



The Interplay of Mental Disorder, Creativity and Society: The Enigma of a Mad Genius

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ABSTRACT

The notion of creativity and madness has been since time immemorial an enigma. The paper attempts to locate the madness and the creativity through the study of the iconic Indian director/actor Guru Dutt and to analyze it within the socio-cultural milieu of the 1950s-1960s. The case study approach was used employing inductive thematic analysis to text and life documents. The value based study positions itself as one of the many attempts done to demystify the links between this alliance. The study sheds light on its perplexing nature and underscores the influence of the omnipresent social-cultural context which casts strong forces that either curtails its expression or promotes its success.

Keywords: case study, creativity, madness, thematic analysis.

INTRODUCTION

World's most celebrated creative highbrows were mentally disturbed, ranging from eminent artists like Vincent van Gogh to literary giants Virginia Woolf. These creative geniuses suffered from conditions that are now classified as psychological disorders by psychologists. The idea that creativity is somehow associated with major mental illness is an ancient one that goes back at least as far as Aristotle, who wrote that the creative geniuses of his time were "inclined toward insanity". Understanding this relationship is of great importance, both theoretically and practically. Creativity as linked to madness has been the subject of many researches and has been a recurrent theme in psychological literature. Many studies like those done by Ludwig (1995), Post (1994) and many prominent scholars argue vehemently for a connection. While there are others who argue equally strongly that studies underlying the mad genius myth are fundamentally flawed (e.g. Rothenberg, 1990; Schlesinger, 2009).

Madness

The English dictionaries describe the word 'mad' as a state of wild or chaotic activity; it also describes it as extremely foolish behaviour and/or having a serious mental illness. Madness can be used an umbrella term for a panoply of conditions. The word 'mad' is used by people to describe something that is highly distinctive, passionate or bizarre, including the use of the term in a positive sense. As Young (60) notes even though the lexicon of madness hides more than it reveals, it always reveals something.

Although the definition of abnormality has not yet been defined in a way that is universally accepted by all, the word 'mad' is used synonymously with abnormality. A major problem is that there is no one behaviour that makes one abnormal. Although there are no clear signs and

symptoms of abnormalities there exist certain obvious features. These indicators include suffering (experience of psychological pain), mal-adaptiveness (behaviour that interferes with our wellbeing, personal and occupational lives), statistical deviancy (rare and undesirable), violation of the standards of the society, social discomfort, irrationality and unpredictability, and dangerousness. It is presumed that it is possible to draw a line between normal and abnormal. How and where this line is drawn depends heavily on which type of normality/abnormality annotation is used as well as its historical and the cultural background.

Decisions about abnormal behaviour always involve social judgements, and are based on the values and expectations of society. This means that culture plays an important role in determining what is and is not abnormal. The society is constantly changing, with some behaviours being accepted and others rejected. What may be considered abnormal, divergent and unacceptable today may later be considered as acceptable, common and very normal. There is also considerable variation in the way different cultures describe psychological distress. Cultures such as those of the Native Americas, Alaska and South Asia, have no expression for depression is a case in point.

Creativity

Creativity is the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e. original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e. useful, adaptive concerning with task constraints) (49). Acts of creativity at an individual level have also been affiliated to personal endowment, contentment and an experience of fulfilment and self-actualization.

Most definitions of creative ideas comprise three components (27). First, creative ideas must represent something different, new and innovative. Second, creative ideas are of high quality. Third, creative ideas must be appropriate to the task at hand or some redefinition of that task. Thus, a creative response is novel, good and relevant. Individual, social, situational and cultural factors work together to determine the likelihood and the magnitude of the creative outcome.

Divergent and associational cognitive styles are considered to be important to the creative process. The “divergent” cognitive style is considered to be pivotal to artistic creation (17). In a pioneering series of studies involving British school boys, Hudson (1966) (21) found that those who specialized in the sciences excelled at tests of logic relations perception that required a convergence on the correct answer. In contrast, those who chose arts had strengths over measures that required the individual to diverge or think fluently without evaluating a particular line of reasoning in detail. This divergent style is characteristically distinct in terms of the production of a greater quantity of responses, are more original and of less “repressive” quality in comparison to a convergent style (17). Another form of cognition that is considered to underlie creativity is linked to the associative combinations that are made by the individual. Mednick (1962) (34) defines the creative thinking process as the “forming of associative elements into new combinations which either meet specified requirements or are in some way useful”.

Sternberg (1985) (48), for example, examined laypersons’ and experts’ conceptions of the creative person. People’s conception contained a combination of cognitive and personality elements, such as “connects ideas”, “sees similarities and differences”, “has flexibility”, “has aesthetic taste”, “is motivated”, “is inquisitive” and “questions societal norms”. At the explicit theories, Amabile (1983) (2) describes creativity as the confluence of intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant knowledge and abilities, and creativity-relevant skills. The creativity relevant skills include (a) a

cognitive style that involves coping with complexities (b) knowledge of heuristics for generating novel ideas, and (c) a work style characterised by concentrated effort, an ability to set aside problems, and high energy. Another confluence theory is the investment theory, (31) according to which creative people are those who are willing and able to “buy low and sell high” ideas. Buying low means pursuing ideas that are unknown but have growth potential. Often, when these ideas are first presented, they encounter resistance. The creative individual persists in the face of this resistance and eventually sells high, moving on to the next new or unpopular idea.

Inner task focussed motivation is also essential for creativity. The importance of such motivation for creativity has been shown by Amabile (1996)(3) in a study where it was suggested that people do creative work in areas which they truly love, and they work in these areas without caring for external rewards. A supportive and stimulating environment is also necessary in order to enhance creative ideas. It is also possible that in the absence of supportive environment the creative ideas in people may never surface.

Confluence of Creativity and Madness

There is a widespread and long-running belief that great talent and great psychopathology are closely related. Commonalities have been observed between the cognitive styles in both the creative and the psychologically vulnerable. Creativity and madness both involve behaviour that differs from norms, and each is intuitively recognised when they appear. Mental illnesses such as mood disorders, schizospectrum and substance abuse disorders appear to burgeon among the highly creative. Although such a link has often been challenged, it has been extant and observed since the ancient Greeks.

One of the first evidence for creativity-madness came up in two studies from the mid-twentieth century. In the first study males born between 1881 and 1910 were examined and it was reported that individuals who had a relative with psychotic disorder were three times more likely than those who did not have psychotic relative to be registered for achievements in various creative fields such as writing, composing, performances etc. (25). Another study was by Heston (1991) (20) in which he studied the children adopted by mothers, with or without schizophrenia. He found that the children whose adopted mothers suffered from schizophrenia were more likely to have creative hobbies and jobs and also showed more musical ability than the children of the controlled mothers.

Another study reported rates of mental illness, mood disorders, and creative productivity in forty-seven British artists and poets (23) and found that 38 percent of these award-winning subjects had been treated for mood disorders, and 6.4 percent had been treated for bipolar disorder. Kayaga and colleagues (2012) (30) found that people who were employed in creative professions (both scientific and artistic) were more likely to suffer from high rates of bipolar disorder than those in non-creative professions.

While there is no dearth of studies that tries to prove a connection between madness and creativity, there is in no exiguity in the literature that denies such a link. Despite such scientific procedure being adopted, we are still tangled between the threads of creativity and madness, with no single answer, and this footing is likely to remain so because of the mystical, gripping ecstasy of the mad-genius – artist both brilliant and doomed.

The Present Study

This paper, attempts to study the life of Guru Dutt an Indian cinema director, whose films *Pyaasa* (1957) and *Kagaaz ke Phool* (1959), are considered classics. Guru Dutt was a prolific actor, director and later-turned producer, and made less than 50 films during his lifetime, which are believed to be the best to come from Bollywood's Golden age. Dutt's courage to express ideas and valour to mirror the reality of the society, with unconventional storyline and technical innovations within the film industry places him within the realm of creativity. Creativity is described as the confluence of intrinsic motivation, domain-relevant knowledge and abilities, and creativity-relevant skills (2). The powerful strides of creativity that Dutt's work reflect is also his internal cry for help in the backdrop of a rigid, inflexible, orthodox society where mental health, inter-religious marriages, women empowerment were dreaded ideas and dismissed. A pall of tragedy shadowed his creative career making him a victim of mental disturbance, depression ultimately leading him to commit suicide in 1964. Madness or abnormality here refers to presence of mal-adaptiveness, social discomfort experienced by the individual and the violations of the standards of the society. His perceived dejection and inability to conform to a society that greatly added to his deep-rooted insecurity and a fragile sense of self-esteem, points at the psychological distress he succumbed to. The death of one of the most successful artists of the Indian subcontinent, that gave cinema classics to remember and succumbed to a tragic death is both poignant and worth investigating. The researchers' attempt is to analyze the genesis and the social framework of the creativity-madness confluence and interpret it as a student of psychology. The aim of the study is to locate the madness in the life of Dutt, its genesis and development; locate the creativity in the life of Dutt, its genesis and development and analyze the emerging themes and to place it in the Indian social milieu of the 1950s-1960s.

METHODOLOGY

The study is situated in the paradigm of qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research paradigm that involves investigation of issues roots in human realities. This research designs is interested in understanding how people understand, experience and interpret the world around them. It is a non-statistical method of inquiry and involves the inductive process wherein the data collected is analyzed, interpreted and understood in terms of themes and categories. It is an attempt to know their subjective experiences. It is a value based research in which the researcher plays an integral role working closely with the data and being sensitive to the case or phenomenon under study.

The case study method was used in the present research. It is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (59). Bullock (1986) states that " a case study, in particular, makes it possible to observe and analyze phenomena as a single integrated whole (14). Earlier case study as a research methodology was viewed with dubiety as it was thought to be poor in design and viewed to follow unsystematic procedures. However, today the case study method is widely accepted because of several reasons. Firstly, it provides an in-depth understanding of the case or phenomenon under study. In addition it helps to understand complex social phenomenon that quantitative research methods might not explain well. Secondly, case study methods are flexible and adaptable in the sense that a wide variety of methods can be used to gather sources ranging from interviews, surveys, to questionnaires. The single case study type was used in the present study. The single case study

method is used when the case is unique, prototypical, salient or revelatory to the understanding of a phenomenon (44).

The sources of the data for the present study were text and life documents in addition to DVD's, blogs, web sources and Documentary. As Plummer (2001, p.22) (41) that the interest of psychology in studying life course has always been present, the study of life course does not come as subjective narrative but comes along laden heavily with the psychologists' interpretations. The method used to analyse these documents was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. A theme is that which captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (10). It is a way through which the embedded ideas in the text, document or interviews surface and help us understand the essence of the data.

The inductive approach to thematic analysis was used in the present study. Themes emerge from and are grounded in the data. Inductive thematic analysis avoids the rigidity and premature closure that are risks of a deductive approach (39). Both the techniques of latent and manifest methods were used in the present research. In manifest coding, the visible or apparent content of a phenomenon is elucidated. In latent content analysis, on the other hand, the researcher is looking for the underlying aspects of the phenomenon under investigation that represents a higher level of abstraction (9).

To understand and analyze Dutt's life and creative works, records such as documentaries, biographies, websites, blogs, articles and films served as sources of data. Documentary by Nasreen Munni Kabir titled, "In search of Guru Dutt" (1989), biography by Arun Khopkar (2012) "In search of Guru Dutt" and article written by Daisy Rockwell (2010) were referred. DVD's (Ultra Distributions) of Guru Dutt's films, *Pyaasa* (1957) and *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959) served as evidence of his creative work, which he directed as well as starred in as the lead.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Life History Analysis

The aim of the present study was to understand the link between madness and creativity. The case that has been chosen for the present study is the actor, producer and director of Indian cinema—Guru Dutt. The sources of the data included books, articles, research papers and films made by Guru Dutt. The single case study design was adopted and text and document analysis was done using inductive thematic analysis.

Dutt's life summary is based on sources mentioned above but the intricacies of his life are difficult to discuss and the reason accountable is the lack of data sources that did not reflect detailed information regarding Dutt's personal relationships. All that has been gathered are from websites that corroborate the facts and in turn hold for some if not complete authenticity.

Dutt was born on 9 July, 1925. He was named Vasanth Kumar Shivashankar Padukone. He was born in Bangalore where his father worked as headmaster and later as a bank employee and his mother was initially a house wife and later taught in a school and wrote short stories in Kannada. Vasanthi (1983) was only 16 when Dutt was born and he is described as very curious, naughty and having an inquisitive mind as a child. He was also aggressive and wilful. Dutt was the eldest of four other siblings. He moved to Kolkata early in life and was embedded in the flavours of Bengal.

He could speak Bengali fluently and the essence of Bengal was in Guru's blood. This is the reason why he adopted the name "Dutt" that is the common surname.

As a child Dutt was an introvert and fascinated by dance, music and love for animals that stayed with him all his life. His films also reflect the same fascination, perhaps it was nature and animals that provided him with solace and tranquillity. However, it was his love for dance and music that paved way for him to venture the creative road.

Dutt's comfort in expression through dance and music perhaps indicates his inability to express himself normally and this inability propelled him towards art that helped him convey his ideas more easily. As is also observed by his colleagues, "He was not a man who could say: "I love you." He used to love, but could not express himself." (Raj Khosla, 1988) (24). Perhaps it was this ability that drove him to successfully "..... convey thoughts visually. He could "see" what was being spoken and appreciate it symbolically and aesthetically" (Majrooh Sultanpuri, 1988) (24). Formal education perhaps never suited him and neither did anything predictable. That is perhaps the reason why Dutt after matriculation joined Uday Shankar's dance academy and later quit his job as a telephone operator. As Millon *et.al* (2003) (38) notes people have a tendency to bring their beliefs, preferences and actions in line with other people around them. This penchant for interpersonal synchronization is what enables a mere collection of individuals to become a functional unit. Not only was Dutt blessed with high creative sensibilities and the ability to see layers of emotions and expressive art, he was also blessed with good looks. As Satyavati Gopalan (1993) notes "...he was easily the most handsome man at Uday Shankar's Centre."(24). It is interesting to note this mal-adaptively where as a young adult Dutt was unable to appreciate the beauty he had within him and how worthy he was to possess such abilities.

Dutt, as a child and young adult, was introverted, reserved and never shared his problems. Secondary data sources indicate that apparently Dutt was a witness of the ill treatment that his father inflicted at his mother. His sister Lalitha Lajmi (1988) states that their childhood environment was not "conducive" as their parents fought a lot (24). Witnessing such ill treatment perhaps had an effect on Guru's mind. Also, knowing that he was the eldest among his siblings what he saw could not be shared. The object-relations proposes that representations of significant adults during childhood act as lenses or models through which future social interactions are viewed and exert an unconscious influence on the person's relationship throughout life (40). Such ill-treatment observed at home might be the result why he portrayed the world differently and the ill treatment by his father strengthened his negative view about the world. Inter-parental hostility creates an aversive home environment in which children experience stress, unhappiness and insecurity (32). Abundant research exists that have proven that conflict in interpersonal relationships in marriage has a detrimental impact on the psychological adjustment of children. Such exposure to family discord, perhaps casted strong influences on Dutt's sensitive mind leading him to develop a negative view of himself and the world. However, due to the lack of availability of sources, it cannot be conclusively established as to what might have lead to Dutt's serious, pessimistic outlook towards life.

During the Second World War Dutt moved to Mumbai after the dance troupe at Uday Shankar's dance centre was disbanded. He worked at the Prabhat Film Company where he met his friends Dev Anand, Rehman and Raj Khosla, and slowly established himself as a successful film-maker. During the recording of "tadbeer se bigadi hui" for his directorial debut *Baazi* (1951) Dutt met his future wife, the owner of a beautiful voice, Geeta Roy. He was enamoured by her voice and being an adept of music himself, fell in love with her. Geeta Roy soon became Geeta Dutt in 1953.

If a timeline is structured, Dutt's life can be easily understood in three phases. The first phase is perhaps characterised by Dutt's satisfaction in life. He was married to the woman he loved. He was an established film-maker, actor and producer and had three children. He directed humorous light hearted films establishing himself as a successful comedy film director, that can be said to indicate the satisfaction in his life. The second phase is marked by his increasing isolation and his deeper depth into film making. His sister, Lajmi (1988) states that the kind of demanding profession Dutt was in, affected his personality and especially the kind of films he made affected him more so (24). She states that their "picnic times" decreased, Dutt was rarely seen and he would rarely speak. During this period he made films like *Pyaasa* (1957) and *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959). It was also the time Dutt apparently fell in love with the actress Waheeda Rehman, whom he introduced in the industry. This was apparently the source of initial discord between Dutt and his wife Geeta. Sources reveal that Geeta was a very possessive wife and used to keep a check on Dutt's affairs. This perhaps might have vexed him as he was wilful and did what he wanted. Geeta's constant glare on him perhaps triggered the clashes between them. He would be so engrossed in his films that he hardly bothered how things were around him. He attempted suicide twice during this phase. His first attempt was around the time of *Pyaasa* and the second attempt was in 1961 where he took an overdose of sleeping pills and was revived three days later. According to Dutt's brother Atmaram (1988), Dutt was "a strict disciplinarian as far as work was concerned, but totally undisciplined in his personal life" (24). This is also reflected by the fact that Dutt invested all his financial resources in the production of *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959), that left him bankrupt. The third phase reflected the confluence of creativity and madness in the second phase. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959) failed miserably, cutting Dutt's feathers for the directorial flight forever. Although he never directed he was able to preserve his financial stability after giving hits like *Chaudhvi ka Chand* (1960) and *Sahib, Bibi, aur Ghulam* (1962) but it was *Kaagaz Ke Phool* with its miserable failure that perhaps pushed Dutt in the trap of both financial and creative failure that eroded his fragile sense of stability.

His wife Geeta separated taking the children away from him. Actress Waheeda Rehman never reciprocated to Dutt and the barriers of religion came between their union. As Mesquita and Leu (2007) (36) note emotions within a socio-cultural context must accommodate the specific meanings and practices, particularly those of self and relationships. These are cultural models that foster personhood and relationships and are sanctioned by the society. Perhaps, the cultural models of the 1950s-1960s were characterized by rigidity and stringent customs not allowing inter-religious marriages. In addition, these stringent cultural models must have perhaps made it difficult for women to exercise their opinions and this may have lead Rehman not reciprocating Dutt's love, furthering his sense of rejection.

Dutt's colleague, V.K. Murthy (1988) recounts that during the search for a location for *Chaudhvi Ka Chand* (1960), Dutt suddenly uttered the line from his film *Pyaasa*, "Yeh duniya gar mil bhi jaaye toh kya hai", when Murthy asked him why he said so, Dutt replied, "*Mujhe waise he lag raha hai. Dekho na, mujhe director banna tha, director ban gaya; actor bana tha, actor ban gaya; picture achcha banane tha, ache bane. Paisa hai, sab kuch hai, par kuch bhi nahi raha*" (24). All of this point at the slow death Dutt was dying marked by a sense of hopelessness, worthlessness and an inability to celebrate success and achievement. He could not blend well with a society that gave him messages that he was perhaps worthless and unwanted. Social scientists use the metaphor of a mirror to identify the process of reflected appraisal: the fact that each of us develops a self-concept that reflects the way we believe others see us (1). It is likely that the

foundations for a poor self-concept was laid when Dutt was a child owing to his dysfunctional family environment, it was these circumstances, as an adult that shattered his frail self-concept. As Baumeister and Bushman (2010)(6) notes one of the basic jobs of the human self is garnering acceptance, and in order to meet what people prefer and expect one needs to change self. The requirements for different culture and eras are different. In addition to garnering acceptance, the culture one lives in imposes systems of morality and one of its major thrusts is to do what is best for the community rather than what is best for self (6). Living in a collectivistic society and bounded by boundaries that curtailed self-expression, Dutt perhaps failed to carve a niche for himself where he and his ideas were appreciated

Humans are social animals and besides being emotionally painful, being deprived of companionship is so serious that it can affect life itself (1). According to his friend and colleague Abrar Alvi (1988), Guru did not “open up” to discuss his thoughts and problems even though they spent so much time together and were close friends (24). He took to alcohol and developed sleep disturbances for which he relied on sleeping pills. He was now encompassed with loneliness, sans love, family and friends. Cinematographer Murthy (2010) in an interview stated that “Before I shifted to Bangalore, I met him ...Guru Dutt told me, 'My family is gone, you are going to Bangalore, Abrar is going to Madras to write for a film. I have become an orphan”. Murthy (1988) recounts, that Dutt, was left alone in his last days and people stayed away from him. Dutt conceivably, became a social outcast becoming increasingly reclusive and reserved (24).

Dutt married Geeta, not the person herself but probably her voice. Waheeda Rehman was the one whom he truly fell in love with. However as Miller (1997) (37) suggests cultural models of self and relating afford and constraint emotional experience and behaviour. The cultural and societal constraints of 1950s on inter-religious marriages perhaps did not let the love foster and Dutt's submission to lost love and failure culminated to Dutt's death on 10 October 1964. There are speculations about whether Dutt deliberately committed suicide or was it an accidental mix of alcohol and sleeping pills. Abrar Alvi (1988) describes Dutt's state during that fateful day as unbalanced (24). There was an observed lack of awareness and incoherence. According to Alvi (1988) Dutt kept saying things that were irrelevant and pointless. Abrar (1988) states that, “.....*He talked about a friend who sent him letters from a mental asylum and Dutt feared that he might go crazy*” (24). Apparently, the last call he made was to singer Lata Mangeshkar asking whether his wife and kids were with her. Hearing a no, Dutt went back to his room. The next morning he was found dead. His condition was conspicuously marked by melancholic features with a loss of interest in pleasurable activities, loss of appetite and cognitive impairment. As Raj Khosla (1988) notes, “you couldn't read through Guru Dutt. But I read one thing about him, even in those days—that he was really lost. Lost in filmmaking, and lost to life.” (24)

It seems that the tragedy that fell on Dutt engulfed not only his life but perhaps took his family too in its vortex. Geeta Dutt after the death of her husband had a nervous breakdown and could not revive herself and faced difficulty making ends meet for her children. Dutt's demise had such a drastic effect on her that she at times failed to recognise her children and took to alcohol. She too died at the age of 41 in 1972 due to liver failure. Dutt's elder son committed suicide in 1985 and his second son, too committed suicide in 2014 at the age of 58.

Analysis of Creativity

Guru Dutt was a sensitive man. An extremely sensitive man, with a thoughtful weltanschauung (worldview). As V.K. Murthy (1988), Dutt's cinematographer notes “he had a jeweller's eye” (24). He had the ability to see what others at that time could not see, and he had the ability to grasp the

subtle, delicate layers of the society and time in which he lived. It can be said that it was this sensitivity of his that brought a revolution in Hindi cinema and it was this same sensitivity that created a void in his life leading to his untimely death.

As a director, Dutt has shown his calibre in his ability to grasp subtle aspects of the scene, whether it is music, lighting, sound or shadows. Guru Dutt's contribution to Indian cinema in terms of filmographic techniques include the introduction of 100 mm lens for close shots which later came to be known as the "Guru Dutt shot", his song picturizations and his portrayal of women.

Raj Khosla and other eminent persona of the industry owed and were indebted to Dutt for many creations that propelled them to success. Quoting Raj Khosla (1988), "I'm known for my song picturizations...Actually it's Guru Dutt's skill I learned" (24). He brought about a change in the conventional fashion in which films were made, known, perceived and viewed.

Dutt introduced songs as means to proceed the story and not merely as a tune one could enjoy. It served as bridge through which the character could communicate his internal strife to the audience. Dutt closely worked with the tune, music and lyrics. 'Waqt ne kiya kya haseen sitam' is a song that makes special mark not only in terms of its lyrics but the way the song was picturized. The lyrics of 'Waqt ne kiya kya haseen sitam' demonstrate Dutt's preoccupation with the hope to find love and anger towards the immoral society.

The use of lighting and parallel beams is another technical beauty this song possesses. V.K. Murthy (1988) states that Dutt was an observant soul and his efforts were directed towards capturing the beauty of things that enamoured him (24). 'Waqt ne kiya kya haseen sitam' reflects Dutt's observant streak. Dutt understood the subtle yet strong balance of the use of light and shadow--whether to evoke a sense of forgetfulness, realization or dream. Dutt had the ability, an art that was deep yet simple. He used simple reflections to create a depth of beauty that no one thought at that time, or even if thought about, couldn't perhaps execute it with beauty.

Symbolism also played a critical component in his films. The use of symbolism in Dutt's films bear witness to his absolutely amazing tactic of playing with meanings and using symbols to get his point forward. This symbolism is evident as strongly in *Kaagaz Ke Phool*(1959) as it is in *Pyaasa*(1957). "Kaagaz Ke Phool begins with the camera looking down on the deserted floor of an old film studio from a great height. There is a statue of a ferocious bird in foreground while Suresh Sinha (Guru Dutt) walks up slowly....When the figure comes in line with the bird's claws; it looks like a helpless human sacrifice at the feet of a cruel predator." (28). This symbolises the impending doom that awaits Suresh Sinha. If placed in the context of Guru's real life, the claws of the bird are the claws of time that will soon ravage Dutt's life propelling him towards self-destruction.

Another significant contribution was the manner in which he projected women in his films. Dutt's creativity lay in his ability to view women differently and in an unconventional manner set against the backdrop when there were impediments over women and their freedom. He moved beyond the conventional oppressed, damsel in distress to showcase a woman that had an independent identity. Director Mani Kaul (1988) states "the greatest contribution he made to Bombay films was that he began to stress the roles played by women"(24). Women in Dutt's film were not aimless rather they had a firm base against which they were set and it showed that they had the ability to think and make decisions for which they themselves are accountable.

The two movies that have been chosen are critical in Dutt's life and also gains paramount importance when it comes to understanding his life and work. *Pyaasa* (1957) is a sensitive film and it is this sensitivity that brings us close in our understanding the blend of creativity and madness of Guru. It can be said that it was this sensitivity that brought a revolution in Indian

cinema and it was the same sensitivity that created a void in his life leading to his untimely death. *Kaagaz ke Phool* (1959) has reflections of Guru's inability to understand the world and this complexity is conveyed through his remarkable use of shadows and lights, songs, music and the actors' display of emotions under his direction. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* was one of the best sources giving insights into Dutt's life and the kind of artistic genius he was because every shot of *Kaagaz Ke Phool* had the true Dutt--not laced by fake emotions or pleasing dialogues, but genuine Dutt who spoke his heart.

Pyaasa (Thirsty) is a story about a poet named Vijay who struggles for fame and recognition. He is rejected by a materialistic society in which only outcasts befriend him. The story of *Pyaasa*, from both, the directorial and the artists view reflects the sensitivity Dutt bore. *Pyaasa* is also described by Dutt's sister as having reflections of emotional turmoil that Dutt was going through. (24)

The character of Vijay (played by Guru Dutt) evokes a sense of helplessness. He is overwhelmed by the insensitivity of the society that deranges man of his humanity. He is disgusted by a society that is ruthless and severs relationships. Vijay is shown to be struggling with hope to make his poems reach the world. The poems written by Vijay are unable to make their mark in the hearts of people as they see them as "waste". But seldom, are they aware that it is this "waste" that mirrors their reality. Vijay is also deeply troubled as his childhood sweetheart betrays him marrying a rich publisher for financial security reflecting the hollowness of human emotions. He is understood and loved for who he is, not by his family and friends, but by an outcast, a prostitute, Gulabu (played by Waheeda Rehman) who is kind hearted. The depiction of Vijay's character and the way his character evolves throughout the film shows parallels to Dutt's life. He did not have to imagine someone, because the helplessness experienced by Vijay was the helplessness of Dutt. The climax of *Pyaasa* was imagined by Dutt as Vijay committing suicide. Upon heated discussion the climax was changed with Vijay and Gulabo going away to an unknown place. This instance draws special attention, as many times it is felt that Dutt had a preoccupation with "death" and "self-destruction".

The suffering, poignancy and unhappiness that are reflected in *Pyaasa* were reflective of Guru Dutt's understanding of the world. Guru Dutt was troubled and displeased by the institution of hypocrisy, greed and corruption that he observed in his time. The way the society functioned and the social context Dutt found himself in exerted an ostracizing force that made him a social outcast. Abrar Alvi (1988) states that he and Dutt often had long arguments on this issue, where Dutt often felt helpless and miserable. (24)

His colleagues Sultan Majroohpuri and Raj Khosla (1988) (24) state that he lacked self-expression and is described as retreating into his shell. This reflects the inexpressiveness Dutt had which was further curtailed by the society he lived in. As his sister Lalitha (1988) (24) also states that "in those times it was difficult to confide into other people. You simply couldn't do that". It is also likely that Dutt might have developed what social psychologists call rejection sensitivity which means that being rejected repeatedly can cause people to develop expectations that others will reject them too. The rejection of his ideas by society, the rejection of love and the rejection towards his sensitivity perhaps made him rejection sensitive. A supportive and stimulating environment is also in order to enhance creative ideas. People who are repeatedly or continually ostracized by others report a poor sense of self-esteem and feel worthless. For some life may seem meaningless and pointless. (56) It is possible that in the absence of supportive environment his creative ideas were unable to make their mark.

Kaagaz ke Phool (1959) is the story of a successful director, Suresh Sinha (played by Guru Dutt) who harbours the dark forces of rejection and despondency, to which he submits helplessly. He

looks for the tying threads of truth and has a vision to show the reality of the world. His marital life is on the rocks and is also not allowed to meet his daughter. A lonely man, he meets Shanti (Waheeda Rehman) and casts her in his film realizing her potential as an actress. Suresh and Shanti's closeness troubles Sinha's daughter leading to the separation of the two. Suresh soon after, loses the custody of his daughter and highly saddened on the departure of his daughter and Shanti, he is left alone and abandoned. He takes to alcohol leading to a downfall in his career and fortunes. The film ends on a sad note with Suresh dying unknown and forgotten.

Kaagaz Ke Phool (Paper Flowers) was released in 1959. Dutt invested all he had in Kaagaz Ke Phool, from finances to technical perfectionism. V.K. Murthy (1988) recounts saying that he had told Dutt that this movie was good but was too pessimistic and might not fare well at the box office to which Dutt replied "some pictures are made for oneself" (24). Dutt had what Amabile (1996) (3) suggested stating that people do creative work in areas which they truly love, and they work in these areas without caring for external rewards. They have an intrinsic motivation and engage in activities for their own sake.

Pyaasa (1957) was a movie that can be said to reflect the way Dutt viewed the world he lived in. Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959), on the other hand, reflects Dutt's inner storms that he harboured and to which he finally surrendered. It is not shocking that Dutt gave up directing after Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959) flopped at the box office miserably, not only because he had lost everything but also perhaps, because he had lost the hope that people could hear his pain. It perhaps reassured his belief of the "inhumane human" and of the careless world who could not understand the beauty of art that reflected the callous society.

Both these films are like two opposing forces—one that was commercially a success, a beautiful amalgamation of creative sensitivity finely tuned to the audience's taste and on the other hand, a dream project that Dutt envisioned and it's extremely discouraging failure to impress its viewers. Both these movies had an opposing emotional tension that was deeply felt by Dutt--the joy of success and pain of failure.

If anyone wished to know the storms and the rocky life Dutt experienced Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959) is the closest one can get. His sister Lalitha Lajmi (1988) and poet Majrooh Sultanpuri (1988) (24) state very confidently that Suresh was the closest reflection of Dutt. It was also the time Dutt attempted suicide the second time but failed. It looked eerie but looking through Dutt's life broadly, Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959) showed what his life would be in reality. Suresh Sinha in reel life discovering as the events folded, was the depiction of what was heading Dutt's way--an impending doom.

During the research several reasons for the miserable failure of Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959) were contemplated. First, it could've been possible that the audience at that time could not understand the suffering of a man. Perhaps the society was in a practice of seeing women suffer and the fact that Dutt showed the powerful, unbeatable strides of society towards the impotent man, the society simply could not accept it. V.K. Murthy (2004) (51) in an interview states that Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959) did not make it big because "people were used to seeing 'tragic ladies' and not men".

Kaifi Azmi (1988) (24), a poet and lyricist points at another factor stating that perhaps the audience perceived utter confusion and the source of this confusion was Guru's personal life. At the time of Kaagaz Ke Phool, Dutt was linked with Waheeda Rehman and this strain in his marriage with Geeta and his lack of mental clarity might have affected Kaagaz Ke Phool.

The cinema perhaps, at that time functioned in a linear fashion where there was no place for the complexities and subtle flavours that Dutt portrayed. Kaagaz Ke Phool (1959) explored the challenges of a true director and the strain close relationships have on man that was probably a

skill that at that time few possessed. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959) was thus a film that perhaps was as frail as 'kaagaz' (paper) to have a magnetic appeal and appeared as an enigma to the audience. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959) was a film ahead of its time. It did not receive the appreciation it was worthy of, but today it is considered a golden classic. According to the investment theory (31) creative people are those who are willing and able to "buy low and sell high" ideas. Buying low means pursuing ideas that are unknown but have growth potential. The ideas of Dutt were perhaps ideas unknown which when first presented, encountered resistance. However Dutt did not persist in the face of this resistance and did not wait to view the eventual success of his creation.

In *Pyaasa* (1957) there is tragedy, suffering and pain but it does not give a feeling of the fact that all is over. *Kaagaz Ke Phool* (1959) on the other hand gives shape to an end that is tragic, dark and fearful. Dutt's films revolved around and pointed at Dutt's fascination with death, destruction, ruin and loneliness. "The centre of the protagonist existence is the remorseless force that drives him to self destruction" (28) aptly describes Dutt's main theme of life.

There is no doubt that Dutt had emotional disturbances, and these were reflected in the characters of Vijay and Suresh (*Kaagaz ke Phool*). In an article of Times of India, dated 1st March, 2015 (54), it was stated that in the earlier times it was difficult for people to talk about their sufferings. The article mentions the case of Dutt and Meena Kumari calling them "Melancholy icons" stating that they suffered from the "ignominy of depression in silence". Probably the only way to express it was through art. This signifies how these artists creatively expressed their suffering within a social framework that perhaps did not condone such expression. The films and characters, however, only had a glimpse of the huge storm that they silently suffered. These icons succumbed gradually to their doomed fate with Dutt committing suicide and Kumari turning to alcoholism and dying of liver cirrhosis.

Dutt's life reflects a psychological trauma experienced by him marked by a fragile sense of hope, childhood trauma, and perceived rejection on several fronts such as family discord, financial collapse, and workplace failure, low self-esteem and the hostility of the society culminating into a severe form of depression driving Dutt to commit suicide. He did not blend well in a society that was rigid, inflexible and obdurate-- it wasn't welcoming to a man with liberal ideas and more so for a man who felt things passionately. The society in those inflexible times did not have the finesse to provide refuge to a man who did not conform to the then prevalent ideas of masculinity. The society perhaps wasn't equipped well to appreciate the fabric of creativity and madness together. It was perhaps incompetent in tackling the allegorical rapture of the mad genius—artist both brilliant and doomed.

CONCLUSION

Within a short span of his stay, Dutt gave a new dimension to Indian cinema; he showed people the taste of richness. Although his life was an amalgamation of creativity, tragedy and poignancy, what Dutt gave to cinema, elevates its rank in terms of standard and quality. As very rightly stated by lyricist Pandit Narendra Sharma (1986)(24), "..... Guru Dutt's presence was like candlelight. A little subdued, but shone nevertheless." All of this point at the creative genius Dutt was the talent he possessed and the ability he harboured. However, Dutt was restricted by the social context that was pervasive in nature. He was perhaps trapped between his sensitivity, his inexpressiveness and perceived dejection by a disparage society of 1950s-1960s, driving him towards abnormality. The

alliance between creativity and madness does not seem to spare anyone from the vicissitude it bears from time immemorial. The value based research uses Guru Dutt as a case that sheds light on the existence of both creativity and madness and its continued alliance. The study positions itself as one of the many attempts done to demystify the links between this alliance. As the tradition of this alliance continues, it seems that creativity and madness are two opposing forces that perhaps at the same time can't resist each others' attraction. Given the perplexing nature of this union, the debate on whether it does or does not have bewitching influence on the one who appears to shelter these entities can't arrive at harmonious conclusion in the near future because every era will surely produce evidences that either favours or disfavours the contention.

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