

REVIEW OF 'A HANDFUL OF WATER'

Dr. Anita Sharma
HOD
Associate Professor
Deptt. of English
Govt. College Theog
Shimla-171005

Don't be satisfied with stories
How things have gone with others
Untold your own myth
- RUMI
-

The book 'A Handful Of Water' is a translated version of the play book originally written in Kannada by Dr. Rajappa Dalavayi under the title 'Ondu Bogase Neeru'. The book is published by Student Book Company, Tumkur, in December 2013. Dr. Siddagangaiah Holathal hits threshold to power, wisdom, ambition, delight, excellence and grandeur through his apt translation in English. He is a well known writer, translator Professor and environmentalist at Tiptoor, Karnataka. The author in his extraordinary attempt has eloquently described the spirit of life ethos, its soaring vistas and a transdental spirit of goodness. The poetic translation is a sensitive and beautiful perspective reminiscent of ancient verse play. The story is a joyous mix of familiar and unfamiliar tales of Alexander, the Great. The universe is made of stories, not of atoms. (MURIEL RUKEYSER) Though the play do not summarises the story of Alexander the Great yet it appealingly present his inner turmoil before going to war and meeting his unfortunate death on the desert. It sensitively portrays the other side of the great warrior.

Firdausi writes in his classical tale of Alexander reaching, in the course of his travels, the end of the world where he encounters a tree with two trunks. Male heads sprout from one trunk and speak during the day in a voice that strikes terror, and female heads from the other trunk talk sweetly at night. The male heads warn Alexander that he has already received his share of blessings, and the female heads urge him not to give into greed: but both predict the same thing that his last days are near. "Death will come soon: you will die in strange land, with strangers standing by". This, as one knows is exactly what happened. Alexander died in Babylon far from his house. In the Islamic world there were legends about the Speaking Tree which bore human fruit and was to be found in mythical lands by the name of *Waq Waq*. The great Firdausi speaks about it in his famous book *Shahnama* ;so does *Nizami in Iskandarnama* , one of the five long poems in his celebrated work the *Khamasa*.

The book 'A Handful of Water' rationally describes the mythic tale of Firdausi moving readers passionately. Literature and history often overlap each other's genres to provide a perfect blend of fiction and history. This historical verse play is divided into 15 scenes with

characters *namely Athina, Alexander, Aristotle, mother and wife of Alexander (Pembeni), Permenio, Achuma(slave) and Thiyab(soldier)*. His translation goes beyond time and age, *‘‘O time, in the anxiety of visiting/ your excellent image/My voice may move behind the curtain.’’* Alexander aptly replies to his teacher Aristotle, *‘‘my journey itself is the globe.’’....The dream of winning the world./ Alexander the emperor of the world./Not just Macedonia, not just Greek/ the whole world should become mine.’’* Alexander convinces his mother by saying, *‘don’t you think that my adventure/ will bring a good name to you?’’* but his wife emphatically says, *‘‘my sigh is a tempest for you/ and my sorrow is the haunting devil/.....He could not win a woman./...How could he win the world? While dying Alexander wisely tells Permenio, ‘‘don’t you think the ambition of Alexander is nothing but madness or impossible?’’* And his death wish was, *‘‘While burying me, keep my two hands upward/and bury my body only./...The world must know that Alexander who has gone to win the world, gone empty handed. /That the world must know.* ‘The book is an enjoyable read and an excellent adventure narrative. The key ingredient in any translation is the ability to empathise and reflect back positively to the other. The writer here transcends borders carving out poetic feelings out of the experience of everyday life. His brain is a library where words from two different cultures associate to give out their relative values have been stored in an orderly manner. He is a loyal translator, simple and seems to infinitely capable of maintaining relationships. His modern sensibilities ensure that his works and writings are for one and all. A litterateur records the history of masses, and literature is all about recording the historical event for a social change. Dr. Siddagangaiah has done justice with his slim translation of one of the most thought provoking play ‘A Handful of Water.’