

The Genesis of the Poetry of R.C. Shukla

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The Indian English literature has certainly contributed in the world English literature. Indian English authors and poet have done a lot of work. This research articles trices to analyze the thoughts and personality of Indian English Poet R.C. Shukla Trough his poems.

Key words:- R. C. Shukla, Poet

The chief purpose of a poet is

the publication of individualism

Whatever be the subject

the poet's aim is

first to compliment himself

and then to despatch his vision.

(Poeterit 150)

This is how R.C. Shukla talks about the basic object of a poet. This seems to be true because poetry is more subjective than any other branch of literature. If we look at the Indian English poets, Jayant Mahapatra and Kamla Das are the two most significant poets whose poetry is the publication of their individualism. In the case of Jayant Mahapatra, it is the publication of his concern at the loss of identity and, in the case of Kamla Das, it is the publication of her callous exploitation by her own husband. In British Poetry, Milton published his individualism through Paradise Lost and also the sonnets. Shelley's individualism was bruised by the disappearance of virtues for which he wanted to live.

The entire poetry of Shukla is deeply concerned with such a publication. Since no body cares for the poet, it is he alone who has to look after his losses. Disintegration of man, loneliness, rootlessness and a terrible sort of alienation are the subjects on which Shukla has written. Shukla has found this world without friends and without love. This state of affairs compels him to think about the purposelessness of life. This is why he once said:

I'm tempted to call my poems

"explorations of reality", the

quality with which the poetry

of Thomas Hardy is imbued.

(Exegesis)

Shukla seems to be very much obsessed with the process of the publication of individualism. This is why he has written in the same long poem:

The poets are arrogantly satisfied

with the effective circulation

of their thoughts.

They can be compared to enticing women

Who are beyond themselves

and are striking objects for starving stares.

(Poetcrit 151)

It is my privilege, on account of my father, that I get sufficient occasions to meet Shukla to put my own questions to him and get their answers. Since I have met a large number of poets in Hindi, I had a curiosity to know what type of man a poet is. It was with this question in my mind that I visited Dr. Shukla in the last week of November and, during the course of my talks with him, asked, "Sir, I desire to know what type of person a poet is?" The question was quite unexpected and Shukla probably was not mentally prepared to answer such an out-dated question. Yet, he very smilingly replied my question and said, "Listen Riju, this is a very trite question that has lost its legs but the question lives in my blood and the answer too. I am inclined to say, though with apprehensions, that my answer may not be acceptable to many. In my opinion a poet is a lonely figure with neglected chapters of his life.... He may claim to be so many things which he is not. He is just a dry paraphrase of some very powerful poetic lines that are rarely deconstructed during his life time."

The answer given by Shukla, within no time, took me to the great ivory towers that were occupied by poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. My mind was also immediately overtaken by the dwellings of Yeats and the blind alleys of the

poetry of Philip Larkin. My purpose, in this paper, is not to pronounce my judgement on the debatable statement given by Shukla; it is only to present my own evaluation of the poetic exercises of this great Indian English poet wearing no ornaments which, with very little efforts, even ordinary poets get. After returning back from Shukla's residence, I read a poem written by him and published in Contemporary Vibes (January-March 2010) It is a long poem written with gusto and force. The poem speaks a lot about the flashy and garish wisdom of the poet who vociferously says:

Poetry is an echo
of the distressed soul
a dumb image of inarticulate ideas
unwilling to rest.
the poet remains lost in the
exhausting exercise of exploration
with which he endeavors to see
the shadowy picture of his emotions
and the crumbling house
of his hopes.

(Contemporary Vibes 45)

Shukla is so much confident of his determination of poetry that he has mentioned in the poem as big names as Hafiz Shirazi, Sheikh Saadi, Mirza Ghalib, Milton, Mahadevi, Shelley, Keats and Kafka. Adding to his illustrations, he gives the names of Amrita, Sahir, Imroz, Jigar and Dushyant. He does not forget to include Mahapatra peeping out through his poetry. He does not stop here; he goes a step further to put on record the deliberations of a poet when he says:

Bereft of validation
the poet embraces his paper
gets inspiration from his void
patronage from darkness and
an assurance from Silence
He writes to honour them all.

(45)

The chief concern of a poet, according to Shukla, is people's indifference towards him. Who is there to deny that the first cause behind every sort of writing is the outcry of the defeated man who has many things to say but is denied attention? It is this idea which is behind these lines:

A poet toils
Because he is refused to be heard
He writes because
he is distracted by the indifference
towards his monologues.
Disillusioned, disappointed
he tries to save himself
from a disease
He hurriedly enters a house
where he can unburden himself.

(45)

The loneliness and the purposelessness here on this earth leads the poet to the dim boundaries of spiritualism. Even the glimpse of these boundaries can give us moral courage to struggle with the forces not prepared to treat us as we should be. Moreover, there is another problem with Shukla and the problem is his agnosticism due to which he is not fully prepared to accept what has been told by the saints and seers. The poet says:

One ignorant has to trust
one who is wise
But being wise does not come
to being perfect
so as to fathom
the mysteries of the universe
the enigma of death
and the ultimate design of the Will Supreme.

(Journeys 82)

The poet is puzzled with the zigzag ways of life. He fails to understand the meaning of so many labyrinths spread around us from the day of our birth to the day of our death. This is why, he says:

How is this journey?
I go forward and come back
only to see the size of the plant
I put in the ground many years back.

(82)

The poet is so much tired with the burden of life that he even loses his faith in optimism. The defeatism that is present in a large number of poems written by the poet is the direct consequence of the dreadful scene of darkness spread around him and this darkness emanates from the absence of men who may be prepared to think about others. Disdaining every scene of hope, the poet says:

No
All optimism is humbug
and the zest of youth
only a cheating agent.
Let us seriously understand the fun
of the power
that brought us hither
to shine, to be soiled
and then
ultimately to be broken like a dream.

(Ponderings 29)

R.C. Shukla, although an uncelebrated poet so far, has written the largest number of poems. He has already published eight volumes of his poetry from Kolkata, Ranchi and New Delhi. The poems, in these volumes, are on the various issues of life but the central point is man's deplorable and alarming distance from man. Such a situation is bound to generate concern and disappointment. Naturally, the person, if he is a poet, seeks an escape and this escape, in the case of Shukla, is poetry. He has stated this truth through a poem titled 'Poetry is an Escape'. He has remarked:

In spite of so many claims
made by those engaged
Poetry is an escape.
It dreads the present
a duration promising no bright future at all
Never a compensation for a loss
or for those aspirations
that walked a few yards and collapsed.

(Ponderings 49)

Shukla has extended his wings so widely that it is not possible to discuss his poetry in a small paper. For that, a whole book is required. His poems on the subject of death and the futility of life are very significant. Since he considers the life on this earth a penalty, death appears to be a stage of consolation to him. It shall not be out of tune if, for the sake of understanding the pain of Shukla, the lines of the preface to 'My poems Laugh' are quoted. The poet exasperatingly says:

What can these laborious compositions give to me?

They may give if
Those who are to judge may forget
what I am.
My poems contain vignettes
of the experiences of life.
They pathetically narrate
the unending tale of misery
woman's despairing degeneration
man's obsession, his demoniac nature
and the callousness of those who govern.
They also talk courageously
about the crop of corruption
the loneliness of man.

And the horrid indifference
towards disorder
I must say
They are the muffled cries of my soul.

(Preface- 'My Poems Laugh')

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