

Voice to the Unvoiced: Beautiful Black Dalit Women in Yendluri Sudhakar 's Poem 'DARKY'

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Abstract - Human life is an amalgamation of fancies and fantasies, joys and sorrows which interprets the varied facets expressed in milieu, culture and ethos. It reflects the beauty of nature, character and life style of an individual. Writers gets inspiration from their own culture and presents the appreciation of beauty through their work of art. It showcases aestheticism with special reference to experiences of an individual as a person or as an observer. The Present work delineates the Poem 'Darky' by Yendluri Sudhakar as a celebration of dark black skin to redefine the beauty standards with poetic sensibility. It is a known fact that stereotypes consider fairness and beauty are associated with white colour and hence discrimination based on skin tone is attached to black colour. Colour prejudice connotes blemish rather than beauty. Dark skin is subjected to lower castes and results in traumatic experiences based on caste and colour. The poem 'Darky' by Yendluri Sudhakar, a famous Telugu poet, Professor, Researcher and Translator offers an opportunity to acknowledge and promote dark skinned lady as natural beauty against the domination of upper-class prejudices for consideration of beauty. The poem has poetic sensibility and aesthetic appeal. He writes about his own culture and realistic portrayal of woman in black complexion. The artistic expression on the beauty of 'an outcast woman' with dark complexion is novel theme. Sudhakar used regional vernacular language to present Dalit life and Dalit world, with an aim to give voice to a culture that had been silenced for centuries.

Index Terms - Colour Prejudice – darky – Black Beauty – Black Aesthetics – Dalit Culture.

INTRODUCTION

Human life is an amalgamation of fancies and fantasies, joys and sorrows which interprets the varied facets expressed in milieu, culture and ethos. It reflects the beauty of nature, character and life style of an individual. Writers gets inspiration from their own culture and presents the appreciation of beauty through

their work of art. It showcases aestheticism with special reference to experiences of an individual as a person or as an observer. Hence Aestheticism in literature is an artistic expression of imagination and fancy which adores the beauty of a person, thing or place. It comprehends a variety of emotional responses ranging from admiration to inspiration, from creative pursuits to entertainment and from pursuit of beauty to appreciation.

The Present work delineates the Poem 'Darky' by Yendluri Sudhakar as a celebration of dark black skin to redefine the beauty standards with poetic sensibility. It is a known fact that stereotypes consider fairness and beauty are associated with white colour and hence discrimination based on skin tone is attached to black colour. Colour prejudice connotes blemish rather than beauty. Udit Raj, Leader of the Indian Justice Party which represents Dalits or the Oppressed Tribes and Castes views,

“Colour Prejudice is an offshoot of the bigger evil of casteism in India”. Dark skin is subjected to lower castes and results in traumatic experiences based on caste and colour. The poem 'Darky' by Yendluri Sudhakar, a famous Telugu poet, Professor, Researcher and Translator offers an opportunity to acknowledge and promote dark skinned lady as natural beauty against the domination of upper caste white colour ladies. His anthology of poems is titled as 'Nalla Draksha Pandiri'. 'It is a bilingual poetry collection published in 2002. The present poem 'Darky' or 'Neelika' in Telugu is taken from it. It speaks about the life of an untouchable girl. The poem has poetic sensibility and aesthetic appeal. He writes about his own culture and realistic portrayal of woman in black complexion

The artistic expression on the beauty of 'an outcast woman' with dark complexion is novel theme. Sudhakar used regional vernacular language to present Dalit life and Dalit world, with an aim to give voice to

a culture that had been silenced for centuries. The poem is addressed to ‘Chandalika’, a derogatory term used by higher caste people to represent low caste. **Chandala** is a Sanskrit word for someone who deals with disposal of corpses, and is a Hindu lower caste, traditionally considered to be untouchable. The poet uses the word ‘Chandalika’ not as the mean and humiliating word, rather goes against the norm and with a sense of pride tries to represent it as the paragon of beauty of poet’s race. He adores her beauty and glorifies her that her glamour in silver anklets even surpasses the beauty of ancient epic heroines.

“O my Chandalika

Epic heroines of Yore pale

Before your silver anklets!”

Her beauty has grace and elegance which made the poet to capture poetic language to celebrate it. He felt so impressive about her and calls her ‘black bird’ and ‘blue diamond’. Her dark body is like ‘black earth’ which is glowing and attractive like a tender, slender, creeper. He frankly expresses that his feelings are true and promises on her ‘marigold bun’. Her extraordinary beauty is even capable of hitting the pot in the sling which is hanged outside the village.

Today I’ve captured the language

That has cast your beauty out.

I bet it on your marigold bun!

It hit the pot in the sling

Held high in the sky outside the village.

Next, he calls her ‘matangini’, a woman who is wedded to God in Dalit community. He compares her to a kite and desires to fly her in the beautiful sky. He exaggerates that the iron bowl on her head is more beautiful with natural grace and is mocking the miss world’s crown. In the next stanza, the poet exemplifies her extraordinary beauty when she was working.

O my matangini!

Making you a kite

I fly you on in the beautiful sky

The iron bowl heavy on your head

Mocks at even the Miss World’s crown

Chandalika is working with sickle like a cheetah which is fast, sharp and talented. During harvest time, while reaping, all the colors of nature bows around her. When she was standing half drenched under the Palmyra tree during work, the dark clouds come near to hug her. By looking at her beauty, the old corn cobs sprout the warm seeds again.

When she sets her foot on the moon in the river, fish in clear water kisses the reflection of moon of her toes. When she fixes her sari in truss and sling, the catapult from the crop began to dance. The red crest cocks runs fast towards her soon after listening to her melodious call. They even forget to eat the rice grain.

Then the poet describes the picture of the ‘dark woman’ who is grinding the millet in the hand mill. While grinding, she spreads out a leg which makes her look to be more beautiful. The flour powder fell on her black waist is shining like a silver girdle. In the folk festival night she drank toddy and hence ‘red streaks’ are seen in her eyes. The whole world seems to be reeling round and round to her with drowsiness. She is black and beautiful shining like black cotton soil and black sheen of pepper creeper. Observing her red streaks in her eyes, the poet remembers the story that had happened on that folk festival night.

The folk festival night you drank palmyra toddy,

This very world reels round & round

In the black cotton soil of your body

Moves slowly the black sheen of pepper creeper.

The moon feels so impressive of her beauty as she lies on the string cot out in the open air under the black vine canopy. The moon tells about her glamorous ‘sensuous secret’ to the sun. The sun also comes at dawn to see her and puts his diamond ray of ring under her pillow. All these things mesmerize the poet and feel the warmth of touching her cheeks. He joyfully sings sleepy songs about her.

‘O Beauty of my Black Vine Grape!

My Black vine Canopy, My star Arundhati!

The gorgeous sight of her beauty makes the stars to dance in the sky and it is seen in her blue eyes. Her eyes are filled with tepid circles of light blue flames. Finally the poet says,

My Black Beauty!

On the throne of Black Aesthetics

I anoint you with all reverence of poetry

I announce you heroine of my Black Poem.

In the poem, Sudhakar reinvigorates and revel the ‘black colour of a dalit woman’ as a symbol of genuine iterative exploration and experience in contrast to the stereotype prejudiced attitude of domination by the upper echelons of the society. Human Dignity irrespective of caste and colour is articulated and given voice to the unvoiced, unrecognized and uncared inhuman segregation as ‘outcast dark lady’ to foster a sense of egalitarianism and accord a new dignified

vistas of identity by adoring black woman of dalit community.

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