

CHAPTER

5

5. Kala Ghoda Poems

5.0 Introduction:-

' *Kala Ghoda Poems* ' is a recent collection of poems published in 2004, before the poet 's untimely death. Arun Kolatkar has a very individual way of looking at the world . These poems focus on the triangular island opposite wayside inn. He would sit for hours at a window table, gazing out at this stony stage. He had been watching various people, objects and actions for a long time . And he celebrated their lives from dawn to dusk and right round the year in this volume. So '*Kala Ghoda poems* ' celebrates the history and especially the street life of Mumbai. (Kolatkar's sensibility was closely associated with the term Bombay but Mumbai, hereafter Bombay is used in the chapter.)

Several poems from *Kala Ghoda poems* were published in London Magazine, little Magazine, Chandrabhaga and Poetry Wales over several years. It is a big collection of poems. It is divided into 28 parts. There are many poems on varied subjects collected in this book. The long thirty one part '*Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda*' is the center of the volume . This part observes for an hour, the various people, objects and actions around Flora Fountain, in Bombay.

Arun Kolatkar lived in Mumbai. He worked as an art director and graphic designer in many reputed advertising agencies like Lintas. He was reclusive by nature and lives without benefit of a telephone in Mumbai. One could meet him at Wayside Inn or subsequently at Military cafe in Fort on two days a week. There he met with his friends and contemporaries on Thursday afternoon over chai and khatra biscuits. He would sit for hours at a window table at Wayside Inn, gazing out at this story stage. Anyone familiar with this part of Bombay will recognize the

island, the pi-dogs, Jehangir Art Gallery's pipe smoking lavatory lady, the ubiquitous crow, the street cleaners and all the other open air residents of Kala Ghoda. They are so familiar that they have become invisible. Who notices baby bather, street cleaners, the acid burned woman with the hideous face on the street ? When they crowd round a particularly rich looking car at the traffic lights, the passengers ignore them. But Arun Kolatkar had been watching them for a long time. He simply records their human presence and makes visible their intimate aspects of their lives as an integral part of the city. Mumbai , a city without soul, is presented in this volume.

Although Kolatkar's work was known only by those who sought it, he was a poet of world class with a very individual way of looking at the world. Bruce King says " , In his writing every cliché is transformed into something new and unexpected, a transformation by imagination language and tone ". (W.L.T. Sept - December , 2005:85). Writing poems on very common and ordinary subjects of street life, he transformed into new and unexpected and wonderful.

This is essential volume for those interested in modern poetry. There are many poems on varied subjects in this volume. He is modern in his approach. He describes the street life of Mumbai. We find his modern sensibility in the poems, choosing subjects for his poems, theme or thought of the poems. He is humanistic in presenting the street life of Mumbai . Talking about the poem 'The Ogress' which was recently published in London Magazine, he says - "That's part of a group of poems written in English. When London Magazine asked me for a poem. I thought that was one of the finishable ones. They're all basically street poems, things I have seen around Kala Ghoda and other parts of Mumbai " (1999:17).

5.1 Theme :-

The most important and recurring theme of the poems is a stark reality of contemporary life predominant people and anonymous. The poet presents the street life of Bombay as it is. So his realm is street talk and the poetry of ordinary.

The another important theme of the poems is dynamism of life. We find life's dynamism, energy enthusiasm in the poems. These characteristic he found in the streets of Bombay.

In both these thoughts or themes, the poet is modern. He chooses subjects for his poetry as street objects, very common and ordinary. He presents simply their life. He is neither sympathetic nor judgemental in his approach to street life. What he has seen around Kala Ghoda and other parts of Mumbai is recorded in the volume.

For example :

Pi-dog is a nine part sequence which begins Kala Ghoda poems. In this part a mangy street dog rests on a traffic island. This street dog is thinking of its ancestors and circumstances while Mumbai sleeps. A pi-dog thinks of himself as the original inhabitant of the island. The poem rapidly moves by way of whimsy to the history and mixed culture of the city. The dog claims his body looks like a seventeenth century map of Mumbai.

I look a bit like
a seventeenth century map of Bombay
with its seven island

not joined yet,
shown in solid black (2004:16)
on a body the colour of old parchment;

According to a strong family tradition he is a descendent, matrilineally to the only 'bitch' among thirty hounds which survived the sea voyage from England, imported:

by Sir Bartle Frer
in eighteen hundred and sixty four
with the crazy idea.
of introducing for hunting to Bombay
Just the sort of thing
he felt the city badly needed. (2004:17)

Here Kolatkar focuses on the importation of hunting hounds to show both the British influence on Indian culture and some of its inappropriateness.

On his paternal side, the pi-dog claims descent from the dog in Mahabharat who remains with Yudhisthira long after such warriors as Draupadi, Sahadev, Nakul, Arjuna and Bhima had fallen by the wayside'.

When help came
in the shape of flying chariot

to airlift him to heaven
Yudhisthira, the noble prince refused
to get on board unless dogs are allowed

And my ancestor became the only dug
to have made it to heaven
in recorded history (2004:18)

Here the poet presents 'the present' in contrast to the idealization of past, to dog Haralan Ellison's 1969 since fiction story 'A Boy and his Dog' which is described as a cultbook among pi-dogs everywhere :

" in which the Boy of the title
sacrifices his love,

and serves up his girlfriend
as dog food to save the life of his
starving canine master." (2004:19)

The choice of science fiction is not just for its story. The poet suggests that sanskrit literature of ancient India, the literature which is allegorized, spiritualized treated as moral and historical truth really is different than the present day science fiction - a collection of amusing often sophisticated invented tales meant to entertain, amuse, shock, a world of fantasy.

Literary allusions such as Ugh which is supposed to come from sanskrit, the pronounced as in Upanishad Ugh is short for Ughekalikady / Sidharayya's famous dog are supposed part of the dog's thoughts as he meditates in the morning sun surrounded by the concrete highrises of Bombay that soon the city will awake and he will surrender the city to its so called masters.

So the poet wrote poem on a ordinary subject like a street dog. His poetry is a poetry of reality of pi-dogs of saying the world as it is. Though he wrote a poem on a street dog he creates something new wonderful through the meditation and thoughts of dog. The dog knows that he is the only sign of intelligent life of the planet, when it's deserted early in the morning and he is also aware that he has to surrender the city to its so called masters. It is a picture of Mumbai street like.

The poet presents here the darker world than the one we saw in Jejuri. It is an unjust embattled world, subsisting not on hope but on something perhaps the regenerative power of life. There is no sentimental attempts to present this as a happy fraternity of beaming

homeless urban pariahs. In Parmeshwari, the old lavatory attendant with her cataract vision sees the new day for the clever forgery it really is.

" and nobody's fool
even with her one eye dim
and mucus-green with cataract

she can see through the new day
and know it

for the clever forgery that it is . (2004;25)

Further the poet wrote poem on a street cleaning and street cleaners in the poem 'Meera' Street cleaning is very common thing. But the poet describes the street cleaning of Mumbai. He talks about not only cleaning but also about coconut frond. The poet talks about the coconut frond and cleaning beautifully in the following lines :

It's a joy to see the coconut frond
clown around, jump and dance
like a performing bear, a green one

...

it lunges and takes sideswipes
an errant scraps of paper
chases the rifraff of dry leaves off the road.

Then the poet wrote about piles of rubbish or garbage in Bombay in the following lines :

at regular intervals of about
fifteen paces perhaps
and consisting of dry leaves, scraps of paper

prawn shelles onion skins potato pee's
castoff condoms, dead flowers

mostly gulmohar and copper-pod (2004: 28)

Who notices the cleaning and street cleaner but he observes street cleaning of Bombay and he ironically says :

"with the result that
the more you clean Bombay
the more Bombay there is to clean (2004:31)

Thus street cleaning is unpleasant very common or ordinary event, but the poet describes this incident beautifully talking about garbage, coconut frond and street cleaners in this part.

Then the poet addresses to a crow in his another poem '*To a crow*'. Generally we do not like this large black bird with a harsh cry. But the poet observes the flying and movement of a crow. While reading the poem we feel that as if the poet is talking with the bird and guides him. At last he succeeds and gets the twig for example :

And there you are.

Now !

stand on it.

A twig ! A twig ! A twig ! A twig ! A twig !

you got it ! you got it ! you got it !

It's all yours , now.

you can take it away

any time you want

But first, examine it. (2004:37)

Crow is a unpleasant bird, but he feels sympathy for the bird. He helps the crow to get twig and describes his efforts in the poem beautifully. He is modern in choosing subject like crow for his poem.

There is humanity in his approach. The poet also describes how birds are making efforts and build nests.

Who notices the tiny boy-child being bathed on the road-side ?
But in the next poem. The Ogress the poet wrote on baby bather. She is one eyed ogress of Rope Wake Lane. She has always been a kind auxiliary mother and semi-official nanny. The woman, washing the baby, and the boy in 'Ogress' emerge as complete human beings. The poet describes the actual incident of bath of a 'small boy' in the following lines:

Soap in eye,
a furious, framing boy
- very angry,

very wet
cradled lengthwise
and face down

on her spindly legs,
extended jointly,
and straight out before her,

She sits on the edge
of the pavement; facing the road
sari pulled up to her crotch (2004 : 40) .

' *An Old Bicycle Tyre* ', in this part old bicycle tyres is speaking. Old bicycle tyre is a inanimate object. It is negligible object. No one thinks about it but the poet wrote a poem on this common object. The

greatness of the poem is that this object itself is talking with readers and expresses thoughts. It says :

An old bicycle tyre

I may be,

a bald wheel put,

an endless eel.

a wobbly zero

a spartic shunya -

but that doesn't mean

I'm ready

to hang myself

up on a finial yet,

or rut

on a many rooftop. " (2004:52)

In an another poem, 'Lice ' the poet describes an unpleasant woman. She looks like ' a stick of cinnamon'. She sits on the upright concrete block. She has been talking non-stop unintelligibly and laughing all the time, because her dirty good lover is back with her again from jail. So the poet notices such unpleasant characters at the place. It is a street scene. He presented apt picture of these unpleasant characters.

For example :

She has been talking nonstop

jabbering away like this

and laughing so much all day

because they let him out of jail this morning

and her dirty no-good lover

is back with her again. (2004;57)

'Kerosene' is another poem in which the poet describes a fine picture of street life. There is a grand old banyan tree. She has been the daughter of that tree. She is playing cards with some of her friends or sisters. She sees the passing kerosene cart. She folds her cards and puts them and takes plastic jerrycan and she's off. She can still run like a gazelle. The poet describes her walking with jerrycan.

Sari pulled up to her knees
and jerrycan in hand she runs,
shanks flashing

with the loping stride of, well
a gazelle, a lame one perhaps
but a gazelle none the less. (2004: 62)

Further in the poem, a young buck is pulling the cart. He knows her and asks her to follow him to the back of the cart. He completed his rounds of deliveries. She has her jerrycan now full to deposit between buttresses of the banyan. Then she is ready to play cards. Thus the poet presents a very common picture of street life. How a girl lives near the old banyan tree and she is a favourite daughter of the tree. Her behaviour is aptly presented by the poet here.

The long thirty-one part ' Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda' is at the centre of the volume. Mostly observes for an hour the various people, objects and actions around Flora Fountain in Bombay. It is a breakfast time. This is a world stalked by the ever-present demon of hunger and even while the restaurants at Kala Ghoda serve steaming breakfasts, there is a keen awareness of another world, where Dalits are being force-fed on shit by high-caste Hindus. It's a shameful incident. The poet wants to

focus this another world through this poem. It's a horrible incident, but its a reality :

In Bandagere
in Andhra Pradesh,
or may be somewhere else in India

thirteen high-caste Hindus
are forcing four dalits to eat
human excreta

which is to say
shit,
right now,

for letting their cattle graze
in the jowar fields
of an upper-cast landlord, say,

Then the poet presents a picture of drunks, delinquents, crooks and usual suspects in jail. It is a another world.

They are interested more in horseplay fisticuffs and insider trading in cigaretts and charas pills than in biography of Jawaharlal Nehru. It is other symbol of Bombay he presented in one part of the section, in the following lines.

Nearer home, in Bombay itself,
the miserable bunch
of drunks, delinquents, smalltime crooks

...

interesting more in horseplay
fisticuffs and insider trading

in cigarettes and charas pills .

than in listening to a one-page biography
of Jawaharlal Nehru.

in a tattered high school text book. (2004:86)

' The Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda, is a important part of the volume. In this part the poet describes the breakfast of the residents. It is a breakfast time. Throughout the city people are eating and Breakfast time in Bombay is a food festival. For example ;

They're serving khima pao at Olympia,
dal gosht at Baghdadi,
puri bhaji at Kailash Parbat ,
and gosht at Survi's,
kebabs with springs of mint at Gulshan-e-Iran
nali nehari at Noor Mahamadi's

baida ghotala at the Oriental
paya soup at Benzir
brun masha at Military Cafe,

opma at Swagat
Shira at Anand Vihar
and fried eggs and bawn at Wayside Inn.

It's breakfast time at Kala Ghoda as elsewhere in a around Bombay. What a loving knowledgable list of good eatries.

In this part, the focus is on an old lady selling from "a jumbo aluminium box full of idlis." The poet says :

Look

The lady with a head of wirewool hair

peppercorn eyes,

and a motherly smile for everyone
is here already,
carrying

a jumbo aluminium box full of idlis
lying
like an infant Krishna.

...
inside a basket
balanced on her head
and a bucket full of sambar (2004:88)

The poet says that she is "Our Lady of Idlis" and sits on one of the many concrete blocks surrounding the traffic island, where the Pi-dog slept & meditated around Flora Fountain. This is another version of Mumbai. All people gather at Kala Ghoda for breakfast.

The little vamp, the grandma, the blind man
the ogress.

the rat-poison man,

the pinwheel boy,

the hipster queen of the crossroads,

the Demosthenes of Kala Ghoda,

the pregnant queen of tarts,

the laughing Buddha,

the knucklebones champ –

the island slowly begins to fill up.

Thus the poet describes the street picture of Bombay. The poet creates the picture of old lady selling idli at Kala Ghoda and serving idlis with the help of words. What the poet observes on the street of Bombay he recorded here. She is old lady. She has motherly smile for everyone. When she comes at the place with idlis all people gather there in a moment.

For example :

Each and every hungry and homeless soul
within a mile of the little island
is soon gravitating towards it

...

They come from all over;
walking, running, dancing, limping, stumbling rolling
each at his own speed (2004: 97)

There are many characters who join in the communal feast of idlis. The laughing Buddha, The Old Pirate, The Shoeshine Boy, that old paralytic in a wheelchair / made by cannibalizing two bicycles; the legless hunchback', a scuffy looking stranger. All these characters described join the communal feast of idlis.

And there are also the irrational acts of generosity that inflect the picture. This is more vividly evoked than in the portrait of Our Lady of Idlis, the woman whom the author lyrically christens Annapoorna, who shares her breakfast with the locals of Kala Ghoda. If the finest poetry changes the way we map our world, one wonders after reading this extract whether idlis can ever be the same again :

Islands of idlis float
belly up
or splash about
in seas of Sambar,

among the wreckage
of red chilli peppers

Submerged aborigines
torpedoed tomatoes,
peppercorn mines

drumsticks
drifting
like shattered masts.

or like oil-slick
seals
blink in the sun (2004 : 104)

Then in the next poem the poet describes leper who join the communal feast of idlis. He portrays the character in the following lines :

Sitting in a corner of the island
clutching
a bowl to his bosom,

legs stretched out before him
and elbows resting
on two sides of the triangle,

the laidback leper's looking as comfortable
as if he were
in the bow of a dugout (2004 : 106)

The poet describes the character like a leper who is very common and negligible. He portrays the character in detail. It shows that what the

poet witnesses on the street of Bombay he recorded in the volume. This is also a version of Bombay.

In the next part the poet describes a stranger. He gives the apt picture of the stranger in the following lines :

And who's that scruffy looking stranger
with dirty yellow hair.
sleeping with his head pillowed on a concrete block!

(2004;107)

After that there is a description of crows in the following lines;

A delegation of crows
from the neighborhood
including some

from the rain trees
and the mountain ebonies
around the museum

...

are quick to arrive
on the scene

as usual. (2004 : 111)

So the poet describes here how the crows from different surround places arrive on the scene. Beside the many character described, there are also crows, dogs and other species who join the communal feast of idlis.

Thus throughout this part Breakfast Time the focus is on an old lady selling idlis. All people, characters, stranger gathered there in a moment. The idli woman brings fiery sambar and soft moons of rice to sell.

The convergence of all the loose appetite in the air within a one

mile-radius to that spot created a bubble. All are happy with the joy of living. The poet says : -

It lasts
for as long as Annapoorna is there
and a title longer.

A sort of an after-image, a glow
lingers behind
for a while after she packs up and leaves;

with a lighter basket on her head,
an empty bucket in her hand,
and a full purse at her waist.(2004 : 112)

The street drama this urban, part comic, part-comic, part-realistic version of romance ends. And all we are left with is an awareness of how art and imagination invert the ordinary with interest.

The pop-up cafeteria
disappears
like a castle in a children's book

- along with the king and the queen,
the courtiers
the court jester and the banqueting hall,
...
and the island returns
to its flat old
boring self. (2004 : 113)

Thus the long thirty-one part 'Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda' is the important part of the volume. This part mostly observes the various

people, objects, actions around Flora Fountain in Bombay. Throughout the city people are eating but here the main attraction is an old lady selling from a jumbo aluminum box full of idlis, with a bucket full of sambar. She is our 'Lady of Idlis' and sits on one of the many concrete blocks surrounding the traffic island. This is another version of Bombay.

After the Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda the poet writes some other poems on different objects and scenes of street life in Bombay. He writes a poem about a cellist in '*words for a Cellist*'. After the music class his fiddler friends have gone with their fiddles and fiddlesticks leaving him alone on the pavement. He describes the picture of a cellist on the pavement. Then the poet writes about a watermelon cart on the street in the poem 'Watermelon'. He describes the watermelon cart going on the street, in the following lines.

The city holds its breath
as the cart goes click - clack
prolonging the road.

stretching the morning
to eternity

finding potholes where there are none' (2004: 120)

Further the speaker becomes very happy when he sees a watermelon cart to pass by. He is very excited and happy and describes his happy mood in the following lines.

My heart leaps up
when I behold
a watermelon cart pass by

Watermelon cart is passing on the road. It is a very common incident. It is a street scene. But the poet observes this scene. He

describes beautifully how the cart passes and feelings and reactions of speaker to this cart in this poem. It is the example which shows the poet's interest in the ordinary.

Then in another poem *Bon Appetit* the poet describes the breakfast of weak, old fisherwoman she takes her breakfast in a hole in the wall tea shop.

Who, on her way to the market
has stopped

to have a quick breakfast
in a hole in-the wall teashop

and is sitting hunched
over a plate of peas.

- her favourite dish -
on a shaky table

(2004 : 125)

Further in the poem the poet writes about moth-eaten kittens. He describes the movements of kitten which emerge from a small pile of rubbish. The kitten is a very common creature but the poet describes the kitten and its behaviour beautifully.

Moth-eaten kitten

- so famished it can barely stand,

- ...

that has emerged
from a small pile of rubbish nearby

slipped once
on a bit of onion skin,

Then there is a poem on a blind man who strings a cot. His stringing a cot is described by the poet. Though he is a blind man, he successfully strings a cat. While stringing his movements are described by the poet in the following lines.

His ropedancing fingers fly
diagonally
criss crossing a rectangular void,

making connections between
the adjacent sides
with a rolling hitch,

joining north to west,
west to south

bamboo to bamboo . (2004 : 127)

The poet wrote poem on a instrument like potato peeler. It is a small negligible instrument used in the kitchen. Then there is a poem on A Rat poison man in a Rat Poison Man's Lunch Hour. He describes his lunch hour in the poem. He left his one legged poster leaning against the wall of wayside Inn and settled down for lunch on the pavement.

One another important poem is 'David Sasson'. It is a monologue of David Sassoon. He begins his monologue with a vague worry at to what will happen when the lease of the library expires and admits to still feeling a little horny once in a while.

I can buy the Bank of England
if I want to ,
with my savings on toilet soap alone.

But the thing that bothers me is

- I daresay I'll get used to it.

by the time the lease

On the library expires

which is to say

in nine hundred and ninety-nine years.

...

and feel as horny

as a rhino

very dishonouring . (2004:143)

Here the poet gives a voice to the bust of David Sassoon in a dispassionate way. Suddenly the bust becomes a real person. He is remembering his past desires. He gives a short history of Bombay in some parts of the poem. Then he talks about Jew a fugitive from Baghdad. He decided to come to these islands.'

for example :

decided to come to these islands

immense riches awaited him

...

in Tamarind lane,

and threw the doors open for business

after hailing his mezuzahs to the doorpost . (2004:147)

He is not happy with the present state of city , he says :

Responses

that may have make way for tears

for what I see now is a sick city.

A cement-eating blood-guzzling city

Passing silver, shitting gold,

and choking on its vomit

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David Sassoon gives a short history of Bombay in this poem. He noted the changes that take place over the years. He says that gaslights replaced by electricity, and horsedrawn trams are replaced by their horseless daughters. He has seen horseless carriages. Then the streets are choked by motor cars.

Sassoon's short history of Bombay blends seamlessly into the philosophical discourse of *The Man of the year*, a very modern father. In the poem '*Man of the year*'. He quickly covers the events of the last fifty years. Time dressed in jeans and an over sized jacket, about to expire in a burst of crackers. He says :

Here I stand at this street corner
leaning on the shoulder of bright red pillar-box
at a drunken angle.

It is a philosophical discourse of *Man of the year*. he ironically says in the following lines.

I was a pretty unremarkable year
all in all, and will
no doubt, be left out of history books.

with no revolutions, wars, genocides
no disasters, natural or otherwise
to remember me by

Nothing much happened, except
that the Himalayas rose by another inch,
fever flamingos came to kutch (2004: 159)

Again he says ironically in the poem -

The good news, on the other hand
is that schoolboys

and girls will not have to memorize me

who got the Nobel for literature ?

who the Booker ?

Who won the cup at Wimbledon ? (2004:160)

Thus he covers the events of the last fifty year or so and ends with a sputtering bang. In this way we have come full circle ; from early morning, before the pi-dogs wake to the last night of the old year.

The another important theme of the poems is this volume is that the dramatic personae described in the volume are again humble folk. They are very common, ordinary which come across on the street regularly. The poet describes their intimate aspects of life.

The dramatic personae in the poem are :

a pageant of social outcast's ; the one-eyed baby bather, the dog, the crow, the tart, the leper, the blind man, the rat poison man and the hash seller. Besides there are some other characters referred in *Breakfast time at Kala Ghoda* are the laughing Buddha, the Old Pirate, the shoeshine boy, that old paralytic in a wheel chair, the leg less hunch back, a scruffy looking stranger.

Throughout the volume all these characters are described. They are ordinary, common and humble look appear on the street. The poet presents these characters as they are. He describes reality in their life. For example in Pi-dog, a mangy street dog rests on a traffic island thinking of its ancestors and circumstances while Bombay sleeps.

Again his poetry is a poetry of reality. The poet focuses on the reality and street scene at breakfast time at Kala Ghoda. He presents the real picture of street life in Bombay. Here the main attraction is old lady selling idli. Her character is portrayed in detail. She has a motherly smile for everybody. When she appear at the place, within a moment many

people and residents gather there. The poet lyrically Christens her Annapoorna. She shares here breakfast with the locals at Kala Ghoda. Beside this old lady, there are other characters like the laughing Buddha, the old priest, the shoeshine boy, scrubby looking stranger. These are also humble common characters. They join the communal feast of idli. There are also crows, dogs, and other species who join in the communal feast of idlis.

So Kala Ghoda poems concentrates on the street life of Bombay. While reading the poem his focus is on the ordinary and anonymous. He presents street scene in Bombay in the poems. He was interested in life's dynamism. He found this characteristic in the streets of Bombay, as well as in nature. This approach of poet to the life is modern. There is a modern sensibility we find in these poems. Sometimes the poet is realist in presenting the life. Sometime he is ironical in his description. He tries to show through these poems that still we are not modern.

5.2 Language :

Kala Ghoda Poems is a recent collection of poems. His later poetry became narrative allegorical and mythical. Kala Ghoda poems are mostly written in free verse. Most of the poems have no rhyming scheme, though they make a certain poetic effect on the mind of the reader. Particularly in these poems his realm is street talk and colloquial and conversational tone. We find street talk and colloquial expressions throughout the poems. He created imaginary characters through these characters narrate. So the use of language is non-conventional and experimental.

For example :

Pi-dog, a nine part sequence begins Kala Ghoda Poems. Here a mangy street dog rests on a traffic island. It is thinking of its ancestors

and circumstances. In his meditation there is humour, physical realism, colloquial speech. In all seems so relaxed. It is a kind of free verse. We find colloquial tone in the following lines :

This is the time of day I like best,
and this the hour
when I can call this city my own;

When I like nothing better
than to lie down here, at the exact centre
of this traffic island (2004:15)

According to a strong family tradition bitch among thirty thousands which survived the sea voyage from England.

Kolatkar is a master of the incongruous and the absurd. Sir Bartle Frer was a British colonial administrator. It is typical of Kolatkar to focus on the importation of hunting hounds to show both the British influence and its inappropriateness. There is a humour. The poet indicates inappropriateness with the help of the word crazy idea in the following lines.

by Sir Bartle Frere
in eighteen hundred and sixty four
with the crazy idea

of introducing for-hunting to Bombay
just the sort of thing
he felt the city badly needed. (2004:17)

On his paternal side the pi-dog claims descent from the dog in Mahabharata who remains with long after such warriors as Draupadi, Sahadev, Nakul, Arjuna and Bhima ' had fallen by the wayside'. The epic roll call contrasts with the physical journey into the Himalayas (

frostbitten and blinded with show dizzy with hunger and gasping for air)
which itself jostles with the conclusion in which the epic 'flying chariot'
appears in the same context, as the colloquial airlift, get on board and
'made it to ' :

- help came
in the shape of flying chariot

to airlift him to heaven
Yudhishtira , the noble prince, refused
to get on board unless dogs were allowed

And my ancestor became the only dog
to have made it to heaven
in recorded history.

'To a Crow' is another poem in which the poet has used the
language effectively. While reading the poem as if we feel that the
speaker is talking with the bird. So colloquial and conversational
expressions are used in this poem :

- Stretch your wings
and level off
along the baseline of the pavement
...
Oh, that was just beautifully done
- you you you
airdevil !

And you did it just right
you landed
a twiglength away from it. (2004: 36)

Further in the poem, the poet used repetition. The speaker is happy and excited because the bird gets a twig. Here the poet used repetition effectively. For example:

Move sideways, without looking at it
Not all at once, but in two steps
a side-shuffle, more like

And there you are
NOW !
stand on it.

A twig ! A twig ! A twig ! A twig ! A twig !
It's all yours, now.

Further in the same poem the poet has used the rhetorical questions very skillfully. The speaker is happy. He asks the crow to examine the twig. Here the poet used the rhetorical questions in the following lines.

Does it shine ? Does it sing ?
Does it spark and crackle ? Does it sting ?
Does it scan ? Does it rhyme ?

Does it make sense ;
and if it does, what does it mean ?
Ask yourself,

Will it fit in with the rest ?
Is this precisely the twig you need for your nest
at precisely this moment ?

And above all, do you like it ?

And what about your wife !

Will she like it ?

Because of the use of these rhetorical questions, the narrative becomes effective and dramatic.

Throughout this volume, the poet has created street life of Bombay with the help of words. So the poet has used skillfully the street talk and colloquial expressions in these poems and this use of language is non-conventional. We find some examples of street talk and colloquial expression in the following poems. For example :

Look ;
The lady with a head of wirewool hair,
peppercorn eyes.

and a motherly smile for everyone
is here already,
carrying

a jumbo aluminium box full of idlis

- lying
like an infant Krishna (2004:88)

...

Don't just stand there
help the lady with the basket, man ;
where's your manners !

Let her settle down nicely,
on one of those
low concrete blocks that skirt the lesser island.

(2004:89)

You'll see
what did I tell you ?
That's her favourite seat,
...
mug along
I told you to ,
didn't I ? (2004; 90)

Where's the laughing Buddha ?
Oh there she is ,
sambar drooling down her chin ;
(2004 ; 98)

Another example of street talk. Here the poet has used question tags which is a sign of speech. For example

And here comes the shoeshine boy
- he really fancies himself
as the funkiest kid on the block, doesn't he ?
...
Hasn't lost a minute either
to start flirting with the girls,
has he ? (2004; 100)

Another example of street talk and conversational tone in the following lines.

And who's that scruffy looking stranger
with dirty yellow hair
sleeping with his head pillowed on a concrete block ?
...
We've never seen him before, have we ?

Is he alive !
Is he asleep ?

What country you come from, sir ?
You got dollars ? Pounds ! Oh never mind !
You hungry ?

...

Good ?
You like ?

Good ! (2004 : 107)

...

So why don't you take your bowl of idlis
and find yourself
somewhere to sit down like everybody else ?

Aren't these blocks of concrete wonderful ?
Let's not forget to thank
whoever it way that invented them.

(2004 : 108)

Arun Kolatkar goes on programming through various kinds of experimental verse. He changed his style from highly imaginistic to anti poetic. One of the experiments in the use of language is that in some of his poems he does not care about the punctuation marks. He writes in a free verse. Most of the poems in Kala Ghoda poems are written in free verse. There is no limitation of punctuation marks . Generally he uses three line stanza pattern in the volume. In *Break fast Time at Kala Ghoda* 4th part is a poem divided into three line stanza pattern into 13 stanzas. This poem means one long sentence. Though it is divided into stanzas. The thought in the poem continues with the stanza without using

punctuation marks or capital letters. The poet has only used commas, and there is a full stop in the end. So this poem is one sentence with a full stop in the end.

For example :

After giving suck
unsuccessfully
to her newborn baby

that she has brought
into the world
with no help from anyone

- cutting the birthstring
with a flintknife,
cleaning up afterwards –

doing it all by herself
like any other
Golu woman,

Like her own mother
before her,
and her mother before her,

fifteen - year - old
Nagamma,
On her hands and knees,
...
that she intends to convert

into milk
for her child

- a miracle
she alone
can perform . (2004 : 83/ 84)

After reading the poems, the three line stanza pattern seems to be his favourite pattern. With the three line stanza pattern he also experiments with other verse forms. In Kala Ghoda poems three line stanza poems are more frequent than two or four lines. Except some few poems, all other poems are written in three line stanza pattern. The three line stanza pattern is a favourite pattern of the poet. All the poems are written in three line stanza such as - 'Pi-dog' 'Parmeshwari', Meera, 'To a crow' , 'The Ogress,' 'Pinwheel' , 'Lice' , 'Kerosene' , Knucklebones, The Barefoot Queen of the crossroads', Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda', words for a cellist, Watermelons, A Blind Man strings a cot, The Potato Peelers, 'David Sassoon', and Man of the Year.

The structure of three line stanza poem is prosaic. Conversational tone, street talk colloquial expressions are mostly used. The structure is prosaic, For example :

I look u bit like
a seventeenth-century Map of Bombay
with it seven islands
...
with Old Woman's Island
on my forehead,
Mahim on my croup
and the others distributed
casually among

brisket, witners, saddle and loin

(2004 : 16)

In this volume there are two poems such as 'Silver Trangle' and 'An Old Bicycle Tyre' are written in 4 line stanza pattern. An old Bicycle Tyre is a poem divided into three parts. An old bicycle tyre itself is talking in the poem. Though it is a inanimate object it is speaking. The first two parts of the poem are written in true verse without using the punctuation marks .The first part is one sentence with a full stop in the end and second part is also one sentence with a full stop in the end. Second part is divided into seven four line stanzas. But only commas are used in the middle, no capital letters and full stop in the end. So the structure of this poem is novel and attractive.

In the whole poems of Kala Ghoda, there is only one poem with a five line stanza. This poem is divided into seven stanzas of five lines. There are two poems such as 'The Rat-poison, 'Man's Lunch Hour' and 'Taffic Lights' are written in two line stanza. Otherwise all poems are written with three line stanza pattern.

5.3 Metaphors / Similies : -

Metaphors and similies are used effectively by the poet in Kala Ghoda Poems. He does not write lyrical or emotional poetry. So there is no much use of similie or metaphor. He has individual way of looking at things. His use of metaphor is also striking and novel. So in this volume there are very few examples of metaphor and simile :

For example :

Pi-dog is a nine part sequence. It begins the volume. In this part a mangy street dog rests on a traffic island thinking of its ancestors and circumstances while Bombay sleeps. The dog claims his body looks like "a seventeenth century map of Bombay" Here the poet has used simile.

I look a bit like
a seventeenth-century map of Bombay
with its seven islands. (2004: 16)

The poet says that the dog looks like a seventeenth century map of Bombay. It's a strange comparison. There is another example of simile in Pi-dog in the following lines.

The mahogany drops
a casket bursting with winged seeds
by the wayside

like an inexperienced thief
drops stolen jewels
at the sight of a cop.

Here the poet compares dropping a casket of seeds with dropping of stolen jewels of inexperienced thief.

There is a fine use of simile in the poem Meera, in the following lines :

It's a joy to see the coconut frond
clown around, jump and dance (2004 : 27)

like a performing bear, a green one.

In this example the poet says that while sweeping the coconut frond dance like a performing bear.

In 'Meera', a metaphor is used in the last stanza of the 6th part of the poem.

Her free arm, raised
in the air,
is a flamingo in flight. (2004 : 32)

Raising her free arm in the air while sweeping, is metaphorically compared to a flamingo in flight. Flamingo is a large pink bird with long thin legs and long neck.

The succeeding poem The Ogress makes a fine use of simile in the last stanza. Here the poet compares the one side of her face with a side of bacon, in the following lines :

is all scar tissue
and looks
more like a side of bacon. (2004 : 39)

and in the same poem in the next part, there is a use of metaphor. The poet metaphorically compares the one-eyed baby-bather to an auxiliary mother, and semi-official nanny in the following lines.

has always been a kind
of an auxiliary mother
semi-official nanny (2004 : 39)

'Lice' is a poem in which the poet described an unpleasant person. The poet compares a girl to a stick of cinnamon in the following lines.

She hasn't been a woman for very long,
that girl who looks
like a stick of cinnamon.

Further the poet describes her talking and movements in the following lines using a simile.

She's holding court,
gesticulating from time to time
with her hands like sparrows.

The another poem 'Kerosene' describes a girl who lives near the old banyan tree. The poet calls her the favourite daughter of that grand old banyan tree.

She has always been

the favourite daughter
of that grand old banyan tree

There is a fine use of simile in the last stanza of the same poem.
The poet compares her running to a gazelle in the following lines.

but she is still in her teens,
the pregnant queen of tarts,
and she can still run like a gazelle when she wants.

The poem 'The Barefoot Queen of the crossroads' is remarkable for simile and for the portrayal of barefoot queen. The poet describes the queen using the simile such as -

she is dark as bitter chocolate,
the witch of Ramport Row,
the barefoot queen of the crossroads.

Further the poet used another simile in the same poem.

The sun covers her face with kisses.
It flutters
like a hummingbird before her navel.

Then the poet describes her movements. She throws her head forward to bring her hair from back to front. The poet describes this throwing her head and hair in the following lines using a fine simile.

leaps upwards into the air
to come surging forward and full
in front of her face like a black torrent.

A simile is seen again in the same poem.

She scatters spitfire droplets of water
all around her;
they dart about like rainbow-tailed moths

Then the poet describes her tossing head with the help of the following simile.

and, with a single toss of her head,
she sends her hair flying back again
- in one body,
like a well trained circus animal
at the crack of a whip.

There is another fine use of simile in the same poem such as-

She piles up her hair
on top of her head in tight coils,
like a great white conch.

Thus *The Barefoot Queen of Crossroads* is a remarkable poem for the portrayal of queen using fine similes. The poet portrays the character in detail.

In *Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda*, the poet describes a leper, sitting in a corner of the island, clutching a bowl to his bosom. The effective simile is seen in -

as the sun palpates him
like a phrenologist
to study the contours of his cranium ;

The poet describes the breakfast at Kala Ghoda effectively. The poet says -

The pop-up cafeteria
disappears
like a castle in a children's book

The last poem in the volume is *Traffic Lights*. The poet describes here motorcyclists with helmet and Traffic lights. Here the poet used a fine simile -

fifty phantom motorcyclists
all in black

crash-helmeted outriders

faceless behind tinted visors

come thundering from one end of the road
and go roaring down the other

shattering the petrified silence of the night
like a delirium of rock drills.

The most effective simile is seen in the same poem in describing traffic lights, and motorcyclists.

raising a storm of protest in its wake
from angry scraps of paper and dry leaves

but unobserved by traffic lights
that seem to have eyes only for each other

and who like ill - starred lovers

fated never to meet

but condemned to live forever and even in each other's
sight.

These are some of the examples of simile and metaphor used by the poet in the volume. These examples show that his use of simile is different and new. They are striking. Some inanimate and animal creature examples are also used. Thus the poet has created new and modern images using these similes and metaphors.

5.4 Images :-

Images are employed beautifully in the volume. Pi-dog is easily one of the most vividly realized of Kolatkar's poems. The images are clear and language is precise. There are various images in the poem. First there is a image of traffic island. Then the dog claims he looks a seventeenth - century map of Bombay with its seven island. They there is a image of foxhounds in the following lines :

that killed the rest of the pack
of thirty foxhounds,
imported all the way from England.

Images of 'Himalayas' and 'flying chariot' are seen in the following lines:

in the icy wastes of the Himalayas,
when help came
in the shape of a flying chariot
There is a example of literary allusion

" Ugh is short for Ughekalikady / siddharayya's famous dog."

The same part of the poem contains the image of sun.

all I know
is that it's addressed to the sun-god

- hence it's called Savitri -

A image of a piebald pianist is seen in - :

a piebald pianist, caressing and tickling
the concrete keys with his eyes,
undeterred by digital deprivation.

The succeeding poem 'Meera' contains also imagery. First there is an image of coconut frond.

A footloose coconut frond
a dropout,

bored with life at the top

There is another example of image of broomstick in the poem. A image of performing bear is seen in -

It's a joy to see the coconut frond
clown around, jump and dance
like a performing bear, a green one

Then there are images of creatures. in

save a few discerning crows and a kitten
in the form of modest piles of rubbish
all along the kerb.

'Silver Trangle' is a poem which contains images of game, rummy, mahogany tree and a cop and crooked lamp post.

your various aunts
are playing a game of cards,
rummy,
under the mahogany

a crooked cop
and, what with one thing
and another.

Then there is a image of an old bicycle tyre in the poem *An Old Bicycle Tyre*.

An old bicycle tyre
I may be
a bald wheel peel
and endless ell.

'Lice' is a exquisite poem which presents a picture of unpleasant person with using fine images. The poet says the girl looks like a stick of

cinnamon. Then these are images like upright concrete block, glass bangles, kitten and slender wooden pillar.

Kerosene is another remarkable poem for the point of view of images, various images are used in the poem, such as, the grand old banyan tree, municipal axemen, a image of Kerosene cart.

The various images in the Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda e.g. the clock, a dog, There are various images of foods - cheeseburgers, french fries, honeycake, cheese, prunes, coffee, matzas (a type of bread in the form of large flat biscuits) , "Khima puo, dal Gosht, puri bhaji, aab gosht, kebabs with springs of mint, nali nehari, baida, ghotala, paya soup, brun maska, upma, shira, fried eggs and bacon" (7th part of Breakfast Time) and idli and fiery sambar. - It's a loving knowledgeable list of good eateries. - It is a breakfast time at Kala Ghoda, in and around Bombay. Using all these food images the poet suggests here breakfast time in Bombay is a food festival.

There are other images of places such as - A makeshift kitchen in a garage, a hole in the wall tea-shop, a rickety primus on the pavement. The residents are fed at these places.

Then there are images of characters like the laughing Buddha, the Old Pirate, the Shoeshine boy, that old paralytic in a wheel chair, the legless hunchback, a scruffy looking stranger. All these various people join the communal feast of idli.

Beside these characters there are also images of birds, or animals and other species such as - crows, dogs, kitten, cats and other species they also join communal feast of idli.

Some other characters like, the little vamp, the blind man, the ogress, the rat poison man, the pinwheel boy, the hipster queen of the crossroads, the knucklebone, champ, join communal feast of idli. This is

a street drama at breakfast time. The poet presents beautifully this street drama using these various images.

The other images such as - gaslights, gaslighters, electricity, horsedrawn trams, horseless carriages, motor-cars (David Sassoon) Himalayas, Hamingos (Man of the year) Motorcyclists, traffic lights, airport, ill-starred lovers (Traffic lights).

All these images and perhaps many more are starkly modern and international cosmopolitan images. So though the landscape and setting is Indian, images and theme are universal and modern and international in its modernity of approach and technique. Using all these modern, international cosmopolitan images the poet has presented an urban street life in Bombay.

5.5 Symbols :-

Arun Kolatkar has employed very few symbols effectively in Kala Ghoda Poems. There is no much use of symbols in the volume.

One symbol he used in the poem 'Pi-dog' is a 'sun'. in the following lines -

All I know
is that it's addressed to sun-god
- hence it's called Savitri

and it seems appropriate enough
to recite it
as I sit here waiting for the sun

to rise
May the sun-god amplify
the powers of my mind.

The sun is the central symbol used in the poem, because the sun is undeniably associated with glory and power, Here Pi-dog is waiting for sun-god. He prays sun-god to amplify the powers of his mind.

Besides the entire sequence is framed between sunrise - , the early morning and sunset the last night of the old year. We have come full circle, from early morning before the pi-dogs wake, to the last night of the old year. So the sun is an apt symbol of the life principle itself. The concluding section describes the setting sun - the last night, clearly suggests that with the turning of the wheel of time, the last night - setting sun is bound in due course to become the rising sun of new year. So that life goes on.

Whatever the poet presents throughout the sequence from the beginning to the end "a street life" is a symbol of Bombay. The various people described in the volume, their life, their behaviour, their intimate aspects of life, their human presence all these aspects beautifully presented by the poet. it is the symbol of Bombay. It is an integral part of the city.

In ' Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda', the focus is on an old lady selling from, ' a jumbo aluminum box full of idlis' with a bucket full of sambar / fit for fire-eaters. The poet calls her symbolically Annapoorna in the following lines.

"Let our Lady of Idlis
(I call her Annapoorna)
Set her basket down "

The poet used a symbol of Annapoorna (goddess) . He calls the lady Annapoorna because like goddess Annapoorna she satisfies the hunger of people by serving idlis. She has a motherly simile for everyone. She does not think about money. She is generous by nature. So the poet lyrically christens her Annapoorna, who shares her breakfast

with locals of Kala Ghoda. Thus the Annapoorna is one more important symbol used in the volume.

She is 'Our Lady of Idlis' and sits on one of the many concrete blocks surrounding the traffic island, where the Pi-dog slept and meditated around Flora Fountain. This is another version of or symbol of Bombay.

5.6 Style :-

'Kala Ghoda Poems' is a collection of poems published in 2004. It celebrates the history and especially the street life of Bombay. It describes the urban and modern Life of Bombay. So the poet's use of language and style is non-conventional and experimental.

Kala Ghoda Poems belongs to later poetry of Arun Kolatkar. His later poetry became increasingly allegorical, narrative, and Mythopoetic. In his essay Eliot has pointed out that poetry of the second voice is that of the poet addressing an audience and poetry of third voice is when the poet attempts to create an imaginary dramatic character addressing another dramatic character. The poetry in Sarpa Satra, Kala Ghoda poems, Bhijki Vahi, Droan and Chirimiri belong to these voices. So Kala Ghoda Poems belongs to poetry of third voice.

In Kala Ghoda Poems the poet has created imaginary dramatic characters like Pi-dog, An Old Bicycle Tyre, David Sesson and Man of the year. The poet looks at the incident through these characters. The poet is neutral in this situation. These imaginary characters narrate about themselves. So this narration is very effective and dramatic, Pi-dog meditates in the early morning. His thoughts about the circumstances, origin are interesting and effective. Another example is of David Sasson. He begins his monologue with a vogue worry at to what will happen when the lease of the library expires and suddenly the bust becomes a

real person remembering past desires. He gives a short history of Bombay. Another example of imaginary dramatic character is 'The Man of the year' a very modern further. Time dressed in jeans and an oversized jacket, about to expire in a burst of crackers. He quickly covers the events of the last fifty years. Thus the poet looks at Bombay city through these characters and expressed their thoughts. This style is new and experimental. And it is a poetry of third voice.

Beside these characters the poet has created characters like a crow and charas pill. The poet addresses to crow in a poem 'To Crow' and to a charas pill in a poem To a Charas Pill. They are listners. The poet is talking with these characters. it's a new incident. Because of this incident the style and language changes. The poet shares with these characters and talking about intimate aspects of life. Sometime we feel the poet is chitchatting with these characters for example "To a Crow" His style is chatty in this poem.

Oh, that was just beautifully done

- you, you, you

airdevil !

And you did it just right;

you landed

a twiglenth away from it.

Arun Kolatkar had a distinctive style of his own. His style is descriptive, colloquial and chatty, a style which might have developed from his advertising day. He rarely discussed his work with others. He confined himself to brief comments.

In Kala Ghoda poems his style is descriptive, colloquial and chatty. Because he describes street life in the volume. To describe a street life he used colloquial language. Colloquial language is used by the poet in the

volume. Sometimes his style is chatty in these poems. For example
Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda :

Look :

The lady with a head of wirewool hair
peppercorn eyes,

and a motherly simile for everyone
is here already
carrying.

9.

Not to worry
for it's breakfast time at Kala Ghoda
and they'll all be here

Let our Lady of Idlis
(I call her Annapoorna)
Set her basket down

Don't just stand there
- help the lady with the basket, man
where's your manners !

The mode of narration is highly experimental. Most of the poems in the volume are significant from the point of view of narration. Pi-dog and Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda . In these parts the poet has used street talk, the colloquial. It is the poetry of ordinary and anonymous, so the poet has used common language. There is the quiet humor, physical realism, colloquial speech , subtle contrasts of registers in Pi-dog. The poet wants to suggest that it is a place of colloquial language.

Breakfast Time at Kala Ghoda is a long thirty one part sequence is at the center of the volume. The poet observes here for an hour the various people, things, objects, and actions around Flora Fountain. The speaker narrates the incidents, naturally the things, incidents 'as' it is .', using very contemporary language. He is neither sympathetic nor judgemental, nor is he intrusive. He simply records their human presence, makes visible the intimate aspects of their lives, as an integral part of city. The speaker describes the street life in this part in contemporary language, street talk and in colloquial expressions. Sometime in this part his tone changes to irony or satire. For example while the restaurants at Kala Ghoda serve steaming breakfasts, there is a keen awareness of another world, disconcertingly close, where Dalits are being force-fed on shit, by high cast Hindus.