

# Social Realism in Poetry and Vihang Naik

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## Abstract:

*There are many facets of the English literature and one of the popular among them is poetry. And if we look at the diversity in the style and genre of the poetry, we will find poetry more and more interesting.*

*The emergence of the modern poetry has made it more easy to write poetry but very few poets can express the deep meaning and feelings through the medium of poetry. One of such poet from India is Vihang Naik who has been actively writing modern poetry and participation in national and international conference where poetry is discussed. One of the best thing is that poet Vihang Naik has adopted a new tool of modern poetry and it is better known by social realism. Poetry of Vihang Naik is really a true example of social realism in poetry. He has been able to express the thoughts and feelings of the urban residents in his poetry.*

*Many of his poems and his poetry book have been reviewed by many editors and I got this opportunity to review his poems and I thought it is better to review his poetry on the yard stick of a single theme rather than taking multiple themes and doing no justice with the subject.*

## Keywords

Social Realism, Vihang Naik, Modern Poetry, Indian Poetry, Contemporary Poets, City Times, Free Style Poems

## Introduction

After going through his books like *City Times* and *Other Poems*,  
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I thought it is fit to consider social realism as yardstick for two reasons. One the theme of social realism is used in modern poetry but very few talk about it. Many poets use this them of poetry but they fail to recognize it. Hence, this review paper will help them understand it better and use it in future. Other thing is that taking a single yardstick for review of poems will give me many more opportunities to go in depth of the

poems of Vihang Naik and bring new meanings to the old words penned by the poet.

## About Poet Vihang Naik

Vihang A. Naik was born in Surat, Gujarat on September 2, 1969. He is India s contemporary poet writing in English. His poems have appeared in literary journals and anthologies along with some significant e-publications. Four collections of his poetry have been published: *Poetry Manifesto: New & Selected Poems*, *Making A Poem*, *City Times* and *Other Poems*. His Gujarati collection of poems include *Jeevangeet* (Gujarati Language Poetry) in 2001,

dedicated to the cause of victims of Gujarat Earthquake of January 26, 2001. He also translates poetry written in the Gujarati language into English, including his own Gujarati language poems. He is educated from The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda with English Literature, Indian Literature in English Translation and Philosophy. He had his primary schooling from Navrachna School in Baroda, Gujarat. He took teaching as a profession serving in colleges since 1996 in Gujarat. He lives and works in Gujarat. India.

## Introduction

This study is the outcome of a feeling I have had for a long time, that the Indian student cannot profit greatly by the study of English language & Literature unless he clearly understand them, on account of the labor involved in collecting the necessary material, which is not all available at one place and in a suitable form. I have done best to my explanations as lucid as possible. I intend the volume to serve as a stepping-stone to further study. The book cannot, of course, pretend to be a complete record of all the forms and phases of English Language & Literature, but it contains a selection of those which I regard myself as a major interest and importance.

Vihang Naik is has revealed that myths are one of the segments which serve to determine the Indian ness in our literature". The inexhaustible lore of myths, parables and legends that pattern and define our culture offers immense scope for the dramatist. The myth is neither tragic nor comic; it is only a perfect vehicle of embodying reality. It is mode for expressing reality and it is logical and concrete.

Stylistics is the description and analysis of the variability of linguistic forms in actual language use. It is the study of style used in literary and verbal language, and the effect the writer/speaker wishes to communicate to the reader/hearer. Literary stylistics is an approach which has affinities with literary criticism and history. It is a kind practiced by Leo Spitzer and his followers in the 1940s. This approach is more subjective than objective, literary than linguistic, and it advocates no rigid methodology. It is based on philosophical idealism: a literary work is intuited as a whole and there is no scope of applying external categories to the work of art. Spitzer claims that the critic grasps the "spiritual etymon" of a literary work by an intuitive "click", and thus understands the "inner form". So the importance of the concrete linguistic form is diminished here and emphasis is laid on the 'spirit' or psychological attitude. The inner form should be grasped first in order to determine the 'outer form', which relates the whole to the parts. Vihang A. Naik has been able to use stylistics in his poems and leave a lasting impression on the readers of the poems.

## Analysis and Discussion

Vihang A. Naik throws light on the life of a very large city in all its shades, glory and misery in his City Times and Other Poems. It is an anthology of his intuitive and philosophical poems. The Poems are divided in 6 segments e.g. 'Love Song of a Journey man', 'Mirrored man', 'The Path of wisdom', 'Self Portrait', 'At the shore', 'City times'.

The poet describes the city as viewed from a person's individual opinion emphasizing upon the effect of modernized life on the minds of people in the society. He had been

a vocal advocate for nature and the most predominant feature of his poetry is the new role of individual thought and personal feeling. He found the source of poetry as a particular unique experience and reflected upon the fact to view nature as a source of beauty and aesthetic experience. Shashikant Nishant Sharma states that: "The poems of the book provide readers a mirror to look into life of a city in all its shades and it is common to find some expression of glory and misery that people feel in his City" (Sharma, 781). He explicitly links nature with art by finding powerful natural metaphors and imagery to articulate his ideas about men's understanding of nature in this universe. H

Making A Poem is a powerful affecting collection of poetry that sheds a fascinating light upon the writing process and poet's personal aesthetics. These are eloquent pieces where the poet displays a confident command of the poetic form to bring his ideas and observations to life. The pieces that ponder the reality of poetic expression are perhaps most fascinating.

Vihang A. Naik throws light on the life of a city in all its shades, glory and misery in his City Times and Other Poems. It is an anthology of his intuitive and philosophical poems. The Poems are divided in 6 segments i.e. 'Love Song of a Journey Man' is more or less an inner travelogue, The segments, for instance, 'Mirrored Man' is about the other chimeras in the city .

Brevity of expressions with glittering pearls of beautiful thoughts is the true beauty of his writings. Chunks of thoughts and patches of expressions give a full meaning of perfection in their imperfection. Unlike other poets, he takes recourse to a very unique style of putting himself across in the criss-crosses of myriads of poetic output, put

in by rest of the poets. His greatness as a poet lies in his technique of telling a very little and leaving rest to the readers to understand and realize. His poetry is like a tip of a vast iceberg that arrests our attention to delve deep into his oceanic psyche and heart to explore much more. Sonnet modal has rightly pointed out:

Jeevangeet by Vihang A Naik - ( poetry written in gujarati ) is a collection of Gujarati poems written by Vihang Naik after his English collection of poems in City Times and Other Poems , only published in 2001 in AiD for Gujarat Earthquake victims of 26th January , 2001 and dedicated to thousands of men , women and children who lost their lives and homes in Earthquake.

Poetry Manifesto is a collection of poems by Vihang A. Naik which are intuitive, thoughtful, philosophical and creative pieces where the poet displays a mature, confident command, with a fine balance of emotional intensity, irony, ranging across themes and places with experimentation.

Vihang Naik Poems like 'The Banyan City', 'Making A Poem', 'New Web Sight', 'Being Contemporary', 'A Disturbed Sleep' and others are real reflection of the true nature of the society and thus they present social realism through the medium of poetry.

City Times and Other Poems was the winner in the Poetry category of the 2016 **IndieReader Discovery Awards**, which is the recognition of the social realism presented in his poems. Before the conferment of this award, he was truly where undiscovered talent who was brought to light so that readers can meet the poet who has the power to make a difference.

He is a conscious poet of ecological awareness. It goes without saying that

pollution has defiled the beautiful landscape of the country. The hectic life styles of the people have turned from bad to worse. People are quite indifferent to the glorious past of the city they are living in. There is lack of ecological consciousness in them. Such people, lost in the tangled ways and means of life, “grapple for meaning /in the traffic of noses.” (The Banyan City) The smoke pollutions seem to have blurred their vision as “There is humming of vehicles. The city mumbles”. However, the poet is confident and optimistic enough to regain the healthy environment because “The roots won’t die.” Many of such poems are reflective of his ecological concerns. ‘Indian Summer’ is great example of eco-poetry, which lays strong emphasis on the ecological balance. His apprehension can be realized here-

You search/ the city, lost/ in a mirage. The sun fumes.

There is only heat and dust.

The major work of the poet Vihang A. Naik is ‘City Times and Other Poems’ which is an anthology of his intuitive and philosophical poems. The Poems are divided in 6 segments i.e. “Love Song of a Journey Man” is more or less an inner travelogue, The segments, for instance, “Mirrored Man” is about the other chimeras in the city .The people in the city are capricious like the walk of a crab or the colours of a chameleon. While, “The Path of Wisdom” is about the beginning of meditation and knowledge. “At the Shore” records the poet’s sense of futility, memory, pain, exile and alienation at the shore of life. The title of this collection is also the heading for the last of its six sections, in which the city is unfolded as a market place, as a heaven for underdogs, and as a seed bed of change and

is observed at evening, at mid-night, by moon light and through fog and haze.

The plight of the people faced with the scorching heat of life pains him to a considerable extent. Rain of peace and thunders of hope still elude us. The poem is expressive of his environmental concerns. The ecological imbalance is the sole reason for all this sordid saga of vitiation of flora and fauna due to constant outbreak of pollution. Following the rapid industrialization we need to maintain aesthetics of Nature or environment, for “There is an urgent need to preserve nature mainly for two purposes; first for ecological balance and second for aesthetic value”(Chandra and Das 16).As a conscious poet, he seems to be able to draw the attention of the people concerned towards this serious problem, appealing for creating an eco-friendly atmosphere for peaceful life. The linguistic and the semantic effects are significant and so is the sense of the poet who conveys something very subtle. In addition, pros and cons of a city life is a recurring theme of most of his poems and this is what establishes his position as a poet of city.

The poem titled “Self Portrait” starts with the diagrammatic sketch with seven blank pages where the reader finds only three words at the tail-end of the page...Here “the poet envisions in an epiphanic moment, the true nature of ones self when he wakes up, ‘to see my / Self ‘ ‘discovered beyond thought’ . Between “my self” and “discovered beyond thought” are five blank pages.

The poet has personified the cities that made me move. He presents the social realism through the character of city which comes out from fog and haze. It is an eventful city within a city. City comes out as distinctive



character though at times, unreal. Yet you are made to see beyond the physical through the diversified poems of the book which tries to present different dimension of the city life in different and suitable manner so as the readers can grasp the essence of the heartthrob of the city.

## Conclusions

To conclude it can be said that the poems of the book provides readers a mirror to look into life of a city in all its shades, and it is common to find some expression of glory and misery that people feel in his City. The poems are clear expression of the imagination and feelings of the poet in the form of free style of poetry which appears to be simple but has a very deep inherent poetic meaning. The poet has tried to show his innermost feelings and experience on many issues related to our existence and survival on this universe and has dealt successfully with some religious, social, cultural, and emotional themes in the book. The poems in the collection are creative pieces reflecting writer's imagination, emotional intensity, intellect and philosophical attitude. There is fine balance of themes which have been placed with experimentation.

Ambiguity is an important aspect of his poetry that deepens the meaning of his poems with greater profundity, subtlety and varied richness. Many of his poems are impregnated with ambiguous ideas that finally take us to realize the unexplored aspects of human life. Hence, he explores nature in its entirety in a philosophical reflection on nature's creative power that lead to an ultimate consideration of the state of society and man's relationship with the universe.

His poems also portray the poet's struggle to understand nature and man's creative and distinctive parallel forces which still exist today, where man's insatiable need to meet the demands of an ever-growing population, has been widely viewed to be destroying the earth's ecosystem, be it through pollution or the exploitation of natural resources. In this way, the poet sharply draws a retrospective view of the nature in his poetry with the back to nature statement.

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