

Stammer- A contemplation on the Absence of Creative Dialogues

- Radhakrishnan C K

The poem presents different perspectives on stammer . It presents stammer as a struggle to translate our selves. It also justifies the presence of diversity in our life as evident in the line "thats why all the words of man carry different meanings ".In that sense the poem is about the different perceptions we have on life. Life is beautiful. Even stammer is no handicap. It is a different mode of speech.

Though there is an effort to celebrate stammer as a different mode of speech in the opening lines,slowly the poem becomes a slight to stammer ,especially in the lines exploring the history of the word,as evident in "these questions make the linguists stammer ". There begins a streak of concealed humour in the poem which is sustained till the end .The references to 'the sacrifice we make to the God of meanings and 'a society with stammer as their mother tongue ' tell us about the the critical approach of the poet. Our response to the burning social issues are not good enough. The poet then proceeds to remark that God stammered when He created man , that man stammers and even the poets do. The difference is that we call it poetry when the poets stammer ! . Even the poets fail in engaging in creative dialogues as and when humanity is struggling to cope with the challenges like intolerance ,violence,terrorism , globalisation and commercialisation.The ironical shift in the perspective on stammer is evident here.

Still the crisp ending with the words 'like poetry' brings back a tone of meditation,peace and hope. The poet seems to contemplate a hope that the times will change and the conversation will be resumed.At the end of all the stammers, we begin to wonder ,whether the poet has been translating himself or exploring the self of others. As the poet himself has written once ,the poem conveys an apprehension about the fate that awaits humanity.A contemplation that begins in stammer may justly end in suffocation:

Our poetry is
the last dreamy song
sung in haste by
a head on the rails
listening to the rumble
of the approaching train
before the steel
crushes its thought.

(*Farewell*, a poem addressed to Saleh, the Syrian poet from *The Arabian Nights*)

Reference : Sachidnanadan on the poem

My nostalgia for the 60s and the 70s of the last century springs mostly from the happy memories of those eventful days when the artists had come out of their cloisters of isolation, exchanged ideas, shared sensibilities, attempted collaborative work and exhibited camaraderie which in the main seems to have been lost in our times for diverse reasons, one of which I fear is the intrusion of market values on arts like painting. While there are artists who still take risks and experiment, I fear their number is decreasing and the burgeoning art market, despite the temporary recession, is tempting artists to imitate the modes, their own or of others, which have found commercial success. The poets too seem to be finding greater comfort in retreating to the sequestration of their writing rooms than engaging the practitioners of other arts in creative dialogue. I can only hope the times will change and the conversation will be resumed.

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