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Contemporary Elements in the Poetry of Vihang A Naik: An Outlook

Ram Avadh Prajapati

The Department of
English & MEL, The
University of Allahabad,
Allahabad, India

Abstract

Vihang A. Naik is an award winning poet of India writing in English and Gujarati. His poems have been published and anthologized worldwide. His collections of poems are well appraised by academicians and researchers. *Making A Poem, City Times and Other Poems*, and *Poetry Manifesto* are some of his well known and published poetic collections by him. Most of his poems have empirical experience. He has deep love towards nature and environment. Without proper sensibility towards life one cannot write deeply. Vihang doesn't lack this attitude.

Keywords- Contemporary, Empirical, Negativity, Modernity

Contemporary literature which is also considered as post modern literature, has some definite and some indefinite points to remember. It talks about alienation, disintegration, fragmentation, "art for mind's sake", and representation cynicism in literature. There is lack of coherence and proper symmetry in contemporary literary expressions. It is ironical in its attitude and tone. It enquires and denigrates the use and value of language. It uses language carefully and precisely to illustrate its ideas. There is newness in use of language. Contemporary literature also reflects ideas, visions, and grievances over unemployment, poverty, corruption, political instability, lack of moral values in modern people, confrontation of culture and civilization, communal clashes, terrorism, natural calamities, religious atrocities, and personal disillusionment. Contemporary elements are profusely found in the poetry of Vihang A Naik. He has presented disillusionment and all other feelings in his poetic expressions. There is maturity of thought and artistic craft in his works. His poems are intuitive and searching new dimensions.

There are several other poets who have represented contemporary feelings in their poetry. S. C. Dwivedi, Biplab Majumdar, Syed Ameeruddin, A. K. Chaudhary, R. C. Dwivedi, Jaydeep Sarangi, A. K. Ramanujan, Mamta Kalia, B. K. Dubey and several other

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poets have given their words to express contemporary world in their poems. *The Mouth of Truth* (2014) is a collection of poems which disclose various types of problems prevalent in contemporary society. It shows how professionals, politicians, educationists, students, doctors, engineers, and sociologists are not doing their works properly. "Topiwalla" is a well acclaimed poem which exposes human hypocrisy and pompous behaviour of men from different sections of the society.

Vihang A Naik is a contemporary poet who has raised several contemporary issues through his poems. He is a modern poet in this sense that he raises questions of modern identity, modern sensibility, terrorism, corruption, religious atrocities social abuses and unemployment. He expresses his emotions by using Indian sensibility, myths, events and contemporary activities. He is follower of Nissim Ezekeil, A. K. Ramanujan, Arun Kolatakar, Dilip Chitre, S. C. Dwivedi in the matter of form and content. The vision and imagination of Naik's poetry are multifarious and contemporaneous. Naik's poetic eyes capture the problems of terrorism, terrorism and corruption in India. Here one can find how Naik has delineated the problems of India in the form of terrorism, corruption and identity crisis. He writes:

The map of India burns
With flames of passion
When fire us set
Against mid-day. You search
Her city, lost
In mirage. The sun fumes
There is only heat and dust.

(*Poetry Manifesto*)

Above expression is very significant to disclose modern sensibility. It discloses how the world has been becoming hotter and hotter due to pollution and cosmic changes.

Naik expresses his personal experiences with seasons, people, institutes and things. He clarifies his emotional attachment with seasonal changes in India in the poem, "Indian summer". Naik writes:

The song of a koel coos
From engines and smoke pipes
Find yourself in the arms
Of summer, a roasting season
Where the smell lingers
Of flesh and blood
burning alive.

(*Poetry Manifesto*)

It is a very thought provoking issue of contemporary modern world that we hanker after what we have not and do not value what we have. Naik's realistic and practical expositions touch the hearts of the readers. In summer we hanker after rain and thunder because we lack water.

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Vihang A. Naik expresses his internal grievance through his poetic works. Contemporary world lacks compatibility, peace, identity, moral values, goodness emotional attachment. The whole world is full of noise, threat, terrorism, “humming of vehicles” corruption and unemployment. He writes:

This aged city
Facing the withered glory
How wrinkled, cracked
Weather beaten
With dim eyes

(Poetry Manifesto)

In contemporary life we find guttered and polluted rivers and fuming and smoking traffic. Naik writes:

.....A river turns
Into a gutter. There is humming
Of vehicles. The city mumbles

(Poetry Manifesto)

Vihang A Naik shows search for identity and meaning through his poetry which is the most debated issue of contemporary life. He writes:

You grapple for meaning
In the traffic of noises

(Poetry Manifesto)

Naik is a great artist and a man of great imagination and learning. The poem “Waiting” is very notable to present a kind of mental and psychological void in human beings and their behaviors. Naik has tried to establish a parallel between man and animal through idealizing his view in this poem. He has shown similarity between human beings and animals particularly some of birds.

Naik’s attitude is very practical. He records day to day events. Once there was draught which has got expression in the poem “Ambaji”. He writes once a particular region was without “without rains”. Here the mood of the poet has become ironical because he writes in such a way which exposes pompous behaviour of human beings. Due to lack of rain everything had turned stony and dusty. The poet observes how people were turning to hills to pray God to make rain possible. Everything had turned painful and dirty. Naik expresses touching emotion and says people were celebrating “carnival without water”. He writes:

There are rocks
Everywhere. Even the roaring
Beast has turned into stone

(Poetry Manifesto)

The very practical and contemporaneous elements are found in the poem of Vihang A Naik. The poet has experienced and has great sensibility to the people who are down trodden

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and sufferings pangs of problems, lacks, emotionless, and have fallen victim to riots, and mutinies. The poet express his pain through, trees, mountains, hills, rivers, and other objects who are silent and bearing damages done by people on the name of globalization, industrialization and modernization. Vihang A Naik writes:

They stand
Tall,
Mute. Now
Since hundred years
Bearing witness
With silent hills
That will not speak
The encroached footsteps
Of an intimate enemy
where the cold
Shadow of death has shaped
Over the deep valleys.
they stand.
Fall.
Silent
Now
Since hundred years
Making paths
Through hills
that will not speak.

(Poetry Manifesto)

“Gujrat” is a poem by Naik in which his vision and sensibility regarding earthquake in 2011, is expressed. It shows the pathetic situation of the moment which changed history, geography, statistics and genetics of the state. The poet talks about consequences of the earthquake. He writes:

A sudden wisdom:
TO change history
* * *
Countless deaths
in countless eyes.

8.48 A. M.
On Gujrat’s face of gold

now

only horrific cracks

and
sense of great

loss.

There is a poem by Naik which present a realization poet's grievous visions and revolutionary ideas. The poet wants to come out of the board and hustled life of modern society and politics. The poet tries to make a comparison between life of human beings which full of problems and flow of rivers which has no hurdle and problem. Vihang A. Naik is very meticulous and artistic in representation and comparison. His thoughts and emotions regarding life have been very successfully expressed. According to him to lead a successful life we need balance of mind, balance of pocket, balance of relations and even balance of population. Even a hero needs balance with the harmony of heroine. The tune must be set before because when a man does not have proper objective of life and sense of compatibility his life becomes boring and futile. The modern society, politics, and human beings need the help and proper understanding among the people Vihang A. Naik has delineated the reality of the modern people. He presents how people are imposed with wishes desires, victories, gains, likes, ambitions and social statuses in modern societies. These things are appraised by human beings and taken as veneration. If anyone does not conform to these ideologies, will be taken as loser or failure. And the bitter truth is that man cannot get proper place and respect without conforming to these things. Vihang A. Naik becomes a little bit ironical in representation of such feelings in human beings. Naik discloses how everything is judged by paper stamps. If someone is doing something and his record on paper is correct and up to the mark then he will be taken and supposed as diligent, thoughtful and visionary, if not will be taken as failure and inappropriate. Naik has presented his self experiences through the poem "Failure". He writes:

You are given
A DESIRE
You Cannot Fulfill
You are give
A Wish
You can act
You CANNOT achieve
A NIMAI

(Poetry Manifesto)

The world in which we are living is full of negativity and contradictions. People are aspiring for good things while it happening wrong things. Naik writes:

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You look for possibilities
You want to continue
You CANNOT

(Poetry Manifesto)

Contemporaneous world is an endless search for one's identity and meaning. People are fully alienated and alone due to problems and aspiration in two legs human beings. The poem "Growing UP" is very significant which shows Naik's attitude towards life and its meaninglessness. He writes:

After you play
Of hide and seek you
Grow up. An adult
Life becomes now
a game lost in seeking
A meaningless search

Vihang A. Naik reveals his idea and feelings about the concept of contemporary. Contemporary world is snobbish and showy. The people do not have real capacity yet showing themselves to be to veteran. Naik writes in the "Being Contemporary" how there we have seen different kinds of changes in our behaviours and activities:

These days it is wise
To be learned, certified and appointed
you can be safe

hammering your thought.
Speak or do not. The day enrolls
Academics, seminarians

professional theoreticians
And a peak of barking dogs, you
become one, quarrelsome

Who seldom bites.

(Poetry Manifesto)

The above lines are totally dedicated to the cause and effect of contemporary life where science has become overwhelming power.

Vihang A. Naik is very realistic in his expression that is why he asks the readers not to expect mermaid's song or imaginary stories from the contemporary poets. Romantic poets sung the song of clouds, birds, bees and muse of imagination but the modern world has become so murky and misty that nobody can even think of that song. The poet takes the readers in confidence that contemporary poets cannot write poems of imaginary things

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because they are fallen upon realistic ideals. Naik writes and takes his readers in his confidence:

In this age, dear Reader
do not look for a poet

who would tell you
the secrets of a mermaid
* * *

perhaps the muse has left him.
He may not among
clouds singing a song
of birds and bees.

Nowadays
he is a man like
you and me.

A voice hooting in the traffic
with stale words and tired tongue.
(*Poetry Manifesto*)

“Desire” is a poem which portrays contemporary life exactly. It tells how life is full of desires and activities. Here we find our own emotions well expressed:

the octopus
of desire
stirs
arteries and veins

tears flesh apart
feeding upon fire
swallowing air

(*Poetic Manifesto*)

Vihang A. Naik has disillusioned mind through which he makes his readers practical readers. There is no fallacy in his thoughts. So we find a concept how contemporary world, feelings, philosophies, behaviours, emotions, systems and values can be represented in poetry.

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