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Untitled-

MA Essay

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I.

Perhaps it would be difficult for me to recall how I learned to interact socially. Objects around me were the tools of communication or rather I took support of different things on my way of daily life. I use to walk by hearing. At times I could feel that the air helps me to move around. I could use my smelling sense to identify and also differentiate in certain cases. The power of vision helps us to see the surroundings; on contrary our mind adopts what we see. In my case, it was the mostly the sound and smell which I perceived through my brain to interact with others. The smell inside my house was different than the smell outside. Often I use to miss the narrow isle that leads to our playground. The stinking smell from the drain helped me to locate the field. At the age of 12, I came to know about colors. Since then, it was typical for me to associate human names with color. Naturally it was bizarre for my friends. Soon I began to use color to code many other things. For me, the air is something 'whitish', not completely transparent. Water surface seems to be yellowish. The color green means something rough, probably a harsh surface. Sometimes people get astonished knowing that I can also dream. Obviously why wouldn't I? But do I see colors?

I often rely on one of my senses in critical situations like a crowded scene. Sounds get mingled with one another hence it becomes difficult to identify a particular tone. In these situations my olfactory sensory neurons get more active and help me to interact. So I smell when I cannot hear properly. I can sense the heat, the change of temperature as the night falls. Early morning wind seems like the surface of water where as the evening breeze seems like the deepest part of a water source.

This is Rony speaking, a friend of mine who is vision impaired.

## II.

The motorbike is raving; we need to hurry. It's windy. Roads are dusty as well. There are lots of noises from other vehicles on the road. Some people are calling each other yelling on the street. We can hear ourselves much better on the outskirts of the city. Sounds have more clarity on this part of the land compare to the busy streets of the city. Every time the change of space creates a new sound, although there is one single sound that was following us all the time. It adds to other prevailing sounds and creates a new shape. Motorbike's sound also varies due to its course. In places where the streets have more ups and downs, narrower turns, the motorbike reduces speed hence the sound seems more closer to our body. After a while, the sound changes again. Now it feels like we are stationary on a large plain. Everything seems to be an endless horizontal plate without any sort of hindrance. Soon the tree line on both sides become our companion and creates a vanishing point on the horizon. We keep on chasing it. And there are crepuscular rays peeping through the branches where the leaves forged enigmatically on the ground. A *psithurism* of the long trees are flowing in the air, as if they are whispering to each other. Also a distinct smell from the surroundings along with these sounds creates a new space of its own. Sounds created by different spaces are following us through out our journey. Soon, we take the high roads by the canal and the babbling of water stream adds to our sound palate. This sound differs as different lives (fish, birds, animals, human) add to the water source. As we go down the slope, approaching our destination, the sound of the water seems fading away.

Again, on the way back we hear the birds returning to their nest. The canal seems to be in peace, as the water produces a mild tone. Soon the sounds from the fireflies captured the moment and as the night falls the whole atmosphere changes into a different tonality. Open fields, trees, air, and water- all the elements producing speechless sound. The voice of these elements interacting with one another changes with the course of the day.



The fox was quite happy to see the round, ripe fruits. He needs not to worry about food today. He feels better than the others today. He has to wander far and wide in the forests in order to find food on other days. Sometimes he even has to fight with others just to find a meal. How does he know that this will taste good in comparison to the something else? How does he know that the something else will not taste as good? Or something else might taste better.

Though the fox was happy to see the round ripe fruits, the grapes were hanging so high up the vine that the fox could not reach them, no matter how much he tried. After failing many times he tried to cover up his incapability in another way. The fox thought deeply about his conundrum and concluded that the grapes were quite green- they were not fully

ripe yet! This must mean that the grapes were quite sour. Therefore, he must not eat them. How did the fox deduce that the grapes were sour?



Thoughts in tranquillity at times can be endless. Often it feels like mere realism rather improbable imagination. I believe, some way or other, every one has experienced or had this feeling of duality. Duality of the physical world and the world of sensation bridges the gap between our existence and realization. The fox did not even taste the fruit rather thought that it could be sour. At times our thoughts can be driven by the way we want to,

and physical elements like in this case the colour or shape of the fruit may act as stimulus. Besides, representing the taste (sour) the colour 'green' may also represents the unripe quality of a fruit which might have provoked the fox not to eat the fruit.

### III.

I find myself among all that surrounds me. At times I am the center of everything; yet my position changes with time. Features of the nature changes from time to time. Day and night the attributes of the nature changes its property in many ways. Light with its all entirety, creates an impact everywhere. On the other hand, the features of darkness help us to understand the 'light' better. Although we can experience this process very easily, still is it that simple to understand? It is amazing to see the whole process happening within a process. Like hearing a sound to understand 'sound', understating 'light' by looking at a light, or trying to understand an object by observing its orientation. Also trying to experience everything through our body. This realization happens through a process that helps us to see, hear or smell. From time immemorial there have been many changes in nature; like we can see the Mount Everest, which was once submerged under water. We can also experience its enormity, see how far or close it is compared to us. When the light reflects from any object it becomes visible to our eyes. This light is travelling from a long distance where the sun is the source of all energy. The distance helps us to realize how big the source is compared to what we see from earth. Not only the distance, we can also hear sounds; sounds of various types through which we can try to identify its source. When we try to remember someone, often we recall his or her facial constructions. Unconsciously individual sounds may also create an outline of his or her impression. Sounds from the surroundings help us to experience the unknown or in this case something unseen. We can perceive these experiences through our sensory system.

আকাশভরা সূর্য-তারা, বিশ্বভরা প্রাণ,	1
তাহারি মাঝখানে আমি পেয়েছি মোর স্থান,	2
বিশ্বয়ে তাই জাগে আমার গান॥	3

অসীম কালের যে হিল্লোলে জোয়ার-ভাঁটার ভুবন দোলে	4
নাড়ীতে মোর রক্তধারায় লেগেছে তার টান,	5
বিস্ময়ে তাই জাগে আমার গান॥	6
ঘাসে ঘাসে পা ফেলেছি বনের পথে যেতে,	7
ফুলের গন্ধে চমক লেগে উঠেছে মন মেতে,	8
ছড়িয়ে আছে আনন্দেরই দান,	9
বিস্ময়ে তাই জাগে আমার গান।	10
কান পেতেছি, চোখ মেলেছি,	11
ধরার বুকে প্রাণ ঢেলেছি,	12
জানার মাঝে অজানারে করেছি সন্ধান,	13
বিস্ময়ে তাই জাগে আমার গান॥	14

Rabindranath (1861-1941) says, “My pulse is beating and my veins throbbing” in one of his songs. In many different ways Tagore talks about the relationship between human and nature. He explains the universe in its enormity that consists of the sky, sun, millions of stars and lives. The search for oneself in this gigantic space is an amazing experience for him. Here in the poem he talks about his connection with nature metaphorically. On stanza 7 and 8 Tagore talks about how he connects himself with the nature. He can feel the nature while touching the forest grass with his feet. Also the fragrance from the flowers lifts his soul. In his case, Tagore also explains in a way the connection between the nature and human body through his realization of ‘senses’.

Similarly in Egyptian mythology, the eyes of the sky god ‘Horus’ are compared with the sun and the moon. In that era, people believed that the eye of horus had healing and protective power. Interestingly the symbol for the ‘Eye’ is divided into six parts each



associates with one of the six senses of human body. So, we can see that since the earliest human history, people had this tendency to associate all the senses with 'vision', hence all the six elements combined creates the figure 'Eye'.

Saints from south east Asia known as 'Baul' have their own ideology behind the sensory system and human body. They believe that our body itself symbolizes the nature and its activities. The process through which our body intakes sounds smell or any other unseen elements can be explained only by studying the human body. This idea of analyzing the nature using human body is known as 'Dehototto'. This way of studying human body in relation to the nature has been an old practice for the Bauls. They talk about this idea of 'Dehototto' through Baul music. It has its own history and lyrically it shows this connection with human senses (also human body ) and natural elements.

IV.

*The way we see our surroundings through sound, touch or smell is fascinates me. I think this is how we see the unseen.*

To discover this realm of unseen, I am interested in our sensory system and how it helps us to experience what is around us. In other words, I want to explore the process through which our body perceives the sensation of touch, smell or a sound. Sound waves of different frequencies are being created every moment around us. Our body absorbs these different sound waves through our sensory system. My intention is to observe this process of sound comprehension. Smells from different elements travel through the space. I would also like to see this process of smell reaching our sensory system. We can see that the nature of the 'wind' is not constant. It changes with different geographical positions. Also it would be amazing to see how the 'air' forms using different elements in various combinations.

Again, I would also like to see how we can portray the time we live in in terms of my works. There are lots of things happening around us. My interest lies not only on each phenomenon but also the process behind all the happenings. This way of seeing things

can be a part of the holistic approach behind my works. For me the idea of the 'present' can be understood better, if we can correlate or accumulate elements from a different time frame. People of different races and of different geographical locations perceive the nature in different ways. Like the idea of 'cold' varies from north to south, from east to west. For some an idea of the 'snow' and 'subzero' temperature can only be found on literature where as for others this could be regularity. Also human 'taste' varies according to their cultural origin. Also with time 'taste' of a particular homogenous community might change. For example, forty years ago Indian or South Asian dishes may not be that popular in a western cuisine. To me, human sensations are dynamic; it can changes through time and space.

By knowing the process behind the sensory system, I think, we will be able to understand our bodily mechanism and explain its functions around space. Also this is an attempt to explain the unseen from a scientific, mythological or a philosophical perspective using our sensory system as tool. My work portrays the process behind our sensory system through which we perceive our surroundings and also my attempt is to create a map that describes the elements and its positions in the whole process.