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## Looking through Lens: A Poetic Analysis of *Poetry Manifesto* by Vihang A. Naik

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### Abstract

This is a poetic analysis of the poems in the collection titled 'Poetry Manifesto- New and Selected Poems by Vihang A. Naik. The research work is an attempt to explore the virtues and vices of the poems contained in the book. The book attracted attention and it was thought that this book would be a poetic book to explain the essence of the poetry. The poetic research analysis of the book has been thoroughly done to test the validity of the assumption, which might not be based on any theoretical ground, but a perception of a common reader. The poems by Naik has surely thrilled and excited to explore the whole book.

**Keywords:** *Vihang A, Naik, Poetry Manifesto, Spirituality*

# Looking through Lens: A Poetic Analysis of *Poetry Manifesto* by Vihang A. Naik

**Shashikant Nishant Sharma**

The world of literature has many shades and one of the beautify genre of the literature is the poetry. From time immemorial, humankind has been using poetry in one form or another for expression of their feelings and thoughts. Naik enables his readers to eavesdrop on the casual throwaway vernacular of the shorter poems and the more tightly wrapped language and energy of the longer poems. For Naik, his native country is well-mapped in literary terms (Prime, 2012).

The poetry has been able to survive even after the advent of the lyrics, which is actually a form of poetry, which can be sang, in a melodious tune. The age of the classical poetry, the era of romantic poetry and then the advent of modern poetry gives us enough things to ponder and discuss. The publication of large volume of books in this age of digital publication has opened up new avenues for authors and poets. One of young poet says, "As an amateur poet, keen on learning and picking up the finer nuances of poetry (Parashar, 2011)." One of the poet of modern India who has dared to present his modern poetry in form of a book which also a representation of the adaptation of English poetry in Indian literature.

'Poetry Manifesto' by Vihang A. Naik is one of the book for modern English poetry, which exhibits the language truthfulness, and energetic communication of views in poetic form. His poetry tries to bring out in the domain of public things, which appears to be beyond appearances. This book is author has earlier successfully published and widely acclaimed for his book titled 'City Times and Other Poems'. Poems in this collection are intuitive, thoughtful, philosophical and creative pieces written with confident command and maturity of thoughts having balance of emotional intensity, irony and experimentation (Naik, 2010).

In this book, there are 72 poems based on many themes like realism, urbanism, religious, social, cultural, and political and economic and personal history. The author has divided the collections of poems under different sections. If one reads the first poem from this collection then he will be able to understand how poet has been economical in using the words for expressing his views and thoughts. The poem titled 'New Websight' proved to be subjective and symbolic in nature (Sheikh, 2012). Let's have a glance at the poem:

...Is the Love  
Poem you received  
Through Email  
Is by an alien  
...  
The Satanic Status

Reboot Love  
 And Life  
 Search  
 Your Third Eye  
 In the World Wide Web  
 ...

The poet has used different style in different poems and he has been able to display maturity of thought and expression through his poems in this book. 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 in his City (Sharma, Book Review: City Times and Other Poems by Vihang A. Naik, 2015). From the above verses, it can be seen how poet has used the metaphor of modern time for conveying the message of humanity and passion. The poem on Indian summer tells the fate of Indian cities, how the city atmosphere is getting polluted day by day has been nicely represented in these verses.

...From the engines and smoke pipes  
 ...The smell lingers  
 Of flesh and blood  
 Burning alive  
 ...  
 On muddy waters, stray dogs  
 On leakage from gutters  
 Summer shadow move  
 And float upon bakes soil

It is not dreams, but reality that pervades this collection, and keeps it on track. Naik's tone, observant and self-appraising, is clear-sighted and without illusion, but strangely reassuring in its ability to state things as they are, and to place them so tangibly in among so much that is unknown (Prime, 2012). The poet has been proactive in sending a strong message to reconnect with our cultural values and good traditions. The poem titled 'The Banyan City' and 'Waiting' are superb example of his beliefs. Few lines from 'The Banyan City'

To unearth the roots  
 Of a Banyan  
 Is never easy  
 Chop or hack  
 The old Banyan  
 With the roots spread  
 Over a century  
 ...

The roots won't die

You witness rebirth

Shiekh says the poet has deep love for environment, he has shown his concern in poems like, 'The Banyan City' and 'Summer Hill Devdars' (Sheikh, 2012). Another reviewer of his book says the poems in this collection are vintage, Vihang Naik's poems are intuitive, thoughtful, philosophical and creative pieces, where the poet displays a confident command, mature, with a fine balance of emotional intensity, irony, ranging across themes and places with experimentation (Bite, 2012).

In poems, 'Ambaji', and 'Summer Hill Devdars', he illustrates his place and his feelings for the places where he once lived. Whereas poems like 'The Song of Maneka' and 'A Song for Maneka' the poet tried to exhibit the deep emotions and attachment to human nature. By passing through Mr. Naik's work in the book titled "Poetry Manifesto" suddenly, I remembered the great voice of Rabindranath Tagore, which mesmerized me through his poetry, entitled "Where the Mind Is without Fear". Mr. Naik's work shows same fearless efforts to carry a message from the narrow streets of city life seeking a revolution for change (Verma, 2015).

Poet, Naik's deep love and passion for poetry can be seen in some of his poems like, 'Making of a Poet', 'A Poet', 'Poetry Manifesto', 'Women and Man', 'A Reader's Response', and 'A Poem and Questions' and 'The Absent Poem'. Naik is one of the modern Indian poet of English language whose book has been widely read and reviewed. And it would be good to listen what Dr. Shamenaz Sheikh says, "He has written some more poems based on his attitude and the language & importance of poetry to name few, 'A Disturbed Sleep', 'Are You Looking for That Poet', 'At Seventeen', 'A Poem Profiles', 'The Poet as a Young Man', 'A Matter of Life', 'Making a Poem', 'A Poem', 'Winter Pen', 'A Poem Comes Alive', 'Making of a Poet', and 'The Absent Poem.'

Jitendra Aroliya very rightly remarks that: 'The poetry collection is based on many themes like religious, social, cultural, and political and economic and personal history. Poet has been able to use scene building in his poems too (Aroliya, 2013). His poems are full of human emotion and passion and any reader will find himself glued to the poems while reading this book. It can be seen from the poem 'The Song of Menaka' and 'A song of Menaka'. To make things simple, let us quote few lines from the poem 'A Song of Menaka'.

Now I feel I shall find my moksha

Through the flesh of your glazing body

Your body is all I have in embrace

A river penetrates the churning ocean

...

Of desire. A song of Menaka searching words

Eyes, lips, breast, thighs throbs with sensuous objectives

You come to a point where the tongue fails

The nude lotus unfolds to the morning

The poem tries to convey the futility of the worldly desires which are like myths or dream that may come true but they will always be there to elude you. The real salvation lies in understanding the purpose of life and the role that one has to accomplish in his life. His poems exhibit a clear influence of William Shakespeare, Michael Drayton, T.S. Eliot, Nissim Ezekiel, P. Lal, and Kamla Das. In his attempt to Indianize the entire book he introduces words like 'moha', 'maya', 'mukti', 'moksha', or brings the characters like 'draupadi', 'vishwamitra', 'menaka', makes references to 'Mahabharata', 'Ramayana', and uses words like 'odhni', 'ghazal' (Dixit, 2013).

Here are some poems like 'A Stage', 'Hero', 'Growing Up', 'Infertility', 'Aporia', 'A Play', 'The Pen' and 'Wanted.' As in 'Wanted', which has symbolic tone in it. To him 'life is a philosophy/book with pencil marks/wounds and comments. A poem /you cancelled at the end'. The pain of broken heart of a sensitive poet makes the reader shudder from pain too (Dixit, 2013).

Some examples will help us understand it better. Some lines from poem 'Aporia'

I cannot contain  
The sand spills  
Out of my hand  
Spills over again  
And again  
...

The poet has convey a deep message through this symbolic poem. He explains how we cannot find a seed by spilling bins. To understand the purpose in life, one has to find a right spiritual teacher who can guide you in your discovery of yourself.

Naik seems to be greatly inspired by the Indian philosophy because there are clear inclinations of his being influence by it as we see many poems in the collection which are philosophical in tone viz 'Prayer', 'A Reader's Response', 'A Poem and Questions', 'At Seventeen', 'A Matter of Life', 'Questions', 'A Poet' and some other (Sheikh, 2012).

One of the virtues of Vihang A. Naik poetry is the use of figure of speech like metaphors, simile, allegory etc. at right place in right quantity. The art of use poetic techniques in modern form of poetry is unparalleled in India. It can be seen in the poem, 'The Pen', he has used pen not as tool for writing but as metaphor to describe the importance of writing. Expressions like ghazal for beloved one is unique in itself and such use tells us how we can use the Indian poetry style in enriching the English poetry which is in no manner foreign for us. Let's have a look a few lines from the poem, 'The End of an Affair' in which he has artistically crafted. As he says:

...  
I resolved to be poet for her  
She became a ghazal in return.  
First silence in poetry than words  
My heart served in a clean plate.  
I never know that the life of a poet

Could be cut into two with fork and spoon

...

I felt love short like a haiku

A time to part

Let us kiss and depart

...

The use of haiku as expression of short but lovely movement of life is superb and can be an example of expression of a seasoned poet of English literature.

Wonderful piece, the ancient struggling form bearing the scars of time and facing the busy throng of life...National Highway number eight.... brings this right into the present... as a red spot in a painting, words which stand out and make you return (Sinclair, 2012). In poem, 'desire' the poet has used the metaphor of octopus and prey as human. The octopus of desire engulf a man like a prey. Instead of few lines from the poem, we can quote full poem here as it's short and concise in content.

The octopus

Of desire

Stirs

Arteries and veins

Tears flesh apart

Feeding upon fire

swallowing air

'After innocence' is an imaginative poem in which poet has discussed about changes which takes place at various stages of man life. The segment, 'Love Song of a Journey Man' has five poems, each crafted beautifully with philosophical blend of mind giving us a glimpse of harsh realities of life. Striking imagery, captivating metaphors and subtle use of other figures of speech add a fresh glory and grace to his poems (Dixit, 2013).

The poet is well versed in linguistic deviations chiefly of graphological deviation. He discards the rules of graphology and punctuation chiefly to heighten the effect. Sometimes, he writes the word in small letters in order to euphemistically ridicule or elevate the importance while at the other time, he capitalizes the words to lambast or mirror the over heightened effect of the same word (Singh, 2011).

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 (Sheikh, 2012). The poems in the collection exhibits poet's imagination and understanding of the word in a beautiful manner.

Vihang Naik is a man who loves his nation and brings the reader on a journey into India and the passion that is India (Reutter, 2012). The poet has good caliber of presenting his imagination, emotional intensity, intellect and philosophical attitude in form of poems; which will be a landmark in the history of Indian English poetry; and an example for the word for presenting the true spirit of free form of modern poetry.

Vihang A. Naik has exhibited the true nature of modern poetry, which appears to be simple but carries deep meaning and message for the readers. A poetry critic, Sudhir K. Arora very aptly writes: 'from the technical aspects, the poet in Vihang Naik seems to be rich enough to create interest in the reader who enjoys the music as well as ponders over the thought expression (Arora, 2010). His short lines attract with images and phrases that speak themselves to the reader. 'All the poems of this collection are specimen of his unparalleled poetic adroitness (Dixit, 2013).

Overall the poems in the Collection titled 'Poetry Manifesto: New and Selected Poems' by Vihang A. Naik is full of energetic expression of modern poet on the things that is happening around. The poems are clear expression of the imagination and feelings of the poet in form of free form style of poetry which appears to be simple but has deep inherent poetic meaning which readers will discover after reading his poems (Sharma, Poetry Manifesto: New and Selected Poems, 2015).

Brilliantly evocative pithy poems of Vihang Naik will develop our insight and prune the poetic skills of young poets by widening their spectrum of thoughts and imagery (Singh, 2011). A good book to get and read to enjoy the modern poetry. The collection of poem is a peal in the ocean of English poetry of modern style. Poetry Manifesto by Vihang A. Naik is representative of Indian poetry in English language.

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