

Vision of Contemporary Multicultural London in Farrukh Dhondy's *East End at Your Feet*

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Farrukh Dhondy, is a British writer and activist of Indian Parsi descent. *East End at Your Feet* is a collection of six stories about London teenagers from Asian and English families. The author describes, through the teenagers' eyes, their life in Britain today. Short Stories are a perennial treasure of scintillating wisdom. Usha Bande and Atma Ram feels that:

The Short Story, as a literary genre, has a unique position in the modern era. Man's life today is hectic and he is hard pressed for time. Such a social institution has given rise to the popularity of Short Story as one can satisfy one's literary urge within the limits of time at his or her disposal. (33)

The Short Story writers have a broad horizon and vision. They seem to comprehend their culture and mode of life in clear perspective and place within the flux of time. Among the major exponents who have contributed to the development of this genre, Farrukh Dhondy holds a unique position.

"Pushy's Pimples" short story mainly deals with typically teenage problems (i.e. suffering from acne), the question of a teenager when to have sex for the first time, but also with conflicts arising from different attitudes of Indian parents and their children raised in Britain.

15-year-old Puspha (or Pushy) learns 'facts of life' not from her parents, but from Michelle, her English school friend. The story tells how Michelle is going to acquaint Pushy with Steve, a friend of Michelle's acquaintances. They all want to meet at Pushy's house when her parents won't be at home. Although Pushy has arranged everything for the meeting, something goes wrong and the story finishes with a surprise ending. In the story, "K.B.W. (Keep Britain White)," is a story about racial conflicts among blacks, whites, Indians, Pakis and Bangladeshis. They all live in run-down housing estates in Hackney, East London. The story is told from the view of an Indian schoolboy, who is friendly with Tahir from Bangladesh who

has only recently arrived in London. They both are respected for playing cricket in the school's cricket team. Life in the housing estate suddenly becomes violent when some white youngsters begin to molest and attack the Asian residents. They paint insulting slogans (like 'KBW') onto the walls of the estate and even smash windows. When Tahir's sister Jenny is made the scapegoat for spreading typhoid in her community, things get out of control and Tahir's family leaves the estate. In *Good At Art* Raju doesn't feel comfortable at his school because of his shyness. He doesn't have any real friends. His parents are Indian immigrants. His command of English is good but he is extremely reluctant to talk to anybody of his peers. His only strong point is his talent for art. His new art teacher who comes from Pakistan immediately discovers how gifted he is. Raju, however, suffers most from his inability to address a girl. He simply doesn't know how to invite a girl for a drink or watching a film. The only way how to express himself is by painting. That's why he paints a picture of Kim, an English girl who seems to be interested in him and his country of birth.

A teenager is known to be good or bad according to the way he behaves towards others and under certain circumstances. When his/her habits are good, he/she is known to be a smart fellow. A boy/girl with proper manners attracts the attention and admiration of everyone, whereas the boy/girl with ill manners draws to himself/herself the ridicule and contempt of others. London consists of multiplicity of cultures. From time to time, a variety of people from different socio-cultural backgrounds have sought refuge in London. Multi-Culturalism is an essential aspect of the London scene that is reflected in the works of the writers. Exile of some ilk is becoming an increasingly ineluctable aspect of human experience. Even the dwindling minority who can reasonably remain in one physical location throughout life are likely to experience dislocation across time. Among the many challenges