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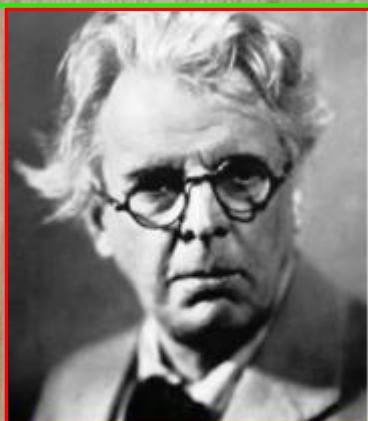
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Creation and Criticism

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Editorial : Jan-April 2020

From Visible Enemy to Invisible Enemy...



Happy Republic Day! On 26th January,
2020, we celebrated our 71st Republic Day.

The Preamble, the very soul of our Constitution presents the objectives which are to "secure justice, liberty, equality to all citizens and promote fraternity to maintain unity and integrity of the Nation." It begins with "WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA." This is the beauty of India and her culture that she always cares not merely of one man but of all people. The people of India who have the feeling of cosmopolitanism are filled with the spirit of "Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah,/ Sarve Santu Niraamayah,/ Sarve Bhadraani Pashyantu,/ Maa Kashchid Dukhabhaavbhaveta."

Divine powers work and create positive environment but satanic powers with masks pollute and pour poison. The destructive powers under the guidance of satanic powers are working to destroy India and her culture from within. These powers talk of rights and freedom but never perform their right duties. Rights,

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not duties are the mantras which they chant. They forget or rather pretend to forget their duties but never forget to ensnare the people with the wrong or negative arguments, misquoted from the religious texts. It is really painful to see these brainwashed people moving on the destructive path. Personal feelings start dominating over national feelings. Tagore who sees the vision of free India wishes to make her a "Heaven of Freedom" where "the clear stream of reason has not lost its way / into the dreary desert sand of dead habit." What Tagore wishes here is quite relevant. People should use their reasoning power and be able to differentiate between the right and the wrong. They should work continuously for establishing India as "Vishwaguru" by following their duties in an equipoise manner. They should abandon their selfish interests and use their energy and power in the interest of Nation. This is the Yoga which is the need of the hour. What Krishna says to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* is quite applicable in the present day scenario.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संगडंत्यक्त्वा धनंजय।

सिद्धयसिद्धयोः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते।।

yoga-sthah kuru karmaani sangam tyaktvaa dhananjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoh samo bhutvaa samatvam yoga ucyate (2.48
Bhagavad-Gita)

(Perform your duty equipoised, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga.)

An Invisible Enemy Enters...

As soon as the Republic Day is celebrated, an invisible enemy of humanity in the form of COVID-19 enters India. It plays with lives of the people in the other parts of the world and now it starts its dance of death in India. It dances slowly in the beginning but with the time, it gains its speed and begins to embrace the people. Now the whole world is in its embrace. The people feel desolate, hopeless and disappointed and do not know what to do and how to fight against the unseen enemy COVID-19. Due to lockdown, people feel frustrated. The government officials are doing their best to fight against the disease. Awareness is the only thing that will save the people from this enemy COVID-19. Man has seen many pandemics, faced, fought and finally come out triumphantly with the passage of time. Time heals the wounds. Man never accepts defeat. He makes a new beginning. Here are mentioned some measures which everyone must follow to defeat the invisible enemy.

MASK will save man from this enemy. Unmask the mask of COVID-19 with the Indian MASK which is:

M.... Mask for face

A.... Ayurveda for immune system (Yoga, cleanliness etc.)

S.... Social distancing (It means—keep physical distance. It means distance of bodies, not



of minds or souls or hearts. It never means—keeping away from social relations.)

K... Knowledge (Know how to bounce back, know how to fight against Coronavirus,

Know how to work online, Know everything that helps in fighting against COVID-19)

Kill Corona with MASK otherwise it will kill man. Wear the MASK and be safe. Be altruistic towards all.

Dear friends, it is the high time for the creative authors and critics who can perform their duties by spreading the positive vibes and making the people aware of this invisible enemy COVID-19 through their writings. For this pious work, *Creation and Criticism* is with them.

All the best!
Happy reading...

Sudhir K Arora
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Essay

Art of Poetry

P C K Prem



Poetry carries restrained praise, a bit of irony and satire, and reluctance of many to share or not to share its joy and here, just ignore smiles and applause. Poems can be straight, complex, and at times, obscure but genuinely try to portray life in multitude of activities of thoughts, emotions and instinctive reactions to persons, relations, incidents and social scenario.

One writes or scribbles a lyric with intensity of intellectual power and emotional reach, is difficult to believe. I understand it as random jotting or perhaps faintly arbitrary it is. An adolescent passion it is to connect with the soil and heart or to stay away in fantasy incomprehensible. Today, poets seem to be in a hurry in many cases and so feel convenient in free verse and defy rhythmical rules. I do not think a poem in free verse is precisely a poem, as obviously it is neither rhythmic nor metrical to be true but if the sounds of the words appeal and innate music strikes ears it is a lyric melodic. However, it is spirit of age a man

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lives with that is probably a little patchy and a bit muddled sans discipline.

If it is about the age, we care for, the poetry or text of it takes birth at this point, and one ascertains linkages with the language, throng of words and meanings. Efforts to sit beside truth in recapturing experiences and little indistinct thoughts words construct, begin. Unease is innate as one tries to travel unsure distance between experiences, thoughts formless, phrase and the final shape words take.

That way I justify what I write. Some verses are serious. A few are light and incongruous but are incisive reflections on man and society. If 'the self' stays out, well, it is good to see around what takes place, what exists and what appears to pester the 'the inside' and 'the outside' of you as body and heart or whatever exists inside. I think poetry is private with an intrinsic desire to participate in societal anxieties and actions where personal reactions and sentiments intercede. Something vague springs up, takes shape and thus, a few words you call rhythmic appear what one calls image of feelings, a little flowing stream of words – perhaps poetic it is. Thus, passion and its upsurge, call it poetry and it continues, and it is only an obsession and thereafter, a thought to put it out arises.

Poetry as one of the forceful segments of literature looks at life in entirety but is not absolute. It takes upon the responsibility of cultivating and spreading values –ethical and materialistic melodically I feel at times, but it raises questions, I do not wish to answer for obvious reason. It is inessential that a poet stays as a *guru*, a preceptor and if it is, he tells lies. Fierce scrutiny of moral principles causes humiliation one does not want. An optical illusion like situation in a desert arises inside where one finds water but is lost in sand dunes but as a guru one must stand up to attest truth so that inner passionate gush gets shape in words. Let the critic start work from here and find actual source of poetic outbursts –a little bizarre, abstruse and still distinct.

As poetic venture moves ahead, it looks messed up as emotions engulf experiences even while distortions arise. It looks odd, for art as a teacher, appears disgusting at times, and here, analytical faculties of intellect of vast scholarly field work to protect its region and it is not necessary that you as a poet adhere to what probity wants. Poetry is what hops and soars sans destination like the first cry of a child in a cradle but visualizes a final structure of creative music in words.

Art functions as a purgatory, a conduit that brings about limpidness, wholesomeness and inviolability even without giving a hint. It is natural and unintended but definitely, it expresses inherent wish to pen down experiences and thoughts even when you, as a poet or an author do not know what precisely you want to convey. If it is the frame of mental region, you want to be true to what you think of man and society it has plausible rationality. Art of continuing real connotation with a strong epithet has definite sources with some elimination. It is precisely a method to get rid of inessentials in what you find awkward and out of

context during review or as you refresh or alter word construction.

Notes are good to bring back what you thought once. To give language to emotions and experiences causes tremendous anxiety and uncertainty since articulation of the indefinable shadows or vaguely hides the real meaning. Therefore, anonymity is bound to emerge but poetry has its regions of exclusivity and isolation where many a time, it does not allow any access to an ordinary poetry lover and it is now for the critic to do the rest.


Young age is unconscious of the truth and reality it depicts. It loves to walk into regions new in the hope that it is good to obliterate what exists. Therefore, it reinstates what challenges sensibilities with diffused relation to purported reality.

First, you sit in the right and now, you turn left to locate its bearing on the background. To gain knowledge of truth appears good but it is stressful. I understand even immature mind raises questions of metaphysical nature he does not know. Later, academicians indulge in the pleasure of imparting it varied meanings touching borders of esoteric interpretations where these meanings do not exist. Here, it turns out phony construal of intellectual prowess or scholarly thrust of not only a lyricist but also the critic. At times, it may be amazing and relevant but many a time, just for the enjoyment of demonstration of one's knowledge that looks mostly meta-psyche related, it hints at absent spiritual quests.

Another aspect that requires elucidation is poet's predilection for love of man, society and humanity I feel. It infuses spirit of humanism, secularism and universality where he functions assiduously toward a future of universal consciousness and unity of minds even as impossibility of realization is understandable and instantly decipherable. However, to tone down such fixation is good for poetry.

Basic nature of human beings never changes and so the poets normally adhere to the social, cultural and religious regions of upbringing they inherit through parents, books or scriptural texts. I am not an exception even when I try to create a different space for 'the self', 'the self' I often try to explore but sadly enough fail to arrive at the correct understanding of what it is. However, vagueness and ambiguity stare and it is the poetic mess that persuades to indulge in pleasure of binding fragile structure of words -one, two, or three, called lyrical lines that give compound meanings. Is it chaotic spirit of the age where man is in a hurry I wonder?

At a very later stage, if humanistic thoughts percolate down the psyche, they imbibe invasive thought patterns of wellbeing of everyone irrespective of doctrine, colour or grouping or region and it is not a new but an ancient thought that finds expression in all religions and so in poetry.



A creative artist of any genre carries character of age but he does not experience the awesome internal or external burden. Perhaps, feelings of autonomy and innate yearnings of a man may a creative artist stay independent so that a reformist in him functions freely sans restraints on wayward feelings. At that time, liberal approach and its assertion take deep roots within. A cause of immense anxiety and further inquisition it is.

To understand social regions depends upon the quality and degree of knowledge and cultural understanding of a poet's backdrop and comprehension of contemporary times. Subjectivity overwhelms despite extraneous factors that engage poet's empathy for the age with the vibrant help of experience, awareness and quality of life a creative artist lives. He expects better life or hopes that people live a rich and happy life. At this point, an ideal perception of poet is noticeable. It involves challenges and assertion of positive attitude with understanding of environment -good or bad and here, any creative man goes beyond the borders of privacy and thinks of universal situation of life and wears mantle of an ethical man many a time and so, appears good and also disgusting. To teach morality is not good and it is not always welcome but it is an enjoyable poetic endeavour and a tool for entertaining 'the self' with value-system that one hardly adores.

I believe feelings of love and love for nature are elementary basics for human aspirations. As poetic sensibility and intensity of experience engulf, cultural proclivity gets strength and it encourages a poet to delve deep into areas of history, religion and myths of humanity in diverse regions that stimulate passion and craze to fathom even unvisited locales -that can be philosophical, spiritual and metaphysical.

At this stage, man's energy to know more about man, society and its evolution function as germane curiosity infuses systematic doze of moral principles. It is not easily discernible but carries the temper of times with reflexive vehemence and enthusiasm.

During its early years, Indian English poetry had its vibrant and dormant spot and here, one can measure the growth with apparent stops, jerks and repositions and now, poets' near aptness in depiction, causes some satisfaction.

It is time of uncertainty in nearly every wing of social spectrum but study of age displays poets' worries, an essential perspective it is, and it is, no doubt, triumph of poets to open up hearts in hard times. If flaws surface, it is natural but the learning appears genuine, for at times, poets work without any frame to depend upon.

If a poet is cynical or wittily ironic, it gives hint of discontent in social setup and reveals awakened consciousness even if the narrative appears not very correct, I not only realized this crystallization but also experienced deeply. If a versifier is a victim to reformatory social and cultural life, it deflates beauty of a lyric. To appear as a reformer or social scientist in poetry may

also exhibit disquiet at the fall of values and necessarily it makes an unlikable indentation in poetic charm and so, it is not true poetry. It is '*chalta hai*' type of verse.

To create a lyric out of inner earth 'the self' and define limits of experiences ugly or striking is authentic, for here the architect or artist of verse draws out stuff from within and speaks out what it contains. If he shares what is within, he makes hesitant efforts to become part of men walking outside the social continuum. However, even with disavowal, social set up restricts a creative artist to speak up what he wishes to say. It is not good for poetry, and one is reluctant to call it a tragedy.


Poetry is born as one looks outside on birth and gains impetus as one grows, one may realize or not. I remember days I spent in securing degrees and heard words of principles and morality, of truth and integrity from elders and teachers. It exercised immense influence and I loved good things like anyone else but as I grew, I was apathetic when I observed them in social system. Is it possible to save soul, the inner man? It is big problem. It is good to speak of nature and its beauty, of values and principles but to live purely on them raises questions, notwithstanding what the written word says. Can poetry in such environment, maintain purity of thought and expression? It is for the versifier to find a solution. Expediency tells to create a distance and live at equidistant. It is a suggestion and every artist has to find his own truth, I feel.

To write has its limitations and poetic frenzy is a little different. You just pick up a pen and begin to scribble lines and as the words come to mind, they form a specific pattern –clear and at times, a little obscure. Experience down deep the heart confronts strains and tensions, for to translate it into structure of a sentence of a few words that appear to flow naturally, is the real problem.

Rhythm or music related to sound softens coarseness words give and here, at times, one tries to find, poetic phrases. However, cadenced or metrical poetic lines for many are not so easy. It requires immense efforts, mental discipline to create music and melody through lexis, an artist realizes, and so it happens with most of the poets when they understand that sensitive expression in blank verse works well. Rhythm and melody require internal poise and equilibrium having source outside I realize and so natural conflict causes barriers in creative process.

If a poet puts stress to bring form to a verse and makes expression pleasant-sounding, tuneful or cadenced, it is extra struggle with the thought and message he wishes to convey I feel but it hampers instant surge of thoughts even if it is modest.

If thoughts and feelings try to touch psychological borders, these give birth to interpretation that carries multiple meanings. To know strength of poetry through mental exercise gives unique pleasure I understand and it is anguish and joy together. One realizes at this moment that realistic comprehension is essential even if inner complexities obstruct.



To me internal maze of thoughts and emotions needs isolation, a kind of insulation from each other to grant it authenticity. It is difficult to find out what actually is true, for emotional and experiential makeup has a thin line of differentiation and therefore, the indistinctness lingers on until a poet tries to arrest it in possibly effective language. In many verses, it works as a restraint. Talking of thought, at times, one is appalled as taste of black blood travels painfully along the Ganges.

Here, in such constructions one fails to convey what precisely one wishes but still the breakup of lines puzzles and reflects some veiled caution.

One wonders if a poet wants to underline intrinsic incongruities or irritations. It hints at a sanctifying process, perhaps as elusiveness assails. Poems also compel one to make a choice between what is obviously existing dilemma and old impulsive urge—good or bad.


A poet's tendency to be ethical and realistic often creates genuine problems where it is unimportant, and therefore, hanging around gives adequate stress. One cannot say what poets really feel when they suffer from irresolution and uncertainty of language they put to use, for the ultimate expression conveys a labyrinth of experience with a few flaws. Even then, it sustains poetic strength and offers moments of pleasure to an insightful poetry enthusiast, I believe.

A creative work apparently looks simple and spontaneous but it requires truth of feelings and thoughts. A poet, a creative artist builds up a certain artistic structure and if he maneuvers inner multiplexes, it is not a genuine art. It is expression of thoughts and emotions with a sense of solemnity and integrity and here the choice is with the artist. If he arranges the choices aptly, it is good but not the best, for truth is an exclusive and instantaneous entity sans disjointed construal, which appears an easy proposition but carries burden of uneasy option with regard to factual understanding.

To take up truth as a subject in lyrics carries limitations because a poet even dilutes the legitimacy and intensity of accepted experiences with the language he uses and the semblance of rhythm he wishes to generate. That is a grave error a poet realizes when he indulges in elegiac joy.

A creative artist deliberates cautiously and discerns a pattern in what he writes I believe. Lyrics, at surface even irritate, inveigle and confound, for he tries to go to the backdrop of formal birth of lyrics and then, understands the hidden meaning and its real face outside.

Very few verses, in this context, I know, I penned down during the last two decades, are not personal in nature it looks. It was neither intended nor deliberate, I understood later. I am still unable to make out. Probably, it was an attempt to hide what I felt for fear of personal infirmities of understanding relations,



society and environment I recognized much later. Subjective scrutiny often obstructed correct rationalization. Maybe efforts were not working! However, it was a false perception I knew because at that time, social anxieties born of prejudices and typical cultural abstractions appeared irresistible.

To see the ugly and the unpleasant and make efforts to change it into beauty is a huge crisis. It requires a very strong heart to nurse hopes even while darkness rampant haunts future. To say good words, to smile and to see only light and radiance even in darkness and innate strain, and intolerance and impatience outside, is a good quality but it is also running away from realities and definiteness and that makes a man nincompoop, and perhaps turns him out of shape, and dreary he is I believe.

In creative art, it is good to speak of hopes but to ignore truth and realism often speak of ominous or murky side of life or does not appear pleasant, and at last, it drives man to imperfect knowledge of life and compels him to live in camouflage and illusion. It kills unprejudiced evaluation and thus, imperfections surface to blur correct appreciation. If a creative artist tries to avoid the downside, he is close to truth and makes art somewhat good if not the best.

About the Author:

PCK Prem (P.C. Katoch of Garh-malkher, Palampur, Himachal, a former academician, civil servant and member PSC HP, Shimla), an author of more than fifty five books, is a poet, novelist, short story writer and a critic in English and Hindi from Himachal, India.

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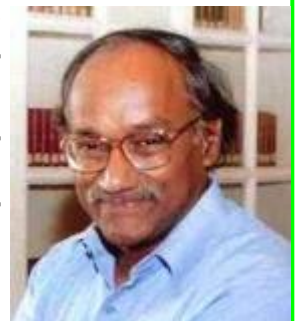
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Essay

Looking Within and Beyond

R K Singh

Perhaps it's time to think what it means to be a poet writing in English in a country that hardly cares about poetry. Of course poetry collections keep appearing, mostly with the poets' own money, in print and online, but reaching out to influential media and academia has been difficult. The general support is missing.

Power and politics apart, practicing poets and editors such as D C Chambial, P C K Prem, T V Reddy, P K Joy, I K Sharma, R K Singh, Angelee Deodhar, Atma Ram, H S Bhatia, Pronab K Majumder, P Raja, Sudhir K Arora, Abnish Singh Chauhan, C L Khatri, Shaleen Kumar Singh, K V Dominic, C L Khatri, and scores of others have been liberally supporting the potent voices that merit public and academic attention. Even as they demonstrate understanding of the poets' relationship to both the present and the past, to the rich literary tradition, and to the sociopolitical system that negates their presence, the problem of literary mediation persists. Their muse struggles for space in the world of Literature.

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Unless academic research on emerging and marginalized poets and writers in English locally, regionally, and nationally is promoted as policy, the native literary culture won't develop. It would not only be difficult but also partial, exclusive, elitist, and negative to discuss contemporary trends and consciousness in creative writing without talking about hundreds of new voices that appeared post-Ezekiel.

If a poet like V V B Ramarao is noted, -- he is an experienced academic, bilingual writer, and translator,-- it is not only because of his ability to carry the message of Indian culture and heritage with dignity but also because of his ability to communicate. He sounds collaborative with contemporary life and society and writes with a purpose, which is both personal and social. Aware of the generational shift, he views the external world with a critical eye and tries to talk frankly. In the process he turns within to become religious, moral, and interpretative.

His manas, sensitive and matured as it is, creatively explores the conflict-ridden world-"killing, ripping, raping, mauling" with "strange codes for strange outrages"-and transforms into a life of love, goodness, and compassion: "Will vultures be transformed/into white doves, blue pigeons and black birds?" ('The Seer's Eye'), he suspects, but sounds reassuring, when he says, "Suffering needn't necessarily degrade" ('Vetting a Poet').

As he exposes what he observes outside - "Threats of extinction wholesale are on the cards again," with Laloosaurs, tyrannosaurs, psittacosaurus, Apatosaurus, saltosaurus, and so many other hydra-heads that challenge humanity everywhere ("Maybe the centre cannot hold, things are falling apart" - Pessimism), he demonstrates his strength inside: "But faith I'd never lose." He turns positive and calls for order, for looking within, through the microscope of oneself, for seeing what he visualizes as "whiteness of mind" and "infant's face."

Most of his poems are replete with images and metaphors that reveal wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and discerning insight: "What is without is within/Look for the infant's face in the one you love:/Just look within" ('Look Within'); "Ask not what the world has come to--/Realize what you have come to" (Mall Malady Moron); and "Blessed it is to be in solitude/A consummation devoutly to be wished/That's all we need to know" ('Bliss it is').

The moralist and teacher in him is ever vigilant: "It is not enough to have a watch right on your wrist/You should know the value of time" ('For Our Grandchildren'); "Spirituality needs wisdom and piety" ('Seeing through I.C.U. '); "Days of deliverance recede far and farther/Hydra-heads cannot be decapitated at all" ('Breasts of Prey'); "Between ism and feminism falls the shadow/For Hers is the kingdom/Time doesn't heal: it only blunts./All is not vanity:/Pain is real" ('Blunted'); and "Karmic suffering alone purges off dross" ('Soul in transit').

Ramarao's didactic tone in many a poem may or may not appeal the new generation readership but the radiance of his thought may be felt by everyone. He tastes and shares liberally what he calls "delicatessen" in poesy via saintly wisdom: "Some tales in our scripture like epics are guidelines for all."

Like a seer-poet, he movingly uses his metaphors to convey what may appear unpleasant but is true. He critically meditates on various social issues of the time and communicates his own personal vision, revealing the experienced scholar he has been and searching his own salvation. His poetry defines the way he perceives the world around him and demonstrates what lies inside him. There is a touch of faith in what he says. To that extent, his poetry is criticism, with clarity of thought and diction, and added humour, irony, satire, and moral tone that draws him to the ways of the self with the same zeal as he commits himself to bhakti or devotion to the divine.

In fact he flirts with the muse to experience the human and divine as a seeker (cf. 'Winter Rain' and 'Foul Play'). In his 'Winter Blossoms' and other poems loaded with sex, he seeks to stress how "amorous sex" is a means of fulfillment. If one desires more and more of it, it is because, to quote J. Krishnamurti, "there is the cessation of self-consciousness, of the 'me'... complete self-forgetfulness." It's a condition to free the self, a self-free spiritual state, "seeking to be free of conflict because with the cessation of conflict, there is joy. If there can be freedom from conflict, there is happiness at all different levels of existence."

When Ramarao's narrator talks about give and take, yearning for ebullient warmth, in absolute oneness of physical union, he seeks a greater continuity of pleasure, and an escape from the deadly sense of emptiness, isolation, loneliness. "Loneliness is hell," says he. The poet seeks solace in the advait philosophy of unity, but cautions: "Libido is not all-it can ignite another flaming hell" ('Vetting a Poet'). He continues:

Hidden arsenals haunt a devil mind
Eager to add lusty continents to
The globe bursting at the seams.
No point chanting mantras for navigation benign.

But love is its own eternity just as discovering the ways of the self through poetry is Ramarao's meditation. The volume is a discovery of truth which everyone may relish. I am happy to be a part of it as a reader.

Courtesy: <http://EzineArticles.com/9793659>

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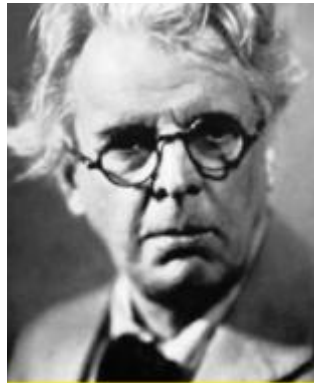
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Research Paper

COVID-19: Relevance of Swami Vivekananda's "The Plague Manifesto" in the Present Day Scenario

Dakshita Arora

Abstract

The COVID-19 has dominated the present scenario and created destruction by making the heap of graves all around the world. But, man who never accepts defeat fights back. He gains strength through reading empathetic literature. Swami Vivekananda's "The Plague Manifesto" is relevant as it has all the clues which are necessary to fight against the monster Corona. If man follows it, he will be free from the fear and gain balance of mind. Modi's Saptapadi is in tune with Vivekananda's "The Plague Manifesto" which mirrors man's past as well as directs him by showing the future how he can bounce back and regain his former glory.

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Keywords: COVID-19, Saptapadi, Arogya Setu App., Emotional support, Empathy, Fearlessness

"But, man is not made for defeat," he said, "A man can be destroyed but not defeated" (103). This is the most powerful excerpt from Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. It strikes and makes man aware of the inner self. Man gains strength with time and fights back. The COVID-19 has made him realise the uselessness of the materialistic approach to life. He has learnt to be more humanitarian in spirit and approach towards life than ever. No doubt, the COVID-19 has dominated the present scenario but it is the man who will get victory over the unseen Coronavirus.

The present day scenario is painted with despair and desolation. Rays of hope are darkened by the black clouds of COVID-19. This situation is not the new one to man who has seen various pandemics in life and with his inner strength he has fought and got victory. Swami Vivekananda, the enlightened soul faces the epidemic in Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1898. He issues the Plague Manifesto to combat the adverse situation. "The Plague Manifesto" of Swami Vivekananda is more relevant in the present day world and highly recommended to the people. The people should follow its each and every word if they wish to come out of this disappointing situation. The feelings of frustration, loneliness and destruction have badly affected the mind of the people. Soumya Das writes:

As the world battles the COVID-19 pandemic about 121 years ago when another pandemic plague broke out in Kolkata and other parts of India, Swami Vivekananda wrote a unique advisory for the Kolkata residents called the Plague Mainifesto. The booklet was written in 1898 soon plague broke out in Kolkata.

The plague takes Calcutta in its embrace in May 1898 and creates mass hysteria. Vivekananda, with his disciples and Sister Nivedita, helps the afflicted and attempts to create a genuine atmosphere of help, support, sympathy and cooperation among the masses. The relief operation becomes the source of relief to the people. Vivekananda's "The Plague Manifesto" proves to be the sun which makes the people aware and thus removes the darkness created by the clouds of plague. This manifesto is the need of the hour in present scenario. This manifesto is the sun which will make the dark clouds of COVID-19 disappear resulting in the light of the sun, i.e. the light of hope.

"The Plague Manifesto" begins with "Om Salutations to Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna" and addresses the people with "Brothers of Calcutta." No doubt, the address is to brothers of Calcutta but it has universal appeal for all the people of the world. This is true in case of all the people around the world as they suffer from the fear of COVID-19. The COVID-19 is the monster. This monster is approaching to devour the people. Only faith, trust, self-help and determination will save the humanity from this monster.

"The Plague Manifesto" has the seven points. These seven points remind the people Prime Minister Narendra Modi's seven steps—Saptapadi which he gave to the people to save from the evil effects of COVID-19. The seven steps—"looking after the elderly people, covering the face with mask and following social distancing, providing help to the needy and vulnerable, having empathic attitude towards the workers, respecting the Corona warriors, boosting immunity according to the tips given by AYUSH ministry, and downloading the Arogya Setu Application" have somewhere connection to Swami Vivekananda's Plague Manifesto.

Now, all the seven points of "The Plague Manifesto" are being discussed here. The Plague Manifesto begins with:

We feel happy when you are happy, and we suffer when you suffer. Therefore, during these days of extreme adversity, we are striving and ceaselessly praying for your welfare and an easy way to save you from disease and the fear of an epidemic. (2636)

Its beginning reveals Vivekananda's empathic approach. What the people need is empathy, not sympathy. The words "We feel happy when you are happy, and we suffer when you suffer" connect directly to the hearts of the people. Vivekananda reveals his protecting and caring attitude towards the people and associates himself with them. In their happiness lies his happiness. In their suffering lies his suffering. No doubt, the days that the people of Calcutta are passing through are full of adversity but Vivekananda, with his disciples, prays for them and tries to find out the way to face the epidemic. In the present scenario, people also need empathy, not sympathy. This very empathetic attitude will give them a will power and make them realise the feeling of togetherness in adversity. Prayer is the way to save from the fear of the disease. Tennyson emphasises the importance of prayer when he says: "More things are wrought by prayers / Than this world dreams of" (116). For Vivekananda, the masses are the embodiment of God. He does not mind if he, with his disciples, dies while serving and nursing them. Service to the common man is the Narayan seva. He asks the people not to be panic. This fear is without any foundation. What they need is to depend on God. If they remain calm, they will certainly find out a way to solve the problem.

Vivekananda asks the people not to have any kind of fear because this fear is without any foundation. He assures them that the government authorities are doing their work to help the people. Hence, their fear is baseless. He exhorts them to "give up this false fear", asks them to have "faith in the infinite compassion of God" and inspires them to "gird loins and enter the field of action" (2636). What is important at this time is that the people should live "pure and clean lives" and if they do so, disease will disappear. When he says that "disease, fear of an epidemic, etc., will vanish into thin air by His grace", he gives them the message of the fusion of *Karma* and *Bhakti*.

Further, Vivekananda offers some pieces of advice and asks the people to follow them. Cleanliness is essential. He asks them to keep the house and its premises neat and clean. The people should avoid eating stale, spoiled food. Nutritious diet will boost their immune system and give them strength to fight the disease. He knows that "a weak body is more susceptible to disease" (2636). He makes them mentally prepared saying that a man comes on this earth and dies after performing the allotted task. When a man is to die, why should he live in fear? Cowards die every moment. Fear is not outside. Fear lies within—within the mind. The need is to make the mind strong with positive thoughts. He says: "Always keep the mind cheerful. Everyone will die once. Cowards suffer the pangs of death again and again, solely due to the fear in their own minds" (2636). He traces the cause of fear and finds that the man who leads an unethical life and earns his livelihood unethically always lives in fear. Such unethical behaviour should be avoided. He asks the people to avoid the two enemies—anger and lust. Every man should abstain from the two great enemies. He advises: "During the period of epidemic, abstain from anger and from lust — even if you are householders" (2636). *The Bhagavad Gita* is Vivekananda's guide. In Chapter 16, Verse 21, Krishna tells Arjuna:

*tri-vidham narakasyedam dvaram nāśhanam ātmanaḥ
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet
(16.21)*

There are three gates leading to this hell—lust, anger, and greed. Every sane man should give these up, for they lead to the degradation of the soul. (676)

Thus, he asks everyone to be away from lust and anger. Further, he asks the people not to pay any attention to the rumours. He assures them that the government will vaccinate only those who wish to be vaccinated. He understands the pain and suffering of the poor people. So, he will do his best in treating the afflicted patients. The Mother of the Universe is with them.

What Vivekananda writes in the point six (which has eight sub-points) of the Plague Manifesto is truly applicable in the present scenario. To fight against COVID-19, cleanliness is mandatory. Washing hands, wearing masks, eating the nutritious food to increase immunity, keeping the positive attitude, removing fear from the mind, earning the livelihood ethically, abstaining from anger and from lust, paying no attention to rumour, helping attitude of the government authorities or Corona warriors, and treating the Corona patients irrespective of caste, colour and religion etc. are some measures which are quite applicable in the present day situation to fight against the Corona monster.

Vivekananda clearly mentions the address and asks the people to apply if they do not find any help. He also assures them to offer even the monetary help. The same is quite true to the Indian government. The authorities have issued the numbers and addresses on which the people may apply if they are hungry or sick or have any kind of problem. Faith is the thing that will

become the rock. Faith comes out of religious faith. Vivekananda asks the people to sing Nama Sankirtanam every evening everywhere. This chanting of the Nama Sankirtanam will remove the fear of epidemic from the mind of the people. He knows the importance of prayer which makes man humble and strong enough to fight against any adverse circumstances in life. Prayer creates faith. Faith is what a man needs today. He needs faith—faith in himself and faith in God. Hence, a man needs to have faith in order to be strong within.

Man is a man. He has faced many challenges and got victory. He has some transcendental qualities. The need is to make him aware of these divine qualities. The lockdown period has given him enough time to ponder over his situation. This period has given him challenges which he has turned into opportunities. He has learnt not to disturb the balance of nature. The man needs to have the qualities which are mentioned in the Verses from 1 to 3 of Chapter 6 of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Here are the three verses:

*abhayaṁ sattva-saṁśuddhir jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ
dānam damaś ca yajñāś ca svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam*
(Chapter 16. Text 1)

*ahimsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaśunam
dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvaṁ mārdaṁ hrīr acāpalam* (Chapter 16. Text 2)

*tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nāti-mānitā
bhavanti sampadam daivīm abhijātasya bhārata* (Chapter 16.3 Text)

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Fearlessness; purification of one's existence; cultivation of spiritual knowledge; charity; self-control; performance of sacrifice; study of the Vedas; austerity; simplicity; nonviolence; truthfulness; freedom from anger; renunciation; tranquillity; aversion to faultfinding; compassion for all living entities; freedom from covetousness; gentleness; modesty; steady determination; vigor; forgiveness; fortitude; cleanliness; and freedom from envy and from the passion for honor—these transcendental qualities, O son of Bharata, belong to godly men endowed with divine nature. (655-56)

COVID-19 has come to the man as thesis. It has created despair and hopelessness among the people. There is no vaccine now but, in future, he will make. But, right now, people are panic and feel frustrated. The stage is the stage of antithesis. This virus is not going to disappear soon. It will remain for some more time as the report says. Man is on the path of learning how to cope with this virus. He will certainly reach the stage of synthesis and soon find the solution of this pandemic created by the COVID-19.

Vivekananda wrote "The Plague Manifesto" in Bengali first. It gave the emotionally support to the people of Calcutta to fight against the plague. The Plague Manifesto, which is written in simple, effective and persuasive and touching way, is quite applicable in the present time. It has proved its relevance

through its emotional touch and the promises that it fulfils in the adverse circumstance. It supports them mentally, physically and monetary. The Indian government, with the official authorities, is on the path of providing help and support to all the people—rich or poor. What a man needs in the present circumstances is balance of mind. He has to conquer the mind. If he does so, he will certainly conquer the fear. Self-help is the foundation which makes him strong enough to know his strength within. He has to acquire knowledge—knowledge of increasing immunity, knowledge of coping with the disease, knowledge of avoiding the disease by washing hands, wearing mask and maintaining social distance, knowledge of online working from home and knowledge of working in the virtual world. He must remember that he is a man and "man", in the words of Ernest Hemingway, "is not made for defeat" (103).

In a real sense, Vivekananda's "The Plague Manifesto" provides an emotional support to the people and hence its applicability to the present COVID-19 scenario is acknowledged. Some men like doctors and soldiers who are in the battle ground to face Corona are putting their lives at risk. These warriors do not care for themselves but care for the common people. They do not mind if they die while serving the people. Swami Vivekananda writes in the Plague Manifesto saying "even we perish while serving and nursing you, we will consider ourselves fortunate." (2636). It is really tragic that today the Corona warriors are being beaten or stoned. For whom are they risking their lives? If the people contribute nothing, it is better for them to remain silent and join their hands with those who are fighting against Corona for their welfare. Mark Vivekananda's words which are quite relevant for every man:


We humbly pray to you—please do not panic due to unfounded fear. Depend upon God and calmly try to find the best means to solve the problem. Otherwise, join hands with those who are doing that very thing. (2636)

"The Plague Manifesto" is the mirror in which the common man can peep into the past and learn how the people faced the challenges and how they slapped the face of the plague. This is the mirror for them to see their future. If they do not follow the guidelines, no one will save them. They must remember that they are human being first. Let them come together and join hands to fight against COVID-19 and slap the monster Corona forcefully otherwise it will slap them. This is the time to take action. The only situation which remains for everyman is: do or die. But, man will not accept death. He will not accept his defeat easily. He will act. He knows that action is the only way that will take him towards victory over COVID-19.

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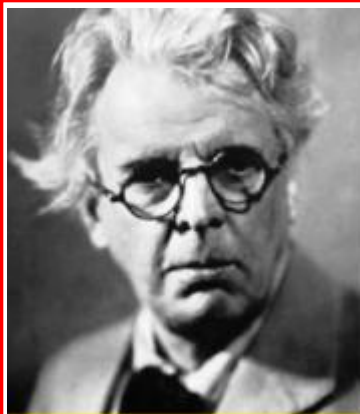
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Research Paper

Space for Woman: A Study of Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters

Neetika

Abstract

Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Despande, Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai among others are the well-known Indian women novelists who have deftly dealt with the theme of space for woman in their fictional worlds. Like the other prominent woman novelists of her times, Manju Kapur (b. 1948), in her debut novel— *Difficult Daughters* (1998), has dexterously presented women of three generations— Kasturi, Virmati and Ida struggling for occupying respectable space in the patriarchal society of India. The struggle of these women lead them nowhere as they peacefully admit whatever unpleasant takes place in their lives and agonizingly survive without saying anything or making any bold complaint about such things. They patiently keep their feelings and emotions under control and silently and reverently do adjustments and sacrifices for the welfare of their families. The paper presents the sincere stories

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of these women characters— Kasturi, Virmati, Ganga and Ida that are doomed to face the poignant problems in their lives due to the rigid traditional family system, limited access to education, strained love bonding and lack of happy, healthy and open space around them.

Key Words: Search for Space, Marriage, Love and Sex, Patriarchy, Identity and Freedom


Manju Kapur's debut novel— *Difficult Daughters* (1998), which received astonishing admiration in India and abroad and finally won the Commonwealth Prize for First Novels in Eurasia Section, is a powerful story of Indian women of three generations— Kasturi, Virmati and Ida. Kasturi, Virmati, Ganga and Ida continuously struggle, suffer and even reconcile only for getting suitable 'space' in the male-dominated society of India. Their story, which begins with Virmati's funeral, is deftly narrated by Ida, Virmati's daughter.

The story of the novel, which takes place during the time of Partition in India, dexterously unravels the predicament of the eldest woman— Kasturi trapped in inflexible and obsolete socio-cultural norms. Kasturi, as a wife, is a spaceless traditional woman. She is very compliant and accommodating. She does not know how to lead her life in her own way and, therefore, she always works and behaves as per the wish of her husband. In return, she desires for nothing; she speaks for nothing; she complains for nothing. Being an obedient wife, she always cooperates and adjusts with her husband and this temperament of hers leads her to become the mother of ten children. She produces her children like the machine and, therefore, as a mother she could not get enough time to nurture her children properly. Manju Kapur grotesquely writes:

Kasturi could not remember a time when she was not tired, when her feet and legs did not ache. Her back curved in towards the base of her spine, and carrying her children was a strain, even when they were very young. Her stomach was soft and spongy, her breasts long and unattractive. (*Difficult Daughters* 07)

Kasturi's painful life can be seen in her physical dullness and severe health issues. In spite of such problems and miseries of her life, she becomes pregnant for the eleventh time. She does not think about her bad health. She does not think about her children. She just thinks about her duties to the patriarchal family and suffers incessantly. But, this is too much for her and, therefore, during the eleventh time of her pregnancy, she gathers her courage and mildly raises her voice against this injustice. She expresses her distress to her husband and tries to create some space for herself. If she had spoken it, she would have created space for herself earlier.

Kasturi is a common woman of the traditional society of India. She does not know the power of her inner self and, therefore, never asks her husband not to use her body as a tool for carnal



pleasures. She is not steady internally and strong physically. However, she is very much devoted to such a husband, who has least concerns for her. Here lies her weakness that leads her to the path of misery due to the physical hunger of her husband and resultant pregnancy time and again. In her painful journey, she not only loses joy and happiness in her marital life, but also frequently loses control over her mind and becomes angry at her first daughter— Virmati inconsiderately. She forgets the contribution of Virmati in nurturing the other children of her family. She unnecessarily questions her daughter from time to time and scolds her for anything and everything. In this way, she becomes instrumental in making Virmati 'not to be like her' and indirectly pushes her to the self-decided path of marital life.

There is another woman— Virmati, who does not occupy proper space in her life and, therefore, continuously grieves in the novel. Virmati suffers as a daughter and then as a wife. Her role as a daughter would have been better-off if she had been the only daughter or the youngest issue of her parents. She would have been cheerful if she had been the only wife of her husband. In both the cases, she is unfortunate. Consequently, she suffers as the first child of her parents and the second wife of her husband, a professor by profession. As a second wife of the Professor, she could not enjoy her marital life. She loses all her useful abilities when she gets married with the Professor. First, she has to suffer at the hands of his family members for her unconventional entry in their family life. Secondly, she could not raise her voice in such circumstances and remains silent and submissive like her mother. She does not fight against the insolences of her family to her and subsequently fails to create reputable space for herself. With the passage of time the first wife of the Professor begets a son— Giridhar. The son grows a little and develops communication with his mother, father and grandmother. One day on her arrival to her husband's house, the son enquires his grandmother about Virmati, "Who is this *gandi* lady? Send her away" (208). On hearing his strange words, she becomes upset to know about her status in the husband's family.

On becoming aware of her loss of her space in the new set up, she wants to get her rights. However, it is so late that she cannot change her fortune. She has nothing to do, but only to lament at her bad situation. She wants to undo her mistakes in order to reset her life. But, it is not possible, at least in this life of hers. She herself has to endure her pains in the traditional society of India. She has to accommodate herself to the new circumstances with her insignificant position.

In spite of being the second wife, she could not enjoy her life in her husband's house. She does seem cheerful in the house. Even she is not permitted to perform her wifely responsibilities to her husband and other members of the family, for example— cooking, catering, washing or other household works. She could never comprehend the words of her spouse when he tells her that he does not want a maid servant but only a partner. Then again, his husband's first wife and his children are totally indifferent towards her and many times show a kind of hatred to her. Since Virmati fails to create suitable space for herself as the

second wife of her husband at his home, her secluded position in the family is meaningless— "She wondered dreadingly whether this isolation would continue till the end of her life" (215).

Virmati feels as if she is doomed to make compromises and adjustments in her life. She has only one desire to get love and respect in the family of the Professor. But, she finds everyone unfriendly to her, except the Professor. Ganga, the first wife of the Professor, her grown up children and even the mother-in-law never leave a stone unturned to humiliate her. At the lunch-time, the mother of the Professor served her lunch on the bed, but she feels dejected— "Whatever little appetite Virmati had was taken away by the humiliation of being served before everybody else like a guest, and that too by her husband's mother, whom, in the proper course of events, she should be serving" (215).


As an unlawful beloved of the Professor, Virmati ponders over her own welfares, but as a woman, she never realizes the benefits of another woman in Ganga. Therefore, all the achievements of Virmati as the wife of the Professor become fruitless with the passage of time. Her illicit deed of wedding the married man is criticized publically and, as a result, it brings shame and sadness in the household of the Professor. But, there is another aspect of this story in the opinion of a critic:

Virmati's attempt to give a complete fulfillment to her heart's desire was a total failure. Yet her struggle for voicing her rights should not be considered as a mistake. But what mattered most was that she had at least made an attempt to break the patriarchal mould and the attempt itself was a great achievement in the forties because no one had ever dreamt of it. (Jandial 11)

Virmati dreams of a child, becomes pregnant and feels elated. But, regrettably her unborn baby dies due to some natural cause. It shatters her hopes. As she looks unhappy and isolated, the Professor inspires her to continue her study at Lahore. Instantaneously, Virmati grabs the opportunity provided by her husband for getting happiness and peace. At Lahore, she finds a new change in her emotional environment, but she could not forget the bad attitude of Ganga and others. Since she stays at Lahore for the study of philosophy, she does not get time to meet with her husband on the regular basis. She also does not like to go to her husband's house at Amritsar frequently.

When the partition riots begin in India, it gives an opportunity to Virmati and her husband to live jointly in the same house. Hence, she comes back to her husband, who was unaccompanied by his first wife Ganga as she with other members of the family are sent to Kanpur for safety motives. Now she gets the opportunity to perform the household duties and enjoy her life as a partner on the bad without any obstruction. Consequently, she becomes pregnant for the third time and gives birth to a female child Ida.

On becoming the second wife, Virmati does not get rightful space in her husband's household. All her defiant viewpoints, which she




had reflected before her wedding, vanished just after her wedding. Her rebellious attitude, which is the forte of her personality before her wedding, loses its hold soon after her wedding. She fails to communicate her voice of liberty as a spouse.

As a daughter, Virmati has somewhat liberty to exercise her powers. But, after marriage she confines herself in her own walls. That's why, at the last moment of her life, she expresses her longing to get suitable space to her daughter Ida and asks her to accomplish her last wish. Hence, she requests her daughter to donate all her body parts to some needy one after her demise. Ida recalls: "When I die, she said to me, I want my body donated. My eyes, my heart, my kidneys, any organ that can be of use. That way someone will value me after I have gone" (Difficult Daughters 01). However, Ida does not obey her mother after her death and cremates her mother's body without donating anything. Hence, Virmati's appeal goes unheard at the last hour.

The story of Ganga, the first wife of Professor Harish, is different from Virmati and Kasturi. Ganga gets married with Harish in her childhood, especially at the age of three, in a ceremonial way. Though child marriage is a curse in today's time, it was in vogue in those days. She could not get formal education in the school due to the rigid social structure. But, she tried to learn all those things— the art of cooking, sewing and management, which are essential for running a household. Until she reached the age of twelve, she remained with her husband. She proves herself as a very good house maker in the family, but being an uneducated woman, she fails to occupy a rightful place as a spouse of her educated husband. She is meek and dutiful and utters no discourteous word to her husband till her husband marries with Virmati and brings her as his second wife to his house. Even after his wedding with Virmati, she does not break her bonding with him. She is satisfied to know that she is still his legal wife. The author remarks— "Her husband continued to be Ganga's public statement of selfhood. Her bindi and her bangles, her toe rings and her mangalsutra, all managed to suggest that he was still her god" (278).

Ganga begins to speak about her legal status just after the advent of Virmati to her house. She raises her dissent for getting right space in the household. She forbids Virmati to go into her kitchen, an expedient place for her cooking performances. She cooks food for her family without getting any assistance from her. She serves it to her husband herself. She never permits Virmati to wash his clothes. She even does not favor the plan of her husband, who wants to send Virmati for higher studies. Virmati also does not show any resent to Ganga and never creates any tussle in her household activities. She respects her. But, she still wants to get her proper space, particularly in the education sector, where she can get the opportunity to refine herself and, in this, way escape the miseries of family life. Here Virmati is right in her desire to continue her studies, while Ganga is self-centered and rigid. Nonetheless, Ganga is happy to learn that she would be all alone with her partner due the non-



presence of Virmati at home. Though it is not a permanent solution to her painful life, it gives some solace to her heart for the time-being. In this way, she represents a common woman, who never wants to share her husband with others. She fails to comprehend the beauty of cordial bonds between two wives. She also fails to realize the value of adjustment and forgiveness in her life. She is happy and her happiness is momentary. Time and tide waits for none. Ferocious riots erupt after partition compelling her to resettle at a distant place— far from her husband. Hence, she has to leave her house, leave her husband and even leave other useful things. She is shifted to Kanpur with a hope to come back again and continue her life with her husband, but unluckily she gets no such opportunity in the rest of her earthly life. Being old-fashioned and uneducated, she could not get rightful place in the society till the last moment of her life.

If Ganga had attuned and cooperated with the second wife of the Professor, she would have enjoyed greater space in her life. If Virmati had taken the right decision, she would have not suffered so much in her married life. Both the women are responsible for their troubles. The Professor is also responsible for their miseries. He was educated. He should not break social norms and values. He should not dupe Ganga, the first wife. He should not lure Virmati, a young woman, for her carnal pleasures. He should not get married with Virmati. In such circumstances, he himself is answerable for the injustice done to his wives— Ganga and Virmati. Moreover, Ganga and Virmati could not separate themselves from their husband. They could not fight for their rights. They could not teach lessons to the Professor. Consequently, they could not get justice and liberty in their lives.

Ida, the narrator, grows up struggling “to be the model daughter” (279). She leads her life under the pressure of her father and mother. Her father wants that her daughter should look beautiful and well-dressed as per the customs of the Indian society; whereas, her mother tightens her reigns on her as she grows older for her life-long welfare. They fail to become understanding father and mother for her. Hence, Ida has a different perception — not to be like her mother. She takes her own decisions, gets married and suffers constantly. She realizes her mistake— “Of course I made a disastrous marriage” (279). She gets divorce from her husband. Now she is husbandless and childless. Her mother is worried about her future— “What will happen to you after I am gone?” (279). But, Ida, a typical daughter of a ‘Difficult Daughter’— Virmati, does not want to live under the shadow of her mother. She wants her own space in the society. She concludes her narrative thus— “This book weaves a connection between my mother and me, each word a brick in a mansion I made with my head and my heart. Now live in it, Mama, and leave me be. Do not haunt me anymore” (280). Dr C.L. In this regard, C.L. Khatri, in an interview with Abnish Singh Chauhan, rightly remarks— “the taste and mood of an age will inevitably be reflected in its literature and art” (Indian Poetry in English 253).

Though Ida is somewhat bold, the other women— Kasturi, Virmati and Ganga in Manju Kapur's novel, *Difficult Daughters* are categorically modest and submissive. These women do not have power and position in the society, where they live and die for others. They do not get freedom to enjoy their married life in the society, which is totally indifferent to their small joys. They just suffer as they believe in their destiny made of the patriarchal structure of the traditional society of India. "They feel, they are suppressed, they understand, they hide, they love, they care, they try, they cry. They are helpless because they are woman" (Das, 208). Manju Kapur wants to communicate that Indian women must get dignified space in the society for their scholastic development, economical independence and constructive liberty so that they could fulfill their desires and achieve their goals.

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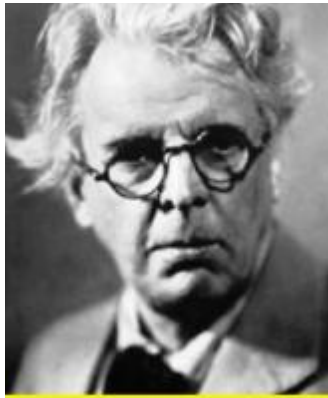
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Research Paper

Modern Urban Life: A Study of Shobha De's Socialite Evenings

Monika Gupta

Abstract

Shobha De, who occupies an outstanding place in Indian Literature in English, skillfully narrates modern urban life in her debut novel entitled, *Socialite Evenings*. The novel brings out the modern urban life of Bombay, now Mumbai, which easily grips the young boys and girls, particularly of middle and upper class families, into its glamour. Small wonder the female protagonist of the novel, Karuna, at a very young age, falls into bad habits nourished in the so-called advanced urban society. She as well as a few other characters- Anjali, Abe, Ritu, Kumar etc. leads her life in her own manner, ties in inter-caste and inter-religion marriages, involves in extra-marital affairs, gets frustrated in social relations and occasionally enjoys the new bonds.

Key Words: Modern urban life, Marriage and sex, Extra-marital affair, Modernization, Frustration, Freedom

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Shobha De (b. 1948) is one of the most prominent women authors of Indian Literature in English. She has taken urban life for presenting a realistic picture of upper-middle and high profile societies of modern India. She has penned down conspicuous novels like *Socialite Evenings* (1989), *Starry Nights* (1991), *Strange Obsession* (1992), *Sisters* (1992), *Sultry Days* (1994), *Snapshots* (1995) and *Second Thoughts* (1996). She has written about day-to-day life in advanced cities and its routine happenings with all its pains and pleasures. Being bold and truthful, she has described the things, in their natural ways, as they happen in the urban city life. Her novel, *Socialite Evenings* candidly explores modern urban India, particularly the city of Mumbai, where money or materialism has hypnotized men and women and concomitantly affected their family life, marital bonds, social relations and cultural beliefs. In this regard, Abnish Singh Chauhan aptly remarks in his book, *The Fictional World of Arun Joshi: Paradigm Shift in Values*:

Since the code of values differ from society to society and country to country, Indian code of values also differs in many respects from the rest of the world. But, recently it is observed that Indian society is aping the West blindly and, therefore, some perceptual and behavioural changes are taken place in the modern Indian society (238).

Socialite Evenings is the story of a prominent socialite, Karuna. To flee from the nightmare of the present, she escapes into the past and begins to write her memories. While writing about her life-story, Karuna doesn't want to start it with her childhood as she doesn't find anything exciting about it: "Bombay- it is Bombay which has shaped me into what I am and it's the story of Bombay. I want to tell" (*Socialite Evenings* 1). Bombay leaves its deep impression on her. She, in her school, sees the well-pampered girls of high-class families. She yearns to be like them. She becomes rebellious and starts doing whatever are denied by her parents. In the company of her neighbour and class-mate Charlie, she, at a very young age, enjoys nude magazines, turns out to be an addict to smoking and becomes conscious to her appearance. It is only because of this company that she steps down in modeling. In college, she comes in the contact of Anjali, who is "dabbling in fashion designing and advertising" (2). She is basically a Gujarati and married to rich Abe (Abbas Taiyabji), a Muslim, who prefers Hindu virgins. Even in her own house, sometimes she has to sleep with her daughter Mimi, as her bedroom is shared with Abe, by any other girl. Anjali doesn't find it awesome as she herself has her involvement with other men than her husband. She becomes angry with Karuna when she, in the party, talks and laughs with a man, who Anjali finds attractive.

Karuna, though born and brought up in a middle-class family, has higher expectations from her life. She wants to live her life like high-profile rich people. Karuna breaks her engagement off with Bunty, a middle-class boy, when a rich ad film maker proposes her; but, finally she accepts the proposal of the boy who, since her college, liked her and has just come back from



America after completing his studies and is looking after the business of his father. Simultaneously, Anjali and Abe decide to divorce each other. The decision doesn't bother to Abe much, but Anjali feels troubled as she cannot live without a man beside her. As a result, she sobs on various shoulders and within no time, those sympathetic shoulders change into even more sympathetic bed. She has affair with various men, but as soon as they come to know that she is serious about marriage, they vanish from her life. On the other hand, Karuna, after one year of marriage, doesn't find anything enthusiastic about it; she rather thinks that "my marriage went sour because I'd married the wrong man for the wrong reason and at the wrong time" (57). They both are quite different from each other, Karuna is romantic and her husband is quite indifferent from the things like romance and love making.

Anjali's divorce finally takes place and in terms of divorce, her daughter, Mimi, comes at her side, whom she decides to send California to join some class. Anjali herself falls in love with man who later on finds her wife better than her. She joins French language institute where her affair starts with her teacher, but after their trip to Agra, Anjali's mind changes as she finds his living standard quite different from hers. Though, Karuna's husband is not like Abe, yet she has lost her interest in her wedding. Karuna hates her husband's attitude of show off and his evening parties while he hates Karuna's indifferent attitude towards all these things. Karuna doesn't like womanish fashion talks; while her husband wants her to be like other wives. She thinks why she is sensitive even about his insensitivities and why should always think about and care for him while he never does so. In a party Karuna meets Ritu who later on comes to her and tells her about the hollowness of her life: "You are married to a wrong man I saw it at the party but I had to come to your house to confirm it. You aren't happy and you feel trapped" (77). She reveals the truth to Karuna that she herself is in the same boat and that's why she realizes her condition very well. Later they become friends.

After a while, Karuna's life starts turning worse. Whenever she tries to share any of her thoughts with her husband, he never responds positively and due to this paucity of communication, Karuna starts feeling mental as well as physical suffocation. They live together, but in their own different ways. Karuna finds herself unable to understand that who among them is wrong—she or her husband. Both find each other socially awkward and pretentious. What is suggested by one is always rejected by the other. The more their marriage fades its hues, the more Karuna tries to convince herself that everything is right and she is happy. She doesn't think about her problems as she doesn't want to take any decision against her marital life.


Anjali, once again, is in love but this time with a twenty four years old guy who later on proves a crook who wants to take advantage of Anjali's name. Anjali, whose parents had done her boycott from them because she had married to a Muslim against their wish, hears of her father's death and goes to her home where she is not welcomed and asked by her mother to stay

away from them. Anjali feels very lonely without any place to go to.

Karuna, when comes to know about her sister's divorce, feels envious that her sister, unlike her, has the guts to break off from unhappy relation. She also likes the way in which Ritu seduces and dominates men. Therefore, Anjali takes a bold step. She finally marries Kumar, who is a gay and has relationship with a boy, Murti. Kumar suggests Anjali to keep her mouth shut about it as in return he will provide her with all facilities. After marriage, Anjali's perception of sex and life changes and all her attention from sex and diamonds diverts to the worship of Lord Krishna. Anjali and Kumar are the followers of a 'baba' whom they call their spiritual guide.

Karuna, in order to escape from her frustration, turns or diverts her mind to Krish, her husband's friend and theatre. Karuna's heart starts developing feelings for him. When Karuna's husband comes to know about their affair, he tries to convince Karuna that Krish is a man of no use and he will spoil her life. Finally, Karuna comes to her husband, after her journey to Venice with Krish, and her husband also welcomes her warmly. After sometime, Karuna comes to know that she is pregnant. She conveys it to her husband, who, calling it Krish's child, asks Karuna to break their relation off and have divorce. Karuna leaves his home and stays with Anjali, where she gets her baby abort. Then and there she comes to know that in future she cannot be a mother and to escape from further more damages she has to remove her womb. Now Karuna feels lonely and unprotected. Anjali, in such lonesome moments supports her a lot and also offers her to help in her business rather than to do a 9 to 5 job in some ad agency, which Karuna is looking for. But Karuna doesn't feel herself efficient enough to do it. Finally, she, from Anjali's home shifts to a P.G. where Krish comes to her and informs her that her husband has kept a woman Winnie in his home and wants to marry her without any delay. She feels heartbroken, but doesn't show it. She starts working in a theatre 'Prithvi', where she gets a small role in a play. The great art film maker Mr Girish Shridhar notices her performance and sends his son to her to fix a meeting as he wants her to sign her for his new movie 'Shakuntala'. Initially, Karuna denies but agrees later on. Girish starts liking her and wishes to marry her and sends his proposal through his son. Karuna finds herself unable to take any decision as now leaving her P.G. has shifted with her parents and doesn't want to leave them alone in their old age. Meanwhile, Karuna's husband comes to meet her as Winnie has proved a scoundrel. He also asks for apology from her, as he, through Krish, has come to know that Krish is not able to make Karuna mother, that's why the baby is their own one. Hearing all this Karuna shows him the way out calling him a worm who deserves Winnie.

Anjali and Karuna's spiritual guide 'babaji', caught by the police with smack, has now been released. To celebrate the occasion Anjali throws a party in his honour. In the party Karuna meets a journalist, Ranbir Roy, with whom her meeting starts and ends with fight. Karuna besides working on Girish's script of 'Shakuntala' also works on some other projects and for one of



them she gets 'Best Ad. of the Year' award. It brings both name and fame for Karuna. She starts Ad films and there also she proves herself. As a result, she gets the proposal to script a major TV serial sponsored by a soft drink company. After one month of Anjali's party, Karuna, once again, happens to meet the same reporter from Washington, at a recording. Here also their meeting begins with tiffs, but later on when the reporter comes to know that she is the soap queen in the making, whom he had come to interview, becomes polite and friendly. After some time he comes to Karuna with a proposal: "Why don't we do an update on the status of the Urban Indian woman, using you, baby kin, as the central figure" (297). He wants to make a documentary on her life, from her birth to her school, lovers, parents, husband and then her career as a soap queen. In his documentary, he wants to show how a girl born in a remote village of Maharashtra, becomes a socialite of Bombay. Karuna gets the idea and tells him that instead of doing a documentary she will write a book about herself. And also tells her that the opening lines of her book will be: "I was born in a dusty clinic in Satara, a remote village on the outskirts of Maharashtra" (298).

In *Socialite Evenings*, Shobha De has shown how hectic life is in metropolitan cities. People are so much after money and status that they don't care for their family and relations. Their sole aim is to be rich and to move one step forward from others and for this they are 'semper paratus' (always ready) to sacrifice love, affection, feelings, emotions, relations, and other things on the altar of name and fame. Families are broken due to the lack of love, care, cooperation, kindness and dedication. Parents don't have time for their children and children don't have respect for them. Marriage is no more a pious relation to carry on the whole life; rather it has become a contract based on the convenience of two persons. Sex, once a taboo subject, has become so common now that not only people talk about it frankly but they don't feel hesitate in having pre-marital as well as extra-marital sex. None of the spouse feels embarrassed if the other one is having relation with anyone else. Girls and boys, at an early age, enjoy sex fearlessly and shamelessly. Homosexual relations are also rampant in the modern urban society.

Shobha De writes this novel on modern urban India as its backdrop and it is invariably one of the best publications to her credit. She truthfully speaks her mind in this work. She often expresses her dissatisfaction with respect to the behaviour exhibited by the present day generation. The real picture of modern urban life has been depicted in this spectacular novel. She knows it well that in urban city life of modern times, women are envious to each other and middle-class and upper-class girls prefer high profile aristocrats; whereas men very easily cheat and enjoy their bodies, but when they are asked for marriage, they abandon them instantly; even husbands and wives are rarely seen emotionally attached or satisfied from each other as they have different views, attitudes, opinions and expectations. This is not a good sign for the growing countries like us. Hence, like Swami Vivekananda, she wants to give a strong message of love, kindness and devotion to the Indian society:

That is what Vivekananda wanted to teach and that is why he laid great stress on developing the inner qualities such as- love, kindness, affection, etc. before going to the external world to stretch one's helping hands to the needy (Chauhan 15).

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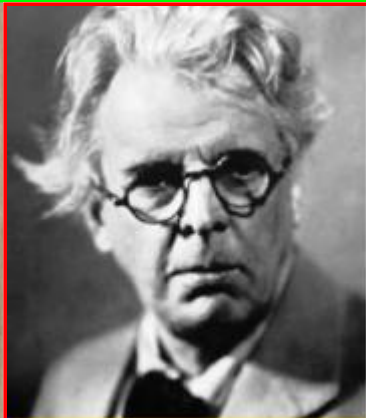
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Research Paper

Women in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland

Aju Mukhopadhyay

Abstract

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*, there is a procession of new women who are not ideals but types. They are free but there is no joy of life in them. They suffer from self-chosen deprivations. Most of them are women of Indian origin, living in India or America. Their actions are considered as social aberrations in India; never ideal for Indian womanhood. But then, life is what it is; they have acted and reacted in circumstances surrounding their lives. Lahiri seems to have given a message of woman's Lib in ultra modern Indo-American society. The trend of modern feminism is also reflected in the women presented in this novel. Women from other countries and India converge in American permissive society.

Keywords: Feminism, Womanhood, Deprivation, Convergence, Permissive Society

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The story in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*, begins with two brothers, Subhash and Udayan, and their parents living in Tollygunge, Calcutta, in the forties of the last century. The brothers with a difference of two years in age grow up in the same room like twin brothers. From their teens they begin parting ways in ideas and ambitions. While Subhash, the elder one, migrates to United States for further studies as a young man, Udayan, the younger one, is impregnated with communist ideas and joins the Naxalite movement in Calcutta during the seventies of the last century. Falling in love he marries first and is killed within two years by the police. The unfortunate pregnant widow is unwelcome to her parents-in-laws but her would-be child is welcome. Hearing the news Subhash comes and marries Gauri, his younger brother's wife. More the story unfolds through the characters more we know the complexities of their life.

Before meeting Gauri Subhash had some affairs with a married woman, Holly, with a child, having differences with her husband. It was a love making affair for a while. Neither of them was deeply drawn to the other though Subhash felt jealous of her husband when she reconciled with him.


Subhash and Gauri shared a bed at night, they had a child in common. Almost five years ago they had begun their journey as husband and wife, but he was still waiting to arrive somewhere with her. A place where he would no longer question the result of what they'd done. She never expressed any happiness, she did not complain. (*The Lowland* 159)

Subhash's suggestion to Gauri to have a child with him to give a sibling to their child, Bela, didn't find favour with her. She said that she would think of it in a year or two as she wasn't thirty yet.

The writer makes Gauri's place explicit in respect of her deceased husband, "Nor was her love for Udayan recognizable or intact. Anger was always mounted to it," (*The Lowland* 164) because of his betraying her in dying at a young age giving her a child to raise, depriving her of all happiness in life. Eventually, while continuing to live in the same house Subhash turned away from her. "He no longer wanted to touch her in bed" (*The Lowland* 176).

Though she cared for Bela, kept her clean and combed and fed, she seemed distracted. Rarely did Subhash see her smiling at Bela, rarely ever kissing her spontaneously. Once pulled by her mother before other school going children and their parents, Bela was so grieved that she publicly said, "I don't like you . . . I'll never like you, for the rest of my life" (*The Lowland* 170).

After a long journey back from India to Rhode Island, father and daughter found that Gauri had left forever in their absence. A letter on the table said:



I have not made this decision in haste. If anything, I have been thinking about it for too many years. You tried your best. I tried, too, but not as well. We tried to believe we would be companions to one another. . . . Around Bela . . . all the ways I've failed her . . . I believe you are a better father than Udayan would have been. Given what I am doing, it makes no sense for her connection with you to undergo any change. (*The Lowland* 211)

She left the name of a University which hired her and the place name, California. Subhash didn't try further to find her.

Gauri lived alone feeling erotically for a man for some days, self-indulging in activities to quench her hunger. Once she faced a lesbian in one of her ex-students, in a sense, Lorna, younger to her. "She had no recollection of crossing a line that drove her to desire a woman's body. With Lorna she found herself already on the other side of it" (*The Lowland* 238). She was forty-five with a body already breaking down. Before that she had never a lover younger to her. It was suddenly for a day as chosen by Lorna, even in the campus that she indulged with her in love making, as they call it. After some days Lorna left for distant place and it was forgotten.

The writer summarily tells us that though she had her relationship changed from a wife to a widow without a choice, she deliberately changed her role in quick succession thereafter from a sister-in-law to wife, then a lone woman as if divorced and from mother to childless woman. With the exception of losing Udayan, she had actively chosen to take the other steps. Though Gauri didn't expect killing of Udayan by police she knew at the time of marriage what dangerous path he had been crossing in life. But that was a compulsion for being loved and loving, occurred only once in her life. "She had married Subhash, she had abandoned Bela. She had generated alternative versions of herself, she had insisted at brutal cost on these conversions. Layering her life only to strip it bare, only to be alone in the end", narrated the writer *The Lowland* (240). Events came one after another depriving her of all traditional woman's wealth. She lived almost a deserted life.

Bela was educated as an environmentalist on her own choice and inclination; concerned for the society, plant life and surrounding environment; living economically without the least of fashion. She had shown her role as a social worker, inheriting the tendency of her real father, as the novelist wishes to inform us. That Udayan was a social worker, teaching children and helping other helpless persons is mentioned in one paragraph, in passing. The writer wants to show that helping the poor is a part of communist character. Bela grew up very practical unlike her bookish mother, not caring for a career as an educationist. She plunged into her job, living in community.

Bela lived nearly half her life on her own besides the first 18 years with her father. She craved for a different pace sometimes, different from what she became; not knowing in full what else she could be; sort of aimlessness. She liked to live with her

father, her only family and sometimes felt drained. On a visit to her father she asked, "How is Elise?" (*The Lowland* 262) Elise Silva, originally a Portuguese settled in Rhode Islands, a widow with brown complexion was a newly introduced friend of her father who he knew as a history teacher of Bela, narrates the novelist. After a smiling interlude which her father took to be a good news of her meeting a good friend happening of which he expected some day or the other in her life. But no,

"She took a deep breath, exhaled.

"I'm pregnant', she said.

"She was more than four months along. The father was not a part of her life, nor aware of her condition. He was simply someone Bela had known, with whom Bela had been involved, perhaps for a year, perhaps merely for an evening. She didn't say." (*The Lowland* 263)

She wanted to come home again and give birth to her child in Rhode Island. She wanted him to provide the same home for her child that he had provided for her. She wanted not to have to work for a while.

The coincidence coursed through him, numbing, bewildering. A pregnant woman, a fatherless child. Arriving in Rhode Island, needing him. It was a reenactment of Bela's origins. A version of what had brought Gauri to him, years ago. (*The Lowland* 264)

There was an upheaval in the father's world. Both of them stayed up in the dark. Whole night. When light broke the father tried to explain or confess,

"I'm not your father.

"Who are you, then?

"Your stepfather. Your uncle. Both those things.'" (*The Lowland* 266)

Then she heard what was necessary. In autumn her daughter was born. And she expressed more love for her father for what he had done.

Bela could not neither blame her father nor her mother for not telling her the truth of her birth. For the same reason her child might one day blame her for not disclosing the secret of her birth. As if by the turn of events, she could realize why her mother was never happy with her and the writer explains that for a moment Bela had some compunction in her heart for her mother. But see how she reacted when once her mother came to see them on purpose.

"The sliding door was shut. Now she and Bela were alone.

"Bela walked over to where Gauri was standing. She came up close. So close that Gauri took a small step backward. Bela raised her hands as if to push Gauri away further still, but did not touch her.

"How dare you, Bela said. Her voice was just above a whisper. How dare you set foot on this house.

"No one had ever looked at her with such hatred.

"Why have you come here?

"I came to give your father the papers. Also . . .

"Also what?

"I wanted to ask him about you. To find you. He said he was open to our meeting.

"And you've taken advantage of it. The way you took advantage of him from the beginning.

"It was wrong of me, Bela, I came to say-

"Get out. Go back to whatever it was that was more important. Bela shut her eyes, putting her hands over her ears. (*The Lowland* 312)

When Gauri was walking towards the front gate, telling that she wouldn't again bother her, Bela shouted at her back, "I know why you left us". . . . I've known for years about Udayan, I know who I am." (*The Lowland* 312)

The writer tells us that Bela's emotion rose very high seeing unexpectedly her mother, remembering the scene in August heat when they returned from Calcutta to find that she had walked out on them, that she considered to be a dead body. "Even now Bela felt the urge to strike her. To be rid of her; to kill her all over again." (*The Lowland* 314)

While going back Gauri crossed the room and coming to the table where Bela's child was sitting placed her hand over her head and then on her cool cheek. It was she who opened the door to her. Caressing her granddaughter she said that she enjoyed meeting her and with tearful eyes entered into her car.

Meghna carries the name of a river in Bangladesh. People from that country, speaking in the same tongue as her parents, masons and construction labourers, eating rice by hands and praying in a mosque, were Bela's neighbours at a place she lived for a considerable time. Bela was curious about them. What Bela indicated about the father of her child to be born to her father seems to be one of such labourers from Bangladesh. Child's name seems to carry the memory of her association with such a person who was lulled by the river. It was a biological meeting which gave birth to Meghna but Bela could not disclose it as her mother never disclosed who was her father. Pretensions were the weapon they charged with each other.

Subhash and Elise moved to a remote corner of Ireland for a honeymoon after the marriage ceremony had been over in a small church at home. The marriage was witnessed by their friends and family. By marrying the couple added to their family large numbers of children and grandchildren, mostly from Elise's side.

Subhash's mother, an orthodox Hindu widow and mother becoming an old lady, by chance got a maid servant who became her nurse and escort. Had she not come across such a person her position would have been precarious and utterly pathetic.

Gauri, a suppressed and depraved woman who remade her future has acquaintances within her academic circles only. She is very studious, a successful professor and scholar but what is her

social status? In order to execute her choice in life she evaded her responsibilities towards her child and legal husband, otherwise telling that she never accepted him as such though he extended all help to her and wished to build a happy family life with her. She was tortured by life, yet it may be said how an independent woman might be in adverse circumstances in life. Many are tortured in life but she has the satisfaction of being tortured for exercising her freedom to live a life according to her own choice. Own choice does not lead to ideal choice always.

Bela, ill-bred but got her father's affection and help in becoming a self-made educated woman. She behaved rudely and harshly with her mother defying all her understanding and education. She comes home pregnant and declares it to her father giving birth to a misbegotten child. She called by name almost everyone elder to her like her actual father and teacher. This seems to be mimicry of American practice. Bela doesn't have many acquaintances in the society to name. Bela grew up and her daughter Meghna would be grown up in the society with one parent only. Meghna would never know her father which shall remain a stigma in her life. She would feel frustrated.

Holly, the woman Subhash spent a few days with, a French-Canadian, born in America, regained relationship with her husband. But that she strayed for some time with Subhash didn't matter in any way in their conjugal life though her child Joshua knew of it; a sign perhaps that she's a free woman.

Elise Silva, reacquainted with Subhash, strangely at the funeral home of Richards, with children and grand children living apart, felt interested about him and the two were engaged finally to marry with large numbers of off springs to Elise's credit. Woman can decide to unite with any man anywhere and at any time of her life. And this happens in this novel not as a special case but as if normal.

Some of the leading women in this novel are not only frustrated but they chose to become unsocial by option following the circumstances in their lives and aggravating it. All the women in this novel are free thinkers and take their own decision. They may be called self-made. But they seem to have been bogged down in life; most of them aren't happy. Some of them will be tempted to live a single woman's life as they were born in the absence of any good guide or guardian to lead them. Single mother concept is gaining ground in society. In Veda Satyakam declared that he was the son of his mother only, Jabala. He was taken in by the Rishi as truthful and straightforward. Recently the Supreme Court of India has given sanction to the idea and status of a single mother. A mother is given all legal rights over the minor child but would the child feel free and righteous when he or she grows old? Did Gogol, in Jhumpa Lahiri's debut novel, *The Namesake*, not change his name given by his parents when he grew up because it did not suit him? The right of the mother is legally accepted in certain extenuating circumstances but that cannot be the usual norm. Only a future society would decide the validity of it. Usually any individual wishes to know both his or her parents and their identity.

In spite of the happening of miseries in the lives of the women in *The Lowland*, none can say that men were the source of all such troubles. They were never meddled, tortured or ill-treated by any man. Yet all of them bled, remained frustrated and unhappy. If the novel is an experiment to show how the self-chosen life of a woman may be, it must be an aberration, not norms, such a life story cannot be standardized. Life at every step usually reconciles, adjusts its position and tries to get harmony and peace leading to happiness. One thing to remember is that the conditions of life created in this novel are very crucial in leading the persons through life. It is an area of human psychology, very aptly dealt with by the novelist.

Instead of criticizing the American way of life as she did in her celebrated debut novel, *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri, has remained neutral here except pointing her finger at each woman as she presents. Lahiri has written numbers of short stories dealing with the relationship among young men and women, has shown her special acumen in dealing with such characters, as in here. In *Lowland* she has placed her characters in situations, usually unheard of, and has tried to show how in such circumstances they may act pervasively. She has shown how a truncated life without guidance, hybrid life with two cultures mixed, may become. She has shown how free women may act like. But on the whole the novel depicts a dismal life story, specially of women, leaving no scope for respite and relief.

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Aju Mukhopadhyay is a bilingual award winning poet, essayist, fiction writer and critic. He has published two books of poems in Bangla and nine in English including two books of short verses (Japanese styles). His poems have been widely published, translated and anthologized in large numbers of Indian and International journals and Ezines in different languages. He can be contacted at ajum24@gmail.com.

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Research Paper

*Manas Bakshi's Poetic Concerns
for Human Relations: An
Overview with a special
reference to Parnassus of
Revival*

**Katta Rajamouly**

Abstract

Manas Bakshi, a poet par excellence from the soil of the poets like Rabindranath Tagore, has had excellent poetic career, spanning four decades and winning encomiums from the literary firmament. Through the medium of his poetry, particularly in *Parnassus of Revival*, he marks variety by the rich use of evocative imagery, symbolic modes, thematic variety and artistic excellence for the snapshot delineation of widespread evils: injustices and prejudices, hypocrisies and jealousies, inequalities and insecurities, and so on in the current society. He is not a silent spectator but a keen observer of evils and events, he witnesses in the spectrum of society. He records all his feelings, expectations, experiences, observations, happenings and so on

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to fulfill his poetic objective from the social perspective. His poetry mirrors the society he lives in. It reflects the satirical vein as the nucleus to satirize the evils in the society.

Keywords: Poetic Concerns, Human Relations, Evils and Events, Social Perspective

A poet is one who has an observant eye and a sensitive heart for human concern and social relation in the welfare of man. He marks a clear-cut distinction by virtue of his distinctive features and special characteristics in the genre of poetry. No two poets are alike or same but they may be similar or dissimilar in presenting thematic treasures and poetic ideals, technical brilliance and artistic excellence. Here is a poet belonging to the class of poets par excellence in the galaxy of contemporary Indo-English poets. He is none other than Dr. Manas Bakshi who occupies a significant place in the poetic panorama by virtue of his rare merits in the contemporary era.

In the anthology of poems, entitled *Parnassus of Revival* Manas Bakshi deals with kaleidoscopic themes underlying life. Time with its past, present and future and man's predicament in time's reign, nature with its lovely scenes, social evils, lacking in faith in human relations, dilemmas, perplexities, confusions, conflicts, degeneration of values, degradation of standards, anarchy and so on in the current society enriched his thematic plenty. He delineates the wide range of themes employing striking imagery, felicity of word-clusters or expressions and precise and crispy lines to exemplify his poetic dynamics. He deserves all encomiums for the merits of the anthology.

Manas Bakshi grows into a humanist by virtue of his good background or sweet disposition. He criticizes the present society for lacking in human relations and social concerns. The prevalent social distinctions and discriminations, status variations and economic depressions to cause inequalities and injustices are against his principle as a poet and man. Through the spectrum of poetry, he shares his heart-felt feelings to the readers in the most convincing and appealing way. As a poet and man, Manas Bakshi is deeply committed to man's peaceful existence and human relations. Man to aim at man-for-man or human relation therefore becomes the focus and fulcrum of his poetry. He presents his feelings, moods, experiences, findings, happenings and so on, as he has broad mission and wide vision as a poet of human relations and concerns.

A poet of human consciousness and social awareness is bound to respond to all the evils confronting the society today. I quote my (Dr. Rajamouly Katta's) definition of poetry from my article in Susheel Kumar Sharma featured in *Language, literature and Culture*, "Every poet lets us listen to his heart-throbs for our heart-responses. It is his primary goal and bounden responsibility to describe events, incidents, experiences, dilemmas, problems, etc that he glimpses through, and weapon and organ he fights with for the aimed reforms and desired solutions. It rises from the reality and actuality of life in the way

the plant rises from the ground of truths to bloom the flowers of facts".

As a poet, Manas Bakshi believes that poetry is the expression of realities that lurk in his mind and heart. The poem, 'A Poem of Untold Moments'(26) reflects his views on poetry:

Words not always enough to delineate
 The bubble surfacing on
 A purple heart's edge.

 That is always a poem
 Of untold moments
 In untold words
 Of metaphoric exuberance.

As a poet, Bakshi defines a good poem as a choice, preferred to any material offer, the only option for him as unfolded in his poem, 'Aesthetic Balm' (9). It should touch the heart by a message of consolation as a lesson for the reader's inevitable learning:

What will you opt for
 A handful of *Dehradun* rice
 Or, a fine poem that touches a lacerated heart,
 As the winter-end breeze blowing over
 The paddy field after harvest?

Manas Bakshi's love for man is the nucleus theme of his poetry as revealed in the collection of poems. He, as a poet and man, loves the race of man and so he wishes man's world to be safe and peaceful. He exhorts every individual to grow into an ideal family and all families into society to reflect human values. His appeal to the race of man ultimately culminates in his universal wish that the earth must be safe. In the poem, 'Caution'(7), he indirectly appeals to the race of man to live in happiness, saving the earth the world for man' existence, averting all evil happenings:

Don't destroy me
 To destroy yourself...

 Your first succour, last resort
 It's me, Mother Earth.

The poet identifies with Mother Earth and appeals to his fellow man with profound feelings of helplessness to stop his act: "Don't bite/To bring out/My last drop of blood." Humanism is the heart of Manas Bakshi's poetry for he loves family relations. In the poem, 'Smile a Day' (61) he gives full marks for marital ties and familial relations: "But full marks?/Sorry, I can't!/Have my wife and children/Waiting till I breathe my last." The poet loves conjugal life as the ideal and preferential one for it gives him solace and bliss. What man gets in marital relations is missing in extramarital relations. In the poem, 'Surrealistic' (21) he distinguishes the marital with the kiss to bestow on man bliss and the extramarital with a 'secret kiss' to be short-lived and

'half-finished': "Halcyon days are short-lived/As a secret kiss,/Looking back often means/The surfacing of a hidden urge/To refurbish all/That is half-hearted, half-finished."

For the poet, love is pure. It is the choicest emotion. In the poem, 'Moving Leeward' (27) he criticizes the lovers today for their non-commitment to love. They are not true lovers. It is for their temporary pleasures: "And love---/Mere a conjunction/Dominating a secluded space/Of momentary togetherness." Manas Bakshi's faith in humanity is comprehensive and compulsive on the part of man. In the poem, 'Moving Leeward' (27) he therefore loves humanity built with the bricks of faith in cordial, harmonious human relations and peaceful existence of man:

When faith is no more
A condition of living,
Marriage seldom sacred
Relations often sartorial
Down a life-line
Staid, turmoil-stained.

Truth to reflect love in man helps man love fellow men to have unity as a sign of humanity. The poem, 'Clairvoyance-like' (8) expresses the truth, the truth of humanity: "Truth is the moment of love/We feel united/Since birth." He advises his fellow beings in his poem, 'What Likely the Art of Living Is' (44) to wish for the safe existence of man, maintaining man-to-man or human relations in the age of man-created barriers: "Only for/Raising a storm inside the orbit/Of the suffering human psyche/Mired in the textures/Of relations mechanized." As a poet and man, Manas Bakshi is against human suffering. He does not like inequalities and injustices, discrimination and humiliation, so on. He is upset more and more with male domination to result in gender discrimination. For him, poetry springs from pain and he expresses the idea in his poem, 'Parnassus of Revival' (14). The theory of his poetry is that it begins in the pain of a girl-child and it is evident in the lines:

Poetry beginning with pain
As a girl child
Born wretched
On the Indian soil....

His poetry mirrors his bitter feelings and unbearable experiences in the sad incidents of humiliation meted out to women in the long past, the past and the present. He portrays his deep concern for woman in his first poem, 'Indian Woman' (1). The feelings related to the incidents of humiliation to women hurt him and hurt his heart deeply for he has high reverence and soft corner for women, He identifies with the woman in suffering:

An Indian woman,
An emblem of duty to family
And love for husband,
Affection to children
And devotion the Creator,

Sustaining for aeon
The legacy, lechery and lapses
Of a male-dominated domain---

He identifies with woman in different aeons. She faces 'the fire ordeal' to prove her chastity. How it is to see her suffering! He shares the suffering of Sita as she suffers for no fault of hers: "Having no fault of my own/.../Had to face a fire ordeal--
-/To prove my chastity/With feminine courage." As a poet and man, Bakshi shares the woes and throes of the Pandavas. He feels that the action of the Kauravas as 'shameless'. He shares Draupadi's suffering, identifying with her. The suffering of women did not lost but continued as ' a stigma of yore!' to the 20th century:

The legacy followed
Even in the 20th century
To adorn me with a crown
Of a royal devotee,
Offered forever to the deity
Of imposed myth
And imagined glory-gaiety!
Neither a Goddess
Nor a call girl
Branded Devdasi---

He has deep anguish for the tragic fate of 'Lower caste woman in Kerala!' a hundred years ago. He expresses his vehement protest, indentifying with her, Nangeli saying: "I preferred chopping of my breast/To paying tax/To the king of Travancore/For covering up the same." It is shameful to think of the humiliation meted out to woman in the form of molestation and rape even in the 21st century in the so-called civilized society with the sense of equality in the democratic setup: "I am that Manipuri girl/Baring my body in vehement protest---/Many of you/21st century civilized male/Unblushing, unfazed, remorseless/Just relax again!"

Bakshi as a fellow being feels ashamed of being a male to victimize a woman to unbearable agony and suffering. He referred to women: 'Padmini of Chittore with deep feelings. He wishes woman to be very strong to avert all the evils related to her and fight like Indian soldiers for her motherland:

I've the fighting spirit
Of Razia Sultana,
The indomitable courage of Rani of Jhansi,
The patriotic spark of Matangini Hazra
And the undying zeal of Kalpana Chawla;

Years glide on in time's ride but there is no change in woman's fate and existence. She becomes a victim to rape, sometimes rape and murder, stealing her money and treasures, the triple crime. There are ghastly incidents of rape of babies, girls and women of any age for the satiation of man's barbaric act in his demonic lust. He feels hurt for the pathetic and tragic plight of Nirbhaya identifying with her: "My fate hasn't been changed--

-/Still I am one after another Nirbhaya/In the hands of the criminals/Gang raped and slain!" Woman lives in the society today amidst fears confronting her all the times. She feels insecure because of brutalities and cruelties of man's violence in various forms. The poet feels sorry for the inhuman act of foeticide. To resort to foeticide by a woman in modern age is a sinful act. He wishes to have security for woman against prevalent insecurity in the present society:

Sorry to say
I have neither a foeticide-free sky
Nor the deserved
Social security reign!

Manas Bakshi as an optimist whole-heartedly wishes that the people should change the pitiable plight of woman in the present inhuman scenario: "I will, for sure, one day/Make India worthy/Of woman's existence." The poet feels that a child gladdens its family by its sweet smile and strengthens the nation by its brilliant caliber and career when grown. He wishes that no foul means should spoil the child's smile. In the poem 'Bugbear' (11), he equates 'child' that gladdens the near and dear with 'flower' that sweetens the atmosphere:

A smiling flower
A smiling child
Bliss of Nature
Sacred and divine

Flower torn
Smile forgotten
Religious fanaticism: a knife
Flashing vengeance
From behind.

The poet presents the portrait of man and woman living in an unwelcome situation against his wishes in the poem, 'Unmasking' (15): "I will make a portrait/Of man and woman/Going deep into the realm/Where the trite terms/Of a prosaic living entail/A nomadic shibboleth,/Where everyone's/Aimless wandering." The society today is mired in numerous ill-treatments to the poor, 'Pavement dwellers and pedestrians' as the sign of marginalization. There is no way set to solve their problems. In the poem, 'Live from Kolkatta Pavement' (30), the poet presents the city's realistic picture to reflect their pathetic plight of the poor for miserable lives:

Marginalized as they are since birth
Groveling for survival in shady shanties,
Like the very footpath
Sheltering the alive and the dead.

The poll promises go in vain. The promises are the words wrought on the surface of water. The leaders are in fact for good governance as per democracy but not poli-tricking for poly tricking. The poet aptly compares votes to fallen leaves to say that they have no value and power after elections. He presents

the most unwelcome situation: "Vote is over,/Torn ballot papers/Mute as the fallen leaves/Can't divulge the secrets of poli-tricking." The poet feels sorry for the martyrs are remembered once in a year in the way the great leaders of great sacrifice are forgotten. It is done as a show but not as a mark of real respect for the departed leaders: "Swirl around a martyr's tomb---/Martyrs initiated at the baptismal of fire/Remembered once in a year!"

The nature-lyric depicting the sun 'Saluting the Sun' (54) making a fact that there are unwanted children and they might not know their male parents. The children grow to be unruly and violent with every possibility of turning terrorists:

Justice? No, not the real cause,

It's all myth

Really is virgin mothers

Of unwanted child still

Scream in the blind alleys of
life,

And Karnas today

Often turn terrorists!

In the poem 'Aesthetic Balm' (9) the poet feels that the worldly life is losing its glories against his wish. He concurs with time's powers as time conquers man's life: "As worldly life loses its charm/To a sardonic smile of Time." The poet presents the picture of the world today in the poem, 'Introspection' (12). He unfurls the fact he is against absurdities and calamities: "It's is a polarized world/Some having more than needed/Some having nothing, superseded/Some enjoying nocturnal glee/In longing eyes/Some dying in the street/After day-long pitched fight!" The poem, 'Aesthetic Balm' (9) lends a poetic utterance to his ideas about the pathetic plight of the people in the prosaic society today:

We're wandering in
wilderness

Craving for a festival of
colours

For minds and stress

For eyes away from

The wonder of a poetic landscape!

In the poem, 'Introspection' (13), he lets his unbearable feelings known to the readers. To all these unwanted happenings and violent incidents, God is silent. He is indifferent to human suffering: "Nowhere to go/...Better to close/The windows and the door/And feel emotional flames/Burning within/...Silent God/At the other end/Playing Sudoku/In the secluded corner of human mind." The poet, on behalf of man, wishes God to avert man's suffering and hurting feelings, He is man's God to be in reign for the welfare of man. It is His responsibility as the Almighty. But God is silent. In the other poem, 'Dwelling on a Stone God' (19), the poet expresses the indifferent attitude of God to man's resorting to violent ways: "The stark residue of a stone-

God/Showing neither anger nor smile." The poet ironically unfolds the view that God is busy having so many schedules that He is not able to redress man's grievances. Thus, man throws the sole blame on God for His being over busy: "For God/Always acting like a minister/Overburdened with several portfolios/Is never spared with a single blame/In human eyes full of vengeance!"

Here the poet echoes the satirical vein of Kamala Das on the life of hypocrisy in the hues of reality led by many in the society today and God is in heaven away from man with the sense of hypocrisy as presented in her poem, 'Fancy-Dress Show': "God is in his heaven and all/Is right with this stinking world." The society is full of 'miseries and mistake'. In the poem 'A Cyber Age Poem', (10) he wishes man in the society today to be 'neo-human' and all the past history not to repeat in the present: "Cyber age; world seems within reach/Flower, fruits and vegetables---all hybrid/Days nearing the pinnacle of global warming/For a fresh start with neo-human seed?"

The poet loves peace from the heart of his heart in the poem, 'As the Pigeons Saw It' (63). He expresses his love for peace by the traditional symbol of pigeons, 'Flying in a jubilant mood'. He loves India for its universal peace and communal harmony:

Some white pigeons
Messengers of peace
... ..
Crossing the border
They felt comfortable and safe
In the peace-loving Indian territory,
Were amazed to see here
Secular majority heralding the cause
Of global peace and communal harmony
Sparing not even an inch
For terrorism to creep in---

The poet says that the pigeons had good image about our nation as it was meant for peace and so they felt comfortable to enter it. They felt disappointed as they found all chaos and unrest in India today against their expectations in a peace loving country: "The pigeons felt sorry for/Being driven to a wrong place,/Felt ashamed too/For being stripped off/Their hallowed image!"

The anthology mirrors the state of lacking in man-to-man, man-to-woman, man-to-nature, man-to-God relations in human society especially in the present society. It is slender but it is a good blender for blending all noble thoughts and bright ideas for their beauty in variety like the pretty flowers put together into an exquisitely beautiful garland. The beauty lying in the variety of poems of the anthology, *Parnassus of Revival*, bestows on the readers gaiety.

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Research Paper

Counterproductive Values in Arun Joshi's "The Only American From Our Village"

Abnish Singh Chauhan

Abstract

Arun Joshi's "The Only American from Our Village" is a very pathetic and heart-moving story. It is a story of a father Kundan Lal, who fulfills his duties and sacrifices his joys and comforts for the best education and placement of his only son. The son, Dr. Khanna gets success, earns money and reputation, settles in America, gets married to an American girl and has two children. He forgets his filial duties and responsibilities and does not turn back even at the time of his father's death. After some years, he comes to India, welcomed by the top authorities and by chance encounters with his father's friend Radhey Mohan, who relates the sad and sorry tale of his father. Now Dr Khanna realizes his mistake and feels the same burning pain in his feet, which was felt by his father walking on the hot sand without shoes. Now, evil boomerangs on him. His moral, social and cultural debasement ultimately leads him nowhere.

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Key Words: Counterproductive Values, Traditional Values, Modern Values, Pain, Repentance


Arun Joshi (1939-1993), whose contribution to Indian Fiction in English is limited to five novels, namely: *The Foreigner* (1968), *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* (1971), *The Apprentice* (1974), *The Last Labyrinth* (1981) and *The City and The River* (1990) along with a collection of short stories, *The Survivor and Other Stories* (1975), has a realistic and transparent approach towards life and society. Just like his novels, his short stories also unravel his keen observation and understanding of crucial things happening in and around his own world. His human ethos and sensitiveness, as found in his popular short-story entitled "The Only American From Our Village" (Joshi 55-60), reveal that he is restless and sad to observe counterproductive values, particularly in the upper crust of the contemporary society.

Here, the term 'counterproductive' is an adjective which denotes 'having the opposite of the desired effect', whereas 'values' means 'standards of behaviour or one's judgement of what is important in life.'

The story is presented from the omniscient point of view. Dr. Khanna, the most outstanding immigrant physicist at the University of Wisconsin, comes to his native land— India that he has left fifteen years earlier, on a four-week trip along with his family. He is a very intelligent and fine physicist, whose devotion to money and career takes him to America. He leaves his father on his own in India, settles himself in America and weds with an American girl Joanne against the wish of his father. He passes a happy and successful life with his wife who begets two sons, and forgets his father and motherland with the passage of time.

Dr. Khanna's tour is a success by all accounts. He is welcomed by an official of the Council of Scientific Research. He delivers some lectures at various seminars and conferences, meets the President and the Prime Minister of India and is offered great respect. His wife and children are "worshipped" (55) by his relatives for whom they have brought "Gillette razors, pop records and a mass of one-dollar neckties" (55), some cheap and useless things for Indians of mid 1980s due to their cultural differences. Dr. Khanna has a deep impact of the West upon him and, therefore, he forgets his filial duties and pious bonds of relationships. At the fag end of his successful visit after his "final talk, at a college in his former hometown" (55), he meets an old man, Mr. Radhey Mohan, who sells court papers in front of the District Courts and who out of the fraternity and old relations comes shuffling along and insists on "shaking Dr. Khanna's hands" (56).

Mr. Radhey Mohan introduces himself to Dr. Khanna as "the *ashtamp farosh* of the town" (56). Dr Khanna, due to the lack of human values, looks "puzzled" (56) at the meeting. Mr. Radhey Mohan is a simple villager, but has sharp eyes on the matters of life and society. He is a childhood friend of Dr. Khanna's father,



Kundan Lal. He tells Dr. Khanna: "Your father and I were very close to each other, like brothers, and I was not then the *ashtamp farosh* because I had property ... and I lived in style" (56). His way of talking, "slant of the lips", "glint in the eye" and his father's "accent" (56) makes Dr. Khanna "uncomfortable" (56). Dr. Khanna tries to avoid him and the blind follower, the principal assists him. But Mr. Radhey Mohan does not let him go.

Mr. Radhey Mohan further tells about his friendship with his father. He tells him that his father and he himself had gone to the same school. They sat at the same desk on which the old *ashtamp farosh*, when he was a schoolboy, had carved the two names on the two sides of it: "Before he died we went and looked for the desk and, believe me, it was still there. So were the names" (56). He could not pass matriculation while Dr. Khanna's father, a brilliant and studious student, stood third in the state, had his name on the Honours Board and won scholarship for his further education. Being poor, Dr. Khanna's father had to get education by winning scholarships. But, he made a mark as a brilliant student not only in the school, but also in the college and "if he had made a mark he did not let it get to his head" and he was "always the same" (57) with the old man. It reveals his human values. He was also a man of high morals as he was unaware about "the dancing girls of Lahore" and "such things" (57) in spite of getting education in the same city. He loved his mother very much: "When his mother died, he cried a lot" (57). Soon after his graduation, he took a job. With the passage of time, he retired. He looked old, older than his years, but he was happy and very proud of his only son, who had settled in America:

He used to say you would be a big government man when you came back. He would say you were coming back in one year, in two years, any time. Then you got married and he was quite for many months. But he started talking again. He said you were the only American from our village. I asked him once what was so great about being the only American from our village. He said it was an honour (57).

The father was very proud of his son, as his son had made some achievements in the materialistic world, but he had lost moral and cultural values by shattering his father's hopes. He lived in his native place and hoped to see his son on his homecoming, but the selfish, materialistic and unresponsive son did not return neither during his father's lifetime nor at the hour of his pathetic death. So, if the pungent remarks of Mr. Radhey Mohan give a shattering blow to Dr. Khanna, it is based on practical values: "We had a foot in the grave, all of us what did we care for your achievements; what you did and what you did not do? I told him so one day. He was angry with me" (57).

Mr. Radhey Mohan's talk is quite embarrassing to Dr. Khanna, more so when he tells him of the expectation his father had of his America-settled son who promised him to send "a return ticket" (58) to visit America. But, his father's expectations were shattered when he did not receive any ticket from his son. His disappointment and shame led him to his illness. His suffering

troubles the *ashtamp farosh*, who knows the importance of human values very well: "It hurt me" (58).

The old man smokes his *bidi* during his narration and its "smokes nauseated" (58) Dr. Khanna, while the pathetic story of his father does nothing to him. It shows the loss of moral and cultural values of the educated and established sons like, Dr. Khanna. The reply of Dr. Khanna, "I did not have", "I could not" puzzles the old man, but he says nothing. The old man tells Dr. Khanna that his father also had no money. His father's economic condition was always bad. When he was a student he had no money to pay his fees. He had only "two pyjamas and two kurtas and he had no shoes" (59). He had to cross "the *cho*" (59), half a mile of boiling sand in which one can "roast corn" (59) in May. So, he would have to stop at this end of the sand, take a handful of *dhak* leaves, tie them on his naked feet with a string and then cross the sand. That is how the shoeless father used to cross the hot sand for ten years of his educational life.

Though the old *ashtamp farosh* tells the story without malice and harshness, it creates "unreasonable feeling" (59) in Dr. Khanna, who has forgotten his filial duties and lost moral and cultural values and wants "to get away" (59) from the place. The story moves further. When the father fell ill and the old man sent a telegram to Dr. Khanna who was in America, Dr. Khanna chose to reply only "by a letter" informing about his inability to visit his ill father due to "some conference" (59). His father's hope shattered and he seemed to forget his ingrate, inhuman, materialistic and insensitive son: "He did not mention you again" (59).

Mr. Radhey Mohan further narrates how when Dr. Khanna's father was sick and dying, he and the father revisited the school. And while returning, they crossed the boiling sand of *cho* with *dhak* leaves on his naked feet, as he used to do in his school days due to the lack of money to purchase shoes:

He stepped into the *cho*. I followed him carrying his shoes hoping he would stop, shouting at him to stop. I could feel the sand through my soles but as I told you he had lost his head (60).

Consequently, Dr. Khanna's father lost his head and then his life: "He walked the whole half mile. The leaves fell off on the way. God himself could not have stopped him. He had fever by the time he got home. The next day he died" (60).

This miserable and pathetic story of his father makes Dr. Khanna only to wince and so his dehumanizing and valueless training in the new civilization has been perfect. Dr. Khanna calmly tells the *ashtamp farosh*: "I was sorry to hear of his death" (60). But the information about the way of his father's death ruins Dr. Khanna's personality. To a psychiatrist, he confides that he has "periods of great burning in his feet" (60). Now, he realizes and thinks that he has been "cursed" (60). He suffers much and his output of research since his return has been "zero" (60). And to

people all around, "he has generally come to be known as the man who does nothing but stare at his feet" (60).

What Dr Khanna sows, he reaps in the long run of his life. But, the sacrifices and sufferings of his father go in vain as he could not teach him the significance of healthy values for a happy and peaceful life.

The short story displays Joshi's artistic perception and projection of his small theme in an interesting and excellent manner. It is readable and praiseworthy for his truthful, forceful and precise presentation of day to day life with counterproductive values in the contemporary society.

Work Cited

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About the Author:

Dr Abnish Singh Chauhan (1979), the editor of two online journals- *Creation and Criticism* and *IJHER* and a Hindi magazine- *Poorvabhas*, is presently serving as a Professor and Principal, BIU College of Humanities & Journalism, Bareilly International University, Bareilly. He has authored a number of books including *Swami Vivekananda: Select Speeches*, *Speeches of Swami Vivekananda and Subhash Chandra Bose: A Comparative Study*, *The Fictional World of Arun Joshi: Paradigm Shift in Values* and *Tukda Kagaz Ka* (A collection of Hindi Lyrics). He can be contacted at abnishsinghchauhan@gmail.com.

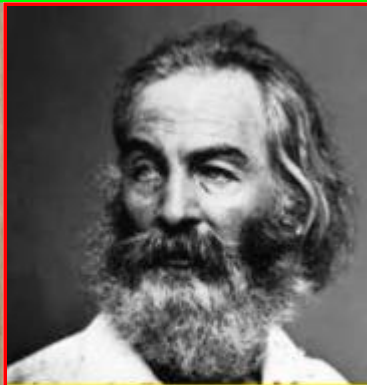
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Book Review

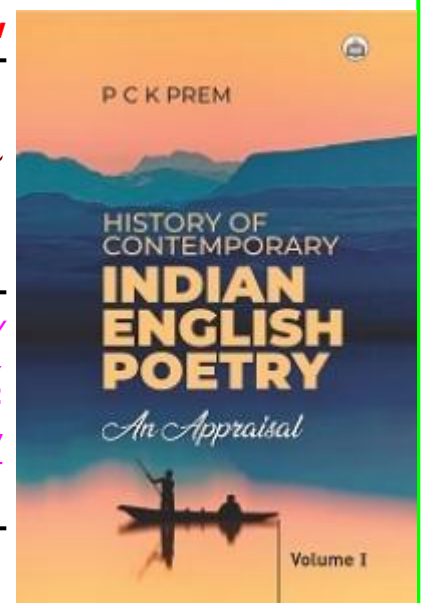
*History of Contemporary
Indian English Poetry: An
Appraisal, Vol. I and Vol.
II by PCK Prem*

PCK Prem. *History of Contemporary
Indian English Poetry: An Appraisal,
Vol. I and Vol. II.* New Delhi:
Authorspress, 2019. Pp. 1419,
Price: Rs. 1750/-, ISBN 978-93-
89110-12-8

**Reviewed by Pravat Kumar
Padhy**

*"Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings;
it takes its origin from emotion recollected in
tranquility." - William Wordsworth*

The words of William Wordsworth are true to the flow of poetry
through the perennial time. India is the land of beauty, peace,



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and poetry. The nostalgic reminiscence of poetry emanates from the inception of our age-old civilization. The radiance of poetry has been reflected in our ancient Vedic literature and continues to enlighten till every tomorrow. Poetic philosophy of India has been sourced from the *Veda, the Upanishads, the Ramayan, the Mahabharata, the Gita, and the Rasa-Dhvani* theory. Poetry inspires to unfold the sublime spiritual essence of the basic building block of creation: the living and the non-living. The literature, the cultural antecedents, is the blueprint of reformation. There has been a vibrant presence of prolific multilingual literature in India. Initial colonial influence has been vividly seen at the formative stage albeit embedded with the aroma of Indianness in English poetry. In 1809, C V Boriah's English writing (Prose) is the first historical instant followed by the memorable prose, "A Defence of Hindu Theism" (1817) by Raja Rammohan Roy.

PCK Prem in the present monumental analysis of Indian Poetry in English eludes the kernel of poetry and its journey: from a tiny seed to a gigantic blissful tree fructifying the essence of peace, tranquility, hope, and happiness. His in-depth study establishes a remarkable milestone in engineering Indian poetry and its classification. The author has systematically and ably evaluated the creative work of 185 poets including 50 women poets in two volumes, with a scholarly introduction. In contrast to the earlier perception, he has designed the concept of time and space in the journey of Indian literature by depicting historical manifestation of the socio-political sketch of India. Further, the author enunciated the poetic pursuits by correlating with various attributes like human psychology, industrialization, socio-cultural, socio-economics, socio-politics and so on with changing time. Industrialization, cosmopolitan lifestyle, materialistic appetite, rural landscape have a great influence on literature and human behavior. He further examined the psychological impetus in the evolution of poetry, its structural fabric, style, musicality with the geographical spread.

In the post-independence era, Indian poetry for decades was represented primarily as the conservative and idealism of cosmopolitan experience. Here the author, Prem, has creatively introduced the concepts of nativization and Indianness emancipated from the embodiment of rural culture. He has congregated the beauty of the rural landscape, inherent behavior and innocence of people into the expanded-form of Indian English poetry at large. This has given an opportunity of amalgamation of rural musicality, imageries, idioms, symbols, and epithets into English poetry, thus enhancing the true literary spirit. After the stage of transitional assimilation and mutual appreciation, the flow of poetry is widely spread, endowed with openness and optimism. This has been aptly articulated by the author in his iconic volumes with an expansive spectrum of exemplifications of poetry from Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Kashi Prasad Ghosh to modern young poet Vivekanand Jha; women poets from Toru Dutt to Chitra Lele. I feel the effort is a brave and valiant literary exploration of Indian English poetry. Indeed, it is a democratic manifestation of the inherent Indian Poetry

with special reference and acknowledgement of the resonant regional literature.

Broadly the time span of development of poetry is correlated with the socio-political scenario and subsequent thematic cultural exploration. The poetry of the nineteenth century (1820-1900) and the era of socio-political awakening (1900-1950) have been classified as early Indian English Poetry. The time segments also influenced the structural fabric of poetry: from colonial Victorian influence to decolonization and style of free verse to liberal experience. The use of idiom, word-phrases, metaphors, imageries, etc in different periods portrayed the variegated contents and lyrical credence.

In the initial period, the Indian poets were influenced by the cadence of English romantic and Victorian poetry. In spite of the alien sensibility, poets articulated their thoughts of rationalism, love and social consciousness with independent texture and literary nuances. Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Kashi Prasad Ghosh, Ram Sharma, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, R C Dutt, Manmohan Ghose and later, Aro Dutt, Toru Dutt, and others contributed a lot during the formative stage of Indian English poetry.

The following poem by Henry (1809-1831), the father of Indian English poetry, depicts spirituality that prevails even in the tiny entity of nature. It is a remarkable emotional driven philosophical illustration:

Oh! In such moments can I crush
The grass beneath my feet?
Ah no; the grass has then a voice
Its heart—I hear it beat.
(*A Walk by Moonlight*)

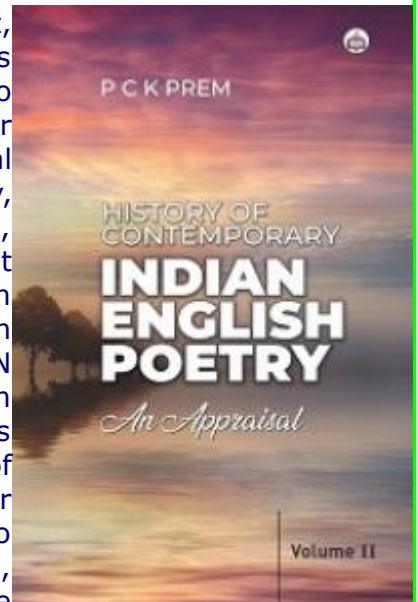
Some literary personalities emphasized the inherent Indian culture of universality and are revered as the Saint Poets namely Swami Vivekanand, Swami Rama Tirtha, Kabir, Nanak, Mira, and others. Later Sri Aurobindo, Sri Paramhansa Yoganand, J Krishnamurti, Rabindranath Tagore, and others symphonized the Indian ethos, metaphysical quests, spiritualism, socio-religious milieu, socio-scientific consciousness, liberty and universality in their prophetic writings manifesting the glaring chapter in Early Indian English poetry and endeavouring global recognition.

Prem elaborates the era of political awakening through freedom moment embarked on an illuminated spectrum of poetic iridescence. Poets like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Sri Aurobindo, Krishna Srinivas instilled the Indian philosophy, spiritual inheritance, idealism, nationalism in their scholarly poetry writings. The spiritual ethos helped to ignite the political awareness and subsequently the freedom moment was collectively spearheaded by Mahatma Gandhi.

The metaphysical expression by Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) stands unique in Indian English poetry:

Voice of Infinity, sound in my heart,-
 Call of the One!
 Stamp there thy radiance, never to part,
 O living Sun.
 (*The Bride of Fire*)

PCK Prem, in his innovative attempt, elucidates the concept two streams of poetry: one exclusively related to 'urban landscape' and the other emanated from the largely rural landscape in the post early poetry, i.e. after 1950-60. The urban poets, Shiv K Kumar, Nissim Ezekiel, Jayant Mahapatra, A K Ramanujan, Arun Kolatkar, R Parthasarathy, Arun Mehrotra, Kamala Das, Keki N Daruwalla, Gieve Patel, Pritish Nandy, Gouri Deshpande, and others have manifested the expression of 'cynicism and anguish' in their writings. The multiple approaches to life, struggle of living, failure, sufferings, materialistic city life predominated in their poetic framework. Prem adds, "The poets born after 1920 and before 1950 or around have a different bringing up....If one category of poets reflects on the sufferings and difficult living conditions, disillusionment in cities.... the other class still carries on theme of nationalism, nature, poverty, hunger Interestingly, it also speaks of Indian cultural heritage, and in a reminiscent mood, experiences anguish on corrosion in ethical values....".The poets expressed their anguish with distinct images, metaphors, and similes.



The followings are some of the examples reflecting the sense of agony and distress. Shiv K Kumar (1921-2017) expresses his stressful life of the city:

Day is for sweating—
 For shoe-shining, foraging for crumbs from dust-bins,
 For pan-handling, or wiping the window screens of cars
 As the traffic freezes at the red signal.
 (*Pavement –sleepers of Bombay, Woolgathering*)

Seclusion of the city life is poetically imaged by Nissim Ezekiel (1924-2004) :

The city like passion burns
 He dreams of morning walks, alone
 And floating on a wave of sand.
 (*Urban, The Unfinished Man*)

The creative upsurge from the extensive rural arena, somehow, remained in isolation and in translucent-visibility in Indian English poetry. The obvious reason remains quite ambiguous. After a long time, the creative search unfurls the concept of 'hope and anticipation' prevailed amongst the poets from the

rural landscape. In spite of difficulties, they cultivated the sense of hope and aspiration from the serene natural beauty, simple way of living. The poetic embellishment reckoned with a sense of optimism and emotional intensity has been observed in contemporary poetry written after 1970 or precisely post 1980. The poets of this generation have shown a different path of sanguinity by deriving the philosophical and emotional mores of the saint poets. This has been vividly seen in the poetry of Mahanand Sharma, Hazara Singh, Yayati Gandhi, P Lal, Keshav Mallick, Baldev Mirza, I H Rizvi, R C Shukla, O P Arora, H S Bhatia, T V Reddy, Nar Deo Sharma, PCK Prem, D C Chambial, R K Singh, V S Skanda Prasad, H C Gupta and others.

PCK Prem says, "It is poetry of Indian consciousness with emphasis on 'transformation, reformation, secularization, and democratization' of human values and universality". He further observes, "Poetry after eighties, appears mature, expressive and confident and looks intensely at life and existence, and identifies areas of hope, joy and stability....".

R C Shukla (1943) in his poetry collection, "Darkness at Dawn" narrates anguish of the present with an optimistic note:

Ungrudgingly
I am bearing the anguish today
In the hope that
Joy shall surely dawn tomorrow
Joy which I earn
And never borrow.

H C Gupta in his collection, "*Poetical Rosary* (2011) searches the purpose of life. He explores:

Shepherds selfless, feeding hungry sheep
Traversing thro thorns, have no time to weep
For others' pain, their pain never mind
With faith move mountains, meek and kind
(*Seek those who find*)

With time, there has been an assimilation of both urban and rural thematic concepts and hence, synthesis of the realism and its manifestation in the renewed poetry writings. The author visualizes, "The period after 1980s notices a slow decline in exclusive city psyche and one witnesses, poets of rural backdrop gradually turning to urban areas and sensibilities.... The process of assimilation of thought and emotions into poetry that already exists but treads a different path...."

Based on this inventive search, PCK Prem has harvested the poetic essence across the country to enrich the true representation and it is indeed conclusively unique. The contemporary musical voice of Bibhu Padhi, O P Bhatnagar, Vikram Seth, P Raja, Sankarshan Parida, S A Hamid, K V Dominic, Sailendra Narayan Tripathy, Pravat Kumar Padhy, Gopal Lahiri, C L Khatri, Bijoy Kant Dubey others to contemporary modern poets Vihang Nayak, Kanwar Dinesh Singh, Kirti

Sengupta, Bhaskaranand Jha Bhaskar, Vivekanand Jha represents a wide spectrum of poetic nuances.

Let us explore some of the examples of verses of assimilation and hopefulness. Bibhu Padhi (1951) writes with lucidity and erudite:

Something, we know, had been growing into light
At a place where all our shadows are supposed to be;
We know that something is taking its birth
Quietly, within our planet's deep night. (*Going to the Temple*)

M R Venkatesh in his book, "I Wonder as I wonder" (2014) paints nature with a graceful benediction:

The streams from the hill flows
With swimming fishes of different colours
As beautiful and near as ever
So Mother Nature let you laugh like this I shall hear.

Referring to the younger generation, Prem notes, "As one goes through the lyrics of Vivekanand Jha (1977), one encounters the effect of experiences as actualities of life depict regions of milieu objectively". Jha synthesizes the oriental Vedic spirit with the use of metaphors and images in the following stanza:

Manual for mankind, road to redemption,
saga of science for self-realisation so much so that
life's empty without it's interpretation
as a bogie halts without an engine.
(*Falter and Fall 15*)

The rich contribution by women poets has added a different dimension to Indian English poetry. Acknowledging their courageous contribution, PCK Prem posits, "Women poets create an ambience of reformation, renaissance, idealism and optimism and visualize joy and fulfillment for not only man but also humanity". Eminent poets like Toru Dutta, Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Das, Ira De, Manika Verma, Eunice De Souza, Suniti Namjoshi, Gauri Deshpande, Mamta Kalia, Margaret Chatterjee, Sukrita Paul Kumar, Meena Alexander, Etty George, Vimala Rao, Sunita Jain, Lila Ray, Gauri Pant, Maheshweta Chaturvedi, Jayshree Nandi, Mani Rao, Lalitha Kumari, Nandini Sahu, Shernaz Wadia, Vinita Aggarwal, Chitra Lele and others have contributed immensely to Indian poetry with sense of fidelity, honesty and innovative poetic lexis. They record the feminine creativity encompassing love, family life, societal issues with gracefulness and imaginative craftsmanship.

Let us examine the journey of poetry by some of the women poets. Toru Dutt (1856-1877) explores the idealism of life in the following poem:

Virtue should be the aim and end
Of every life all else is vain
Duty should be its dearest friend

If higher life it would attain.
(*Ancient Ballads* 68)

Kamala Das (1934-2009) unveils her experience of anguish and writes:

I am saint. I am the beloved and the
Betrayed. I have no joys, which are not yours, no
Aches which are not yours. I too call myself I.
(*An Introduction, Selected Poems*)

The aspiration and optimism have been vividly expressed by the young poet, Chitra Lele:

Together we can dream
And envisage youthful vision.
Together we can walk as a team
Through the darkest of times.
(*Divine Decorations*)

The in-depth analysis of critics and synthesis of various anthologies at the end of the volumes make a holistic picture of the long journey of Indian Poetry in English. Contemporary poetry of Niranjana Mohanty, Tabish Khair, Shanta Acharya, and a few others could have been incorporated. Prem's endeavor in contouring the democratization of literature is a landmark achievement. Undoubtedly he is eclectic in his inner impulse and offers the symbiotic joy of poetry to all with his intellectual renaissance. "Poetry is as a cure for bringing about equality.....Poetry unifies man and eliminates discordant notes in man and society", PCK Prem enumerates by embodying the lines from the collection, "Silence of the Seas" by P K Padhy:

You create a sense
That bridges
The poor and the rich
You create a salt
That dissolves
Dirty rusted edge of colour and creed. (*Poetry for Me, Silence of the Seas, 1992*)

The volumes would remain as an important treatise on Indian English Poetry for poetry lovers, research scholars, and academicians for times to come. The unwavering endeavour by Prem is praiseworthy, beyond words.

About the Reviewer:

Pravat Kumar Padhy hails from Odisha, India. He holds a Masters in Science and Technology and a Ph.D from Indian Institute of Technology (ISM), Dhanbad. He has a certification of the Executive Education Programme on "Advanced Management" from IIM-Bangalore. His literary work cited in





Interviews with Indian Writing in English, Spectrum History of Indian Literature in English, Alienation in Contemporary Indian English Poetry, Cultural and Philosophical Reflections in Indian Poetry in English, History of Contemporary Indian English Poetry etc. His poetry won the Editors' Choice Award at Asian American Poetry, Poetbay, Writers Guild of India and others. His poem, "How Beautiful", published in 1983 in the leading Newspaper, Indian Express, has been included in the Undergraduate English Curriculum of Shivaji University, Maharashtra, India. He guest-edited the November 2019 Per Diem Column, The Haiku Foundation, on the theme, "Celestial Bodies". He has seven collections of verse to his credits.

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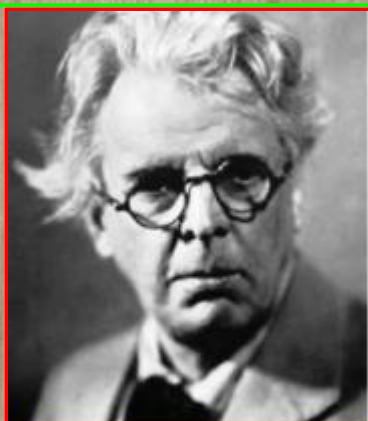
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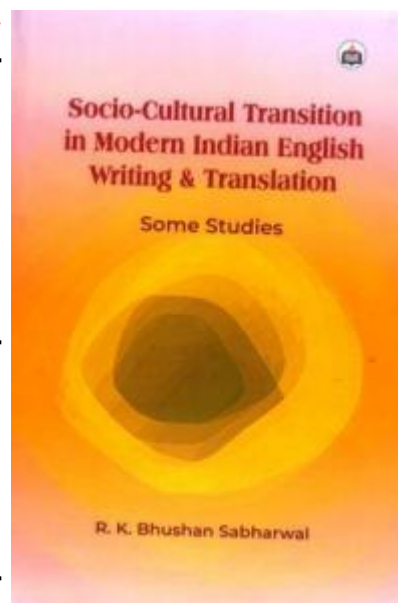
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Book Review

*Socio-Cultural Transition
in Modern Indian English
Writing & Translation:
Some Studies by R. K.
Bhushan Sabharwal*

R. K. Bhushan Sabharwal. *Socio-Cultural Transition in Modern Indian English Writing & Translation: Some Studies*. New Delhi: Authorspress, 2020. Pp. 161. Price: Rs. 800. ISBN: 978-93-89615-74-6.



Reviewed by Sudhir K Arora

Socio-Cultural Transition in Modern Indian English Writing & Translation: Some Studies is a very relevant critical book which reveals R. K. Bhushan's critical acumen and the mental labour which he has put in accomplishing this meticulous critical venture. The book under review, besides four book reviews, namely, Bapsi Sidhwa's *The City of Sin and Splendor*, Gopal

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Lahiri's *Living Inside*, Mutalik Desai's *Aldous Huxley: The Novelist and the Thinker* and Lalit Mohan Sharma's *Pearls and Pebbles* which reveal Bhushan's knack of writing book reviews, contains eight research articles on Nissim Ezekiel, Kamala Das, Namdeo Dhasal, Rabindranath Tagore, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Suryakant Tripathi Nirala and Pankjam.

The first research article, titled "Defining Indian English Literature and the 'New' and Nissim Ezekiel in Indian English Poetry" explores the dimensions of Indian English Literature which has registered its presence in the Council of World Literature after 1947 with its move towards national literature. After 1947, the trendsetting poet Ezekiel who is also called the father of modernism has given the modern trends to Indian English Poetry. Bhushan finds in Ezekiel a close symbolic parallel with the wandering Jew and so calls him "the Wandering Jew of Indian English Poetry." In a very authentic manner, he observes Ezekiel's poetry and feels that "his poetry has a FLOW that sweeps away the rot from the stinking shores and breathes freshness of sight and smell in its beauty leaving the reader under the spell of visionary enchantment" (25). He finds in him a subtle fusion of romantic strain with modernity. What makes Ezekiel a romantic poet is his art of intellectualizing passion. The poet in him has shown how the modern man has lost touch with nature.

In his second article "The Adventures of Kamala Das among the Traps and Tangles of Love, Lust, Life and Light: A Study", Bhushan has illustrated how Kamala Das, who plays various roles, has universalised the personal in her poetry which has become "a drama of aches and endurance in longing and languishing." Bhushan also presents Das' other unexplored aspect which reveals her pain at brutal killings and rising terrorism resulting in the genocide of the Sikhs.

In the third article, "Poetry as a Movement, Movement in Poetry: A Study of Dalit Identity & Voice in Namdeo Dhasal", Bhushan finds a fierce voice of protest and resistance in Namdeo Dhasal who challenges the authority and becomes himself a movement as a person. Dhasal's poetry is the poetry of a fierce fighter who fights fiercely to unite mankind with "no levels of caste, colour, class, religion and even sex." The gist of Dhasal's movement lies in following humanism and happily living with the principle of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Bhushan goes through the short stories of Tagore and takes the issue of "the dramatic unfolding of adolescence" of the main characters of the stories like 'The Cabuliwallah', 'The Castaway', 'The Homecoming', 'The Child's Return', 'Chitra', 'Master Mashai', 'The Hungry Stones', 'The Victory', 'The Post Master', 'The Broken Nest', and 'Aparchita' in his article, titled "The Genius of Rabindranath Tagore in his Short Stories: A Study." He traces the modern traits in Tagore's stories in which he sees the use of suggestive, realistic, impressionistic and even surrealist techniques.

In "Fakir Mohan Senapati and *his Six Acres and a Third—A Fine Narrative of the Dynamics of History and Divine Justice*", Bhushan takes the novel *Six Acres and a Third* of Fakir Mohan Senapati who is known as the Father of modern Oriya literature. This novel, for Bhushan, "is a critique and an ironical narrative in the form of an allegory to transform the then existing system of relations between the colonizer and the colonized, lords and lewd, the exploiter and the exploited in Indian society" (108).

Bhushan is quite submissive and frank in admitting that he studied Hindi language upto Matriculation and for one year at the college level. He admits that he is not a good reader or speaker of Hindi and cannot think of scholarship in Hindi. But his conversation with Dr. R. S. Toki about Surya Kant Tripathi Nirala created an interest in Nirala's *Saroj Smriti*. In his critical essay, "My Casual Ventures in Literature: Suryakant Tripathi Nirala's 'Saroj Smriti': A Formidable Challenge", he finds Nirala "uncelebrated among the celebrities" and connects his Chhayavad to English romanticism. He critically examines the poem "Saroj Smriti", an elegy on the death of the poet's daughter Saroj and finds its ending on "a note of surrender, perhaps accepting in all humility the Will of God and the Omnipotence of callous and mocking Destiny" (124). What makes this research paper striking is Bhushan's own translation of some excerpts of "Saroj Smriti" into English. For instance: "Silence soothing loaded with music / Landed in the song of new life" (123) and "Suffering was ever a tale of life, / What to say today which didn't say before!" (124).

Bhushan has given sufficient space to K. Pankajam, the bilingual creative writer (English and Malayalam) by writing two articles, titled "The Song of the Eternal in the Poetry of Pankajam: A Spiritual Perspective" and "Critique of K. Pankajam's *Bunch of Blooms*." Pankajam's poems which are "wonderfully simple and spontaneous and sonorous" reveal her as "an enlightened spiritualist." He sees her kinship with the best of Romantic and Pre-Raphaelite tradition.

The poet dominates over the critic. Bhushan, being a meaningful poet, has turned his prose into poetry. Criticism becomes creation. Only a poet can pour alliteration while writing about Nirala thus: "Nirala romanticizes the beauty, movement, seasons of Nature in all her rough, rolling, receptive, rejuvenating, reminiscing, regenerating, resurrecting postures and roles (118)." About the poetry of Dhasal whom he puts among the universal fraternity by virtue of the fighting spirit of his poetry, writes, "This is the poetry of a fierce fighter; this poetry also fights fiercely. This poetry succeeded where Dhasal might have failed. Poetry is an art of a very high order and artists of high order alone take it up to search for its beauty and truth in their own way and present the same for posterity" (69). Such instances which demonstrate Bhushan's art of writing poetic prose are spread in the text of the book.

The book, *Socio-Cultural Transition in Modern Indian English Writing & Translation: Some Studies* fascinates the reader by virtue of its relevant content and keeps him engaging with its

frank and objective criticism. It will prove its worth as a good reference book and contribute to the field of knowledge. In brief, it is going to be a worth-reading critical feast for every lover of literature. Kudos to the critic R. K. Bhushan whose experience as a critic speaks itself in every research paper and the publisher Authorspress for bringing out this significant book of critical studies.

About the Reviewer:

Sudhir K. Arora, the Chief Editor of *Creation and Criticism*, is presently serving as Associate Professor, Department of English, Maharaja Harishchandra P. G. College, Moradabad. He has several significant publications to his credit including *Aravind Adiga's The White Tiger: A Freakish Booker* and *Cultural and Philosophical Reflections in Indian Poetry in English*.

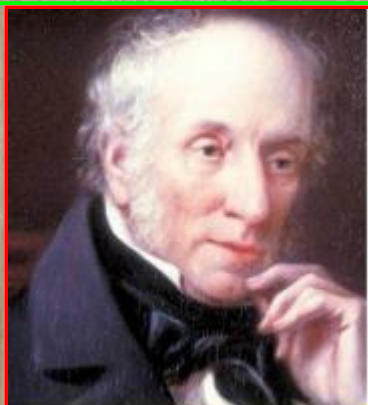


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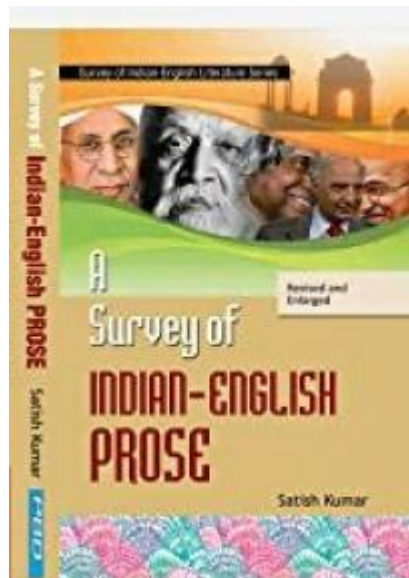
Book Review

A Survey of Indian English Prose by Satish Kumar

Satish Kumar. *A Survey of Indian English Prose*. Bareilly: Prakash Book Depot, 1993, rev.ed. 2020. Pp. 376. Rs. 450/-. ISBN: 978-81-7977-656-5

Reviewed by Abnish Singh Chauhan

A Survey of Indian English Prose, a volume from PBD's celebrated author Satish Kumar, presents a comprehensive account of the growth and development of Indian English Prose from Raja Rammohan Roy, the grandmaster of Indian Renaissance, to Gurcharan Das, the acclaimed author and management consultant of contemporary India, marked by common sense and rational expressions. The volume proceeds chronologically in eighteen parts including 'Prologue' and 'Denouement', extending from the beginning of English as official



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language in the 18th century India to the present day creative experiments of Indian prose masters.

Along with the vivid profiles of more than one hundred big and small authors and their exemplary prose works, the volume compresses a large treasure of information into 376 pages. The coverage catches the attention of the readers even in the 'Prologue', where the author highly emphasizes on the successful use of prose by Indian writers and proudly quotes a line — "Prose is not inferior to poetry." After 'Prologue', the book begins with 'Indian Renaissance' (1820-1900), the golden era of the evolution of prose in India, and the contribution of its prominent thinkers, social reformers and persuasive statesmen like Raja Rammohan Roy, Ram Gopal Ghose, Keshav Chandra Sen, Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, R.C. Dutt, etc. The author also unequivocally chronicles the saint writers— Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramatirtha, who highly influenced the entire course of the development of prose (also poetry) with their rich contents and stylistic devices, particularly during the 'Spiritual Renaissance' in the 19th century India, through their cultured oratory and studious writings. They also paved the way to the great writers of the coming generation ('Towards the Dawn'— 1901-1947)— Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Shri Paramhansa Yogananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, S. Radhakrishnan and many others. The prose writers of this period were attempting social prose, cultural prose, political prose, journalistic prose and philosophical prose in the form of autobiographies, memoirs, diaries, travelogues, letters, essays, articles, criticism, etc.

The next section of the book— 'Modern Indian English Prose' (1947-2000), inculcates the expressions of Indian ethos and sensibility in the works of Jawaharlal Nehru and S. Radhakrishnan, who were still writing energetically, and witnesses the emergence of self-styled authors like N. Raghunathan, Kuldeep Nayar, Sisir Kumar Ghose, Nirad C. Chaudhary, Ved Mehta, Khushwant Singh, etc. along with their fruitful practices of English for the multi-dimensional development of English prose. Likewise, 'Contemporary Prose' (2000...), in the new era of communication, vividly expresses the changing scenario of life and society in India (as well as in the other parts of the world) through the works of A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Gurcharan Das, Shashi Tharoor, Amartya Sen, Ramchandra Guha, Shobha De, Arun Shourie and many other writers.

The book strikes a balance among traditional, modern and contemporary Indian English prose writings through the thematic and stylistic analysis of the literary works of true intellectuals in the face of social, cultural, political, economic and spiritual developments in the history of India. The author concludes his survey with an extensive bibliography, including useful reference books and primary and secondary sources, in addition to a chronological table of the major events as apparent from the artistic endeavors of Pre- and Post-Independence literary life.

The survey helps the readers to enhance their awareness of the shared past, motivates them to get encouragement from the historical advancements in literature, drives them to connect with the stylistic and linguistic devices of prose works, propels them to use their imagination for the productive stuffs, impels them to cultivate their love and compassion for others and inspires them to nurture their own creativity. The book, which is equally useful and significant for the students, researchers, teachers and lovers of the literary society, embodies a clear, lucid, easy and conversational style worthy of reading time and again. Kudos to Dr Kumar, the prominent historian of Indian English Literature, for producing the second revised and enlarged edition of this marvelous book!

About the Reviewer:

Dr Abnish Singh Chauhan (1979), the editor of two online journals- *Creation and Criticism* and *IJHER* and a Hindi magazine- *Poorvabhas*, is presently serving as a Professor and Principal, BIU College of Humanities & Journalism, Bareilly International University, Bareilly. He has authored a number of books including *Swami Vivekananda: Select Speeches*, *Speeches of Swami Vivekananda and Subhash Chandra Bose: A Comparative Study*, *The Fictional World of Arun Joshi: Paradigm Shift in Values* and *Tukda Kagaz Ka* (A collection of Hindi Lyrics). He can be contacted at abnishsinghchauhan@gmail.com.

