

CALL-25

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



**EDITOR
DR. S. P. RAJGURU**



**PHOENIX ACADEMIC
&
RESEARCH CONSULTANCY**

Where we give wings to fly!



CRITICAL APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Editor

Prof. Dr. S.P. Rajguru

Professor and Head,

Dept. of English,

Rayat Shikshan Sanstha's,

Balwant College, Vita, Tal-Khanapur, Sangli. M.S. India.

“Critical Approaches to Language and Literature”

Prof. Dr. S.P. Rajguru

© 2025 by Prof. Dr. S.P. Rajguru

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior permission of the author. Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages. [The responsibility for the facts stated, conclusions reached, etc., is entirely that of the author. The publisher is not responsible for them, whatsoever.

Imprint

Any brand names and product names mentioned in this book are subject to trademark, brand or patent protection and are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective holders. The use of brand names, product names, common names, trade names, product descriptions etc. even without a particular marking in this work is in no way to be construed to mean that such names may be regarded as unrestricted in respect of trademark and brand protection legislation and could thus be used by anyone.

ISBN: 978-620-7-65447-5 (International)

Date: 22/03/2025

Published by,

LAMBERT Academic Publishing

OmniScriptum S.R.L., 120 High Road, East Finchley

London, N2 9ED, United Kingdom

Printed By

Phoenix Academic & Research Consultancy, India

Contact Us –

Mob – 9822371039

www.phonenixpublication.com

www.researchpublications.info

www.asmenotes.com

Published by: Phoenixpublication.com

ISBN: 978-620-7-65447-5

	Stitches		
37.	The Voices Of The Disadvantaged Classes In Arvind Adiga's The White Tiger	Dr. Mrs. Sita Chandrashekhar Jagtap	206
38.	Literature As A Glocal Phenomenon	Dr. Pravin Bajirao Shinde Patil	210
39.	India And Diaspora Literature: A Century Of Unrooted Identities	Mr. Amol D.Waghmare ¹ Mrs. Swati A. Waghmare ² Dr. D. D. Khaladkar ³	216
40.	Ecocriticism: An Interdisciplinary Approach To Literary Studies	Dr. Somnath Vishnu Yadav	221
41.	Literature And Environment In Rabindranath Tagore's Stories: An Ecocritical Examination	Dr. Girish Vishnupant Kulkarni	228
42.	Discrimination In Jessie Redmon Fauset's <i>There Is Confusion</i>	Mr. Kathare Ganaraj Narayan	231
43.	Exploring Lesbianism And Queer Identity In Radclyffe Hall's The Well Of Loneliness	Dr. Sadashiv Mane	235
44.	Aspects Of Fantasy And Mythology In Neil Gaiman's Novel American Gods	Miss. Kharat Shubhangi Pralhad	240
45.	Digital Queer Spaces: How Social Media Shapes Lgbtq+ Identity And Activism	Mr. Anandrao Tukaram Khade	245
46.	Racial Inequality In Paul Beatty's Novel 'The White Boy Shuffle'	Mr. Dipak Chandrakant Devkar	249
47.	Colonialism And The Global Expansion Of Power In <i>A Column Of Fire</i>	Mr. Pramod Shankar Patil	252
48.	Navigating Identity: The Cultural And Personal Struggles Of Dalits In Bama's Kurukku	Mr. Santosh Kuldalik Jadhav	256
49.	The Psychoanalytical Study Of Anita Desai's <i>Cry, The Peacock</i>	Mr. Shashikant U. Rathod ¹ Dr. Amol M. Raut ²	264
50.	Mystery And Crime In Ruth Rendell's <i>To Fear A Painted Devil</i>	Mr. Vitthal Gangaram Shinde	274
51.	The Role Of Multimedia In English Language Teaching	Mr. Abhijit Rajaram Mohite	282

SOCIAL DISPARITY IN THE SHORT STORY 'THE SHROUD'

Ms. Shubhangi Nivrutti Lavate

Research Scholar, Shivaji University, Kolhapur

Abstract:

The present research paper focuses on the disparity in the social life of the Indian people. It shows a huge gap between the status of upper and lower class. The suppression and the exploitation due to the poverty take place are depicted really in the present story. "The Shroud" is the story of two cobblers, Ghishu and Madho. Madho's wife dies during labour pains. To buy a shroud becomes necessary. They have no money. They beg the necessary amount from the villagers and squander it on liquor and food. In spite of their laziness and deceitful behavior the theme of the story centers around the concept of inhuman treatment given to the downtrodden in the pre-independence India. It is not the story of only two persons, but of the entire Dalit society. The shrinking of work by Ghishu and Madho can be seen as the reaction to this inhuman treatment rendered to the Dalits. They promise to go to work when invited but deliberately fail to keep it. People called them only if they could not avoid it and they demanded double wages and the two together put in the work of one man. This is their way of showing their displeasure, their anger. Even the comment of Ghishu that money will come as it came earlier is indicative of this very anger. They practically swindle the people of their money by telling lies. All this is their way of pretesting against the injustice done to them.

Keywords:- Poverty, Zamindar, labor- pains, Shroud, Unjust Custom, Funeral Rites
Introduction -

"The Shroud" is the story of Ghishu and Madho, the two belong Chamar Class. Budhia, the wife of Madho dies during child birth and the pair goes to get the money for the shroud. They look at the custom of covering the dead with a shroud as an unjust custom. Ghishu points out that the woman who lived in tattered clothes all her life is to be given a brand new shroud after she died. In a sense they can be called right. The funeral rites are imposed on men and women by the society. We come across such customs and traditions in every society, not necessarily Indian.

The death compels them to buy a shroud. They have no money. They go to the Zamindar for help and we see Ghishu prostrating before the Zamindar and begging money from him. Surely he lies when he says we gave her the best possible treatment we could afford, when the truth is that she was not even looked at while she writhed. The lie is also the result of utter poverty and imposed custom. And when they do get some help from the man others also out of feeling of shame, help them. The amount is five rupees and they spend it, not on shroud but on drinking and eating. In other words, they make the most of it. The shroud does not come. Ghishu tells Madho that he would tell people that he lost the money and they will pay again for the shroud. The hut itself becomes the shroud for the poor dead Budhia and we must look at the title in this sense.

Madho and his father Ghishu sat in front of their poor hut, warming themselves in front of a fire. The fire had gone out but the burning coals baked potatoes placed in them and the pair peeled off the potatoes and gulped them down their throat without munching being too hot to munch. Budhia, the wife of Madho was writhing in labour pain, inside the shack. Ghishu asked his son to go in and see her, he did not move. "I am afraid of going in, I cannot bare her wails, he said, "Why don't you go in and see?" "How can I go in and see her half naked body?" asked Ghishu. Both had the same thought in their minds: If I go in, he will gobble up most of the potatoes and leave very little for me.

The duo thought her wailing unbearable and wondered why she doesn't die. Their trouble will be saved. Poverty, ruled the house. There was no death of work in the area. Farmers needed labour, but the pair was extremely lazy. They loved shrinking work and while time in meaningless activities. Hard work was not for them. If there was no food in the house, Ghishu would cut the dry branches of trees and Madho sold them in the market. Potatoes did their work and they felt sleepy. Drinking water they spread on the ground with their knees near their chest and were fast asleep in no time. Budhia continued to wail.

Ghishu and Madho led an utterly poor life, thanks to their laziness. They were famous not to keep their word and for shrinking responsibilities. People avoided calling them for work unless they were really short of workers and they would both ask double payment and did one man's work together. So nobody believed them. Ghishu's wife had died long ago and Madho was married to Budhia only one year ago. Her arrival had improved the condition of the house because she did some work and fed them. They were thankful to her for that.

When they woke up in the morning, the inside was quiet and they found her dead. Even the child in her womb had died. Now they began to howl. People gathered, expressed familiar consolatory words and went back. Women came and wailed for some time and went back. Some persons began to cut bamboo into size for the funeral bier. A shroud was necessary and it must be purchased from the market. Neither Ghishu nor Madho had money with them. To seek help they went to Zamindar. He hated Ghishu and Madho, who never kept their word of coming to work on his farm. But the situation was different. So he hurled a one rupee coin at Ghishu and went in. Seeing this others also contributed to the fund and in a short while Ghishu had five rupees in his pocket. He was a rich man. Now he could purchase a shroud.

The two went to the market, but they found that the price of the shroud was too high. They wanted something cheap. When alive, Budhia wore rags and now after death she was going to be covered in a new shroud. Both Ghishu and Madho could not digest the idea. As they moved through the village, they come in front of a wine shop and automatically their feet took them inside. Ghishu ordered the bottle of liquor and some tidbits. But Ghishu was not satisfied. They had money and they must use them to have their belly full. So he ordered two seers of puris and mutton curry, fish and some more items. Madho went and brought them. They ate to their bellyful and when they could eat no more they decided to give the puris to the beggars.

Madho was troubled somewhere deep down in his heart. They had collected money for the shroud and they had spent it on food. What will the people say? Where are they going to get the shroud now? But Ghishu was not worried at all. He said, “I would tell the people that I lost the money from my pocket. We searched and searched but could not find it.” Madho was quite impressed by the intelligent brain of his father. Now they felt the pub with the puris tucked under their arms and went out. They distributed the puris to the beggars saying, ‘Say prayer for my daughter-in-law, who has died recently. Your prayers would send her to heaven. She will surely go to heaven. She was a good and considerate person.’ Madho said and started weeping. Ghishu consoled him saying, ‘Be happy that she has escaped this hell.’ They started walking to their hut, of course in an unsteady walk. On reaching the shack Ghishu started singing and it was followed by dancing. Even Madho joined him and soon the liquor had its impact and both collapsed.

Conclusion:-

Ghishu and Madho lead the life of a destitute. They live in a dilapidated hut. There are only a few earthen pots in the hut. The cause of their poverty, we are told is not lack of work but their laziness, their reluctance to their work. They are shrinkers. If they have nothing to eat, they steal from the farmers. The question is why do they shirk work and prefer utter poverty? One way of looking at it is their nature and illiteracy. But the author wants us to view it as their protest against the society. They are looked down by the village because they belong to the downtrodden caste. In retaliation to this they avoid working for the upper class villagers. Thus it can be seen as their way of revenge on the society, though they suffer as a result.

References:

- Premchand, Munshi. Kafan, Blue Lunar Construct and Communication Pvt. Ltd., 1st Edition, 2023.
- <https://www.encyclopedia.com>
- <https://franpritchett.com>
- <http://ghai-tc.blospot.com>