



AMRITA PRITAM'S 'THE REVENUE STAMP': SURPASSING MARITAL BONDS

DR. D. PARAMESHWARI

Assistant Professor
Dept. Of English
Osmania University, Hyderabad.
(TS) INDIA

ABSTRACT:

When I stepped in to this world, the shadows of death were already etched out on to the walls of the house... I was barely three when my younger brother still crawling on his knees passes away. Before I reached the eleventh summer of my existence, my mother too flew the nest and then my father who had passed the pen in to my hands, he too left the domain... And now I was virtually standing lone in this strange world--- not a soul I could call my own. I just could not comprehend that if the soil of this earth did not have to be generous enough then why did it endow one sibling? Perhaps by mistake, for he was snatched away so soon and it is said---my mother had sought divine blessings to conceive me. But it completely baffled me--what kind of blessing had she sought and what kind of an aspiration was fulfilled? Why bestow something which had to be vanquished from this earth so soon? I felt like a flame of fire, when I emerged from my mother's womb--- there must have been a demonic shadow which baptized me with thick smog...

INTRODUCTION:

The Revenue Stamp is a celebrated work of famous Punjabi writer Pritam who has been honored with a variety of awards. Krishna Gorowara has translated it in to English. It is a journey of reflection and contemplation of her own creative life. It is an intense experience of search or the truth. While writing one's autobiography, one must relieve the pain and that?

DR. D. PARAMESHWARI

1Page

too with a cool head, which is relatively more difficult. It is an experience of just resurrecting the graves of past life. She entitles her first chapter 'Resurrecting Time'. The chapter begins with a question:

"Is it a doomsday?

Moments of my life in the womb

Of time, lived a while and

After the span of time, seemingly entombed,

Are today alive again, stalk past me"

Amrita Pritam recalls the memories, which had buried in the womb of time. Her experiences and existence have been painted on a vast canvas and for colors she has chosen to use the palette of her emotions. It is very difficult and expensive medium. No one can escape from it or feel indifferent to it. Overcoming all the risks she tries to write an autobiography with frankness. The Revenue Stamp shows that to live one's life in one's own way is as challenging as to write an autobiography.

Amrita Pritam has very candidly confessed her own experiences of life in 'The Revenue Stamp'. She says, "I had the sensitivity to react to the faintest of Oduors... and I simply could not stand stinking lies...". She had love for truth in her from childhood. Timothy Dow Adams remarks that, "In terms of truth, we expect from an autobiography obedience to the conventions of the genre which hold that the story being presented subject of the story, who purports to believe that he or she is telling a truthful version of the past".

In Revenue Stamp she strongly talks about her father, about her childhood stubbornness and youth, about her marriage, about her love for 'Sahir Ludhianvi', Sajjad, Imroz, about her and her rebellious ideas. Amritha Pritam admits Sahir as her first love, which was sort of emotional storm and brought loneliness in her life. But Imroz gave emotional comfort in her loneliness. For her "Love had merged in to an inner rebellion. Sometimes it had the sweet aroma of a wine cup; sometimes it burnt her away as a "Cigarette".

She makes her story the stamp of truth, in conveying the realities of her life very truthfully. She says,

"what ever happened in my life happened between the layers of thought that found their way in to novels and poems. What was left? Still, I thought I might write a few lines- something to complete the account book of my life and at the end, seal it with the Revenue Stamp as it were".



The chief characteristic evident in Amrita Pritam's, *The Revenue Stamp* is a women's battle against authoritarian and male hegemonic discourse. Men are more privileged than women to enjoy life according to their own way. As Virginia Woolf has pointed out, "That women are relegated to the purely biological realm, their 'natural' creativity is seen as centered around child-bearing and child-rearing and they are denied a social identity".

The Revenue Stamp is appreciated for its transparency. Amrita Pritam never tried to glorify her own self in it, but just wrote her struggle for identity. The theme of her writings is the essence of life. Despite the anger with the basic injustice of life, her writing overflows with love for entire humanity. She had the courage to face and lead life against all odds. Amrita Pritam had the strength to be true to herself, but there was also a deep-rooted sadness, which enveloped her by untoward happenings around her.

She refers to the four stages of human life. According to Hindu religion each man must pass through four stages-four 'Varnas' and four 'ashramas' in the due course of his life span. She could discern four milestones:

During the first phase, like a Bodhisattva, I sat looking upon everything with an eye of wonder; the minutes were somehow magnified, though for no reason that I can explain. By the second, I had developed an overwhelming consciousness- it was the vigor of youth in revolt against the bastions of social tradition. The hatred and wrath rising in me was like a precious stone in a toad's head. The third one was the courage to forget and demolished and present and to build a new future, the courage to shuffle dreams like cards before they are dealt out... the courage to take the losses in a game and to shuffle the cards again and deal them out afresh in the hope that luck would change. The fourth is the sense of isolation.

She identifies herself with the phoenix, which rises again and again from its own ashes. She suffers the sense of death, burial of emotions and seeks self-knowledge. Going through *The Revenue Stamp* one feels that she was leading a life of ups and downs. Amrita defied the morality codes of community she is in, had suffered the bitter reactions, throughout. *The Revenue Stamp* offers the reflection of Amrita Pritam's rebellious views as an expression of a romantic mind and a suffering woman in her.

Thus, *The Revenue Stamp* offers Amrita's cognitive vision of life, where as *My Story* invites severe criticism for the sensational and even distorted image of her view of her life that she lived.



REFERENCES

1. Sinha, Anita. Feminist Visions: Indian English Women Novelists. New Delhi: Creative Books, 2000.
2. Pritam Amrita: The Revenue Stamp- An Autobiography, 1977.
3. Pritam Amrita, The Black Rose, 2005.
4. Pritam Amrita, A Great Wordsmith in Punjab's literary history, 2006.
5. Pritam Amrita, Women Writing in India: 600B.C to the present, 1991.