

HUMAN BODY AND CARNAL DESIRES AS REFLECTED IN VIHANG A. NAIK'S POETRY

DR. BIJENDER SINGH

English Lecturer
GSSS Hatt, Jind,
Haryana. INDIA

ABSTRACT

The roots of Indian English poetry were germinated from the mind of Henry Vivian Derozio and later other poets such as Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Manmohan Ghose, Aurobindo Ghose, Rabindranath Tagore, Toru Dutt, Sarijini Naidu etc. added new flavour in it. At the initial stage, Indian poetry germinated from the Bengali poets in nineteenth century. Many poets carried forward this bequest in twentieth century and some budding and award-winning poets have enriched Indian English poetry in twenty first century through their significant and award-winning works. Indian English poetry was flourished and fostered by many prominent poets such as Nissim Ezekiel, Mahashweta Devi, Vikram Seth, Dom Moraes, A.K. Ramanujan, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, Usha Akella, Tabish Khair, Gorima Basu, Bijoy Mishra, Kamala Das, Keki N. Daruwalla, Meena Alexander, Adil Jussawalla, Rajagopal Parthasarath, Vihang A. Naik, Meena Kandasami etc. Vihang A. Naik is one of the contemporary poets who has stirred the world through his poetic creation and he has achieved remarkable success to the extent that his poetry collection City Times and Other Poems (1993) has fetched Limca Book of Records. Vihang A. Naik's poetry has many inveterate themes but present paper is a self-effacing attempt to analyse and restrict his poetry only through the analytical lenses of human body and carnal desires.

Key-Words: Human Body, Carnal Desires, Vihang, Poetry, Body, Sex, Human Beings.

Poetry is an art through which a poet empties his heart and pours out the emotions on the sheet of paper. Poetry is not an intentional effort of a poet; it has a spontaneous and natural flow of words descending directly from the heart of a versifier to create new opinions and insights in verse on any topic in an impressive manner. Yashwant Handiqbag writes about poetry:

The process of creation is spontaneous; as soon as poet has some ideas, he should pen it down otherwise they would not come at later point of time. Creating a poem is

like chasing a butterfly; it may or may not come to you; and though poet writes a poem, all the ideas wouldn't come on paper as they were in the poet's mind. (1)

Human body has been one of the suave themes in Indian English literature. Many novelists and poets such as Shobha De, Kamala Markandaya, Namita Gokhale, Kamala Das etc. have projected human body as a central motif in their works. Many male and female poets have jotted down a lot on this theme. So far as female poets are concerned, Kamala Das is a precursor to discuss this theme. Kamala Das has candidly depicted her cravings for love and sex overtly as she could not get love and emotional attachment from her husband; that's why she has frankly depicted this theme in her poetry collection *Summer in Calcutta*. Her poem "My Grandmother's House" is a perfect illustration for her craziness to search love to the extreme point. She writes:

*I who have lost
my way and beg now at stranger's doors to
receive love, at least in small change? ("My Grandmother's House")*

In the nineteenth century, the seeds of Indian poetry were germinated by Henry Vivian Derozio and many other poets also followed this trend. These poets heaved problems of the society and the pains and anguish of their hearts through their poetry. In the twentieth century Indian poetry got a fertile land to nurture and develop. Twenty first century saw many new turns and twists in Indian English poetry. Apart from male writers, Indian female poets have contributed much in Indian English poetry and their input is really unforgettable. Apart from poetry, women writers have strengthened literature in all genres as Dr. Shri Krishan Rai and Goutam Karmakar observe in this context:

Generally women writes are categorized into three sections. Bronte sisters, Jane Austen and others belong to the first category. Sylvia Plath, Virginia Woolf, Emily Dickenson and other belong to the second category. The writers of first section or category have found it difficult to be simply acknowledged in the intelligentsia and the second category writers has started to revolt again the patriarchal domination. But there are some writers who are rebellious and confessional, feminist and feminine....Kamala Das along with Eunice de Souza, Mamta Kalia, Imtiaz Dharkar, Gauri Deshpande, Tara Patel, Lakshmi Kannan, Mukta Sambrani, Sujata Bhatt and others belong to this third category. (12)

If we discuss about the contribution of Indian poets about the theme of body and carnal desires, Kamala Das' name comes first of all in our mind. She has written about the private aspects of the women and she has divulged everything that she felt necessary to express to her readers. She has dealt almost every issue related to women. Dr. Khandekar Surendra S. writes about Kamala Das:

Kamala Das says that she was never a nymphomaniac and rejects that her poems are pornographic in tone. In her over-anxiety to expose dark areas hidden in her subconscious and also to expose the society of its inhibitions, some of her poems have turned out to be crude and hasty compositions. It would not be an exaggeration to say that she is the first Indian woman who could use love as a theme, so sustaining through her poems, in multi-colored dimensions. (74)

So far as male poets are considered, they have been the torch-bearers in all the centuries. Many poets have devised new styles and themes for their poetry. To take the theme of body and carnal desires, Vihang A. Naik has also written a lot in his verses. He is a multi-talented bilingual poet and a college faculty member who has embarked a lot on the carnal desires of human body. Vihang A. Naik needs no introduction and much work has already been done on his poetry. Mirza Sibtain Beg writes about Vihang's creative achievement:

Vihang A. Naik is a new emerging star in the firmament of Indian English poetry whose voice mesmerizes and draws the attention of modern people. His phenomenal craftsmanship is conscientiously displayed in each and every poem of the collection 'Poetry Manifesto'. His creative vision brings symbolically rich corpus and ensconces imagination. By virtue of his expressiveness, creativity and clarity, he certainly startles the poetry world His poems are intuitive, thoughtful, philosophical and creative wherein he demonstrates unflagging command over language with a fine balance of emotional intensity and irony expanding across various themes and places. (116)

In the article titled "Looking through Lens: A Poetic Analysis of Poetry Manifesto by Vihang A. Naik" Shashikant Nishant Sharma writes, "His poems are full of human emotion and passion and any reader will find himself glued to the poems while reading this book." (282) Man is a slave of circumstances since time immemorial. If the circumstances are favourable for the fulfillment of the requirements of the body, human beings become blind also. In such situations, when eyes see the beauty of body, there is always longing for the culmination of love-making. Human beings become so obsessed that words are spoken less and only the movements of the body give full gratification to the lovers. Vihang A. Naik's poem "The Song of Menaka" glorifies the charms of beauty and it depicts that even a saint like Vishwamita could not resist himself from getting entrapped in the snares of beauty. The saint Vishwamitra was also lured by the charms of body of the beauty queen, Menaka. Vihang A. Naik talks about this aspect in this poem:

*There is a point where words
Fail; language ends when body
Takes over talking.*

...
*Eyes become fingerprints unseen, unseen.
Body is moha, desired. Maya admired.
Even Vishwamitra wouldn't deny the view. (32)*

Vihang A. Naik has taken the theme of body and the peripheral themes in this poem. He has gone beyond the boundaries of body and reaches at the climax of human life. Vihang has Indianise his poetry like Ezekiel. Dr. Kalyani Dixit also observes in this context:

His poems exhibit a clear influence of William Shakespeare, Michael Drayton, T.S. Eliot, Nissim Ezekiel, P. Lal, and Kamla Das. In his attempt to Indianize the entire book he introduces words like 'moha', 'maya', 'mukti', 'moksha', or brings the characters like 'draupadi', 'vishwamitra', 'menaka', makes references to 'Mahabharata', 'Ramayana', and uses words like 'odhni', 'ghazal'. (Dixit 2)

Vihang A. Naik's next poem "The Song for Menaka" also deals with the theme of body. The opening of the poem strikes the importance of the body through which the poet persona finds the way of salvation. The poet looks the body as a means to fulfill the suppressed desires. Man feels ecstasy in the pleasure of oneness of body and Vihang compares this stage with the salvation. The poet persona finds salvation through the body of her lover:

*Now I feel I shall find my Moksha
Through the flesh of your glazing body.
Your body is all I have in embrace.
A river penetrate the churning ocean. (33)*

The poet depicts sensual imagery in his poetry like Keats. He talks about the love, lust and heat of emotions in this poem. He uses the erotic language and through these words Vihang's poetic craft has achieved a remarkable status:

*Eye, lips, breast, thighs throbs with senses
adjectives. You come to a point where tongue
falls. The nude lotus unfolds to the morning
sun. Light licks the bare thirsty flower.... (33)*

Vihang A. Naik has taken woman's body as a source of attainment, fulfillment and completeness. Without woman a man is incomplete and woman's body is the only means through which he gains perfectness. **Though man gets emotional, psychological, moral and intellectual support from a woman, man gets core support from a young woman through sexual satisfaction. At this time both feel utmost completeness and that's why main role of a woman is to provide sexual gratification to his man.**

Vihang A. Naik has taken this theme in many of his poems. His poem “Night” also reveals this theme. In this poem the poet tells that night is the most suitable time when human bodies crave for mutual completeness. Through “The Candle Flames” the poet wants to draw the attention of the readers towards the singeing sexual emotions of the lovers. The “flickering” of flames and “melting vex” are the images through which the poet sheds light on the sexual intimacy of a couple. He strikes this theme in these lines:

*It is night.
The candle flame burns
Melting a body.
After the flickers
And melting a wax, a dark
Void remains. (35)*

The poet has visualized the body of woman for sexual gratification. In the poem “Enigma” the poet has taken the body as a source of fulfillment. The poet adorns body at the outset of his poem. **In this poem the poet says that man’s heart melts when the beautiful body of a woman attracts the attention of a man:**

*Your heart laid bare
Where the body does not fade. (36)*

The poet uses darkness as a symbol of igniting the spark of carnal desires. In the poem “Enigma” the poet depicts that human being becomes an animal at night to see and feel the charms of body and this charm of beauty shines in the eyes of a lover. He writes:

*The Body. Darkness
has a flesh of its own
illuminated in the eyes.
An animal. (36)*

The poet persona does not accept himself as a poet. But people are acquainted with his poetic capabilities and that’s why the people urge and inspire him to write something remarkable and mind-boggling. In the poem “Epic” the poet tells about the futility of dreams in love and the stark reality of human life. In this poem his beloved asks him by handing over him a bunch of paper to write an epic of their love:

*Love keeps sterile dreams, reality
is mechanic. Man incomplete.
She gives me a bunch of papers*

to write an epic about her. (62)

The poet finds himself helpless to fulfill the desire of his beloved. The poet is unable to fathom the depths of his poetic art and he is in dilemma what to tell her. He wants to convince her beloved that he is not a poet but he finds it very difficult for him to tell his beloved because he has fears that by doing so she will get heart-broken. Vihang writes further in the poem “Epic”:

*I anticipate the pen would fail. How
Should I tell her I am not a poet. (62)*

Vihang A. Naik’s poem “*Love Song of a Journey Man*” seems to be a monologue. It also depicts the theme of carnal desires. The poet has used multiple layers of meanings in this poem. The poet says that when a person is near his beloved, he is filled with craziness for the fulfillment of love and his whole body starts breaking with some unknown pain. This pain may be waived only after drinking the “nectar” of love i.e. after fulfilling physical desires. In the opening of the poem the poet writes:

*The world
shrinks within
the boundaries of flesh.
Drink nectar.
Grasp the luster
Of a sculptured beauty
In hands- (85)*

Man is a social creature and he has many desires engraved in his heart. So far as the carnal desires are concerned, they are also as natural as food. But these desires break a man from within if these desires remain unfulfilled. Vihang A. Naik’s poem “*Desire*” also deals with carnal longing of human beings. He writes:

*The octopus of desire
stirs
arteries and veins
tears flesh apart
feeding upon fire
swallowing air. (101)*

The poem “*Pleasure*” deals with the carnal desires of human beings. Through the image of serpent the poet talks about how a sexually fervent person removes the clothes of his loved one. The poet uses the image of a sexually sick person who is lost in the pleasure of physical

fascination and feels satisfied only with the fulfillment of his love. The poet depicts this theme in the poem in these words:

*Upon the bed
of sand
the serpent
taking the garment
out
displaying the skin
of beauty
...
lost in the circle
of pleasure
until the wind
shook the design
on the sand. (102)*

A person easily get lured to get love and to satisfy his lust. In young age, there is hardly any love between **anti-sexes** that is without lust. Couples meet to satisfy their lust and this lust also leads to a new birth that keeps their love intact in the form of an entry of a new baby in the home. Tobi Ete also writes in this context, “Love, Lust and Lure are three essential part of human being without which the life becomes incomplete and difficult to survive in this universe. These are the three major feeling systems that muddle human life.” (8)

Kamala Das feels bored with her loveless life and she craves for the real love. She thinks that there is not a benefit to live on this earth without love. She finds love as a source of existence in this world. She writes in the poem “Suicide” that she would not like to be alive on earth without love:

*O sea, I am fed up
I want to be simple
I want to be loved
and
If love is not to be had'
I want to be dead... (The Suicide 2)*

As a conclusion, it can be said that Vihang A. Naik penitently ensconces at the platform of Indian English poetry due to his strong poetic oeuvre. He is an Indian English poet who basks at the glory of his poetic creation to the extent that his readers cannot help applauding him for his excellent and rabid art of writing poetry. Like many other Indian English poets, he has been successful to depict the theme body and carnal desires. He has depicted the

requirements of human body and the carnal desires which are the roots of the creation of this mundane world. It is attraction of the body that brings the lovers together and culminates into oneness and in this way human progeny goes on due to perennial power of mutual love. Vihang A. Naik has depicted human body as a core theme of his poetry and the longing for physical intimacy is explicit in his poetry which has been dealt very succinctly and dexterously.

WORKS CITED

- Beg, Mirza Sibtain. "Vihang A. Naik's *Poetry Manifesto*: A Thematic Glimpse." *International Journal of English, Literature, Language and Skills (IJELLS)*. 4.2. (2015): 116-120.
- Das, Kamala. *Summer in Calcutta*. New Delhi: Everest Press, 1965. Print.
- Dixit, Kalyani. "Colossal Range of Experiences and Philosophical Vision of Vihang A. Naik in *Poetry Manifesto (New & Selected Poems)*. *Research Scholar: An International Refereed e-Journal of Literary Exploration*. 1.4 (2013): 1-4.
- Ete, Tobi. "Love, Lust and Lure: A Study of Vihang A. Naik's Love Song of a Journeyman by Vihang A. Naik." *The Achievers Journal: Journal of English Language Literature and Culture*. 1.4. (2015): 8-11. Print.
- Rai, Shri Krishan and Karmakar, Goutam. "Languishment through Expression: A Study of the Unfulfilled Desires and Eternal Cravings in the Poetry of Kamala Das." *The Expression: An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal*. 1.5. (2015): 11-21. Web.
- Surendra S, Khandekar. "The Themes of Love and Sex in the poetry of Sylvia Plath and Kamala Das." *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*. 2.3. (2011): 105-112. Web.
- Sharma, Shashikant Nishant. "Looking through Lens: A Poetic Analysis of Poetry Manifesto by Vihang A. Naik." *The Context: Quarterly e-Journal of Language, Literary and Cultural Studies*. 2.2. (2015): 279-286. Web.
- Naik, Vihang A. *Poetry Manifesto (New & Selected Poems)*. New Delhi: Indialog Publications, 2010. Print.
- Yashwant, Handibag, "A Portrait of the Indian Ethos: Vihang A Naik's Poetry Manifesto (New and Selected Poems)". *Literary Cognizance*. 1.2 (2015): 01-04. Web.