

BOOK REVIEW

Acceptance, Rejection, Compromise: Three One Act Play (Trilogy) by **Pronab Kumar Majumder**. Kolkata: Bridge-in-Making Publication, 2009. 82 pp. Rs. 120. Soft cover.

K. V. Dominic

Pronab Kumar Majumder is a widely published and anthologized Indian English poet settled in Kolkata. He retired as a Special Secretary to the Government of West Bengal in 2001. He has been editing the international literary journal *Bridge-in-Making* since 1991. Majumder has published seven collections of poems in Bengali and twelve in English. *Acceptance, Rejection, Compromise: Three One Act Play (Trilogy)* is his maiden attempt at one act play.

This trilogy is written with a didactic purpose. As the title suggests each play imparts a noble value to the reader. For a successful life, for individuals as well as couples, these values of acceptance, rejection and compromise are essential. In this modern, materialistic world, there is little time for loving, caring or keeping a warm relationship, especially between husband and wife or between parents and children. The neglect or absence of love between husband and wife is the theme of this trilogy. In the struggle for existence, connubial bliss disappears, and gloom and darkness sneak the bedroom. Negligence, as we find in the plays, is never deliberate but circumstantial. Majumder here deals with the lives of metropolis. Both husband and wife have to earn to make ends meet. As government opportunities are less, they seek private employment, particularly in multinational firms. They have to dance to the tune of their employer and their survival in the firm depends on their performance. Moreover, the global recession and depression make their jobs insecure and they work every moment with the Sword of Damocles over their head.

“Acceptance” tells the discordant married life of Sumit and Sushmita. Sumit is a college lecturer working in a suburban college. Sushmita is a business postgraduate working for a multinational company in the metropolis. It is four years since they married but only once they had a short trip away. After their marriage they lived first in a small apartment. The busy and overwork in the company made Sushmita restless and she could not bear the addition of Sumit's mother in the house. She was yearning for privacy and love from Sumit. The mother was sent to Sumit's brother's house.

Sumit took a larger apartment and a servant girl named Laxmi came to help them. The mother came back to their house and Sumit was happy that Sushmita finally accepted their mother. Sushmita often came late in the house after the busy schedule in the

office. Exhausted she would dine and sleep neglecting her duty as a wife. Sumit also failed to serve his duties as a husband. Arka, Sushmita's boss, took advantage of the situation and seduced her under the pretext of saving her from the termination from the company. She was repentant of the sin, but appeared happy to her husband and mother. Perfidious Arka, called Sushmita to his cabin after a few days and gave the termination letter. Sushmita, beaten and exhausted, was accepted warmly by Sumit and their mother. Sumit consoled her telling that she would get employment soon in some other company. They decided to shift to a smaller apartment. On the suggestion of Sushmita, they went on a tour to a sea-side resort. In the guesthouse, after their mother slept, Sushmita confessed to Sumit of her sin. She told him: "I am a sinner dear, I am pregnant. Yes, I am pregnant not by you. In our long years of marriage, we didn't have a child. I wanted it. I don't blame you. I blame myself for getting it by some other. Would you accept the child?" Sumit was spellbound. He could not believe it. He murmured, "Pregnant, pregnant you are. I failed, you got it done." Sushmita implored him to accept them: "Yes, I am, that is the reality O dear. That is the reality. Please accept me, accept my child. Both of us appeal to your magnanimity." The play ended, assuming that Sumit accepted her and her child.

"Rejection" tells the story of Dr. Pritam Basu and his wife, Shreya. They live with their father Prof. Somen Basu. Pritam is a very busy doctor who has devoted his life for the patients. Often he comes very late to his house. Shreya aged thirty, works in a multinational software company. She is the Project Manager. Pritam and Shreya have no child—in fact they find no time to give birth to a child. Pritam's neglect of his wife irritates her and he feels guilty of it. He tries his best but cannot be truthful to his duty as a husband. His father also advises him several times to find time to spend some moments with her. Pritam fails miserably.

Ashok Srivastava, the Senior Vice President of Shreya's company, was a very loving and caring officer to his staff. He invited Shreya one day for a visit to his house. His wife, very beautiful and young woman, was a handicapped and in crutches. They welcomed Shreya and drank tea with her. When Shreya reached home late in the evening Pritam was there and he taunted her with bitter remarks. Their father interfered in the conversation and the ice was broken. Ashok got transfer order to go to Bangalore. It was a shock to all employees, particularly to Shreya. Shreya was asked for a tea in Ashok's house. He was alone there. His wife and daughter had already shifted to a house in Bangalore. Shreya became very emotional and wanted to have a memento of love from Ashok. But Ashok controlled his emotion and said, "My good girl, you are too good. I have accepted you. Love, if really it is, knows no "Rejection." True love accepts, never rejects, even in a crisis. Stay fine, we shall have better time to be with. I leave my heart and thought for you." Shreya wanted to give a farewell

dinner on the rooftop of her house. Ashok was willing. The farewell party at the rooftop was attended by all the colleagues of Shreya's office. But all were discontent as Pritam was not present. Dr. Pritam came very late for the party, only when others were leaving. He was very apologetic. Pritam and Shreya were alone in their bedroom. He explained again why he had been late. He asked her to forgive him. She replied that his negligence amounted to silent rejection, which she could not bear. Hence she decided to reject him, not physically, but mentally. "Some day you may feel the pain of being rejected. For me also it is painful to reject," she cried. The play ended.

In "Compromise" we learn the disharmonious lives of Kaushik Basu, a marketing manager of a multinational company and his wife, Shweta, a journalist. The problem arises due to the busy schedule of their life. Kaushik goes to his office at 9 am and returns at 8 pm. Shweta goes to her office at 4 pm and returns at midnight. They have no child and live with Kaushik's mother. Kaushik suspects Shanka, another journalist in Shweta's office who drops her at house everyday. Shanka is single and handsome. Kaushik often taunts Shanka when he is found in his house taking tea with Shweta. In fact the relation between Shweta and Shanka has not gone beyond the limit of friendship. Kaushik's mother's words also add to his suspicion.

The C. E. O. of Kaushik's office has noted that Kaushik is not smart at his work and there is some problem worrying him. He calls Kaushik to his cabin and enquires it. The C. E. O. advises him to consult a psychologist. Kaushik meets the psychologist named Kurnal Sen Gupta. Gupta studies the case and wants a consultation with Mrs. Kaushik. She also appears before the psychologist another day. The psychologist learns matters from her and requests both the husband and the wife to meet him another day. They come to him accordingly and Gupta teaches them the necessity of compromise in their lives.

Gupta told them, "I would suggest Mr. Basu to make acceptance of whatever happened making you suspicious, distrustful. And I would suggest Mrs. Basu to reject repetition of what you considered not should have been done. That will bring great COMPROMISE." He asked them to meet him a year after. Accordingly they visited him a year after with their new-born child. They had had a very happy compromising life and had time to give birth to a child. Before parting Gupta told them, ". . . And that is life, always something we accept, something we reject and strike a compromise to live a life. Acceptance, Rejection, Compromise are the wheels on which life move on." The play ended.

Yana Rowland, *The Treatment of the Themes of Mortality in the Poetry of the Bronte Sisters*. Plovdiv: Plovdiv University Press, 2006, pp.iii +357, ISBN-10:954-423-326-8 and ISBN-13: 978-954-423-326-4

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In this deftly constructed and clearly argued study, Yana Rowland highlights the theme of death as a gradually emerging chief philosophical discourse in English poetry of the late 18th-19th centuries in general and the theme of death in the poetry of Bronte sisters in particular. The study is carried out in the light of the modern European Ontophilosophy and existential ethics as represented by Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Mikhail Bakhtin, and to some extent Hans- George Gadamer.

The book commences with a brief representation of the concept of death as propounded by Martin Heidegger, Levinas, Derrida and Bakhtin, and the concept is alternatively termed as *Dialogism*, or the faith in *Otherness*. It is through these reflections Rowland examines Emily Bronte's interpretation of the phenomenon of mutability.

Part I is a survey of critical sources on Bronte sisters' poetry. The purpose of the survey is to put together the studies conducted on the Brontes at one place, and to assert the need and significance of the present study.

The first section of Part II briefly examines the thematic field, mortality, as interpreted in literature, especially by the graveyard poets, Thomas Gray, William Blake, William Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge, Lord Byron, P.B. Shelley, John Keats and Alfred Tennyson.

Section II of Part II concentrates on the poetry of Anne Bronte and the treatment of death in her poems. The idea of appropriating of authenticating one's own death lurks in the philosophy of early Anne Bronte. Death as an opportunity for subaltern self-cognition and a medium for the liberation of the spirit appears in her later poems. Rowland argues that the poet manoeuvres the fear of death towards the Sublime when focusing on the grandeur of Christ's miraculous life, rather than on a preoccupation with the sublime in Natural phenomena. The writer finds this as a reason for the abundance of hymns in Anne's poetry.

Like Anne Bronte, Charlotte Bronte's treatment of death

is not focused on the motif of spiritual salvation through the image of Christ. Her early poems demonstrate Mutability as Nature's driving force while in her later poems she explores the theme of Orphan hood. Rowland discovers the two images that emerge and evolve in the death poems of Charlotte Bronte: the Survivor (the Self) and the Ghost (the Dead Other).

In section III, Rowland analyses the image of death that subsumes the poetic corpus of Emily Bronte. To her, some of the *Gondal* poems of Emily Bronte are a reflection of human fate as dependent on Nature's cyclical progress (based on the idea of transitoriness). The paraphernalia of death is contained in certain objects/phenomenon of nature that recur in Emily Bronte's poetry. The writer also investigates the way the poet establishes philosophical links between Nature's fragmentarity and man's fragmented existence. Aligned with this aspect, some of her poems are centered on the motif of separation from the body in Emily Bronte.

After examining the three poets individually on account of the mortality theme, Rowland adopts the comparative approach of study to draw parallels between them. She finds the 'Other' as a common link between *Angria* and *Gondal*, and this 'Other' is assumed as a dead beloved, or parent or friend. Another affinity drawn between the Bronte sisters' theme of death reflects in their belief of endless care and love for the 'Other', and the emotional turmoil in the absence of this 'Other'. Bakhtin's concept of 'Otherness' is specifically taken into account to emphasize the notion of Being as Co- Being in the poetry of the Bronte sisters.

In her conclusion, Rowland suggests the possibilities of further research in related areas, for instance, the images of death and the female beloved in later Romantic and Victorian poetry, the theme of orphanhood in the poetic works of the Bronte sisters, and the evolution of the themes of mortality in later Victorian and early 20th century poetry.

Overall *The Treatment of the Themes of Mortality in the Poetry of the Bronte Sisters* extends our understanding of their poetry in terms of the subject. The book is very readable and suggests a fresh dimension of the poetry of the Brontes, particularly when credits have been mainly given to them as novelists. The strengths of the book to the Bronteists, and to the scholars of English literature in general are the detailed analysis of the subject which is studied in the light of the theories and the similarities and dissimilarities which Rowland establishes between the three sisters in their treatment.

Explorations in Indian English Drama : By **T. Sai Chandra Mouli and M. Sarat Babu** , Authors Press , New Delhi , 2009, Rs 675, pp267, ISBN 978-81-7273 -490-9

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Indian English drama has been nurtured and enriched by such stalwarts as R.N. Tagore, Aurobindo, Nissim Ezekiel, Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Asif Currimbhoy ,G.V Desai , Badal Sarkar , Dharamvir Bharti and others .But inspite of that, much criticism and literature is not available on this popular branch of literature.

T.Sai Chandra Mouli and M. Sarat Babu have worked hard to fill this gap by compiling this seminal anthology. In the preface to this anthology they observe, "Drama is integral to Indian literature and culture. Traditional theatre played a vital role in integrating and harmonizing divergent strands of our social fabric based on race , sub-cultures, languages and regions .New interpretations of old, known tales and relating them to contemporary life are not an alien practice. "[p.5]

This anthology contains twenty three papers in all and covers one hundred years of Indian English drama. The first paper of this anthology entitled ` Human Concerns and Relationships in Rayappa Pattar`s *Sangya -Balya :Betrayal*` is written by Kh. Kunjo Singh. In this paper he explores the role of elemental passion in interpersonal and human relations. In this play translated by one of the famous creative writers and critics of India Dr. Basavraj Naikar, ``Human concerns and human relations form the backbone of the theme of the play .The play very nicely shows the natural human relations between husband and wife and also among the members of the family` `[p.4].This paper is well written and presents the in- depth study of the play from the perspective of human concerns and relations.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore has written the famous play *Muktadhara* in 1922 .The next paper entitled `Symbolism and Freedom in Tagore`s play *Muktadhara* ` written by P.G. Javalgi. focuses on symbolism fused with mysticism, lyricism and religion in the play. ``Perhaps no other play of Tagore expresses his political conviction with such directness and force.The

play, though written in prose, contains many songs and poetic passages. Tagore the poet, expresses his poetic attitude to life in his prosaic work *Muktadhara*." [p.36]

Habib Tanveer, a noted theatre personality departed recently and Vinay Kumar Pandey pays tributes to him in 'Tanvir's Charan Das Chor'. In this paper the critic presents the principles of Charan Das, a thief, who sticks adamantly to his principles despite many temptations. The famous critic Dr. Basavaraj Naikar in his paper 'Satirical Vision in *Silence! The Court is in Session*' opines: "The play is very important in the Indian context as it holds a mirror to the changing values of the Indian society. Vijay Tendulkar, who is a keen observer of life around him, has captured the spirit of time very sensitively in the play. The play shows how in the later part of the twentieth century Indian society women are liberated psychologically through education" [p. 57]

Sumitra Chakravarty compares the theme of death and life motifs in the plays of Vijay Tendulkar and Badal Sarkar in her paper 'The Interplay of Death and Life Motifs in the plays of Tendulkar and Badal Sarkar.'

G.A. Ghanshyam and T.A. Khan in 'Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan: A Saga of Dichotomy*' and 'Intertextual Interaction between Text, History and Society in *Ghasiram Kotwal*' offer critical opinions on the plays of celebrated Marathi dramatist Vijay Tendulkar.

Girish Karnad is a significant contributor to current Indian English Drama and most of the articles of this anthology cover his major plays. U.N. Kurrey and Susan Udai trace cultural values in Girish Karnad's play *Tughlaq* in their scholarly paper 'Quest for cultural values in Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*'. K.S. Anish Kumar explores Indian and feminine sensibility in his paper 'Passion for Perfection: A Case of Girish Karnad's *Hayavadana*.' Krishna Singh highlights marginalized characters in two of Girish Karnad's plays *Naga Mandala* and *Tale Danda* in his paper 'Marginalised characters in Girish Karnad's *Naga Mandala* and *Tale Danda*'. Gulshan Das and T.A. Khan's 'Intertextuality and myths in Girish Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*' is quite interesting.

Smita Mohanty analyses Girish Karnad's play *Bali* in her paper 'Karnad's *Bali: The Sacrifice* [2004]' and states, "it is an ethical thesis on the existential dilemma of individuals in their socio-cultural matrix" [p.126]. Sudhir K. Arora dwells on colonial

theme in his scholarly paper 'The Tiger and the Colonial Cage : A Peep into Girish Karnad's *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*'. G.S Jha explores 'Karnad's Quest for Alternatives'. V.Madhavi familiarizes us with Marathi dramatist G.P. Deshpande's play *A Man in Dark Times* in her innovative paper 'The Red Turned Black.'

One impressive aspect of current Indian English drama is translations of plays of other languages into English. S. John Peter Joseph examines Basavaraj Naikar's translation of M. M. Kalburgi's original play in his paper 'From static to dynamic : A Critical Study of M.M. Kalburgi's *Fall of Kalyana*.' T.S. Chandra Mouli views this play differently in his paper entitled 'A Treatise on Good Governance: *Fall of Kalyana*'.

Basavaraj Naikar is the pioneer in 'transporting' the playwrights from other languages into English. In his paper 'The Tragic Dilemma of *Larins Sahib*', he critically evaluates Gurucharan Das's play *Larin Sahib*.

P.Naga Suseela and P. Gopi Chand explore Mahesh Dattani's contribution in 'Dattani's *Tara : A Twinkling Star in the Post-Colonial Indian Drama*'. S. Kanakaraj, A. Mohan Kumar, J. Samuel Kirubabahar and M. Devi Chandra offer their view on the dramatist from the perspective of gendered politics in their paper 'Psyche of Tempered Individuals in a World of Gendered Politics ; A Study of Mahesh Dattani's Select Plays'. A. Madhavi Lata probes into visible and invisible themes of Dattani in 'Unmasking the Realities of Dwarfed Maturity and Neutral Maturity.' D. Suganya studies disintegrating relationships within the family as presented by the playwright in 'Exploring the Masked World of Gays : An Analysis of Select Plays of Mahesh Dattani'.

This anthology is seminal because this has covered almost all the major current Indian English dramatists and explores rare themes in them. T.S. Chandra Mouli and M. Sarat Babu have done commendable work. Although there are some typos here and there and its price seemingly a bit high, this anthology is a must read for every lover of English literature. I do hope that many more scholarly anthologies will flow from the mighty pens of these two celebrated critics.



Book Review

Bran Nicol: *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*, Cambridge University Press, 2009, ISBN 978-0-521-67957-2

Book Review by: Lata Mishra, Govt. KRG PG (Autonomous) College, Gwalior (M.P.)

As does a biologist, systematically and methodically dissect a specimen for his study so does Bran Nicol in his *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* deal with the concept of Postmodernism. The book is written with great care and concern. The scholarly approach and sustained argument about the postmodernism, postmodernity, theories in postmodern fiction is a major concern in this study. Nicol considers Postmodern fiction more as an aesthetic, it is a sensibility that brings under its umbrella all specific currents in writing of later half of 20th century.

In this comprehensive study of the term, Nicol emphasizes that Literature is no more about being delighted, but now it is a labyrinth and meanings have to be deciphered from the text. Postmodern readers cannot afford to sit with their backs resting and hearts delighting in the fancy created in the novel. One needs to work out meanings in the text. Reality is a manufactured product. The novel no more informs us about reality but it constitutes reality. The book is intended both for the scholars and students of postmodernism. In a very deft and precise manner, the writer divides the book into chapters dealing with the term Postmodern Fiction and its various kinds, citing key novels of its twenty-four representative novelists to enable the readers 'digest' each concept with full clarity.

Any attempt to define postmodernism, becomes difficult due to postmodernists' central claim that express, defiance and rejection of truths. The meaning of the term's prefix is also disputable as it signifies the end of an old and beginning of new era. However, critics regard the relationship between modernism and postmodernism as a complex one. Nicol argues that though postmodernism has been defined keeping in view modernist values and aesthetic techniques but postmodern fiction ought to be compared to realism for better understanding. He explains the reason for preferring so, through Patricia Waugh's argument that modernism is preoccupied by consciousness whereas postmodernism is interested in fictionality. Realism ignores fictionality.

Apart from Introduction, the book comprises eight chapters. Chapter One entitled Postmodern fiction: Theory and Practice assesses how social and cultural changes affect fiction and positions its readers to respond to it. After a brief discussion on realism and modernism the writer analyses the features of modernist fiction as pointed out by Nathalie Sarraute and Robbi-Grillet. Grillet talks of fiction as 'constructing' rather than 'transcribing' reality. This chapter also gives perspective of postmodern theorist Brian McHale and compares it with Hutcheon's poetics of postmodernism. McHale's theory states that 'dominant' component of modernism is 'epistemological' whereas that of postmodernism is 'ontological'. Two kinds of reading practices 'paranoid

reading' and 'conjecture' are critically examined.

Chapter Two, Early postmodern fiction: Beckett, Borges and Burroughs discusses the mentioned novelists. They are anti-realists and may be considered key-transitional figures between modern and postmodern fiction.

Chapter Three, US metafiction: Coover, Barth, Nabokov, Vonnegut, Pynchon, explores the terms such as metafiction, metanarrative, paratext, intertextuality and so on. It then takes into account the representative novels of these writers and discusses myth, fairytale and fantasy in their works. The writer explains how the reader also plays the role of co-creator of a text. He conjectures rather than interprets the rhizomatic narrative structure of postmodern fiction.

Chapter Four, The postmodern historical novel: Fowles, Barnes, Swift differentiates radical metafiction from historiographic metafiction.

Chapter Five Postmodern-postcolonial fiction explores postmodern strategies employed by postcolonial writers. The conventions of the Bildungsroman in postcolonialist texts. The notion of single authoritative viewpoint is challenged in both postmodern and postcolonial writings. In this chapter Bran Nicol discusses Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's children*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo*.

Chapter Six, Postmodern fiction by women: Carter, Atwood, Acker begins with discussion on several prominent feminist and cultural theorists like Sandra Harding, Sabina Loviband, Meagham Morris, Spivak, Irigaray and so on. The three fictionists clubbed in this chapter draw matter from literary and cultural myths that shape their contemporary culture and use postmodern aesthetic strategies in their writings.

Chapter Seven, Two postmodern genres: Cyberpunk and 'metaphysical' detective fiction assesses how postmodern fiction encompasses science fiction and detective fiction within itself. Science Fiction offers an alternative to realism. Writers like, Burroughs, Vonnegut, Atwood and Acker explore what is directly unrepresentable in fiction through creation of virtual space like, space colonies, space-stations, subterranean cities. The term cyber-punk and its origins along with example of novel, *Neuromancer* by William Gibson is also assessed. In detective genre, Nicol discusses Borge's *Death and the Compass* and Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, Paul Austen's *City of Glass*.

Chapter Eight, Fiction of the postmodern condition: Ballard, De lillo, Ellis is the final chapter of the book. In this chapter the works of three post-war writers are investigated. The chapter deals with the way the ever advancing and expanding technology has intruded our culture and changed the world from real. Bran concludes, 'postmodern fiction reminds readers of the nature of fictionality and causes them to reflect upon the process of deriving the meaning from narrative.'(185)



The Queen of Kittur, By Basavaraj Naikar, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2009. Pp.310. Rs. 300. | Dr. R.S.Chulki, Visiting Professor of English, S.B. Post Graduate College, Bijapur 586 103 (Karnataka)

This is a great historical novel dealing with the biography of Rani Chennamma from her birth to death. After the death of her husband, Raja Mallasarja, she became the powerful ruler of the Kingdom of Kittur and rebelled against the East India Company that wanted to conquer entire India. The first part of the novel describes her bravery and patriotism when she fought against J.M.Thackeray, the Collector of Dharwad and killed him. In the second part, though it is not divided into two parts, she fought against Mr. Chaplin, who left Bombay for Belgaum on 17th Nov 1824, with a firm decision to annex Kittur Kingdom after defeating Rani Chennamma.

Rani Chennamma had five great and admirable qualities of head and heart. Her nobility is shown when she gave ten thousand rupees to Saidansab to reconstruct a mosque. Her magnanimity is shown when she treated the Christian prisoners of war, saying, "These innocent women and children are like our own sisters and children" (P.146). She showed her political sagacity when she said, "We are free to manage our own kingdom the way we like. Our treaty with Munro says that" (P.91). Her humanity can be seen when she released two British captives, Mr. Elliot and Mr. Stevenson, whom she never ill-treated as enemies. She showed her equanimity of mind when she was kept as a prisoner in her own palace and also in the Bailhongal jail afterwards.

The greatest quality of Chennamma was that she was a great patriot and heroic in her struggle, which is shown in her speeches. She said to the warriors of Kittur, "The Kittur kingdom is your and you are the kingdom. Is there anything more honourable than a heroic death on the battlefield?" (P.232), "Our choice is only between freedom and heroic death on the battlefield" (P.246), "Please remember that I am not a coward, though born a woman... whatever happens to you will happen to me" (P.263). Then she is depicted as the greatest was heroine whose name will shine like a star among the great queens of India. Mr. Eden, the Acting Political Agent, after the demise of Thackeray, admired Chennamma's bravery, in spite of her being the enemy of the Company Government (P.203). Even Thackeray himself had admitted saying, "This Rani seems to be a thorough gentle lady" (P.147). On 5th December 1824, Mr. Chaplin, who was ecstatic about his victory over the Rani of Kittur, frankly confessed, "Rani Saheb, though we have fought against you, we have great respect for you. You have done your duty as a true patriot" (P.273).

Though she had a big army of 3000 horsemen, 2000 camels and about a hundred elephants, 36 cannons and 56 guns, she was defeated in the war. There were three obvious reasons for her defeat and downfall. First of all, she could not get any help and support from the Raja of Kolhapur. Secondly she was betrayed by her own selfish and treacherous man, Sivabasappa, who had adulterated the gunpowder with cow dung and grains of millet, which made the guns defunct at the most crucial time. Thirdly the Company army, which surrounded Kittur Fort from three directions, was several times bigger and better equipped with modern weapons of war.

The revengeful and ambitious Chaplin ordered the captains and his soldiers

to give capital punishment to the prominent rebels and warriors of Kittur like Sardar Gurusiddhappa and others. He ordered for the demolishing of the main portion of the palace and the fort of Kittur so that the name of Kittur kingdom should be obliterated from the minds of people. The glory and grandeur of the kingdom was crushed down. It seemed that the sun was setting eternally on the Kittur kingdom (P.261). But it is an undisputed fact that Rani Chennamma sowed the seeds of 'Patriotism and Freedom', which sprouted afterwards.

It is a highly absorbing historical novel, in which the author has neither distorted the facts, nor exaggerated them. Neither has he suppressed the truth, nor has he sacrificed it for the sake of convenience. In every historical novel there must be a proportionate fusion of facts and fiction. The author is not allowed to take liberties with the recorded events. At the most he can reconstruct the past and interpret it by filling the gaps logically and artistically. As there is no scope for the free play of imagination, he can create minor or functional characters to bring out the truth of history. It is a work of art, not rewriting the history. The author's artistic part will be in the blending of the realistic with the fantastic. The exact dates, months and years of hectic political activities, wars and deaths, manners and morals of the kings, queens and common people must make us think, feel and see the past before our mind's eye. The letters written by the British Political Agents and others confirm the authenticity of the novel. Generally what the historians sum up in three pages Dr. Basavaraj Naikar has described vividly in three hundred pages. Nothing is tedious or monotonous in the novel. As it is not divided into chapters, the novel has swift continuity and flow till it reaches the final disaster. Several Virasaiva technical terms, Kannada and Sanskrit words like vibhuti, istalinga, dasoha, tirtha, prasada, puja, etc., create the local colour and atmosphere successfully. The language is racy and effective. Somehow, some misprints have crept in, but they could be avoided in the future reprints of the novel. Indians depend heavily and rely on British historians, who were partial in the writing of history, but here Dr. Basavaraj Naikar has viewed and re-written from the Indian point of view showing the greatness of Rani Chennamma, who is praised even by the British Captains and Commanders of the East India Company. Much of what he has recorded may not be original, but the presentation of facts is new. In spite of our best efforts to know the truth much of history remains a mystery. As a creative writer Naikar has injected life into the moth-eaten records and has infused blood and life into all the characters, both major and minor. He can easily transport the readers to the concerned time of history. The portrait of Rani Chennamma on the galloping horseback, with a sword in one hand and a shield in the other, on the cover page, can inspire the people and arouse patriotism even in the dull souls, even today.

By writing this novel the author has immortalized Rani Chennamma, the Queen of Kittur, and in turn, he is immortalized by the novel. It is not merely a great achievement, but a solid contribution to Indian English Literature. No other Indian novelist can ever dare write such another.

The novel deserves to be prescribed as a text-book at the graduate level, in all the Universities of Karnataka State.



Sudha Murty: Gently Falls the Bakula (Penguin Book, 2008, Rs. 150)
Review By : Anju Bala Agrawal, Reader, Dept. Of English, R.C.A. Girls' P.G. College, Mathura

Sudha Murthy is a well-known name in literary circles. Apart from being the wife of N R Narayan Murthy, the legendary software entrepreneur who founded Infosys, Mrs. Murthy has created an identity of her own as a writer. The novel, Gently falls the Bakula was written more than three decades ago. In fact it was Sudha Murthy's first Kannada novel. It was translated and published in English in 2008 by Penguin.

The story is about a bright young man and a girl, who know each other from their school-days. In fact, they are class mates and both have broken record in the Bangalore SSLC Board as Shrimati stands first and Shrikant stands second. In the beginning, Shrikant is not happy as Shrimati has proved herself better than him. Soon after the rejoicings of success, they meet in the train going to their relatives. During this journey, they get a chance to know each other and promise to become friends. They decide to meet under the Bakula tree. Though, they are neighbours, their families are always in feud. After High school, Shrikant takes admission in Science College. He graduates from IIT-Bombay and joins a software firm. Shrimati who is extremely brilliant, chooses history which is uncommon for a bright student, but achieves her best in it. Their friendship continues and they fall in love. At the end of her masters, Shrimati drops her career interests and chooses to be a wife of Srikant. Srikant's mother, who is a greedy woman, is in search of a rich bride but Shrikant is interested in Shrimati, so they get married in spite of a family feud. They come to Bombay.

In the beginning, Shrimati manages her house and lives at home. After a year, she feels bore and wants to pursue her studies, but a letter from her mother-in-law spoils all her plans. Like a villain of a Bollywood movie, she writes to Shrikant to return which she had taken as a loan for his studies. In fact it is a trick to tease Shrimati. Shrimati as a faithful wife decides to work to pay the loan and thus shatters her plans of studies. In spite of all this everything appears rosy to her in the beginning. Later she feels like a bird in a golden cage when Srikant for his career interests ignores her and more so mocks at her skill in history as a useless knowledge. But she not only endures but also encourages him in his career for a long time. After almost half a decade of marriage, she realizes that her husband has become too focused on his career and has no place for family matters or to think about her. Eventually, she takes a decision that leaves their family life shattered. One fine day decides to end her endurance and moves out to take care of her life and interests.

Shrikant is so workaholic. He is not much interested in giving the blessing of motherhood to Shrimati. He does not want to adopt a child nor is he interested in taking any medical treatment. His mother Gangakka leaves no chance to insult and torture her daughter in-law. Shrimati is not feminist but she has not been able to make herself a machine like Shrikant. Besides she is not overambitious. She merges her identity with that of Shrikant. She easily manages his house and other affairs so he is touching the heights. Even his friends know that he is successful only because of Shrimati. He does not understand the "sacrifice" of Shrimati who inspite of being sharper than him, leaves her career pursuits. For him, there is no limit. He does not understand the emptiness which is in the life of Shrimati. This is a picture of today's

world. Nowadays, over ambition has also become a cause of divorces, so today's MNC's workers should read this book. In the middle, the writer has glimpses of the life of Shrimati and Shrikant's friends. This shows the comparison between a normal life and extraordinary life. The title also suggest that Shrimati's decision is not an explosion, but it is a result of long meditation. Her inner peace is not in being the wife of a successful MD but in mutual love and understanding which they have left behind. But her tolerance ends as Shrikant has no time for her.

Their romance is so cute and unadulterated and maybe almost unreal in today's time. Bakula is a name of a flower and their initial romance started around a Bakula tree. Gently falls the Bakula signifies how slowly the romance fades out. First of all, we should know something about Bakula. Bakula is a common flower, which is normally goes unnoticed as it is not very attractive but retains its fragrance for a long time even after it has dried. It interests the readers to know, that, "Bakula's" attraction lies purely in its fragrance. The narration shows a stunning similarity between Shrimati (the protagonist) and Bakula (the flower), thus making the reader comprehend the meaning of implied simile. Bakula which is placed high at the beginning of the narration slips slowly and steadily as the events unfold, losing its sheen. The fall of Bakula implies the fading of Shrimati, until one day, she decides to pursue her passion for academics. Rooted in Indian soil, it is a simple story and classic narration by Mrs. Sudha Murthy. She has an uncomplicated narrative style. Gently Falls the Bakula is no exception. This book is about her life and her feelings. It is a very well written book. It is quick and easy to read.



Jaydeep Sarangi

YOUR IDENTITY

What makes you so happy?
 The red soil and the sweet smell
 Of tress numberless;
 College boys passing with confidence
 Challenging the world of profits and delight.
 Your bows attract me to work
 Your goat takes me its own side;
 I dream my own story in cool shade
 Like a man directed towards
 The honey of experiences.
 My mind sits back....
 Looks into heaven for manna
 As life piles on life
 Experience leads to another.
 The river is your energy;
 It writes your history.
 Unfurls memory frozen
 In cool folk dance
 And your identity generation.
 The college girl stand first
 In University Examination.
 History is re-written in black ink.

