



Diversity in Emotion (s): Reading Mapping the Mind, Minding the Map

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ABSTRACT

Literature, as a piece of conventional dramas and revolutionary analogies stands crucial to reading of modern texts and ideas. "Mapping the Mind, Minding the Map," edited by Basudhara Roy and Jaydeep Sarangi, is an anthology that brings together the works of twenty contemporary Indian English poets. The anthology includes contributions from notable poets such as Adil Jussawalla, Arundhati Subramaniam, Ashwani Kumar, Bashabi Fraser, Bibhu Padhi, Jayant Mahapatra, K. Satchidanandan, K. Srilata, Keki N. Daruwalla, Lakshmi Kannan, Mamang Dai, Nabina Das, Robin S. Ngangom, Sanjukta Dasgupta, Tabish Khair, Usha Akella, and Yogesh Patel. The anthology serves as a poetic journey that encourages readers to reflect on how landscapes shape identity and to consider the interplay between internal cognition and external reality. "Mapping the Mind, Minding the Map" offers a holistic exploration of locating oneself through language, making it a valuable resource for those interested in contemporary Indian poetry and the intricate connections between place and self. This paper following an empirical methodology would explore how the emotional variabilities are justly arrayed through the poems.

Introduction

Mapping the Mind, Minding the Map edited by Basudhara Roy and Jaydeep Sarangi is an epigrammatic anthology that brings together a diverse collection of contemporary voices from the Indian subcontinent and beyond. With contributions from renowned poets such as Adil Jussawalla, Arundhati Subramaniam, and Jayant Mahapatra, this 391-page volume offers a rich tapestry of poetic explorations that delve into the existential dilemmas and cultural landscapes of our time. One of the anthology's greatest strengths is its inclusion of poets from a variety of cultural and geographical backgrounds. This diversity not only broadens the scope of the collection but also provides readers with a multifaceted view of contemporary issues. Each poet brings their unique perspective, creating a dialogue that spans different experiences and locations.

The anthology features a selection of high-quality poems from established and emerging poets alike. The contributions from poets like Arundhati Subramaniam and Keki N. Daruwalla are particularly noteworthy for their lyrical precision and thematic depth. The collection stands out for its ability to balance well-known voices with those of lesser-known but equally talented poets. The anthology's focus on existential dilemmas and contemporary issues is both timely and relevant. The poems engage with themes such as identity, displacement, and the search for meaning in a rapidly changing world. This thematic coherence ties the diverse contributions together, providing readers with a reflective and thought-provoking experience. Through its rich mosaic of memories and experiences, the collection enhances readers' consciousness and deepens their understanding of the human condition. The poems confront a range of sentiments—from hardship and despair to compassion and resilience—offering valuable insights into how individuals navigate adversity and cultivate strength. By addressing both the profound and the mundane aspects of life, *Mapping the Mind, Minding the Map* contributes significantly to contemporary poetry, encouraging readers to reflect on their own experiences and engage with broader cultural and existential themes.

Methodology

Empirical methodology refers to a systematic approach to acquiring knowledge through direct observation, experimentation, and evidence-based analysis. It prioritizes the use of measurable and verifiable data to investigate phenomena, often employing methods such as surveys, experiments, case studies, and fieldwork. This approach is grounded in objectivity and seeks to minimize biases by adhering to established scientific protocols. By emphasizing real-world data and reproducibility,

empirical methodology enables researchers to test hypotheses, validate theories, and generate reliable conclusions. It is widely used across disciplines, including natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, to ensure rigor and credibility in research outcomes. Applying this structural pattern here, we see how the book navigates through the mind and emotions in terms of words.

Woman in Landscape

Few poems ranged from the horizons of womanhood to mnemonic lanes of ontological substance. Like Jussawala's "Woman in Landscape" talks of how the poet crafts a vivid and evocative depiction of a scene that blurs the line between dream and reality. It calls from the Kali inspired women and sheds of boundaries. The poem opens with a description of a distant, almost mythical land where traditional values and rigid structures persist—where laws are immutable, and social hierarchies remain unchallenged. This imagined realm, populated by a prince who remains untainted and a society that maintains a stark division between the rich and the poor, serves as a backdrop to the poet's vision. As the poem transitions from this idealized vision to the tangible reality of the scene, the focus shifts to a specific moment: a woman, aged and leading a thin cow, is captured as she traverses a desolate landscape.

The poem reflects several feminist elements that are interwoven with themes of identity, agency, and resistance. The poem likely examines the relationship between a woman's inner self and the external landscapes she inhabits, symbolizing how societal structures shape her identity and lived experiences. The poem foregrounds the woman's voice and perspective, emphasizing her individuality amidst the often-patriarchal landscapes of society. This assertion challenges the erasure of women's identities in traditional narratives. The woman in the poem is portrayed as more than a passive observer of her surroundings. Her engagement with the landscape symbolizes an active reclaiming of space and agency, reflecting feminist ideals of autonomy and empowerment. The poem critiques societal constructs that confine women within predetermined roles. By positioning the woman as an integral part of the landscape, it challenges notions of invisibility and subjugation. The feminist adage that "the personal is political" resonates in the poem, as it delves into the woman's personal experiences while subtly addressing broader socio-political issues related to gender and power. The landscape serves as a metaphor for the woman's resilience and multifaceted identity. It embodies both her struggles and her strength, presenting a harmonious yet complex relationship between nature and femininity. These

elements collectively underscore the poem's exploration of feminist themes, highlighting the ways women navigate, resist, and transform the landscapes—literal and metaphorical—that they inhabit.

The poet's act of photographing this scene highlights a disjunction between the envisioned grandeur of the mythical land and the stark, unadorned reality of the present. The imagery of the "parched river bed" and "abandoned well" contrasts sharply with the initial dream-like description, underscoring a sense of disillusionment. The concluding lines emphasize the disparity between the poet's romanticized expectations and the actual evidence captured in the photographs. Despite the detailed and intimate portrayal of the woman and her cow, the broader landscape or country that might have once been imagined remains absent from the images. This absence points to a profound realization about the nature of perception and the limits of idealized visions in capturing the essence of reality. Ultimately, the poem reflects on the tension between fantasy and reality, between the grand narratives we construct and the often stark and unembellished truths we encounter.

Haldi

The poem carries distinct feminist elements that engage with themes of tradition, gender roles, and the cultural symbolism of turmeric (haldi). Turmeric, a deeply ingrained element in South Asian culture, is often associated with rituals, healing, and femininity, making it a powerful motif for exploring feminist ideas. Turmeric, traditionally linked with purity, beauty, and marriage in patriarchal contexts, is reimagined in the poem to challenge these conventional associations. The poem may critique the ways in which cultural rituals enforce gender norms, transforming haldi from a symbol of conformity into one of agency and strength. The poem highlights the often-overlooked contributions of women in preserving cultural traditions. By focusing on the physical and emotional labor surrounding haldi, the poem acknowledges the resilience and creativity of women. Turmeric's association with healing serves as a metaphor for women's resilience and self-reclamation. The poem portrays haldi as a tool for nurturing not just the body but also the spirit, reflecting a feminist reclaiming of traditional symbols for personal empowerment.

Through its imagery and narrative, the poem may explore how haldi is tied to rituals that enforce traditional gender roles, such as marriage ceremonies. It critiques how these rituals often reduce women to symbols of purity and domesticity. Haldi, derived from the earth, symbolizes the organic strength of women. The poem draws parallels between the nurturing properties of turmeric and the inherent power

of women to sustain and heal themselves and others. By weaving these elements into the fabric of "Haldi," the poem uses a culturally rich motif to explore the intersections of tradition, identity, and feminist resistance, transforming a simple substance into a profound symbol of gendered experience and empowerment.

Liquidity of Words

Few titles like Haldi, Bhakti have been an enterprise to the linguistic indexes that could make reader fall in love with the fluidity of the language in a three-dimensional perspective. The poem titled in "Come Sit with Me by the Silla de Paita", is where the poet invites a powerful and evocative dialogue with Manuela Sáenz, a historical figure renowned for her revolutionary spirit and passionate love for Simón Bolívar. Set against the backdrop of the Pacific Ocean, with its "gossiping waves" and a wind described as "a bow throwing arrows", the poem blends imagery of natural grandeur with a call to historical and personal remembrance. The poem opens with a warm and intimate invitation to Manuela Sáenz, addressed as "Dame-of-the sun," a title that both venerates her and reflects her prominent role in the tapestry of Pan-American history. The "red carpet" and the exchange of "love-bites" symbolize a shared, deep connection between the poet and Sáenz, emphasizing both a personal bond and a mutual recognition of their respective passions and struggles. The poem explores themes of defiance and freedom through imagery of "Krishna, Bolivar" and "the horseback of our bones," evoking a sense of unity and shared revolutionary fervor. The poet contrasts the conventional expectations of "husband" with the liberating choice of a "chosen one" suggesting a rejection of societal norms in favor of an unrestrained, albeit tumultuous, passion.

Through the metaphor of embroidery with "stars of love" and walking "barefoot on a road of thorns," the poet illustrates the sacrifices and struggles inherent in such passionate pursuits. This imagery not only reflects the physical and emotional trials faced but also underscores the transformative power of such love. The latter part of the poem highlights a contrast between the poet's own solitary devotion and Sáenz's revolutionary love. The poet laments the isolation in a world governed by "gold and gravity," while celebrating Sáenz's more dynamic and transient love. Sáenz's "volcano heart" and her unyielding commitment to Bolívar's fading dreams are portrayed as symbols of revolutionary zeal and enduring hope. In the concluding lines, the poet expresses a profound admiration for Sáenz's capacity to love both fiercely and freely, positioning her as a figure that illuminated a path of liberation through her emotional and political dedication. The poem reflects on the tension between eternal devotion to a divine ideal and

the more fleeting, yet deeply impactful, love for a mortal and revolutionary cause. Overall, "Come Sit with Me by the Silla de Paita" is a lyrical meditation on love, freedom, and historical memory. It honors the revolutionary spirit of Manuela Sáenz while also reflecting on the poet's own solitary journey and the complexities of devotion in the face of changing times.

Conclusion

Mapping the Mind, Minding the Map presents a diverse array of poetic forms, including prose poetry, typographic experimentation, and linguistic innovation, addressing significant themes related to urban Indian identity, acceptance, adaptation, and cultural estrangement. This anthology, published by Sahitya Akademi, redefines traditional poetic boundaries by integrating verbal, vocal, and visual elements into a unified new form. The collection features ten poems from each of the included poets, collectively crafting a complex tapestry of emotions, experiences, and cultural reflections. The anthology offers a multifaceted exploration of themes such as womanhood, the body, institutions, family, and love. Each poem functions as a carefully constructed ensemble of language that invites readers to engage with the poets' emotional states and the intricate realities of their lived experiences. The poems collectively provide a nuanced reflection on "contemporary life, revealing both personal and societal insights" (Roy, 13). The anthology serves as a dynamic itinerary for readers, guiding them through a spectrum of emotional and intellectual terrains. The book is a commendable effort by editors Basudhara Roy and Jaydeep Sarangi to present a broad and inclusive spectrum of contemporary poetry. The anthology's strength lies in its diverse representation of voices and its exploration of significant existential themes. However, its impact is somewhat diminished by inconsistencies in poem quality and a lack of cohesive editorial vision. For poetry enthusiasts and scholars interested in contemporary Indian and sub-continental voices, this anthology offers valuable insights and a broad cultural panorama. For casual readers, the book may require patience and openness to a varied poetic landscape. Overall, it is a significant contribution to contemporary poetry anthologies, with room for further refinement in its presentation and cohesion.

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