kavita he creates new images by the typical

combination of new words like पंक्चरली, पंपतो, रबरी रात्र, रबरी कुत्रे and makes a sarCastic comment on the industrial life of city dwellers when he says,

हसण्याचें जरि वैड लागलें
मुकतात तरि अश्रू चोख.

(Madness of laughter and barking tears go together.)

Lack of syntax is a general feature of poetic expression. However, the order of words though not in the strict grammar form of prose is generally so arranged as to convey the meaning easily. But when it comes to the stream of consciousness style of expression, a total lack of syntax becomes the appropriate syntax. Such lack of syntax comes repeatedly in many of the poems of Kahi Kavita. For example, consider the following from his poem number 35.

सुल्या दिलाची कंबुस्ताच्या
मढ्यात काजळ धरे भावना,
शततारांचा पुंज शोधतो
स्क मनोरा हवैतिल पुन्हा.
जाईल सळई तुझ्या कृपेची
बुब्बुल्लेल्या साचातुनी जर,
शततारांचा पुंज हवैतुन
खेवीन या तळहातावर.

(Despite the frustration and disappointment of the open mind of a foolish person, the search for the light of a hundred stars and a mansion in the air persists. The poet further affirms his ambition of realizing his dream of reaching the light of hundred stars provided he is blessed with a glimpse of the ultimate.)

In his poem number 47 of Kahi Kavita he remembers an event of the earlier night and then comes back to present in a most suggestive fashion.

पिचे अंधार पोळ्ळ,
 गहिवर येई काळा,
 गाली वाळला ओंछ,
 दहिवर झाले गोळा.
 तुझ्या मुरक्या केसांचे
 कळ माझ्या गालावर,
 माझ्या ढिल्याशा बोट्याचे
 तळ तुझ्या स्तनावर.
 सोडवैना सोडवितां
 गेल्या रात्रीचा हा पाश,
 जागा आहे तरी आता
 मेल्या इच्छा सावकाश. १

(The poet remembers the romance of the previous night. He remembers the golden hair and the soft breasts of his beloved but then at the moment of his remembrance he

is awake and his desires die out gradually, though he finds it difficult to free himself from the memory of the earlier night.)

The continuity of life as well as the stream of consciousness and time are most beautifully expressed, almost in Woolfian style, (a luminous halo) in his poem number 54 of Kahi Kavita.

* कित्ती वितीचि जीवन माझी
 तुराच ठावें, सदार्ग त,
 कित्ती शिर्ताची माझी मूक
 ओरबाडते आंतिल किंत
 होतें - आहे - होईल यातून
 बीज वाहते होण्याचीच.
 हा स्नायूच्या तारांचा रे,
 तुझ्याच हाताखाली स्वीच.
 पुरेल मजला स्थिर वाटोळ्या
 तेंप्राचा बघ असा जरी दाणा,
 मेल्याविणो जें जळतिल तारा,
 तशारतिल अन् स्नायूचि कण.

(The poet is talking about the length of life and the needs of life. Life is a continuum of was, is and will be through which the electricity of being flows. He feels that the switch of the wires of muscles is under His control. He yearns for a stable moment of circular halo making his life fulfilled and satisfactory.)

In this poem one distinctly hears the echoes of Bergsonian time concept, the transitory nature of life, the forces of the libido and the artist's urge for a moment of luminous halo.

4.5.4 Anakhi Kahi Kavita -

According to G.V. Karandikar the poems in Ankhi Kahi Kavita of Mardhekar are basically philosophical, meditative, in search of the ultimate meaning of existence and its relation with the ultimate principle of the universe, the God. The poetry in this third and final stage of Mardhekar's literary sublimation is representative of the twentieth century man, desparate with inconsistencies in material life compelled to go in search for the ultimate spiritual resort.¹⁴ Mardhekar's journey to the realm of spiritual poetry is the climax of a protracted drama of vitality, of ambition, consistently defeated by the cruelties of existence, that was his life. It is on this background that we explore some of the poems of Mardhekar from his Anakhi Kahi Kavita for identifying the streams of consciousness aspects. In most of these poems Mardhekar is trying to establish a rapport with the almighty God by a process of total unification with the ultimate principle. When we read poem number one from Anakhi Kahi Kavita we clearly feel that Mardhekar is looking into his own soul - the stream of consciousness and prays to Him for a number of emancipations. See for example -

ॐ दे काठिन्य माझें
 आम्ल जाऊं दे मनीचें,
 येउं दे वाणीत माझ्या
 सुर तुझ्या आवडीचे.

लोभ जीमेचा जळ दे
 दे भिर्ज विद्वेष सारा,
 द्रौपदीचें सत्त्व माझ्या
 लार्म दे माणा-शरीरा.
 जाऊं दे कार्पण्य ॐ मी ॐ चें,
 दे धर्ह सर्वास पोटी,
 मावनेला येउं दे गा
 शास्त्र-काट्याची कसोटी.

:
:
:
:
:

आशयाचा तूच स्वामी
 शब्दवाही मी भिकारी,
 मागण्याला अंत नाही,
 आणि देणारा मुरारी.

(The poet is praying to God. In his prayer he seeks, humbleness and purity of mind. He wants his speech full of sweet tunes in praise of God. He seeks freedom from the taste buds of his tongue. He wants to forget all his malice and hatred. He requests for his language the pure strength. He prays to God for a total surrender of his

own self and a feeling of fraternity for all. Ultimately he says that He is the only master of all meaning and he is only the poor carrier of words.)

In the poem immediately next to this we enter into a labyrinth of philosophical images involving abrupt changes from spiritual to material. It also reflects the continuity of time and the possibilities of the future with a suggestion of inbuilt universal instability. See for example -

बन बाबिचे पिवळ्या गातें
 आकाशातील अधोरेखिते
 चराचरातिल दळते संज्ञा
 जगण्याची (पण उद्या) प्रतिज्ञा
 अळ धूवाचा ठळता तारा
 संस्तर्णाचा कुला प्रश्न,
 गारठल्याविण गळती गारा,
 रेडिओत अन् राधे क्रिश्न

We get the same feeling of the continuity of time in the sequence of life death and life in poem 5 of Ankhi Kahi Kavita where Mardhekar writes about -

कुणि मारावें, कणी मरावें,
 कुणि जगावें साऊनि दगड,
 विळवून कुणि आयुष्याना
 ओतावे अन् सोन्याचे घड.

⋮

अखेर घेता टक्कर जरि मा
 युगायुगांचे फुटेल माल
 अशाश्वताच्या समशेरीवर
 शाश्वताचिही तुटेल ढाल.

(The poet is commenting upon the inequities of fate. Some people live a rich life at the cost of a large number of half-starved people. The poet thinks about the future revolution in which the defence of the lasting will be shattered by the sword of the mortal and transitory.)

The same stream of thought about life is most exquisitely related in poem number 8. See for example -

सुरांत भरली टिटवीच्या कुणिं
 मृत्युजयता मोडी, भावी,
 आणि अवानक शिवली गेली
 ध्रुवाध्रुवातील कांही कडवी.

(The poet expresses his view that life is continuous despite the death.)

The fear of death that is a constant universal theme of human life which paradoxically underlines the continuity of stream of consciousness is expressed by Mardhekar in a language which makes us shiver with a sense of apprehension. Consider for example the following from his poem number 14 of Anakhi Kahi Kavita.

अंधाराचा धाक उदंड,
 काळोखाची हाक अकल्पित,
 ओल्या जिवणीमधील पाणी
 पळविल रेशी रात्र अशिल्लित,
 मयाणतेच्या बजावहूनी
 येहल केव्हा शौळ अनामिक,
 गिळा तिला अन मंत्र आठवा
 मनांतल्या पण मनांत, लौकिकः

(The fear of darkness is infinite. There is always a possibility of an unexpected call from this darkness. It will be in the form of a whistle from the ramparts of horror. Everybody has to be prepared for it with a prayer.)

In another poem in describing human life he uses the symbol of ants and presents a number of parallel situations in the life of a community of ants and the civilization of human beings. The continuity of time is again expressed in the following words :

सामान्याला सनातन
 नाते अर्नत कालाचे,
 वैष्णवाच्या टिळ्यावर
 ठोके गाजती सालांचे.

(Poem 24)

(Time is immemorial and infinite. It has relation with the life of a common man. The years are the tolls of a bell counting the passage of time.)

or as

बेकबेचे तेच परोधे,
जुनीच माषा, नवे परोसे,
जुन्या कल्पना, नवी तर्पणे
तीच गिरमिटे, नवीन वळसे.

(Poem 29)

(Life is a continuous repetition of the same old language but with new promises, the same old ideas but with new offerings and the same old screws but with new grooves.)

The incoherence of thought is again very much evident when we read lines like -

चढेल तसडीं तेढीं नातीं
नश्वरतेतहि चिरका नखरा,
शिजत्या मांसामधून कोणी
स्वर्ग हुंगतो बुलंद बेहिरा.

(Poem 32)

(The poet is talking about the strained and hateful relations between men and the futile ego. He makes a reference to the disgusting selfishness of people who will not mind a massacre to achieve their own ends.)

As in Kahi Kavita we once again come to stream of consciousness reverberations when we read one of his stray poems

(असंगृहीत ७) in which he is exploring the origins of universe itself with a full sense of realization of its futile nature.

तेजाच्या अन् निळ्या नळीतून
जसा फुलावा निळसर चाफा,
सपोत सजेमधून तेसा
अनुमतीचा फुलला चाफा
कधी ?
पहावे तेजातून हा
काय ?
कुणाला शोधायें अन् ?
दलभग्राच्या आग लागती
पायासाली इथे अचेतन.

(The poet imagines that human life is like a blue flower blossoming out from a halo blue tube which is a stream of consciousness of myriad experiences... All human efforts to search for Him in this halo ultimately end in the death.)

4.5.5 Natshreshta -

Natshreshta is the title of a radio play which Mardhekar derived from a short story Natshreshta Appasaheb Rele which he wrote for Dhanurdhari in 1944. Originally in the form of a short story it is another but an impressive attempt by Mardhekar to grapple with stream of consciousness technique of writing.¹⁵ In this story Mardhekar narrated the stream of consciousness of Appasaheb Rele a renowned

stage actor, who is counting his days on the death bed.¹⁶ The span of stream of consciousness narrated here may be somewhere between fifteen minutes to thirty minutes (at the most) one morning when a hospital nurse is making a routine round of check up and comes to his bed. The whole story is punctuated by routine actions and questions of the nurse, the gaps between which are parts of the stream of consciousness of Appasaheb Rele whose mind is meandering in the labyrinths of the memories of his past.

It is, however, to be noted that as a radio play Mardhekar could not do justice to the effective use of stream of consciousness technique and as such we make reference to the text of short story itself.

Appasaheb Rele asks the nurse whether he could have some tea. The nurse says no. This is the present. From thereon the mind of Appasaheb goes into the past and remembers the excellent performance of the play, his talk with his servant, his talk with Renukadevi, the ovation given by the audience etc.

Once again we are brought back to the present by the question asked by the nurse regarding the blanket after which there is a continuous movement backward and forward in time in the stream of consciousness of Appasaheb. In this story there are some thoughts in the mind of Appasaheb which get expressed in a very incoherent style. For example -

‘ सकाळच कोवळ ऊन काचेच्या भांड्यातूनही रंग सुरूवतं अस
मला नाही वाटत. ’

(I don't think that the young morning sunlight can produce
colours from a glass pot.)

or

‘ अव्यक्तादीनि मृतानि व्यक्तिमध्यानि सकाळच ऊन
काचेच्या भांड्यातूनही ईद्रधनुष्याचे रंग सुरूवतं. ’

(Incoherence in which there is jumbling of some Sanskrit
scripture with the present state of the author's stream
of consciousness responding to the rainbow effect created
by the morning sun through the glass pot.)

or

‘ हे थर्मामीटर थिएटरकरिता लिहायला. ’

(This thermometer should be used for writing a play for
the theatre.)

or

‘ वाः क्वान् कर्तृशास्त्र. म्हणो ईजक्शनची सुई बोटते. ’

(What a logic ! they say that the needle of the injection
pricks.)

To conclude in this short story Mardhekar uses the techniques of
incoherence, interior monologue and movement in time in the narration

of the stream of consciousness of Appasaheb Rele the Natshreshta. It is, however, necessary to state here that Mardhekar had a definite point of view to emphasise which is expressed through the stream of consciousness of Appasaheb Rele in the following words :

‘ भावना जोपर्यन्त खरोखर वाटत नाही तोपर्यन्त ती स्टेजवर वठवता येते. पण तीच खरी वाटायला लागली म्हणजे लेखणी हातात धरावी लागते. ’

"Only so long as you do not feel that the emotions are real you enact them effectively on the stage; but the moment the emotions become real you have to wield the pen rather than paint the face."

4.5.6 Novels -

In Marathi literature one can come across a fairly good number of psychological novels in which psychological analysis of the character's behaviour has been attempted by some leading novelists like N.S. Phadake in his novel Uddhar (1927). Some other novels in this tradition according L.G.Jog are P.B.Bhave's Varshav, P.Y. Deshpande's Nave Jag, Biwalkar's Shubha and more recently Bokil's Fol Asha, Khandekar's Jalalela Mohar and Pendse's Kalandar. It is, however, important to note that most of these later novels deal with the characters' physical disabilities affecting their mental behaviour.¹⁷

According to L.G. Jog the first novel in which the stream of consciousness technique was adopted was written by Vishram Bedekar, Ranangan published in 1939.¹⁸ However, it has been maintained that

the novel Ranangan despite its dimensions of stream of consciousness, achieved fame for other reasons and was appreciated in the traditional critical frame-work developed by N.S. Phadake.¹⁹

However, there seems to be a unanimity among the students of Marathi literature that Mardhekar is the pioneer in this field. Mardhekar wrote only three novels - Ratricha Divas (1942), Tambadi Mati (1943) and Pani (1948).

Ratricha Divas, in a formal sense is a complete experiment in the stream of consciousness style of writing. As we are going to make an attempt at parallel, in depth study of Ratricha Divas alongwith To the Lighthouse of Virginia Woolf in the final chapter, we, therefore, briefly present here the story, the characters and the plot of Mardhekar's two later novels Tambadi Mati and Pani.

Tambadi Mati -

Tambadi Mati was published in 1943. In this novel Mardhekar has adopted the traditional style of straight narration of what happens in the material world rather than go in for the stream of consciousness style of writing.²⁰ In his preface to the novel he makes it clear that -

‘ या लिखाणांतून एखादी क्रांतिकारक विचारसरणी प्रसृत करण्याची किंवा समाजाला प्रगतीच्या मार्गावर स्फ पाऊल पुढे टाकायला लावण्याची माझी महत्वाकांक्षा नाही. मराठीत विचारवंत कादंबरी-कारीची परंपरा अखंड नि उज्ज्वल आहे. त्यांनी ते कार्य केले आहे आणि करताहेत. शिवाय, माझ्यात तितकी कुवतही नाही. फक्त जिवनाच्या

स्का पाऊलवाटेवर भावनांची काही विरोध सादश्ये दृष्टिर्पथात आली.
 त्याच्या नमुन्यानुसार कल्पनेच्या मागावर शब्दांच्या धाग्यादो-यांनी
 हे कथानक विणलं स्वढव."

(It is not my intention in this writing to propound a revolutionary philosophy nor my ambition to take the society one step ahead on the path of progress. The tradition of thoughtful novelists in Marathi is bright and continuous. They have done that work and they are doing it now also. Besides, I do not have that capacity. What I have done is simply to weave a story with the threads of words on the loom of imagination of some contradictory events and incidents which I came across on the by-lanes of my life.)

Tambadi Mati is a tragic story of Shiva, the son of Kondiba of the village Palaskhed. He defeats a renowned wrestler Gnyanu in a wrestling match, making all his villagers proud of him. The story has a distinct background of the second world war and its destruction. In this whirlwind of the war, Shiva is involved after a due process of military training leaving behind his newly-wed wife and the aged parents. Most ironically he is pushed to the war field through the propaganda of a deceptive socialist leader Bhai-Kumar who has seduced Sulabha Likhite, a daughter of mixed blood, whom he deserts. On the war field the rustic innocence of Shiva is shattered because of the deaths, the injuries and the blood that makes the soil red. In the meanwhile, the government has taken over Kondiba's land for war purposes and Kondiba is expecting the return of land to him after the

return of his son from the battlefield. Bajaba, Sarja's father starts cultivating Kondiba's plantation and Kondiba moves to the district town and gets employed in a factory. In the final stages Saraja is kidnapped and raped on her way to Kondiba when as Mardhekar writes -

‘ जिल्हाच्या गांवीं स्का लहानशा विटामातीच्या खोलीत स्क
म्हातार जोडपं सुनेची डोळे मरून वाट पहात होत. ’

‘ कलकत्याच्या स्का दगडवुन्याच्या फौजी हॉस्पिटलमध्ये
हॉस्पिटलच्या विजेच्या दिव्याच्या मंद प्रकाशात झोपेची आराधना करीत
झगणशय्येवर पडलेला स्क तरुण आपल्या पत्नीच्या स्मृतीनें विरहाकुल
होत होता. ’

(In a small room of clay bricks in the district town
the old couple was impatiently, worriedly waiting for their
daughter in law.)

(In Calcutta in a stone-built military hospital, under
the dim light of an electric lamp, a young man lying on
his bed was trying to sleep but was full of sorrow because
of the memories of his wife and his separation.)

Tambadi Mati is a poignant story of the war imposed
disintegration of a simple village household, the devastation of Shiva's
life, of Saraja's life and of Sulabha Likhite's life. For the sons of
the black soil Mardhekar gives red soil as a symbol of conflict with
the belief that it is only people like Shiva who preserve human
relations even in their own destruction.²¹

Pani -

Pani Mardhekar's third and the last novel was published in 1948. As in the case of Tambadi Mati the background of destabilizing World Wars looms large in this novel also. The story begins with the balad singing by Govinda Shahir of the Bhagatpur village which has a tradition of martial achievements. Tukaram fights in the first world war and comes back with one arm lost when his son Vithu is being shaped in the same mould of a soldier's life by destiny. In the meanwhile, major socio-economic changes take place and one of these changes seriously affecting Bhagatpur is the construction of a hydro-set electricity generation centre /on the waters of the Krishna. This dislocates the villagers who go away after selling their lands, in search of employment to other places and some get employed in the construction of the dam itself.

Vithu, Tukaram's son first moves to Bombay and gets recruited in the army. The scene then shifts to the Burma front where escaping from the Japanese prisoner's camp he rescues a Burmese girl from a possible rape by Japanese soldiers. While coming back to India on the sole resource of a life-belt Vithu experiences the stream of consciousness. This is one of the few places in this novel where Mardhekar tries with the stream of consciousness technique to describe the turmoil that takes place in the mind of Vithu.²²

In this novel Mardhekar narrates the story in the fewest possible words, with a select number of events and actions. The other important characteristic of the novel is the use of water as an all-pervading symbol of life.²³

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- 22) Mardhekar B.S., Pani, Yugawani Prakashan, Bombay, 1948, pp. 113 to 119.
- 23) Yeshwant, Manohar, op.cit., p. 86.