

A Glass of Time by Tejaswini Patil: A Study of Major Themes

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ABSTRACT

A Glass of Time is a volume of poetry by Tejaswini Patil, an established poet in English, Hindi and Marathi, having four volumes of poetry to her name. In *A Glass of Time*, she takes her readers to the inner psychological journey undertaken by her, unfolding various facets of her personality. Her theism, concern for nature, brooding over concepts like Culture and Humanity, deep faith in the power of Love, role of women in the development and enrichment of Life itself along with her deep roots in Indian culture and family system fascinate the readers. Her deep contemplation over life, relationships and humanity can be experienced through these poems. Along with thoughts, the poems are enriched with different stylistic and poetic devices.

Keywords: *Psychological journey, Theism, Culture and Humanity.*

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A Glass of Time is a volume of poetry by Tejaswini Patil, an established poet in English, Hindi and Marathi, having four volumes of poetry to her name. In *A Glass of Time*, she takes her readers to the inner psychological journey undertaken by her, unfolding various facets of her personality. Her theism, concern for nature, brooding over concepts like Culture and Humanity, deep faith in the power of Love, role of women in the development and enrichment of Life itself along with her deep roots in Indian culture and family system fascinate the readers. Her deep contemplation over life, relationships and humanity can be experienced through these poems. Along with thoughts, the poems are enriched with different stylistic and poetic devices. Some poems are long, some short while some are just fragments; each of them having rich content, like

"The regions of
Silence and darkness
maintained by you
are adrift in the moment
I call you." (A Glass of Time 36)

The very first poem 'A Glass of Time' is written in conversational style. It's a kind of address to God as God doesn't make any reply. In few lines, she has covered her life span and is thankful

to Him for offering her beautiful life and His blessings. This poem, at the outset, arouses curiosity in readers' minds and makes them ready for the journey.

The poems like 'To Granny', 'Down the Memory Lane' and 'To Papa' are about the lifelong influences created by her grandmother, grandfather and father respectively. The poem addressed to Mahatma Gandhiji named 'Bapuji' highlights the need of Gandhiji's values in contemporary period:

... Come back, Bapuji,
we need you to free us
from our own clutches. (A Glass of Time 65)

Along with these family bonds and influences, multiple shades of love find expression in her poems. Union, separation, reunion, feeling of ecstasy in love and finally, a divine touch to love transforming it into spiritually; everything is there.

I worship a handful of sand
Under your feet you have left
behind
While you have captured the
whole share
fragrant with my scent
Under your command (A Glass of Time 65)

Apart from heart full of love, her trust in Almighty God is inherent in poems like 'Krishna', 'Anahat', 'Zen Music', 'Loneliness', 'I Worship' and 'Silence'.

Dear God,
None else in this world
Can replace you
tell them
And at your feet
Lies on my solace (A Glass of Time 16)

This deep faith in God leads to her everlasting faith in humanity and culture. The poem likes 'The Culture' and 'Making of Culture' not only trace it's beginning in the caves but also focus the role of women in its enrichment. Her views on women are in many poems where she has

reflected over mythological stories, Gods, Goddesses and anecdotes about women whom Indian society worships even today. Women's empowerment, achievements as well as her

sufferings, cries, expectations and dreams find place in many poems like 'She', 'Hibernation', 'Mona Lisa', 'The Dream' and 'Breaking Off'.

'Zen Music' – Thematically as well as stylistically different poem where the poetess has put forth her inner growth as a poet and as a devotee too. The poem begins with her journey where she declares that everything in her life fuses with Him. Who is he?

... the path, the winding
disappearing in YOU. (A Glass of Time 18)

This capital 'YOU' suggests the presence of God himself. Though the journey seems to be physical one, actually it undergoes deep within her heart. The first line of the four stanzas begins with 'I walk... walk' (A Glass of Time 42)

She has started her journey deep in the forest and gradually, she finds peace and uniqueness with the foliage, the rustling of the leaves of trees as if they are doing 'Pranayama'. A calm, peaceful mind who is in search of God can experience such things as the inner voice of the poetess unites with them and a stage comes where the inner turmoil, thought process also stops and the mind becomes 'calm' as a Yogi. This experience can be compared to the words of famous Marathi Saint Tukaram Maharaj.

The person can feel himself/herself. She can touch her wavering soul. She finds herself reflected in everything around her and doesn't want to return to material world. She has received this 'perfect happiness or glee' experienced by yogi. This another world has poured pure bliss and sublime in her heart. And the result is that she finds herself everywhere as a devotee can experience God in everything.

I am the blue veil,
The green around;
I am the sound;
I feel it rings from the heart;
I am sound
I am flame

I am rain.... (Tukaram Gatha 44)

This state of mind is called as ‘Tadatmya’ with nature or God. She now gets the universal ‘Blue’. This ‘Blue’ is Lord Shri Krishna as well as the unlimited sky which pours its energy within her heart.

Instead of herself now, she finds ‘Him’ everywhere. Her entire self gets enveloped by ‘Him’. This union of devotee and God is a state of bliss as she says:

You occupy me
Like the everlasting flow
Of eternity.... (Tukaram Gatha 44)

In this research paper, the researcher has analysed some of the poems.

The Forest

The poem reminds us to Robert Frost’s poem “Stopping by Words on a Snowy Evening”. The metaphor of the forest is used by the poetess as she cites in the last line. The forest may be forest or a poetic art. (Poetry Down The Ages 45)

The forest is mysterious, deep, unfathomable; with uncertainty of events. Along with anxiety and happiness, the silence and the mystery of forest accompany us when we go through it. Various sounds in forests fascinate our soul and take us to another world. Most of us get captivated and enthralled in this enchanting world and lose themselves. Very few can survive and get delighted by its beauty.

The last line of the poem suddenly changes the tone from sensual to philosophical one. The forest is not necessarily ‘physical’ forest with flora and fauna but can be a ‘poetic art’. Poetry is also deep, abysmal and has unfathomable depths of the ocean. Its depth can’t be measured by everyone. One has to delve deep into its heart. It’s beauty, mystery and depth can only be experienced by an enriched soul.

Woman

‘A woman is not born, she is made’

A famous saying by French feminist critic Simone de Beauvoir reveals the universal position of women. Women behave as they are made. They behave as per the culture where they are born. Except some cultural differences, women’s psychology and position in this man-made

world is same. In this poem, ‘Woman’, the poetess has tried to trace the roots of feminine behaviour. She says at the very outset,

Once again,
I am trying
To analyze my DNA
As a woman ‘ (A Glass of Time 69)

Here, she has tried to analyze her DNA as a woman. DNA is the central information storage system of most animals and plants. It is organized into genes which lead to observable traits of personality. DNA of women points out certain common behaviour traits of women in general.

Her search for feminine features in herself led her to a voyage inside where she found heaps of her species who had tried to raise their voice against barriers in their lives in the pages of history, the walls of caves, paintings, sculptures as well as myths and oracles unveiled by some of them. She found some traces of the inequality in them. As an Indian woman, she has some of these myths which are contradictory in themselves. Here, woman is ‘Shakti’ or ‘Devi’ at the same time, she is exploited instead of her superiority lifetime.

‘Ardhanari- Nateshwar’ idol represents the equal status of Shiv and Shakti or Devi while goddess Lakshmi pressing the feet of Lord Vishnu in Kshirasagara shows her inferior status. In the famous story from Mahabharata, Savitri brought back the soul of her husband, Satyavan, with the help of her knowledge, wit and Tapa (yogic sadhana), at the same, there is a story of Rishipatni Ahilya cursed by her husband on the issue of her chastity in Ramayana. Devi Seeta sacrificed her life and spent her entire life in exile for the words of Shri Rama while Gautama Buddha left his wife and newborn son when he left the palace in search of meaning of life. Everywhere, woman has sacrificed and proved herself but still, she is unsuccessful in getting equal position in this world. The poetess knows that there are traits of these women in her, too and what should she do

if her wings are
Stronger than her arms...?
Whether she should revolt against the system or subjugate herself in the existing one?

She

“SHE” is another poem in this chain where the poetess has used contradiction in alternating lines to highlight the plight of women. The poem is written in contemporary context. Though

the life of human beings advances, the condition of women has worsened. The poetess has made effective use of past tense for her achievements and present tense for her sufferings.

She had broken the man-made frame/image and crossed every threshold of life. She had broken her silence and asked questions to authority and also had taken sword to her country. She had already soared high in the sky with the wings of her knowledge, confidence, bravery and capacity. But simultaneously, she is suffering. Even today, she is gangraped and massacred along with her fetus. Her roads are blocked even today. They try to freeze her horizons. Her struggle for existence is forever and ever. She has to live in this confounding world and prove her compatibility. That's the truth.

Making of Culture

The preceding poem "WOMAN", which is full of mythological references, the poem 'Making of Culture' elaborates the canonical role of woman in the making of human culture. At the outset of human civilization, man hunted for livelihood and she remained in caves. She turned those cave-walls into beautiful inscriptions from her life. Those paintings, and sculptures became voice of her conscience. Later, caves turned into walls where she lived as captive but she started agriculture and gave stability to human life. 'She' is there who laid the foundation of the so-called man-made society where her role subsided even today.

The Culture

The poem is a reflection over the worn-out, disrupted condition of culture all over the globe. The beautiful yarn of culture created by mankind over thousands of years is now shattered. The hands of caste, creed, religions, racism, wars and selfishness have tattered this cloth. It can only be mended by love, compassion, humanity and tenderness of heart. She appeals everyone to actively participate in this noble task.

A Lighthouse

The poem 'A Lighthouse' reminds us of John Donne's poem 'Valediction: Forbidden Mourning'. Here, Donne has used the metaphor of 'compass' for lovers. One point of the compass its fixed point completes the circle. In this poem, the poetess has used the metaphor of a lighthouse. It is there, fixed, guiding the last ships and showing them direction. She is the 'lighthouse' and her lover is a 'ship' which undertakes adventures. He reunites with her after every expedition. The poem is optimistic though there is hint of their separation.

A Golden Climax

The poem is written in different style, being divided into two parts, each one different and complete in itself. The poem reminds me of the famous line by P.B. Shelley, ‘Our sweetest song are those that tell of saddest thought’

Here, the lamp, burning within her heart, is lighted by-burning. This suffering has aroused a state of elated bliss in her mind which envelops the world now. The second part also has a sanguine tone which tells how every upcoming moment in her life, happy or tragic, is a golden climax.

Dear Sapling

Apostrophe: As a literary device, an apostrophe is a poetic phrase or speech made by a character to express their internal thoughts as a way for a character to express their internal thoughts and feelings to someone to someone or something that is not able to respond.

As parents advise their children about the journey of life, in the poem, the poetess has made the sapling aware of its life-journey. Though it is addressed to the sapling, it is applicable to human life also.

Connect...
Connect with the surround
And sing in glee
The hardest time
also will flee (A Glass of Time 75)

She makes it aware of the hardships and adversities which it will go through but these hard knocks of time will make him tough to undergo any situation and ultimately,

Centuries and centuries
You will stand witness;
it’s journey of your life and
the story of your success (A Glass of Time 75)

In this poem, she has used the device of apostrophe to express her innermost thoughts for a sapling. The poem reminds me of the famous poem by famous Hindi poet Harivansharay Bachchan where a small baby-bird asks mother-bird whether it has learnt to fly. What the mother tells her child is the philosophy of life made simple.

Poetic devices: Most of the poems in this collection are embellished with poetic device and figures of speech like simile, metaphor, alliteration, repetition, anaphora, apostrophe and imagery along with inherent internal and end-rhyme. The simple ‘I am’ anaphora in the poem ‘Zen Music’ depicts her utmost union with the nature and God himself. Apostrophe as a device is applied in the poem ‘Dear Sapling’ and ‘A Child and a Baby Bird’. The use of metaphor can be found in the poems ‘The Culture’, ‘The Lamp’, ‘The Fantasy Garden’, ‘Rainforest’, ‘The Forest’ and ‘The Lighthouse’. Apart from these, repetition, alliteration, similes are scattered in abundance in these poems.

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