Bibliotheca: The Road to Wisdom

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Quest in to a Creative Self

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Keywords

Creative self, library, literary wisdom, self transformation,
transformative centers

Abstract

There is a path which takes any creative intellect from the world of information to that of wisdom through the world of knowledge. This path for creative realization is indeed resonant with the 'Upanishadic' method of spiritual realization, i.e. the transformative ideology of the East, consisting of the phases of 'Sravana', 'Manana', and 'Nididhyasana' in that order, with the outcome of the phases being Information, Knowledge and Wisdom respectively. This has been seen to be true in the case of legendary literary work and unparalleled epic of the East, Mahabharata, inspired the master writer of India, MT Vasudevan Nair in penning an equally legendary work 'Randamoozham' (Second Turn), in this comparatively limited linguistic realm and the role played by
libraries in that creative endeavor. The literary creative route of 'Randamoozham' the author vindicating the hypothesis; 'Library is the right fulgent path for transforming information through knowledge to wisdom'.

I Background and context

Libraries: the sacred centers of transformative meditation, incubators of integral personalities, and wombs of wisdom. It is from these wombs that emerges an Einstein, a Freud, a Marx, or an Osho. It is the same secretive meditation that can create a Dostoyevsky. It is from this pregnant silence and the womb of darkness that the world enlightening thinkers, intellectuals, philosophers, scientists, spiritual leaders, and authors have emerged. Libraries are ideally the anthills of creativity wherein hidden are the thoughts and words awaiting liberation at the slightest existential provocation.

The whole universe of the trunk, bark, branches, twigs, flowers and fruits called a tree is hidden in a small seed. As well hidden is the comfort of the shade and fresh air that a tree may offer. So hidden are the potentials of hibernating organisms too. The same transformative chrysalis is an essential prerequisite to every creative expression. This phase of meditative silence and withdrawal is what the secret behind all intellectual and creative flowering. It is indeed through such a transformation that a genius become manifest. Exactly this transformation is what libraries facilitate.
In this century of 'information floods' it is high time that the importance and need of libraries as centers of knowledge be highlighted, owing to the unique way in which they function in transforming human lives. Libraries are no mere centers of information/knowledge, but a fulgent path to wisdom. This study is to illustrate how libraries function in transforming information stored in a creative individual's mind into wisdom through valid knowledge, with the resources and reach it provides him/her with, and thus to substantiate the timeless significance of libraries.

II The idea of transformation

Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, and Upanishads form the four step transformative ideology of the East, commonly known as the Vedic literature. Upanishads or the concluding parts of Vedas are the fruition of a long dialectical process that lasted for centuries together in the spiritual and intellectual realms of the East, not in any organized manner, but rather in a scattered and independent mode.

The word 'Upanishad' consists of three roots-'Upa' means 'Near', 'Ni' means 'down' and 'Shad' means 'Be seated'. So, 'Upanishad' literally means to be seated at the feet of the Guru, or spiritual guide, with an aim to receive the teaching-teaching on ultimate things! It is believed that a Guru will deliver the complete meaning of Upanishads only after understanding the disciple's ability. Thus this teaching method aims the complete development of individual capacities of the disciples. Three stages are employed in this process: 'Sravana-Manana and
Nididhyasana'. Sravana is the stage in which meticulous listening takes place, Manana is the stage in which in depth meditation on what has been listened to takes place, and the Nididhyasana is that stage in which whatever has been listened to and meditated upon is strived to be realized in one's own experience, thereby transforming one's being altogether!

The investigator intends to capitalize on this rigorous process of self transformation by drawing analogies between it and what actually happens in the literary creative process. A path which leads an individual from information to knowledge and from knowledge to wisdom can be seen there. This is analogous to the above mentioned scheme of Upanishadic instruction. The stages of Information, knowledge, and wisdom correspond to the stages of Sravana, Manana, and Nididhyasana respectively. However in this particular process the individual him-self or her-self become the master as well as the disciple. Even though this transformative process is dependent on various external elements too, the individual's insight plays the key role. Thus it is a kind of self-transformative process which is able to realize only through experience.

III Why 'Randamoozham'?

An epic be retold strictly in humanistic terms without losing the aura of what makes it an epic in the first place. True to the author's claim in the epilogue, the work doesn’t deviate from the basic framework of the source-the great epic Mahabharata, but largely capitalizes on the
instances of pregnant silence of the great poet Krishnadvaipayana Vyasa, towards what is worth calling a humanistic reconstruction and a psychoanalytic deconstruction of the epic from the point of view of the most authentic, human and simplistic protagonist-Bhima. As can be seen in the novel, despite being the mightiest warrior in the epic, Bhima is the truest representative of what may be called the 'timeless man' with all strengths, weaknesses, cares, concerns, fears and follies that are characteristic of it!

No wonder; in addition to what there really is in the epic, much has been attributed to him in comic terms over time, for sense of humor is what makes humans a unique creature!

Through Bhima of 'Randamoozham', one can indeed relive the epic in humanistic terms! Can look from within the human crises in it, be part of them, and feel them for one-self! Can put one-self in his shoes and realize the worth of the claim that Mahabharata is the ultimatum as far as human life is concerned-social or psychophysical!

IV Methodology

The Investigator focuses on the ability of the chosen individual to attain wisdom through the medium of literature and tries to elucidate the different stages of information gathering and knowledge formation which lead the writer to acquire literary wisdom and express the same in a creative form.
Admittedly, this novel was the fruition of a unique psychoanalytical and hermeneutical rereading, which is characteristic of MT Vasudevan Nair, of the original epic, both from the original author's point of view as well as from various protagonists' points of view. And in that pursuit the writer has indeed transformed a spectrum of information that had accumulated in that creative mind, ranging from folk tales rooted in the epic which he was told in his childhood, through various formal literary and historical studies of it to the original epic as such, into something worth calling wisdom. And this was done for sure, as is pointed out in the epilogue to the work, by way of extensive research and analysis that he carried out over decades together, which transformed the information first into valid knowledge and then into a peculiar kind of transformation. By interviewing the author this aspect is aimed to be brought out elaborately.

A case study through interviewing method is intended, in the long conversation he mentioned his childhood, various mental states during the writing process of 'Randamoozham', year of research in Mahabharata and his diverse experiences in reading. In addition to all this experience, Investigator's focused on the core text, 'Randamoozham'.

V Analysis and major findings

It is proposed to analyze the data obtained through the interview in three stages, viz., the stage of information, that of knowledge and that of wisdom, in the lines of the 'Upanishadic' triple stage mode: 'Sravana-
Manana-Nididhyasana'. Though treated under different headings, it should be born in mind that the three stages are contiguous and form an integral creative process of a literary work.

V.1 The stage of information

Three questions and response to them are analyzed at the stage of information.

The first question was with regard to the influence that the stories related to the epics and other anecdotes springing from the historical and cultural background of his land and life there, had on the author as a child, and the way that influence contributed to his most creative and mature work chosen for analysis. The question was put in the light of a relevant statement that he made in the epilogue of the same work.

MT answered, "Just as I said there, the fact of having born here and having grown listening to the folklore, epic and mythology of this land is indeed the inspiration. There are two ever-revered epic heroes for Indian children-Hanuman of the Ramayana and Bhima of the Mahabharata. Both are embodiment of physical prowess. Rural children of Kerala experience many a restriction in the name of Bhima. "Don't stick your leg out of the mattress while sleeping. It will make your strength leak!" Long ago Bhima was given a small mattress intentionally by Duryodana for reducing his strength. What did Bhima do? He limited
his leg on the mattress sticking out his head! That's all! The child laughs, amazed at Bhima’s cleverness!"

"There are several stories like this. I was being grown hearing such taboos. Nowadays our children have special interest towards epics as in the case of histories. Several warrior heroes like Sivaji are there. I do see the same thing when I observe children of my home. Now there is a child Bhima, 'Chhota Bheem' for kids. Such things have fast influence on our children. Once there were illustrated classics, 'Amarchitra Katha'. For some time it was out of circulation. Now it has come back. Nowadays children have ample opportunities to know and enjoy all these things. But there were no such illustrated stories or child literature in my childhood days. The only thing I heard was some epic stories from folk. There were restrictions on children related to these stories. It was a part of rural culture and folklore. From the rural elementary school I learned 'Sreekrishna Charitham Manipravalam' from Koppan Master. There, children were made to recite poems. Sitting among them I also studied some versicles. But there was no Mahabharata. Thereafter when I studied in Kumaranallur high school there was a practice of other teachers engaging the class in the absence of any teacher. Thus Vasunni Nambiar Master comes, native of our Malamakkavu. He would tell us many stories in several periods instead of teaching. Those stories would never end. We were excited. In the evening, when master returned home we used to escort him. He would go on telling stories until he reached home. These kinds of stories made my childhood days enjoyable. This experience tempted me to read more. The works of Alexandre Dumas made me read passionately. With
unrelenting enthusiasm and increasing pleasure I finished books like 'The Count of Monte Cristo', 'The Three Musketeers', etc. 'Monte Cristo', the edition I saw then was about seven hundred pages. It took several days for me to finish. Thus my childhood days were affluent with stories."

**The Investigator's second question:** "Though mythical blending and other additions made out of devoutness meddle with the power and beauty of a beautiful poem, aren't they indeed appreciable to the child mind of India? In this sense can we claim myths to be sublime creation of art?"

MT replied, "Once my friend Ananda Moorthy said; there are two distinct languages in India, Ramayana and Mahabharata. It's absolutely true. Wherever we reach some stories would be prevalent there related to Ramayana or Mahabharata. The natives there popularize this much authentically. Thus these epics are related to people of all regions. Children all over the region do hear this. The only difference is that this may be in different ways. Ramayana is of many types. There is a book titled, 'Many Ramayanas'. This is compiled by a lady scholar gathering various versions of Ramayana available around the world. Even for Thailand, they have their own Ramayana. Myths entertain children at all time. It's true of all countries. Every nation like Norway, Sweden, and Greece has its own myth. They have their own powerful warriors. Those myths might have been so deep rooted there. We have many other myths in addition to Ramayana and Mahabharata. But these two are
most popular. That's all. Children at all ages are fond of such superhuman stories weaving myths. Child mind would indeed enjoy this."

True to the overall theme of the first stage of investigation, the Investigator's last query was; "How far do these epic stories transmitted as Grandma Stories and verbatim influence a person in his later life? Would you spell out from experience?"

MT replied, "Sure, these myths can exert great influence in later years. Hanuman and Bhima are the characters that have influenced the children of India the most, also Ganapathi. Certainly children imbibe some valuable lessons from these epics into their life because they are purely sensitive. Values like service, righteousness, sympathy, honesty etc are transmitted into children through them. These cast a deep impact on their future life. These stories are mostly presented before children as super human and celestially fabricated stories. Those who have read Bharata attentively will be convinced that it is not the true Bhima that is portrayed before the tender minds devouring children's literature and illustrated classics. Bhima has not only a huge body, but also a great mind. The Bhima of the Mahabharata is a human being, an archetypal image with human weaknesses and strengths. Several scholars who have done studies of the human story that is the Mahabharata have cursed those who added childish stories and inconsistencies to it to satisfy the whims of priesthood."

"These sorts of stories influenced me also. In the times when I used to feel content by adorning the dim wall of the porch of my old house with
pictures of poets and the story writers framed in glass. It was the time when as an impoverished boy I used to wear my worn out button less knickers fixed with plantain fiber. Then I had only one thought-literature! I had only one desire always whether I walked or sat-I must write; must become a litterateur."

"These kinds of anecdotes and stories cast deep influence in me due to this aptitude. Enthusiasm in composition has been the capital, since childhood, for my creative career. It is this same creative urge that stimulates those little fingers that make castles with sand on the seashore, as well as the pen of the greatest novelist, which wrote 'The Brothers Karamazov'. Every creative act gives birth to a whole new world!"

_Evidently the 'hearsay-gathering' of information characteristic of the childhood has played an influential role in the path to knowledge. And unlike any other child in any other part of the world, the author had been fortunate enough to enjoy a wide spectrum of such information in the forms of epical stories, anecdotes and mythology. And admittedly the first stage of 'Sravana' can be seen to have been fulfilled sufficiently!_

**V.2 The stage of knowledge**

The stage corresponding to 'Manana' is analyzed here. The analysis aims at seeing how the information supposedly gathered at the previous stage assumes the status of knowledge through an iterative process of
'learned' selective reading and contemplation. In this stage, Investigator asked four questions.

The first question: "When did you start observing Mahabharata distinct from the environment of grandma stories and verbatim with a research mind?"

MT replied, "In November 1977, after death came very close to me and then withdrew, I longed to complete at least this novel in the time left to me. I prepared mentally to write and started reading and gathering information. But I could finish it only in 1983. I am grateful to time for the days in its infinite mercy it allowed me. I toiled for more than ten years for this creation, reading and writing. It took more than six years exclusively for writing. I used to speculate Mahabharata as a story of joint family. Collapsed family relation-men entangled by it in my own village had been a subject to me before. The only difference is that I am dealing here with a family story set in a more ancient time."

Investigator's second query: "Would you speak out in detail about the libraries in India such as public libraries and University libraries which proved resourceful in the creative process of 'Randamoozham'?"

MT responded, "I consider the reading and study in connection with the preparation for this a great gain. I am indebted to my friends at Nagpur, Kozhikode, Bombay and other Universities who helped me avail the books to materialize this. Availability of books was important, purchased some. Especially beneficial were the Studies by Sanskrit scholars. Having
read 'Bharata-sangraha' of Rajaji and the complete translation of Mahabharata by Thampuran, I felt some more readings to be necessary. For this I must rely on libraries. I got Kisari Mohan Ganguli's English prose translation of Bharata from the Calicut University library. Now it consists of four volumes. But in those days it had eight volumes. I got all of them from the University library. In those days I think that it was available there only. It is Kisari Mohan's English prose translation that I find to be the best among the translations of Bharata-beautiful use of the language. This book has a history. At the end of 19th century, Dr Reynold Rost of the India Office Library wrote to Pratap Chandra Roy, a leading publisher in Calcutta, pointing out the necessity for an authoritative prose translation of the Mahabharata in English. Roy agreed with him. But whom could he find to take on the responsibility? Several people discouraged him, saying the project might be considered against the Hindu religion. Roy discussed with Ishvar Chandra Vidyasagar. He proposed that in order to have uniformity one and the same person had to do complete translation. He found a person who declared he was ready to take it on: Kisari Mohan Ganguli. Having toiled for thirteen years from 1883 to 1896, he completed the translation. He was insistent that his name should not be revealed. When the work began to come out in serial from in 1904, the translator's name was not mentioned."

"This book was initially known on the name of Pratap Chandra Roy. British Government honoured Roy for Bharata translation. It was only in 1974 when the book was republished we came to know about Ganguli's herculean task. Ganguli's Bharata is a translation that sustains poetic
glory. Whenever doubts arise, he points out the differences between the Poona and Calcutta editions. There is also a Kumbakonam edition. Several studies based on these three editions have been of great help to me."

"I have made use of many other books from Calicut University library for this. To obtain so many books was difficult. I had a friend at Madras Doordarshan who told me that necessary books could be purchased since a good fund was at his disposal for extension of their library. So I made a long list of books referring the catalogue of Sanskrit texts with the publishers Motilal Banarsidass in Delhi and handed it over to him. They were so expensive. My generous friend was ready to procure the required books worth around ten thousand rupees in the name of the institution. After my reading and note making I safely returned them. Then he sealed those books and officially handed over them to their librarian. It was a unique experience. Many a Sanskrit scholars were ready to clarify my doubts accurately. The sources of this work have such an unknown stories behind them. I made arrangements to obtain books from North Indian libraries through my friends for this purpose. I returned them safely after I had finished making necessary notes in due time. Those books were made available on such condition. I utilized libraries of Pune, Bombay, Nagpur, and Lahore for my creative pursuit. Some of the rarest books were obtained from these libraries. I procured a book from Pakistan in order to learn warfare of the time of Bharata. Thus sitting amidst a heap of books, reference books, spending years together I fulfilled my creative pursuit. It was books from various
libraries in different regions of the subcontinent that equipped me for that."

The third question was: "Which were the great books that created proper background and made integral contribution in the craft of 'Randamoozham'? Which were the books through which you travelled with the mind of a researcher?"

MT said, "Complete translation of Kunjukuttan Thampuran and Kisari Mohan Ganguli's English prose translation have influenced me the most. Ezhuthachan's 'Kilipattu', Rajaji's 'Bharata-sangraha' and Kuttikrishna Marar's 'Bharataparyadanam' were keenly observed and studied!"

"When the epoch of the Mahabharata becomes the setting for a novel, innumerable doubts arise confusing the author. He has to acquaint himself with countless details: the landscapes of that era, its agricultural practices and lifestyle, the architecture of the houses, dress, ornaments, food habits, objects used in everyday living and so on. He has to study the codes of war and weapons. English translations of Sanskrit works are very helpful in these areas, particularly 'Vedic India', 'Vedic Index' by A.A. McDonald and A.B. Keith, Ralph Griffith's study of the 'Yajur Veda', Georg Buhler's 'Sacred Laws of the East', Julius Eggerling's 'Shata Patha Brahmanam', Pandit Rajaram's 'Dhanurveda Sankalanam', Pandit Ajaya Mitra Sastri's 'India in the Brihad Samhita', and Yohann J. Meyer's 'Sexual Life in Ancient Bharatha'. Other works that helped me to study the culture of that epoch are too numerous to be mentioned and I will not list them here" (363-364).
The last question in this stage: "How much endeavoring was it for MT, the prolonged reading experience of Mahabharata? How much it differed from the sweet restlessness of the 'Story Teller in his smithy', having prepared notes on collection of ingredients and that of the background preparation in the creation of other works. Could you recall?"

The reply: "Yes, of course it differed. It was indeed a strange area for me, having no pedantry in Sanskrit. I went to my village with a Jeep load of books. On writing some books are to be kept with us for reference, although many books were returned after reading and note making. When the work is based on Mahabharata the writer can't avail full liberty. I did avail only permissible liberties. Great research is needed to recreate life of ancient times. Every detail related to the life of Vedic age is to be obtained. I had to study about 'Vedas', 'Upanishads', 'Brihad Samhita' and 'Kuttani-mata' in order to get minute aspects of life of that period."

As is clear from the author's responses quoted above this second phase had indeed been the most laborious one. Admittedly materials had to be sought from all possible resources mostly libraries across the country and abroad. The author had to undergo a kind of chrysalis meditating up on various possibilities and probabilities of interpreting the pregnant silences of Veda Vyasa, and at the same time had to take conscious efforts at overcoming his linguistic limitations. And to any one's astonishment, this whole process of 'Manana' took a time span of more than a decade, culminating in a process of creation which too
lasted almost six years. This creative phase in tune with 'Nididhyasana' is the next and the last stage of analysis.

V.3 The stage of wisdom

In this stage, the Investigator asked five questions, with the aim of bringing to light how the knowledge and insights accumulated in the last phase were realized in the form of the magnum opus of the author- 'Randamoozham'.

The first question was: "How do you identify an experience to be a potential seed for a plot? How does it take roots in your heart? Would you please explain the sweet restlessness starting from such conception of a story-seed which remains until its holistic development into a full-fledged story-alive based on the creative process of 'Randamoozham'? Would you spell out in detail?"

MT said, "Sometimes I accidentally become part and parcel of an incident or a long forgotten one is brought back to memory for some reasons; or an event or a character which I hear about touches me deeply. This causes disturbance in me. It lingers in my mind as a blot-not of the kind which may vanish simply by sharing with others. But of the kind which doesn't get evacuated of the mind even when spoken out, and which remains as a tailing causing restlessness. It may be of an event, character, and memory etc.-an entry in the mind! I become aware that this would form an embryo. Even if I refrain from writing, it will sprout in my mind as an organic growth. It would capture me at one stage or
the other. Such fertilization may occur from silly affairs. It's impossible to predict the nature of its flowers and seeds. Only on completion of the work can I sense its final mellowness."

"The seed of a story can be compared to a flower bud that peeps out from the entanglement of bushes. Creation is the development of this bud clearing off bushes and retaining only requisite few to effect background beauty. Imagine a wasp erecting its nest in my mind; collecting things from here and there, fusing them with gum, collapses happening somewhere, rearranging again. The creative process runs roughly like this. Once the story is conceived thus, involving the said restlessness all emotional and cognitive activities revolve around it spontaneously."

"I do script full story in my mind, correction, crossing, wiping, measurement and everything takes place in mind. Circumstance is to be fully created in my mind. In the bit of time that I wish to fix in the story, in that atmosphere everything that I intend to write happens. I can see, hear and experience all. If that world is found befitting, everything is ready. Picking up pieces of paper, then I would sit to write (18-19)."

"Since the work was based on Mahabharata the great challenge I felt was in the style of language. It must never be a style that I used to write with. It should be a language related to that period and culture. It must not be a language similar to that in some other popular novels of mine. Just listen to this; 'The delicate fingers of heavenly nymphets, plucking Santana flowers'. Santana flowers do not belong to us. It's from heaven.
We would reach true culture of Mahabharata only when such a language emerges. Nevertheless I was determined from the beginning to give importance to human situations. There are various perspectives from which to view the work of Vyasa. Suppose we read this as a human saga, his Mahabharata is indeed a glorious work. Basic human feelings are the same forever. Basic values are also the same. Kunti, Draupadi, Bhima, Ghatotkacha, etc., are significant character-sketches even in this period. Men like Yudhishtira, Duryodhana, and Dussasana are still in there around us."

"Bhima is the most humane character and earthly man. Ghatotkacha was more attractive to me than Bhima. It was through Ghatotkacha that I reached Bhima. Their life is interconnected. Ghatotkacha is the first issue of Pandavas. The bride came first was Hidumbi, all though she wasn't given the status of bride."

The second question: "You have stated in the Epilogue to 'Randumoozham', "The theme that I have developed is certain human crises in Mahabharata. I bow before Krishnadvaiapayana Vyasa who did keep moments of pregnant silence in his narration, which prompted my thinking that way". How did MT's searching mind explore the silence of Veda Vyasa? Would you offer details?"

MT replied: "Vyasa's silence was meaningful. It would make one think that necessary moments of silence were left deliberately for the posterity to inquire and interpret. Volitional moments of silence amidst a musical composition are indispensable part of it. Aren't they?"
"I have not made any changes to the frame work of the story of Krishnadvaipayana, the first Vyasa, codified. The parts where I have taken liberties are those in which he maintained a silence that those who came later were to find meaningful. There are moments when, between the lines, he gives us hints. For example, Vyasa him-self hints clearly that Yudhishtira is Vidura's son. In the Ashramavasa Parva, when Vidura has sacrificed his life after renouncing food and going into meditation, Krishnadvaipayana points to Yudhishtira and says:

Dharma is Vidura and Vidura him-self is the Pandava. That Pandava stands before you as your servant" (Kunjukuttan Thampuran's Malayalam translation).

"It is significant that, at the moment of Vidura's death, the entire radiance of his aura enters Yudhishtira."

"There are occasions when the poet changes the subject after a few moments of silence. Yudhishtira clearly says 'Let Bhima be king' after the Kurukshetra war has ended. Latter, he gets ready to be crowned himself. What happens in the interval between these two moments? The story teller has to find out what mind be the natural sequence of events. Yudhishtira, who had grown detached from worldly affairs after the war, suddenly sets aside his initial idea of retiring to the forest and prepares himself for the coronation. He must have had a reason for this. Kunti Devi, who had taken control of events at many decisive moments, both overtly and covertly, could not have stayed idle during these days. Vidura could not be king because he was the son of a servant, so he
would have wished for his son at least to become king. And on such an occasion, Draupadi, always talented at discovering arguments in favour of a just cause, would surely have considered the risk to her own position and spoken her mind.

"Another scene: Abhimanyu has been killed. The whole camp is plunged in grief. Almost immediately, Ghatotkacha is killed as well. Krishna says:

I should have killed him, Bhima’s son, Ghatotkacha. Knowing all of you loved him, I did not do so earlier" (Kunjukuttan Thampuran's Malayalam translation).

"Would not Bhima have heard him?"

"I have not added any new characters. Vishoka, Balandhara are all in the Mahabharata. All I did was to look a little more closely at people whose image remains blurred in the general perspective."

"Bhima was a warrior who never knew fatigue. The heroes of wars in those days were not sports persons who alternated between being in form or out of form on the playing field. Bhima was capable of attacking Karna from head to toe and making him tremble with fear. The same Bhima collapses when Karna comes up to him, slings his bow around his neck and drags him, insulting his scanty beard and pot-belly and demoralizing him. It is common for warriors to collapse on hearing of tragic events that have just taken place. That is how Drona perished, after all. The only valid reason the mighty Bhima would have had to
collapse so pathetically when he confronted Karna, to lose his courage and valour, to almost die while he listens helplessly to insults to his manhood is that he had heard news that had dealt him a terrible blow. And what news could have shaken him as deeply as the truth of Karna's identity?"

"There is an endless list of stories in the Mahabharata where events that we could accept or understand as human are invested with the halo of a destiny that has been divinely ordained. These are certainly later additions. Karna was an excellent warrior and archer, but he was not invincible. He was not successful at Draupadi's swayamvara, or in the episode of Virata stealing the cows, or during Duryodhana's procession: he ran away from all of them. Though there is a story to illustrate that Karna too was superhuman: it says he endured the bite of a pest so that his Guru, who was asleep on his lap, should not wake up. The Guru, Parashurama, guessed at once that his disciple was not a Brahmin and cursed him, saying his weapon would become useless to him at a critical juncture."

"The wedding of Draupadi is another such story. Polyandry was considered uncultured even among the tribes of that time. Drupada was against it. Later, in the gambling hall, insults were hurled at Draupadi's chastity, since she had five husbands and such a marriage was not keeping with local customs. Kunti must have devised a solution to ensure that her sons did not quarrel over a beautiful girl and go their separate ways. She knew that Yudhishtira, as the eldest, had a special right over his wife. Whatever people might have said, Kunti knew for
certain that her sons had to stay together. She was, after all, a woman who had exceptional strength of mind: she recognized the forest women and her five sons who came to the house of lac as suitable victims whose charred skeletons would replace her sons and herself."

"However, there is a story that treats the wedding of Draupadi as a divine decision. It says that she was an ascetic maiden in her previous birth. She performed penance and Shiva appeared before her. Without meaning to, she chanted the words 'Give me a good husband' five times. This meant that she was therefore destined to have five husbands. This argument is put forward by no less a person than Krishnadvaipayana himself! Who could imagine that legendary poet telling such rubbish? No wonder fine scholars of Mahabharata, including the Malayalam critic Kuttikrishna Marar, find fault with additions like these that flaunt divine haloes that mar the strength and beauty of the poem."

"Studies and research projects that deal with these interpolations continue to be popular. Many things that Bhishmacharya was supposed to have said during the long period when he lay on a bed of arrows are considered to have been added later. There are scholars who argue that even the 'Bhagavad Gita' was a later addition. Dr Phulgendu Sinha, a scholar of Vedanta, said recently that the 'Gita' of today was put together in 800 AD, that the real 'Gita', Vyasa's 'Gita', which took shape 600 years earlier was another work altogether and that he was going to dedicate his entire life to discovering this original 'Gita'."
"Enough of all that. The Mahabharata is an immensely powerful family saga, a ballad of war, and a history of tribal culture. It is easy to surmise that a story that took shape orally must have sustained many changes as it was passed down from generation to generation. Most of the descriptions of war scenes are similar, as happens in folk literature everywhere. All the images of handsome men and beautiful women are similar. 'Many' may mean a hundred; 'Very Many' may run into thousands. When a thousand arrows were sent from a bow, 10,000 came back. A huge army becomes an immense formation, an akshouhini, which, according to the rules, should contain 21,870 elephants, as many chariots, three times as many horses and five times as many foot soldiers. When the poet says that eighteen such formations fought in the war, we can only conclude that he used poetic license to describe a mighty war that had no eye-witnesses" (364-368).

"When we follow Bhima, for whom strength was both a curse and a burden, through the universe of the Mahabharata, it becomes clear that he is not just a man with a scanty beard and a pot-belly, wielding a huge mace. He is a savage warrior who does not find it necessary to conceal the emotions of passion and desire, a man uncluttered with the baggage of philosophical thoughts or the code of the Aryas" (370). "He is a born fighter and tireless warrior. He was brought up in the cradle of Barbarians. So his fighting quality reflects that his route is that of a savage; a Dravidian."

"Karna was indeed the son of a charioteer. When I kept away my thought blended with myth that Karna is the son of Surya. I imagined a
handsome hero, amidst the serfdom of saints in the palace of Kuntibhojan, who shows pity on Kunti, a charioteer. Karna's sperm might have been evolved from him. Kunti should have been compelled to abandon her child soon after birth because she was supposed a virgin then. I agree with the fact that Karna was floated in to the river, one among many such incidents reported in stories pertaining to ancient dynasties. We can perceive this in Mugal, Raj Put and other North Indian dynasties. If old sultan fathered two sons one of them was sure to be killed; because when they become mature they will certainly fight each other for the kingdom. One was killed to avoid this. Karna might have been rescued when he was destined to be killed."

"Kunti; she was extremely brilliant. To have a wise son she courted the wise Vidura. Then the wise king needed a strong warrior to shield the country. Most gallant, for that she accepted the sperm from an unknown powerful savage, a savage without an identity."

"It was owing to the mute of Vyasa that I could avail freedom of interpretation. But the liberty I enjoyed was all permissible. Bhima ought to retreat from Mahaprasthana—the last journey unto liberation; since he is obliged to do that. His last rival-Ashwathama was still absconding in the forest, and the first love-Hidimbi, was still living somewhere in the forest, anticipating him! Above all, the sperm that formed him had its origin in the forest. So he is bound to return to where he came from. That should be an instance of poetic justice rendered at the hand of time!"
The third question was: "Once you have stated that "I wrote for me. When I write there are no journalists, publishers, and readers. I try to convince myself during writing." How much of 'my creative self', the ego in me got satisfied in the creation of 'Randamoozham'?"

MT answered, "The two works I felt perfect on completion of writing are 'Randamoozham' and 'Manju'. I toiled too much for 'Randamoozham'. Once Ernest Hemingway, our great master figure said, human emerges in to this world with unbounded innocence. The universe will not tolerate it; the world will become obstinate to put an end to this. Man gathers strength amidst his resistance against destruction. The huge mishap we see in this world is refusal of innocence. A special affinity towards such propositions... obsession have I naturally. When such characters appear I am enabled to intrude more in to this. Bhima of 'Randamoozham' is such a type."

"I confined myself to my study pressing for words! It was only then I realized my limitations and shortcomings as to the work at hand! I am not well versed in Sanskrit, hence I was not able to enter the world of Bharata directly-I recalled. So decided to set foot into that wonderland with the assistance of translations and annotated texts. I was a profuse reader. But the more I read, the sillier I felt. When I entered in to the recesses of Vyasa Bharata, I realized who he was! Poet of poets, narrators' narrator! That great genius had left some loopholes here and there for us to ponder. I endeavored to have an access into that luring muteness with the help of words. Although it took many years for preparation, ever since I set off I got absorbed in it, forgetting even my
ill-health. I used to notice my surroundings when I sat for writing. But in the pursuit of this work, at some stage there were moments of complete oblivion! I wasn't aware even where I was! "Fine...its working! Even the deepest recesses of my mind have awakened and are delivering...I feel!" Days passed without myself being aware of it! I didn't even look at newspapers in those days. Having perched in a hut of a village, amidst a heap of reference books I performed the creation. I really enjoyed the work. It's only later that I perceived that during those days I, who used to find it difficult to write for three or four hours continuously, spent eight to ten hours together in writing. So much concentration had I. The whole process was meditative!"

"Dwelling a small hill house on the bank of Bharata River, receiving in my meditative solitude, all that nature had to offer in the process of the creation I continued the work. What is life but nature! Only when the radiance of its countless aspects talks to us through its occasional murmur do we awaken, and only then art, literature, poetry and music take birth! So remain all ears for the murmurs!"

The second last question: "How much is MT's covert library life endearing to him? Isn't it Valmiki's covert library life in the termite crust of the fabricated story? In this sense how much is the significance of reading, of library or of books in the transformation of an individual? Would you please comment from experience?"

MT answered, "We can perceive the life of Valmiki in termite crust as it is. Books can make wonders at all time. Library has been a part of my
life all through. Reading sets a ground for writing. I have visited almost all libraries in India. I still have membership at Connemara Library of Madras. I have acquaintance with some foreign libraries. There is a library at Barcelona, 'Cemetery of Forgotten books'. Some forgotten books are there, including books which are not popular now. I used to go to 'Library of Congress' in America. There I have a comrade in the library. Once he showed me my own books there."

"Some years back intermittent death was noticed in the vicinity of Italian monastery library. On enquiry it was understood that Aristotle's third volume of 'Poetics' was not yet published. But there was a copy of it kept in the library. It contained genuine humor. On apprehension that, this humor might deprive of people's devotion and faith. Poison was applied on each leaf of the volume. Death occurs when readers attempt to turn the pages of the book, touching it at its edge with their finger and on touching the same finger on their tongue. It's clear that books have so much influence in the society."

"When fight occurs between nations in most cases library becomes the first target of assault. Complete annihilation of the culture of a nation can be done by this. There was indeed such an attack in Kabul. Then a bookstall there became the first target. The owner of the bookstall had to save valuable books there in a cave. This incident has come to light in the form of a book, 'Book Seller in Kabul'."

"It's the library and books that play a significant role in the transformation of a person's life. Though when we are in need of books
they may play a hide and seek game and only on fulfillment of the need they come out, indicating the fact that books have a life of their own!

The last question: "An eventful life and an illustrious career! How do you feel when you look back?"

MT said, "Any book can be rethought, corrected, and rewritten. Life is the one-only one, which permits no correction...no re-writing!"

'Nididhyasana'-this is the most challenging phase of any creative process. In the case at hand, the author had to creatively verbalize all the historical, literary, humane, psychoanalytical, and philosophical insights that had condensed in his mind clothing them in the most appropriate words, and rehearsing them on the stage of imagination. And when the intended work is based on the greatest epic of the world the author had to be extra cautious as not to exceed the limits of the freedom granted by Vyasa by way of his pregnant silences, at the same time capitalizing on them ingeniously. And the author could successfully fulfill this task. The awe and appreciation, the fruition of this pursuit that is the novel 'Randamoozham', received at the hands of readers itself is the best testimony of this success.

V.4 Major findings

- There is a path which takes any creative intellect from the world of information to that of wisdom through the world of knowledge.
The path for creative realization mentioned above can be seen to be resonant with the 'Upanishadic' method of spiritual realization consisting of the phases of 'Sravana', 'Manana', and 'Nididhyasana' in that order, with the outcome of the phases being information knowledge and wisdom respectively.

This has been seen to be true in the case of 'Randamoozham' the magnum opus of Malayalam's beloved writer, vindicating the hypothesis that 'Library is the right fulgent path for transforming information through knowledge to wisdom'.

**VI Summary of findings and conclusion**

There is a path which takes any creative intellect from the world of information to that of wisdom through the world of knowledge. This path for creative realization is indeed resonant with the 'Upanishadic' method of spiritual realization consisting of the phases of 'Sravana', 'Manana', and 'Nididhyasana' in that order, with the outcome of the phases being information knowledge and wisdom respectively. This has been seen to be true in the case of 'Randamoozham' the magnum opus of India's beloved writer, vindicating the hypothesis: 'Library is the right fulgent path for transforming information through knowledge to wisdom'.

Through 'Randamoozham', the author could indeed take each reader millennia back in time and make them re-live the epic. The astuteness has been the author's realistic and psychoanalytic approach in the third
phase, i.e. the 'Nididhyasana' towards reconstructing of the greatest epic strictly and purely in human terms, which shows the unique literary wisdom claimed to be achievable. The bold speculation as to the heredity of the Pandavas is the best instance of manifestation of this wisdom. These speculations, forming the theme of the chapter 'Paithrikam' (The Legacy), are admittedly the wise and creative interpretation of the moments of pregnant silence of the master poet by the present author. And they have been rightly defended by the author in the epilogue to the work. Also the author's observations as to the practices and situations constituting the folk-exaggerations of the facts into the epical magnitude in the epilogue also testify for the state of literary wisdom that the author could attain to. And towards this, admittedly the author had literally come through the two stages of 'Sravana' and 'Manana' with all the pains and pleasures of it. And the libraries as the plentiful resources of knowledge, especially during the second phase, had indeed served him to the greatest extent for the conversion of information to knowledge.

In the third phase, though the author had not chosen the serene quiet meditative solitude of a library to work in, the ambiance that he actually chose and worked in was no different from this. And as is claimed above, that ambiance served the purpose. He could actually undergo a transformation from the world of information to that of wisdom through the world of knowledge, culminating in his gift to the humankind in the form of an invaluable piece of literature.
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