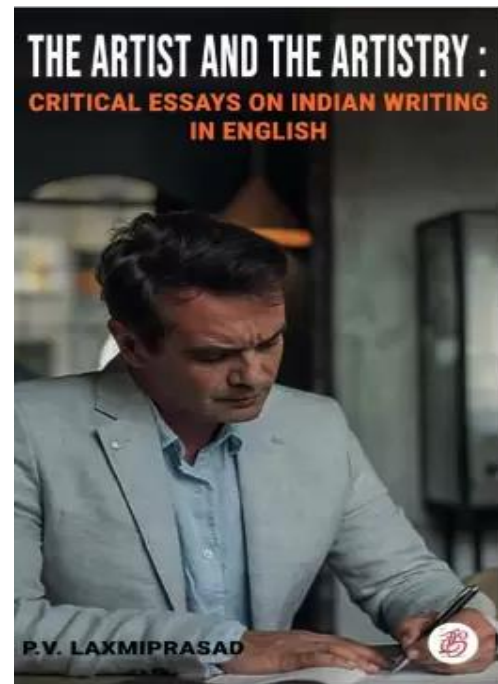


P. V. Laxmiprasad's *The Artist and the Artistry: Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, BFC Publications, Lucknow, India ISBN: 978-93-90478-63-7, 2020, Pp 100.

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The book under review is entitled *The Artist and the Artistry: Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English* is a richly deserved volume of critical essays on Indian Writers in English. The anthology includes poets, story writers, novelists, regional novelists, drama and Three- One Act Plays. These include Girish Karnad, Narendra K Sinha, Jayantyi M Dalal, O. P. Arora K. V. Raghuapthi, D. C. Chambial, Manas Bakshi, Nalini Sharma, P. K. Majumdar, C. L. Khatri. Laxmiprasad is passionate about Indian writers and their writings. As he stated in the Preface, “Each generation has produced great writers in the country. Sometimes, writers are established, and at others, emerging and



still, others are yet to make a mark in the literary world. Some have achieved name and fame and others are unsung heroes of literature. I put them equally on the side of those great writers because their writings reflect universal thinking and attitude” (Preface). Accordingly, Laxmiprasad picked up writers and brought them into limelight. This is where criticism plays a very crucial role in shaping the literary career of a writer. True to the spirit, the author has worked on emerging creative writers and studied their works for critical examination. He has explored those unexplored vistas of literature produced by Indian authors in the recent decades. He does select the writers and their works in true class and merit. Whether it is poetry, story or others, Laxmiprasad is always at ease and command when he ventures to evaluate the writers. If one looks at the quality of research papers, Laxmiprasad has explored themes and justified them with suitable titles for those papers. It is said that a craftsman is known by his merit and

efficiency. Laxmiprasad combines the qualities of a genuine critic just as he did with a number of critical works numbering 42 speak of his devotion and commitment.

There are 16 research papers all well written and explored. The writers include P. K. Majumdar, C. L. Khatri, Anil K. Sharma, K. V. Raghupathi, Girish Karnad, Narendra K. Sinha, Jayanti M Dalal, O. P. Arora, Manas Bakshi, D. C. Chambial and Nalini Sharma. Laxmiprasad has included poets, story writers, playwrights, and novelists. There are four papers on Pronab Kumar Majumdar, two on K. V. Raghupathi, one each on C. L. Khatri, Girish Karnad, Narendra K. Sinha, Jayanti M. Dalal, Manas Bakshi, D. C. Chambial and Nalini Sharma.

Pronab Kumar Majumdar's *Passage to Peace* is an in-depth poetic analysis of the dangers confronting the modern world. He has dealt with the theme of peace so deeply that every poem of the collection searches for the roots of peace. He feels tormented by those fanatic elements. According to him, 'Peace' only sustains our lives towards the end, and man can live in peace and harmony so long as he upholds those human values. The world would still be a paradise if we change the mind-set of the people who are misled on the path of terror and horror. The poet strongly pleads for secularism as a way of life. The peril of destruction awaits man in every form of life. Anil Sharma emerges as the superb storyteller in Indo English Short-Story Writing. All the 36 stories are wonderfully agog with candid statements and acknowledgements. The collection is replete with features of solemnity, dignity, and grandeur and serious by varying the length of sentences. The style of writing is unusually formal. He is above all a realist and makes readers realize the world. A writer lives in the works he creates. Anil Sharma's *Candid Confessions* will certainly live in the hearts of discernible readers. The city of Chandigarh becomes the city of Portrayal in Characterization. Delineation of characters is precisely done at all levels. It is definitely a literary odyssey by Anil K Sharma through his story collection, *Candid Confessions*. Laxmiprasad is selective and his selection of writers is one of significant phases of story writing in India.

C. L. Khatri is a poet of social ethos. All the poems lead the readers to thoughtfulness, making them pensive, sad, and socially conscious. There are pointed remarks and didactic sayings. Almost all the poems have bearings, directly or indirectly upon the social things. He goes from political to universal and ethical to social experiences of life.

K.V. Raghupathi echoed the silences of life in his actual experiences first as a student and later as a poet, philosopher and citizen. Truly, *Echoes Silent* is a collection deeply rooted in disillusionments and detachments at every stage of poet's journey. He presents those experiences, bitter or pleasant, all universally taken up, all echoed silently hitherto unexplored

in a poetic composition. Girish Karnad has, indeed, revolutionized the Kannada Drama with variety as colour of writing in his plays. The techniques of symbols, disguise, spectators, irony, poetic utterances, imagery etc., are structurally attempted with sheer stage beauties. Girish Karnad, according to Laxmiprasad, becomes the theatre Man of Erudition.

Narendra K. Sinha presents a few glimpses of the pathology of society in Jammu & Kashmir. The stories definitely reflect life in Kashmir as it exists today. The problems are a plenty from different dimensions. Sinha presents them through literary interpretations that really stirred the souls of patriotic Indians. The incidents in Kashmir stirred his soul within limited time, space and expression. The narration of stories: is unusually tempting and gripping. Unlike the other expatriate Indian writers who portray India around dark elements of poverty, nakedness and negative manners, Narendra K. Sinha is absolutely realistic in the true spirit of writing. The collection *Stories on Kashmir and Others* is a worthy collection on Diaspora discourses from the pen of an expatriate Indian.

Jayanthi M. Dalal's *Ordeal of Innocence: Effervescences of Estranged Relationship* is originally a novel in translation from Gujarati into English. The novel begins with two years of married life of Shashank and Sukanya and later from Mumbai to America. They were a happy couple in the initial phase of life enjoying the ecstasies of married life. But, trouble soon began with the arrival of first-born baby Laxmi. An element of suspicion, uncertainty and chaos perplexed Shashank when the baby was placed in his arms. He was stunned by the baby that the nurse held in her arms. Jayanti M. Dalal examines the precariousness of human relationships through Shashank and Sukanya, whether they are through marriage, friendship, or family, and offers insight into the human spirit. The element of suspense continues to haunt throughout the novel. The novelist has well-presented *The Ordeal of Innocence* that occurs in the daily life in our personal relationship with others. The novel is intensely suspicious, and yet it portrays realistic account of genuine happenings in the world.

Marriage Carnival in O. P. Arora's *The Silken Traps* is yet another paper in that Laxmiprasad has taken up the marriage culture that is prevalent in India and the world. It is well said that marriage unites two families hitherto known or unknown to each other apart from uniting souls in waiting. Marriage is also defined as a three-ring circus: engagement ring, wedding ring and finally suffering, but marriage in O. P. Arora's *The Silken Traps* becomes an interestingly stylish but satirically realistic study of cross-cultural relationships. It is, at once a big hungama, a grand spectacle, a real Tamasha and a carnival of extravagantly expensive event heralding

the union of diverse cultures. It's again a marriage - drama of the most spectacular show. This is what O. P. Arora calls a cumbersome procedure of any Indian marriage irrespective of class distinctions. A marriage involving thoroughly two different cultures i.e., American and Indian spiritedly representing a global village of Cosmopolitanism.

Laxmiprasad evaluates that how the marriages of 21st century become intercontinental in tradition and variety. Marriages mark and symbolize the meeting of culture and religion- a marked and distinct transformation that culminates in the successful but extraordinarily arranged event. The novel is thoroughly an excoriating picture of the contemporary institution of marriage.

India with its diversities, pluralities, complexities, and contradictions has become a classic consensus country, demanding the old-world qualities of patience, deep thinking, and strategic compromises. There is perceptible increase in the power of man in every field except over himself. Man lacks harmony within and without and our earth has become a discordant orchestra with each member playing a different note.

As the future is full of challenges, uncertainties and opportunities, the youth are constrained to look before they leap. Even their parents ponder what use is our long littleness of life, getting and spending, begetting children, targeting fleeting pleasures, regretting mistakes and forgetting the real purpose of life Society is in ferment.

Laxmiprasad through Manas Bakshi's *The Midnight Star* peeps into the nature, origin and predicament of life from philosophical accounts of protest, anger and agony. Philosophy is a way of life In the *Midnight Star* which abounds in virility and virtuosity and that ultimately unleashes a fertility of thought to readers. The voice of the poet is grief-stricken, disgusting and at times appears helpless in helpless situations. Truly, the poet chases the mysteries, breaks them succinctly and presents in a richly deserved ocular proofs and pinpoint accuracies.

In another paper, Laxmiprasad examines K.V. Raghupathi's *Desert Blooms* and presents the journey of insights that ultimately go into the core of life. According to him, the poet sees the experiences, transcends, and traces the essence of meaning of life. Life is like a flowing river. Man is just a spectator on the canvas of life. Life cannot be defined. One has to sail with life since life comes to a static position. Absoluteness is impossible. Creation itself is relative. Nothing can be taken as 'absolute'. It is no doubt a wonderful paper on *Desert Blooms*.

Through the poetry of D.C. Chambial, Laxmiprasad has studied philosophy that is rooted in the basic tenets of life crafted on philosophical sides. Though readable in Style, thought force is the mainstay of writing. The lines themselves are good treats for readers. They are not streaks

of imagination to say, they are, in fact, accurate revelations on the life of eternity. This is a serious attempt to rationalize the philosophies of life. No doubt, the muse of poetry dances on his finger-tips. Laxmiprasad concludes that all poems of Chambial are machines to think with and engines to carry forward from philosopher's points of view.

In yet another paper on P. K. Majumdar's *Time's Timeless Bard*, Laxmiprasad writes that time is the architect of both the creation and the destruction. Man, being a short time actor, plays his part and leaves this world to mingle with the passage of time. Laxmiprasad concludes that Man has to use Time to his advantage, otherwise time flees away never to return again. A vein of philosophy, mysticism, didacticism flows through the vessels of these works. Time, on a grand scale, receives a lion's share of compositions in his poetry. A typical Majumder is Time's Timeless bard to the core of his entire collections.

“Nalini Sharma – the Prolific Story Teller is the last paper of this critical volume. *The Unwed Mother* is a collection of 17 stories that are woven around the teenage girls and middle-aged women. Her women characters are the victims of men-centric world. They have to struggle within the family and outside of it. They realize their abilities and position and react appropriately in the male dominated society. Her stories are marked with sensitiveness and emotion. They are interwoven around their troubles and tribulations of women.

Laxmiprasad concludes that Nalini Sharma attempts her stories on social milieu which contain a great deal of progressive thought and message. All the stories are noted for their narratives skill, deep social conscience and finely drawn characters. She portrays the complicated world human nature in general and women's personality in particular. The stories represent the plight, desires, hopes, fears, aspirations and frustrations of women. They project the difficult state of female characters between patriarchal society and women individuality. They portray the emancipation of women and the struggle to explore the ways for self-identity and expression. Thus, the collection is wonderful in many aspects. It is rooted on Indian soil. Laxmiprasad has rightly selected the Indian Writers for his analysis. Indeed, it is a significant contribution. It is befitting the modern society and their temperaments. Philosophy occupies the collection by a few poets. Laxmiprasad explored them succinctly for the readers.