

Gales of Sorrow in T.V. Reddy's Literary World

Trishna Kumari

Research Scholar, University Department of English, Tilka Manjhi Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar, India

Email - trishna33@gmail.com

Abstract: *Sorrow or suffering is an indelible part of human life, be it a common person or a poet. As a human being we cannot be untouched of it. Sometimes our suffering is personal and may be due to the loss of our near and dear ones or due to deteriorated health conditions or sometimes it may be due to the loss of wealth however, sometimes our suffering is due to social reasons such as wrong practices and incidents prevalent in the society. This article explores the profound theme of gales of sorrow in the literary world of T.V. Reddy, focusing on how his poetry depicts deep emotional turbulence and societal despair. Through the metaphor of gales, the researcher tries to convey the uncontrollable and devastating nature of sorrow that sweeps through both individual lives and the collective human experience portrayed in the poetry of T.V. Reddy. Reddy critiques the modern world's moral decay, materialism, spiritual alienation, the inner and outer chaos that arises from such disintegration. The article analyzes how Reddy's sorrow transcends personal grief, reflecting larger societal anxieties, while also considering the subtle undercurrent of resilience that occasionally breaks through his verses. This examination sheds light on the complex interplay of loss, suffering, and the potential for renewal in his poetic vision through his collection of poems-when Grief Rains and The Broken Rhythm in the*

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1. INTRODUCTION:

The phrase *gales of sorrow* (Reddy 6) taken from the poem "When Grief Rains" evokes a vivid image of overwhelming grief, likened to strong, uncontrollable winds that sweep across a landscape, leaving devastation in their wake. Sorrow or suffering is an indelible part of human life, be it a common person or a poet. As told by Thomas Hardy in his, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, "Happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain" (Hardy 184)(1) and We, as a human being cannot be untouched of it. The theme of sorrow and suffering has been sung and narrated by many writers and poet from the time immemorial. Sometimes our suffering is personal and may be due to the loss of our near and dear ones or due to deteriorated health conditions or sometimes it may be due to the loss of wealth however, sometimes our suffering is due to social reasons such as wrong practices and incidents prevalent in the society. As a poet, Mr. Reddy has also depicted his sorrow through his melodious and eye-opening poem.

The metaphor of 'gales' is taken from one of the poems of T.V. Reddy, the researcher tries to convey the uncontrollable and devastating nature of sorrow that sweeps through both individual lives and the collective human experience portrayed in the poetry of T.V. Reddy. Reddy critiques the modern world's moral decay, materialism, spiritual alienation, the inner and outer chaos that arises from such disintegration. The article analyzes how Reddy's sorrow transcends personal grief, reflecting larger societal anxieties, while also considering the subtle undercurrent of resilience that occasionally breaks through his verses. This examination sheds light on the complex interplay of loss, suffering, and the potential for renewal in his poetic vision through his collection of poems-when Grief Rains and The Broken Rhythm

2. Analysis of the different Poems

Grief of the poet in the very title poem of the Anthology titled “When Grief Rains” “focuses on a time quantum when grief rains.”(Ramesh Chandra Mukhopadhyaya, A Poetic Journey from Dystopia to Utopia)Mr. Chandra again defines grief and adds, “It implies myriads of intense emotions that rend our brains, rack our hearts and wreck our beings... it seems...grief does not rain always...there are certain contexts in which grief rains.”(Mukhopadhyaya 72) The very collection of poems portray the bundle of grief from what we pass by and the collection become ‘a saga of deep-felt suffering’(2)

The emotion of a poet may be expressed in few rhythmic lines and it gives him relief from his circumstantial pain or may be satisfaction and relief from his day’s exhaustion and tiresomeness. However, the magic of poets’ poetic art sometimes brings a sense of relief to the readers too. The lines, rhythm, and flow of natural emotion help the reader to recognize his own feelings and generate a soothing effect.

In an interview with Santanu Halder, Mr. Reddy answered the question, “why do you write Poetry?” in very simple and concise words without any artificiality that, “in order to forget the exhaustion and tiresomeness of the professional life, I spend my time in my creative writing.” (3)

Mr. Reddy started writing poems from his school days. However, his poetic career started with the publication of his first anthology of poems, entitled *when grief rains*. It was published by Samakaleen Prakashan, New Delhi in 1982. At the time of publication of this Anthology, he was about 39 years of age. When we relate Reddy’s Poetic career with Erikson’s eight stages of theory of psychological development we find that it runs over the middle adulthood and maturity period of his life and that a mature thought towards life peeps through his poetry.

The very collection of poems opens with a very beautiful poem of twelve lines titled as *The Balmy Smile* (Reddy 3). As the title denotes the poem has a soothing effect on the mind of the reader where sorrow has been thrown away by some positive forces. The poem shows the optimistic view of the poet on every dark or gloomy incident. It is the power of the poet’s imagination and his selection of words and images that has made a lasting effect on the reader. He writes,

A drop of rain

Frays the furious sun...

The smile of a child

Laces the clouds of gloom (Reddy 3)(4)

In the words of K. Srinivasa, ‘When Grief Rains’(Reddy 6) “expresses some of the truths of nature in an emotional and sentimental vein”. S. Harikrishna, put forward his views in his book, ‘Social Realism in the Poetry of T. V. Reddy’, “Being a true son of the soil, the poet knows the value of the rain in his region which is mostly drought affected”. Therefore, the poet compares a drop of rain to frays the effect of furious sun on earth as the smile of a child laces the clouds of gloom to their parents or everyone near him.(5)

As the poet is grown in a village and surrounded by nature’s beauty, his images are also taken from nature only. Either it is the bright side of life or it is the darker side of life every emotion shows by images taken from nature in this short and beautiful poem.

The third poem of the collection of ‘The Pulse of Life’ from ‘When Grief Rains’ is, ‘*The Sparrow*’(Reddy 3). The poem put forward the struggle of the sparrow and vicious crow. The sparrow who is in her own zeal to make her nest by collecting leaf and straw to hatch her egg but the wicked crow invades her grassy womb i.e., nest. The poem depicts our society in general and the society where Mr. Reddy resides in particular. Everywhere, be it our society or anywhere in the world, we realize that the poor or the lower middle class is struggling to make his life worth living whereas the strong, the rich try to disturb the poor and lower middle-class people. Even it can be equated to a situation where a girl who is going to school for studies so that she could make her career and life successful, is exploited by some physically strong roadside romeos. This beautiful poem of eleven lines has beautifully portrayed the exploitation of weaker and hardworking sections of society by stronger but destructive forces prevalent in our society. Here this small poem also reminds us of Arundhati Roy’s booker prize won Novel *God of Small Things*, where **Ammu** and **Velutha** are struggling to make a happy family and dreamt to live a blessed conjugal life but the stronger people of the community on the name of cast exploited them and ruined their life. Reddy tries to make the readers sensitive enough to these incidents by a wonderful selection of words.

A flutter of waiting wings:

The sky squawked in requiem. (Reddy 3)(6)

The imagery in this line evokes a sense of loss, mourning. "A flutter of waiting wings" suggests a gathering of birds, perhaps crows or vultures, often associated with death or misfortune. The "waiting" quality implies a sense of anticipation, as if they are gathered for a specific event. "The sky squawked in requiem" further reinforces the theme of mourning. A requiem is a mass or song for the dead, so the "squawking" sky symbolizes a collective cry or lament. It could also suggest a chaotic or dissonant noise, reflecting the emotional turmoil associated with loss. Overall, the line paints a picture of a dark and somber scene, where nature itself seems to be mourning the passing of something or someone. The imagery is evocative and powerful, leaving the reader to contemplate the deeper meaning behind the words.

In the next poem '*The East*' Reddy again became optimistic. In this short poem of two lines, he portrays hope and gloom. At night, the darkness is compared with vaulted Pyre and grey ashes while the rays of sun are compared with phoenix. As in Greek mythology Phoenix, the mythical bird has the ability to be reborn from its ashes and symbolizes immortality and renewal as the rays of sun come out of the grey ashes of night. The cycles of hope and despair run side by side in our lives. When we are surrounded by gloom and despair, we should not lose hope because, after darkness, there is a light, and this is an eternal circle. The Poet writes:

Look at the east:

Still it is dark.

An invisible hand

Has lit the vaulted pyre;

From the grey ashes of yesterday

rise the rays of sunlight

phoenix-like. (Reddy p.4)(7)

Sorrow is of different nature. Sometimes it is due to disease, sometimes due to failure and sometimes due to the loss of loved ones. Nevertheless, there is a pain sung by Coleridge in his poem, "Youth and Age" and that pain is, "Ere I was old!/ Ere I was old? Ah woeful Ere/ which tells me, youth's no longer here!/ O Youth! For years so many and sweet/ 'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,/ I'll think it but a fond conceit-It cannot be that Thou art gone!"/(8). T. Vasudeva Reddy sings similar pain of ageing in his poem '*Gray Hair*'. The poet is afraid of '*abhorring sight*' of the ageing in the form of *gray hair*. He calls the reflection of ageing in the form of grey hair as *repelling*. He writes,

I shall uproot you with a spade

From the tawny beard

And in the very next line he challenges and questions the growing grey hairs and says,

Do you still dare mock at me?

I dread thy unborn progeny

And flee from the reflected agony (Reddy 4)(9).

Poets are preachers too and this is true in the case of T. Vasudeva Reddy. Pain and sorrow are parts of life but the most important thing is to have patience. Patience leads us to live a successful life. Poet sings,

"Have patience:

That is your armour...(Reddy 4)(10)

When we read Milton's *On His Blindness*, we encounter a similar feeling, and it seems that Mr. Reddy is extending this thought. In Milton's poem, there is a sense of subjectivity, as he reflects on his own life experiences and seeks consolation. In contrast, poem of Mr. Reddy offers an observation of the outer world for his point. He (the poet) gives an example of the "temple tower ...stands up to the stormy winds"(Reddy 4). He adds,

"Tempests often corrode

The carvings of the tower...

Yet they smile and kiss the gales

And shelter the poor with open gates...(Reddy 4)(10)

Milton in his poem "On His Blindness" sings:

When I consider how my light is spent,

Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide

Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent...

But patience, to prevent

That murmur, soon replies," "God doth not need

Either man's work or his own gift...They also serve who only stand and wait".(11)

Reddy adds meaning to the thought and gave it a beautifully meaningful ending when he says, "*Be patient or become a patient/Make an ashram or an asylum*"(Reddy 4).

The poem "**Potent Drop**" of the collection of poems "**when grief Rains**," reminds us of the poem of romantic poet of nineteenth century **John Keats**' poem "**Ode to Nightingale**". When Keats wrote this poem, he was suffering from the pain of his Brother Tom's early death. The misery of death, illness separates us from our dear ones. Isolation and pain of separation become unbearable and we want flight from the reality of life. In such a case, something needs to console a crying soul. As Keats "heart aches" and he feels "*drowsy numbness pains*". He again says, "*O, for a draught of vintage...That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, And with thee fade away into the forest dim*"(Keats, Ode to Nightingale)

Dr. Reddy also chooses the potent drop to get rid of his sorrow. Here the drop may be of poetry. However, he writes,

The glass of liquor

Elevates me to the skies...

Why should I waste

My short span of life

By thinking of those

that laugh at my sorrows...(Reddy p.5)(12)

The third and second last line of the poem reminds of a similar flow of poetic beauty as of John Keats when Reddy writes, "*The power of the drop wanes, the divine reverie fades, and scenes of reality serenade.*" However potent the drop is, being it of wine or flow of poetic rhythm, it cannot keep us far from reality for a longer period. Keats Ode ends on the same note when he writes,

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?

Fled is that music:-Do I wake or sleep?(Keats, Ode to Nightingale)(13)

Reddy's use of the word lotus island also reminds us of Tennyson's poem titled "Lotus Eaters" which drew inspiration for this Poem from Homer's Odyssey. In the poem, soldiers of Ulysses have eaten the flower of the particular Island

and come in a state of drowsiness. They sing, "Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease". They no longer want to return to their home. They justify their ease by saying, "*Death is the end of life; ah, why should all labour be?*" They added, "*All things are taken from us, and become portions and parcels of the dreadful past.*"(14) They are afraid of the reality of life that they will face after returning from war after a gap of ten years. It may be possible that their son inherits their land and they may become aligned for their own family. The reality may be not tolerable and so they do not want to face it. Poem adds the line:

Dear is the memory of

wedded lives,

And dear the last embraces of

our wives...

but all hath suffer'd change:

For surely now our household

hearths are cold ...(Tennyson, "The Lotos-Eaters,")(14)

Keats has chosen powerful wings of poetry and draught of vintage, **Tennyson** the flower of "*Lotos*" and **Mr. Reddy** '*potent drop*' in the form of poetry to get rid of the sorrow and anxiety we face in the world as a human being. Different masters of poetry treat similar themes in different ways and Reddy is not lesser than others in his treatment of the theme and selection of words.

In the The Poem "Thirsty Field"(Reddy 7) he laments the pathetic condition of farmers and condition of crop and field during famine. It is true that the condition of farmers in India has changed significantly over time, with both improvements and ongoing challenges. Traditionally, Indian farmers practiced subsistence farming, growing just enough to feed their families. Crops heavily relied on unpredictable monsoons, leading to frequent famine. Farmers had limited access to technology, irrigation, and credit, making it difficult to increase yields or income. After the Green Revolution (mid-1960s) introduction of high-yielding crop varieties, fertilizers, and irrigation, leading to a major increase in food grain production, we achieved self-sufficiency in food production and reduced dependence on imports. While some farmers have benefited from technological advancements and market access, many still struggle with low income. Many farmers rely on credit for seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, which can lead to a debt cycle if harvests fail. Fluctuating prices of agricultural products and a lack of bargaining power can leave farmers vulnerable. Farmer suicides remain a serious issue, driven by debt, crop failure, and economic hardship. The Indian government has implemented various schemes to improve farmers' conditions, including loan waivers, minimum support prices, and crop insurance. There's a growing need for sustainable farming practices to address water scarcity and climate change. Initiatives promoting education, access to technology, and better market access are crucial for improving farmers' livelihoods. Overall, the condition of Indian farmers is a complex issue with a mixed picture. While there have been improvements in food security and technology, challenges like debt, volatile markets, and lack of resources persist.

Andhra Pradesh from where Mr Reddy belongs, like many parts of India, has a long history with famines, primarily caused by unpredictable monsoon rains. Famines were more common in the past, particularly during British rule (18th-early 20th century). The Guntur famine of 1832 (also known as Dokkala Karuvu) is a devastating example, killing an estimated third of the region's population due to crop failure and high taxes. Fortunately, large-scale famines haven't occurred in Andhra Pradesh in recent history. This is due to factors like improved infrastructure, irrigation systems, and government intervention during droughts. While not full-blown famines, droughts can still cause hardship for farmers and lead to food shortages. As being a farmer Reddy has closely experienced with famine and felt the pain of mother earth who always wants to provide greenery and grains for their children. The poet illustrates the struggle of a raindrop, describing how 'drops of rain traversed / through the darkened sky / and touched the thirsty fields / Hardly they entered / the countless cracks, / The period proved abortive' (Reddy 7). He laments the pathetic condition of the field and the dead crop, emphasizing the futility of the rain's arrival.

In the last three lines, the poet vividly portrays the deplorable condition of the sun-burnt crop through striking figures of speech, comparing the crop to a 'dissected corpse' and the dry field to 'the post-mortem table.' These metaphors emphasize the lifeless and barren state of the landscape

There are countless reasons that bring us to tears and just as many that fill our hearts with happiness. Yet, everything is transitory. What we can do is devote ourselves to our duties with honesty. Whether one is a king or a beggar, everyone must walk the same path. After expressing sorrow over the thirsty fields and the ill fortune of the farmers, the poet consoles those grieved or desperate in life through his poem 'Transience,' where he reflects, "All the land under the sun seems ruefully inadequate" Though the lines the poet speak to the conflict between the fleeting nature of life and the human desire for permanence. The speaker reflects on how everything the sun touches, no matter how vast or abundant, feels insufficient for someone who senses eternity within themselves. The warmth of the sun symbolizes the vitality of life, yet the man remains aware that earthly possessions and experiences are fleeting compared to his inner sense of timelessness. This realization becomes a source of grief for him.

In the poem "When Grief Rains"(Reddy 6) the speaker is overwhelmed by sorrow and desires escape, but a subtle hope for resilience or survival persists.

when gales of sorrow

wreak my surging spirit, ...

a dim desire creeps unawares,

to possess the instinctive mackintosh (Reddy 6-7)(15)

Hope is a fundamental aspect of the human experience. Despite the challenges and uncertainties of life, man continuously clings to hope, often seeing it as the driving force that propels him forward. It is hope that sustains him through hardship, offering the belief that something better lies ahead, even when the present seems bleak.

Reddy laments not only on loss of love, transitoriness of life, farmers' sad lot but he also sings of the sorrow of attack on Indian cultural heritage. Reddy belongs to the small town of Andhra Pradesh. He is as connected to the landscape, as to the farmers and poor people as he is connected to the historical and cultural and religious heritage to the place. In his poem "Thousand Pillars" from the collection **The Broken Rhythms** we hear the pain of his heart when he says,

"While divinity throbs the stone

The ruins preach the self-same gospel"(Reddy 13)(16)

3. Conclusion :

In T.V. Reddy's anthology, the poems *The Balmy Smile*, *The Sparrow*, *The East*, *Grey Hair*, *Patient*, *Futility*, *When Grief Rains*, *Thirsty Field*, *Transience*, *Realisation*, and *Thousand Pillars* explore a profound spectrum of grief, suffering, and existential reflection. Across these poems, Reddy presents sorrow not just as an individual emotion but as an intrinsic part of the human condition, weaving together moments of personal, cultural, and philosophical anguish.

The recurring motif of grief, as highlighted in *When Grief Rains*, becomes a central theme that binds the collection. However, the poems do not merely dwell in despair. While sorrow pervades the verses, there is a consistent undercurrent of resilience, reflection, and sometimes, hope. Reddy's poetic journey, as suggested by Mukhopadhyaya, moves from dystopia to a potential utopia—not necessarily in the literal sense but in the personal realizations and subtle moments of peace or resolution that emerge through suffering.

In conclusion, Reddy's anthology transforms grief into a vehicle for deeper understanding and self-realization. The poems reflect the many facets of human suffering while offering glimpses of solace, wisdom, and transcendence, making the collection both a "saga of deep-felt suffering" and a meditation on the cyclical nature of life's trials and resolutions. Through sorrow, Reddy invites the reader into a reflective, emotional journey that resonates with the complexities of existence.

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