

LITERARY ARTILLERY OF C.L. KHATRI

- A.K.Choudhary

C.L.Khatri, an editor of Cyber Literature, is a well-known bilingual Indian English poet who credits three poetry collections- Kargil(2000), Ripples in the Lake (2006) and Two- Minute Silence(2014) in English besides a number of critical works. It is always thrilling for me to go through a number of poetry books versified in different genres, styles and themes. Though C.L. Khatri raises a number of burning issues, yet he belongs primarily to Aurobindonean School of Poetry rather than Ezekielean School of Poetry due to the abundance of Indianness across his poetic groves in general and Two Minute Silence in particular. Khatri is a literary infantry who turns the century for the success story of Tom, Dick and Harry amidst many a sophistry on this starry land of statuary. His poetic periphery that deals primarily with the gate of ivory is , in fact, a landslide victory for many a literary heraldry. The poetic tracery this statuary inputs breeds a lap of luxury for the mercury of the paltry. The poet P.K. Majumder comments on the writings of C.L. Khatri:

“In his two collections of poems viz, Kargil and Ripples in the Lake, Dr. C.L. Khatri provides us with huge food for thought that stimulate our conscience. He seems to be infusing in to his fellow beings a profound spirit of enthusiasm and courage in order to overthrow the evils and oddities of Indian society. He is intensity aware of his environment and tries to restore order in the chaos through an ironic treatment of the situations prevailing around him. Instances of ironic undertones are abundantly scattered all over the poetic world of C.L. Khatri.”¹(2012: 68)

Indianness runs wild across his poetry books that makes him out and out an Indian English poet. There are a number of native words-- prakrit, yajna, tandav, shailputri, somarasa, bunker, Haa , Haa Kaar, chulha, paapers , sattu, chhath, the kua, kasaar, prasad, teej, jeetia, bhai dooj, laddu, balushahi, kartik purnima, khaza, tilkut, sattaani, Bans Ghat, moksha, khichari, sangrahalay, Gandhi maidan, tilak, Aam adomi, khash adami, dada, chapaak, devar , Babu , sindur, Astra, dhoti, rehat, kolhoo, phagun, chait, Holi, bhang, thandai, Sali, bhabhi, devar, malpua, joginia, gopian, jogira, rasaleela, wah, ayah, dhoti, pugadi, parvatin and many others that exhume Indian essence worldwide.

There are a number of native proverbial dialogues -- Om Shanti , Ram nam satya hai, Holi hai bhai Holi hai, Navaraski eye, Holi etc that woo the muse lovers to go through his creative works. The abundance of the mythical messiahs –Ram, Shiva, Ahilya, Meghanad, Kumbhakaran, Ravan, Lakshman, Surpanakha, Seeta, Kunti ,Shailputri and several others make him the follower of Aurobindonean School of Poetry in all his conscience. The frequent uses of the religious and historical places Rameshavaram, Naina Hills, Braj etc enlivens a head horse for the cultural heraldry of India over the world.

Apart from the aforesaid Indian elements Dr. C.L. Khatri focuses his writings on a number of capital ideas-- sex, politics, suffering, humiliation, election, invention, consciousness, tsunami, school conditions and many more that reflect the Indian society in to to. The poet calls the government schools the fucker of the future of those students admissioned in it . His minute

description of the ancient city Patna in the poem 'Poem to Patliputra reminds Jayanta Mahapatra's painterly painting of Jagannath Puri-in the poem 'Down at Puri!.

His melancholic mood comes to lime light while he quests for a Charak in Patna Medical College and Hospital, a Chanakya in the university, a Chandragupta in Vidhan Sabha and a Bhagirath in the Ganga.

The poet paints a shameful picture of Bihar known for nepotism, anarchy and violence every where. But the poet is optimistic while he murmurs at heart and soul. His ailing heart gives a real picture while the mother in Kalahandi sells her son with cold breath and frozen tears in the same way Kunti casts away Karn in the basket of river.

**“But we are Bihar.
We know how to rise like phoenix.”²(2014: 46)**

In his poem 'Holi' his enthusiasm bursts forth with the colour of Holi, great festive days celebrated in the northern India. As a painter he paints a dazzling picture of the holy scene in which people rejoice with one another without jaundiced eyes. The verbal romance between Sali and jeeja or devar and bhabhi reaches to its apex with jokes, comments ,songs ,dances and various sorts of entertainments.

**“Everyone is drenched in colour
Drunk in bhang and thandai
She looks Sali or bhabhi
He looks jeeja or devar
Running after one another.”³(2014:51)**

It is said that All is fair in love and war. C.L. Khatri adds Holi in it and sings. **“In love, war and Holi nothing is unholy.”⁴(2014:52)**

It is said that the politics is the worst corrupt profession to deal with the masses. The political interference in all offices creates many a viper thought over the corpse of the humanity and chastity of the masses. The politicians have nothing to do with morality, purity, clarity and chastity except the game of power by fair or foul. As a result the politicians use the tricks of the race,religion, region, language and caste on the eve of elections to befool Tom, Dick and Harry for the sake of power only and nothing else. The poet paints a shameful picture of the political scenario where none but the snake steals the show.

**“Politics is a power sharing platform
Where end justifies the means
We beat about the bush
And the snake steals the show.”⁵(2014:59)**

The politicians are the incarnations of the devils rather than the angels so far their actions are concerned. D.V.Sahani calls them more dangerous than the snakes.

His concept of sex that is the need of the hour is genuine because sex is, to him, like hunger or thirst. Sexual satisfaction is the daily dozen of the masses. Sex, love and marriage vary with one another. The poet versifies:

**“Dear old scarecrows, don't meddle
Sex with love and marriage**

**They are our personal picks
And not public property**

I am born with a patent of my own body.”6(2014:63)

Mind is the most resourceful thing that sharpens with the passage of time. The poet compares between mind and road because the sensation of the mind can rarely be compared with any other thing including road. The road can be repaired in course of time but meditation requires to repair the mind. It is interesting to know the proverbial line of John Milton while he muses in *The Paradise Lost* 1 : The mind is its own place and in itself/ Can make a hell of heaven, heaven of hell. The muse lovers can find the uses of various figures of speech- alliteration, simile, metaphor, personification, parable etc from alpha and omega of his verses that make him a poet of repute in Indian English poetry. Here are few examples of alliteration-- dance, death and desire, the story of struggle, strife, submission And subversion within the walls, winding ways and waterfalls, stars scores shining, skate over show and sing, dated dress like dhoti, lost license to live exist, flinging flakes of fear with two long horns, bees, birds and beasts, and several others that elicit his poetic mastery in Indian writings in English . There are a number of phrasal words-- flinging flakes, carry on, beat about the bush, steal the show, on and off, throw away, etc frequently found in his poems. Here lie few proverbial dialogues: I am a blissful soul, Absence shows one's real worth, many a Kunti casts away their babies in the basket of river, we know how to rise like phoenix. In love, war and Holi nothing is unholy, It will take time to repair the roads. And greater time to repair the mind, I am born with a patent of my own body, Embrace the sun rays and breeze/ with open arms like virgin earth and several others that establish his poetic maturity in to to.

In his poem 'River' the poet calls salvation the ultimate goal of mankind on this strife-stricken earth. The area is unlimited and bliss is infinite. As a result the poet sums up his idea in this stanza.

**“Heaven lies ahead
Infinite peace, infinite bliss
Sound sleep, selfless work
And salvation at the end.”7 (2014:15)**

The poet paints a painterly picture of hillscape, riverscape, Gangascape, Pataliputrascape and Holiscape in the same way the Romanticists have done long ago in English literature. Like the Romantic poets the poet is suffering from the romantic fever in his writings and salutes the Naina Hills with full-throated ease.

**“I salute the Naina Hills
Communicating to the bare bones of beauty
Steep rise-n-fall, winding ways and waterfalls
Music of trees treating insanity
Peep from suicide point, kiss of lover's point.”8(2014:43)**

The poet enjoys a glimpse of natural beauty-- winding ways and waterfalls, music of trees, lover's point, umbrella roofs, dark lake, snow fall, the music of mountain and dreams of solitude in its full swing. His poem 'Two Minute Silence' is a homage on the death of grand culture. We, the Indians, are losing these things day by day. This poem reminds Nissim Ezekiel's poem 'Very Indian Poem in Indian English'. 'Two Minute Silence' is the poetry book in which the poet finds

the anarchy prevailing across the country. The poet versifies this stanza in the melancholic mood.

**“Ladies and gentlemen of India
Let’s observe two-minute silence
On the death of dhoti and pugadi
Oxen and coolies replaced by wheels
Chopped up hands and lame legs.”⁹
(2014:67)**

His poems The Falgu, Flower of Opium, Tsunami, Fire, A Crane in Cage and many others are also of great importance due to the focus on a number of themes.

Going through his trio collection of poems in general and ‘Two Minute Silence’ in particular I reach on this observation that C.L. Khatri is a poet of eminence who belongs to Aurobindonean School of Poetry, although Ezekielean tradition of burning issues blooms side by side in his writings. Indianness is the mantra of his poetic journey that flourishes from one poem to another across his poetic journey. Free verse is his poetic style. Simplicity, common words, candidness, uses of various figures of speech, mythical and cultural champions are his poetic forts that flourish to its acme in his verses .C.L. Khatri is a great Indian English poet of this century from the fertile literary soil of Bihar. Indian English Poetry can be categorised in to three parts- Aurobindonean, Ezekielean and Tagorean School of Poetry due to their focus on cultural heraldry, burning issues and the blending of the two in their works that run wild across the poetic garden in Indian writings in English. Indian English poetry has started to bloom and will flourish with the passage of time.

References:-

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9. Ibid, p.67.

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