



CHAPTER – I
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This dissertation undertakes a comparative study of two novels viz. *Kosla* (meaning cocoon), by Bhalchandra Nemade and its American counterpart *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger.

The reasons that necessitate such a study must be stated at the outset. In the first place, while discussing Nemade's *Kosla*, Marathi literary scholars have occasionally likened it in terms of theme, structure and style to *The Catcher in the Rye* and have stated that *Kosla* carries some influence of the latter. For example, Mr. Anant Kadam¹ mentions that Bhalchandra Nemade himself urged him to read *The Catcher in the Rye*. He states that notwithstanding some influence of *The Catcher in the Rye* on the style of *Kosla* there is no borrowing from the former. *Kosla*, he maintains, outcome of Nemade's truly native experiences. Dr. C .J. Jahagirdar also refers to the use of stylistic peculiarities shared by both the novels. He points out the difference too, "Nemade does not propose, as Salinger does, an alternative world of innocents and saints. By concentrating on the primary social institution of the family, then moving on to the secondary ones and finally to the problems of history and time, *Kosla* offers a fairly wide context for its theme."² Shakar Sarada³ also, while referring to the similarity in the attitude of both protagonists to phony things and sex, states that, at least to his mind, *Kosla* is more appealing. On the other hand Ashok Kelkar seems to detest any attempt at comparing the two novels. His aversion for comparison is reflected in his postscript appended to his short article⁴.

Stressing the dissimilarity in the two novels he opines that *The Catcher in the Rye* is a more successful novel whereas *Kosla* is more serious one. However, such statements amount to little more than unsubstantiated passing remarks and hence they need to be verified by way of a thoroughgoing study of both the novels.

In the second place, both the works in their isolated contexts have constantly provoked the critics to analyse and discuss them widely and thoroughly. Salinger's 'The Catcher' has given rise to what George Steiner degradingly calls 'Salinger Industry'⁵. In his article he takes stock of the existent Salinger criticism and points out 'some of the things that are seriously wrong with contemporary American criticism'. He dubs many critical comments as 'propensities and exaggerations'. Here are some of them, which he has quoted in the same article:

- "Salinger is probably the most avidly read author of any serious pretensions in his generation". (Arthur Mizener, *Happers*, February, 1959)
- "There are, I am convinced, millions of young Americans who feel closer to Salinger than any other writer". (Granville Hicks, *Saturday Review*, July 25, 1959)
- "The problem he [Salinger] has set himself in this last period is no less than the utilization of transcendental mysticism in satiric fiction, something (as far as we know) never attempted before by an

American writer, and by only a few in Western literature.

(Professors Gwynn and Blotner)”

Such exaggerated statements, Steiner argues, ‘get Salinger’s work out of focus and could do a great deal of harm’. He then provides us with the main facts about Salinger. According to him, “Jerome David Salinger is neither Moliere nor Chekhov. He is not yet Mark Twain...He is a gifted and entertaining writer with one excellent short novel and a number of memorable stories to his credit. He has a marvellous ear for the semiliterate meanderings of adolescent mind.”⁶ After noting such virtues of Salinger he accounts for, in a negative way, Salinger’s popularity. For him, Salinger’s writing *briefly*, his flattering of the ‘very ignorance and moral shallowness of his young the ‘less exalted’ reasons responsible for his popularity with them. He then attributes the disproportionate critical interest to two reasons viz. ‘the jargon of New criticism’ and ‘the matter of economics’, which refers to publishing research for personal advancement. Mr. Steiner opines that as ‘good literature’ is not produced enough for the massive critical industry minor writers like Salinger receive undue attention.

In a sense, (but surely in a positive one), it is applicable to Nemade’s ‘*Kosla*’ too, as the response of the scholarly readers (not to mention that of the untrained ones) to it ranges from a number of seminal articles to a comprehensive study in the form of doctoral thesis. Nemade, by writing unprecedented novel has provoked the Marathi literary critics more and more about him. His novels, especially *Kosla*, have thrown a challenge of deeper

interpretation for them as a result of which we see an upsurge of critical commentaries on it.

Nevertheless, a serious attempt to balance these two literary heavyweights has not so far been made. The present researcher intends to do it in a modest way.

After a brief a review of the body of critical opinion regarding both the novels, we may now have some discussion in the direction of placing both Bhalchandra Nemade and J. D. Salinger in their respective literary traditions. To begin with Nemade, he emerged as a rebellious novelist with the publication of his first novel *Kosla* in 1963. Written in a surprisingly short period, a mere fortnight (from August 24, 1963. to September, 10, 1963.) by a disillusioned college student, *Kosla* shocked the conservative readers by unfolding an apparently bizarre life and world of an un-heroic protagonist, Pandurang Sangavikar. With his *Kosla*, Nemade not only broke with Marathi fictional tradition but also pioneered a 'new novel' which was soon to dismantle pseudo-idealistic and crudely heroic middleclass world created by earlier writers like V S. Khandekar, N. S. Phadake, etc. Thus, his was a 'novel' (in a double sense) attempt to give an expression in his native voice to human existential anguish and multi-dimensional sense of alienation through his *Kosla*.

Nemade's other novels namely: 'Bidhar' (1975), 'Zareela' (1977) and 'Zool' (1979) have been actually designed to form a quartet -first of its kind as for as Marathi fiction is concerned. It is evident from the fact- which Dr. Rajan

Gavas⁷ points to - that though actually 'Hool' was published first as a sequel to 'Bhidhar' in 1975, it has been separately brought out in the year 2000 so as to complete the quartet. It is also to be noted that, though presumed otherwise, Nemade's proposed novel 'Hindu' is no part of the quartet. Through his quartet, Nemade responds, with his own moral vision, to the dismal socio-cultural reality of post-independent Maharashtra.

Interestingly, while tracing back the development of Marathi fiction, Nemade himself, has discovered three major tendencies in one his critical essays⁸. They originated, in his opinion, respectively in the novels by (1) Baba Padmanji-'Yamunaparyatan' (1857), (2) Laxmanshastri Halabe - 'Muktamala' (1861) and (3) R. B.Gungikar 'Mochangad'(1871) . While the tendency in Yamunaparyatan is to respond to real-life problems in respect of man-society relationship, with certain sense morality, the other two are incompatible with it in that they either create 'unreal' based on the real or even an illusion of non-existent reality. Happily, in the sixties of the past century, the Yamunaparyatan tendency was revived and projected in various ways in the 'new novel'. Udhav Shelake's 'Dhag'(1960), S N.Pendase's 'Rathchakra' (1962), Manohar Talhar's 'Manus'(1965), Bhahu Padhye's 'Barrister Anirudha Dhopeswarkar(1967) have considerably contributed to the 'new novel' Though Nemade has not included his own name (out of humility?) in the array of these writers, he occupies foremost position among them.

As a poet and critic too, Nemade has proved to be equally rebellious. His two collections of poems – Melody (1970) and Dekhani (1991) and

'Tikaswayamvar' (1990) - a compilation of critical essays, reviews, interviews, etc.- illustrates his outstanding contribution to Marathi poetry and criticism respectively.

Jerome David Salinger (1919), Nemade's counterpart in the proposed comparative study has curiously acquired the status of an ever-discussed writer in contemporary American literature despite his shying away from all publicity and scholarly interest in his slender body of work. Like Nemade, J D. Salinger's literary career too began early during his studentship. His first story 'The Young Folks' was published in the 'Story' magazine in March 1940. Written simply as a class assignment, the story immensely impressed Whitt Burnett, the editor of the magazine-who happened to be Salinger's teacher for a course in short story writing at Columbia University. However, his first novel (and probably the last?), *The Catcher in the Rye* was published on 16th July, 1951 after a prolonged gestation of ten years (which is in sharp contrast with a brief fortnight in which Nemade produced his *Kosla* During this decade, Salinger handled his protagonist of the novel in at least seven short stories. The first among them was sold by Salinger to the 'New Yorker' in November, 1941 but its publication was delayed until 1946 due to the entry of United States in the world war II It then appeared in December 21st issue as 'Slight Rebellion off Madison'. The material of the story "I'm Crazy" which appeared in the December 22, 1945 issue of Collier's was actually incorporated in 'The Catcher' In the same year a ninety-page novella about Holden Caulfield was submitted for publication but later Salinger withdrew it for reasons which

have remained obscure. Within a couple of weeks after its publication on 16th July, 1951, *The Catcher in the Rye* appeared on New York Times' list of best sellers remained there for 29 weeks. This popular success, however, was not vindicated adequately by critical acclaim for there were mixed responses from scholars and reviewers. For Paul Engle the novel was "engaging and believable, full of right observation and sharp insight"⁹, while Nash Burger called it 'an unusually brilliant first novel'. Harrison Smith called the novel "remarkable and absorbing, a book to be read more than once"¹⁰, whereas Ernest Jones remarked that "although 'The Catcher' was always lively in its parts, the book as a whole was predictable and boring"¹¹.

Thus, on one hand 'The Catcher' seems to be acclaimed as 'great' and 'true' and on the other hand, it is condemned as 'perverse' and 'immoral'. It has proved to be the 'most widely read post- world-war-II American novel in schools, colleges, and universities' and also 'the most widely censored book in the United States'. It was banned in schools and libraries in the wake of protests from parents, school boards, principals, etc. Jack Salzman gives the details of the ban in his introduction thus : "In 1960, for example, *Catcher* was removed from the library and the recommended list at a highschool in San Jose, California. In Louisville, Kentucky, a teacher who proposed using Salinger's novel in his tenth-grade class was told that he would not be rehired, and the book was dropped from the reading list.... In 1972, a Kansas school district's advisory board voted unanimously to recommend that *Catcher* be removed from the district's approved reading list; the school-board, however,

voted against barring the novel.”¹² In spite of the fact that censorship and *The Catcher in the Rye* became ‘almost synonymous,’ it has retained its popularity with mature scholars and immature adolescents both, in its home country and abroad as well. It has been made available in translation in Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, Netherlands, etc. James Miller rightly comments, “no serious history of the post World-War novel can be written without awarding Salinger a place in the first rank and even perhaps the pre-eminent position.”¹³

ALIANATION: A THEORETICAL OUTLINE

Nevertheless, before we proceed further, we need to make ourselves fairly clear about the very idea of alienation for we are likely to come across many of its conceptual variants. Noting the ambiguity of the concept an article¹⁴ in Encyclopaedia Britannica, for instance, enumerates ‘the most common’ variants of the meaning of alienation as follows:

1. ***Powerlessness***, the feeling that one’s destiny is not under one’s own control, but is determined by external agents, fate, luck or institutional arrangements;
2. ***Meaninglessness***, referring either to the lack of comprehensibility or consistent meaning in any domain of action (such as world affairs or interpersonal relations) or to a generalized sense of purposelessness in life;

3. ***Normlessness***, the lack of commitment to shared social prescriptions for behaviour (hence widespread deviance, distrust, unrestrained individual competition and the like);
4. ***Cultural estrangement***, the sense of removal from established values in society (as, for example, in the intellectual or student rebellions against conventional institutions);
5. ***Social isolation***, the sense of loneliness or exclusion in social relations (as, for example, among minority group members.);
6. ***Self-estrangement***, perhaps the most difficult to define and in a sense a master- theme, the understanding that in one way or the other the individual is out of touch with himself.”

Let us take in to account a few more definitions:

- 1) “Alienation is an individual feeling or the state of dissociation from self, from others and from the world at large.”¹⁵
- 2) “The term alienation and estrangement refer to the characteristic of an individual consciousness and social structure typical in societies whose members are controlled by, instead of controlling the consequences of their collective activity.”¹⁶
- 3) “Alienation is a certain psychological state of a normal person, and an alienated person is one who has been estranged from, made unfriendly towards his society and culture it carries.”¹⁷

- 4) “Alienation is a general type of situation of the absolutized subject who has given a world to himself, a formal world refusing in this way the true, concrete and its requirements.”¹⁸

A cursory look at the history of the term reveals that German philosopher Hegel conceptualised alienation for the first time. ‘Alienation’ and the ‘self-alienation’ are, in fact, the English equivalents used for the German words ‘*Entfremdung*’ and ‘*Entausserung*’ respectively. By alienation Hegel meant man’s existential duality. As the article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* referred to earlier interprets it for Hegel “there was an inherent dissociation between man as a creative subject seeking to be and to realize himself and man as an object influenced and manipulated by others so that man’s own creations (his art, language, science and so forth) stand outside him as alien objects.”¹⁹

While Karl Marx borrowed the term alienation from Hegel, he entirely transformed it in to a secular and materialist idea. Unlike Hegel, alienation was not an ontological fact for Marx, but rather a rather a product of the prevalent economic system: capitalism. His economic-philosophical interpretation of the concept of alienation is revealed in the following conclusions.” We have considered the act of estranging practical human activity, labour in two of its aspects. (1) The relation of the worker to the *product of labour* as an alien object exercising power over him. This relation is at the same time the relation to the sensuous external world inimically opposed to him. (2) The relation of labour to the *act of production* within the *labour*. This relation is the relation of the worker to his own activity as an alien activity not belonging to him; it is

activity as suffering, strength as weakness, begetting as emasculating, the worker's *own* physical and mental energy, his personal life- for what is life but activity? – as an activity which is turned against him, independent of him and not belonging to him. Here we have *self-estrangement*, as previously we had the estrangement of the *thing*." Marx discerns two more aspects of estranged labour, according to him estranged labour also turns (3) *Man's species-being*, both nature and his spiritual species-property, in to a being *alien* to him, in to a *means* for his *individual existence*. It estranges from man his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual aspect, his *human* aspect. (4) An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life activity, from his species being is *estrangement of man from man*.

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For the exponents of existentialism like Jean-Paul Sartre, alienation was not the effect of alien forces or institutions; but it resulted from the very existence of life in a world which is basically devoid of any meaning or purpose. On the other hand, for the psychologists like Sigmund Freud, alienation was rooted in the conflicting nature of conscious and unconscious forces within the personality.

What can we gather from the foregoing discussion (though it is all too brief) and a set of definitions of the term alienation? First, one may experience the painful feeling of alienation in a number of ways such as powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, cultural estrangement, social isolation and self-alienation. Second, so alienation can be an individual feeling or a shared

feeling of a minority community. Third, there can be multiple causes of alienation ranging from economic, technological or sociological to philosophic-existential and psychological; Alienation can be product of unsuitable social structure like capitalism or, more fundamentally, it can be the result of man's inability to come to terms with the very absurdity of existence or to manage the split between conscious and unconscious psychological forces within himself. Fourth, the terms like disaffiliation, dissociation, estrangement, self-alienation seem to have to have been used almost interchangeably. Although it would be ideal to take in to account the different shades of meaning implied them, there is no much harm in using them alternatively as they largely share the core meaning. We shall attempt a detailed discussion of the theme of both the novels with the help of this theoretical background.

Broadly speaking, Comparative Literature as an independent discipline emerged in the West at the beginning of 19th century and in India at the end of it. However, despite India's multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment – which is so favourable for the comparative approach – it has not yet adequately proliferated in this country. The 'procrastination' may have its roots, as Nirmal Jain argues²¹, in socio-political and economic determinants, but it is to be simultaneously noted that while Indian comparative theorists are oscillating between two positions: Indian Comparative Literature and Comparative Indian Literature, their European counterparts have not fully succeeded so far in precisely defining the nature, scope and method of Comparative Literature. Nonetheless, if – as Amyia Dev pleads²² - India's third-world-position lends

greater validity for Comparative Literature in this country, then serious attempts need to be made to devise an indigenous comparative perspective in which literary studies can be undertaken both on intra-national and international levels.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

As mentioned at the outset, the present study concerns itself with the comparison of *Kosla* and *The Catcher in the Rye* in terms of theme, structure and style. The present researcher is of the view that a comparative study such as this of the two works in question will not only be useful for their better interpretation but also to reveal how writers placed in apparently diverse geographical and cultural contexts present themselves grappling with similar human-life crisis. Simultaneously, it must be noted that this study is not limited to the analysis of aspects of similarity alone; it also places equal emphasis on the differing aspects of both the novels. In fact, 'The Catcher' is often compared with its 19th century predecessor 'Huckleberry Finn' written by Mark Twain and there are good reasons to do so. On the other hand, though *Kosla* is first of its kind in the history of Marathi fiction, there are novels like 'Barrister Anirudha Dhopeswarkar' by Bhau Padhye, which justifiably invite their comparison with *Kosla*. However, only on *Kosla* and 'The Catcher' as this study focuses, the researcher has confined himself to the detailed discussion of only these two.

METHODOLOGY USED :

Obviously, the researcher is out to use what is termed as 'Comparative Method'. However, it should be made clear that, it is not necessarily a study in terms of 'Reception', 'Influence', 'Analogy' etc. The researcher is interested in comparing *Kosla* and 'The Catcher' *with* each other and arrive at a common ground crossing the geographical, linguistic and cultural frontiers.

For a comparitist, it is always desirable to base his discussion on his reading of the works in the original, in order to arrive at authentic conclusions; the present researcher has no problem in following this view as both the works in question are accessible to him. However, in the course of discussion, the researcher has taken liberty to quote from the English version of *Kosla* entitled 'Cocoon' by Sudhakar Marathe²³

CHAPTER SCHEME:

The present dissertation is divided in to five chapters. The first chapter, of course, the 'Introduction' presents a review the critical reading of both the novels viz. *Kosla* and *The Catcher in the Rye*, which is followed by some direction in the direction of placing the Bhalchandra Nemade and J. D. Salinger in their respective fictional traditions. In addition to this the theoretical discussion about the concept of 'alienation' and the present status of comparative literature in India is also incorporated in the same chapter.

The second chapter undertakes the comparison on the thematic level while the third on the level of structure and the fourth chapter on the level of language and style. The fifth presents the outcome of the study by way of conclusion.

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- ¹ Anant Kadam, Bhalchandra Nemade: Motha Lekhak Motha Manusahi from Changadevchatu-shtyasambandhi, Shabdalya Prakashan, Shrirampur, 2001, p.482-483.
- ² Chandrashekhar Jahagirdar, introduction to Coccon, by Sudhakar Marathe, Macmillan India Limited, 1997, p.xi.
- ³ Shankar Sarada, Bhankas, Vaitag, Thorach Ahe Vagaire, from Koslabaddal, ed. Baba Bhand, Dhara Prakashan, 1979. p.89.
- ⁴ *ibid.*, p.73.
- ⁵ George Steiner, "The Salinger Industry", *The Nation* 189. (November 14, 1959) pp. 360-63. Reprinted in *if you really want to know: a catcher casebook*, ed. Malcolm M. Marsden, p.64.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, p.64.
- ⁷ Rajan Gavas, Introduction to Changadevchatushtyasambandhi, Shabdalya Prakashan, Shriram-pur, 2001, p.13.
- ⁸ Nemade Bhalachandra, *Tikaswaya'mvar*, p.54
- ⁹ Paul Engel, *Chicago Tribune*, (15 July, 1951) ..From Introduction, Salzman Jack, "New Essays on The Catcher in the Rye", Cambridge University Press (1991), p 5
- ¹⁰ Harrison Smith, 'Saturday Review, *Ibid.*, P. 5
- ¹¹ Earnest Jones, "The nation", *Ibid.*, p. 5
- ¹² Jack Salzman, "New Essays on The Catcher in the Rye", Cambridge University Press (1991), pp 14-15
- ¹³ James Miller 'Ibid.', p.12
- ¹⁴ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, volume, 1.p. 574.
- ¹⁵ Josephson, Eric and Marry, *Man Alone, Alienation in Modern Society*, New York, 1962. p.13.
- ¹⁶ Stanley Moore, *Ibid.* p. 78..
- ¹⁷ Gwynn Nettler cited from Edwards Paul, ed. *Ibid.* p. 78
- ¹⁸ Jean- Yves Calver, *Ibid.* p. 78
- ¹⁹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol.1. p. 574.
- ²⁰ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Progress Publishers, Moscow.1977. pp.71-74
- ²¹ Nirmal Jain, "Comparative Literature: Indian Context" in Amiya Dev and Sisir Kumar Das (eds.) "Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice"(1989) p.80
- ²² Amiya Dev, "Towards Comparative Indian Literature" in K A. Koshy (ed.), "Towards Comparative Indian Literature" (Aligarh : Department of Modern Indian Languages, Aligarh Muslim University, 1987), p. 19.
- ²³ Sudhakar Marathe, "Coccon" Mc Millon, India Ltd., 1997.