

# **THE POETRY OF CHARU SHEEL SINGH: A STUDY IN PHILOSOPHICAL DIMENSIONS**



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# DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

(Para – 12 – B)

I declare that the thesis entitled “**The Poetry of Charu Sheel Singh: A Study in Philosophical Dimensions**” is my own work, conducted under the supervision of Dr. O. P. Budholia, Professor, Department of English, Govt. College, Bhitwar, Gwalior (M.P.). I have put in more than 200 days of attendance with the supervisor at the centre.

I further declare that to the best of my knowledge the thesis does not contain any part of any work which has been submitted for the award of any degree either in this university or in any other university/ deemed university without proper citation.

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This is to certify that the work entitled “**The Poetry of Charu Sheel Singh: A Study in Philosophical Dimensions**” is a piece of research work done by **Ms. Preeti Bala Shrivastava** under my guidance and supervision for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Jiwaji University Gwalior (M.P.) India. That the candidate has put in attendance of more than 200 days with me. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis:

- (1) Embodies the work of the candidate herself;
- (2) Has duly been completed;
- (3) Fulfills the requirements of the Ordinance relating to the Ph.D. degree of the university, and
- (4) Is up to the standard both in respect of contents and language for being referred to the examiners.

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# PREFACE

Dr. Charu Sheel Singh is a poet, critic and literary theorist. He has a long experience of research and is well-acquainted with various schools of thought in literary criticism. But the most important aspect of his literary personality is his thorough knowledge of the spiritual traditions of the East. Often scholars attain perfection or near perfection in the Western traditions of theology and spirituality but seldom do they attain such a hold on the Eastern philosophical and spiritual traditions.

A Western scholar is adept at understanding and interpreting the Western classics but is lost in the Eastern texts and sometimes in his ignorance, he even denies their importance. A traditional Sanskrit scholar is spiritually unconcerned with the Western philosophies and does not take them in his purview. Dr. Charu Sheel Singh is unique in the way that on the one hand he writes in English and on the other he comprehends the spiritual implications of the Eastern classics. He adopts the standard ways for using English language as medium of reinterpreting the Eastern classics with a blend of postmodernism.

With this he has the fruitful imagination which helps in taking flights of fancy which are meaningful yet vastly poetic. His imagery evokes the poet in his reader and combines the oriental and the occidental, the sensory, the psychic and the mystic. He works as a bridge between East and West, much like Eliot and Yeats, but with a more Indian and more spiritual perspective. Indian spirituality for Yeats and Eliot worked more as a mere peppering for their Western philosophy, but for Dr. Charu Sheel

Singh it is the main ingredient. The language is English and the literary technique is postmodernism/ post structuralism, but the philosophy is Eastern.

Besides producing many masterpieces in Mandala literature, such as *Tapascharanam*, *Tapascharanam: Sukadev ki Pida*, *Songs of Life and Death*, *The Indian Hero*, *Creation Cocktail*, *Terracotta Flames*, *Scripture on Stone* etc. he has also made significant contribution to contemporary literary criticism.

Charu Sheel Singh also followed the philosophical and cultural configurations and works out the real motives for the process of indigenous aspects and the Indian sensibility in the entire corpus of his poetry. The present work – this proposal for the completion of her doctoral work will be a unique contribution not only to the poetry of Charu Sheel Singh but also to the rich poetic store of Indian English literature.

As the West has not yet found the solution to its psychological problems related to human life, it is slowly coming to understand the importance of the Eastern philosophies such as Buddhism and Hinduism, for establishing the peaceful norms of human behaviour and the cultural sensibilities therein.

It will be fructiferous amidst the high-tech sensibilities of our contemporary world just for two aspects: to understand the relational values and to reveal the universal elements of literature. The poetry of Charu Sheel deserves in this direction, for he has used such literary principles in his poetic works as to minimize the strained relationships, on the one hand and to impart the universal affinity only on the basis of humanitarian aspects.

The prestigious and highly philosophical work of Dr. Charu Sheel Singh is *Kashi: A Mandala Poem*. The temporal ground on which the legend of Kashi remains existent is Kashi itself. It is believed that the city of Kashi exists on the trident of lord Shiva representing the oldest and never ending tradition of this nation, Bharata.

Dr. Charu Sheel Singh is no exception. In his poetic universe, Kashi figures as the epicenter of all spiritual ideas. As a crowning glory of his poetic genius, the epic of Kashi contains the philosophy and wisdom of Mandala Theory, devised by himself. The present work has analyzed the textuality of Kashi and his poems. It also brings into being the multiple forms of the philosophical dimensions involved in the textual lines and the hyper-textual absences.

**Chapter I, Introduction** is devoted first to analyze the boons of English language. The analysis and causative effects leading to the production to the philosophical genre of Indian English poetry is made. The chapter has also analyzed the various facets that created the philosophical interest in the mind of the poet along with his life and formative influences.

**Chapter II, Austere Practices: *Tapascharanam*** is the beginning of Charu Sheel as a poet. In the twentieth century Indian poetry written in English remained under the influence of the English Romantics, but it is Charu Sheel Singh who kept in continuity with his own methods of poetic creation at the instance of Rabindranath Tagore. *Tapascharanam* is based on the epical tradition of the poetry and reveal through denotative, indicative and suggestive phrases, the high tradition of the austere

practices or the mode of penances. The researcher has tried to analyze the subtle points that under the pressure groupism and propaganda, language sensibility are subjected to a process of corruption and debasement. In the name of the sentiments of Indianness, there are some poets who only revealed the low-mimetic zones of culture and Indian values in their poetic creation. Efforts have been made in this chapter to bring out the above mentioned themes and their philosophical dimensions.

**Chapter III Temporal and Trans-temporal Streams: *The Songs of life and Death*** is a core chapter in the sense that it has analyzed the relationship between the issues of temporality and spirituality. Temporality here means the elements of earth or philosophical aspects of the being for the process of becoming. The poet has used the meditational forms which finally become the Upanishadic reflections in the poetic contents of *The Songs of Life and Death*. The poet has brought into being his painful anguish and perceiving despair. These two elements enkindled in him rhetoric which leads to him to comprehend the real bliss of life. The researcher has interpreted philosophical ideas in the text of *The Songs of Life and Death*, bringing out the foundational axioms on which the poet has worked upon.

**Chapter IV, Ossified Rituals** is concerned with the Puranic literature in the text of *Indian Hero*. There is a long tradition of *Avtaars* (incarnation of God) in the Puranic literature. The poet through his creative imagination has dealt with the myth of the earth and the metaphor of sky. The Earth is a woman, and she craves for her fulfillment; and it is the sky which fulfils its womanhood. The earth as mother represents the elemental realities with its physical attributes, while the metaphor of

sky is infinite or without any limit (*Sunya*). It is an association of *Prakriti* and *Purusha* for the creative process of the humanity en *masse*. This chapter has tried to interpret the axes of *Prakriti* and *Purusha* as depicted by the poetic imagination of Dr. Charu Sheel Singh.

**Chapter VI, Radiography of the Contemporary Anguish: *Terracotta Flames*** has analyzed the thematic contents of the anguish and despair. The poet paints the corrosive state of the contemporary being. The thematic contents of *Terracotta Flames* bring forth some supplements related to the values for the living standards of man. The present chapter has analyzed the literary creation with its high principles and which surpasses the bounds of the temporality and linear configurations.

**Chapter VII** is related to the Mandala theory of the poet. Before writing this long Mandala poem, Charu Sheel Singh has also developed his Mandala Literary theory. However, in this long poem, he has dealt with the existential powers of Kashi. It is through the union of Lord Shiva and Parvati, this entire creation came into being. Here in *Kashi*, Kashi itself becomes the symbol of creative process. The mortal pyres near the river Ganga became the source of immortal imagination. These are the burning pyres associated with the immortal existence of Lord Shiva. Kashi itself is a symbol of cosmos (*Prakriti*) which meets with an eternal cosmocity (*Shiva*) in order to materialize the concept of time and timelessness. Kashi as cosmic seed (*Bindu*) encircles the cyclicity of life and death; and produces the essence of all *rasas* that exist in *Beebhats* (*Jugupsa*) disgust. The poet has also included many other symbols

which are related to the concepts of *Purusha* (Shiva) along with the description of the low-mimetic zones of the creative process. The researcher has tried to analyze these philosophical dimensions in the text of *Kashi*.

**Chapter VIII** speaks upon the philosophical dimensions of the three texts of the poet, *Etching On the Edge, Legacies and Golden Chariots*. These texts work out the traditional heritage as legacies and the continuity of philosophical reflections. History in India, unlike the Islamic tradition and the European model of history, differs slightly in the sense that Indian nationals followed the memory lanes as the true essence of history and culture. The concept of Indianness does not produce the low-mimetic zones but it includes the indigenous sensibility in totality. The researcher has tried her best in this chapter to study these aspects.

**Chapter IX: Conclusion** is devoted to the analysis of the rich Philosophical traditions of India, along with the Vedic, Upanishadic and Puranic version and subversions of the materialities included in the core chapters.

This research work is a result of the constant help and encouragement of many savants of the field of English Literature.

First of all, I heartily thank my mentor and guide Dr. O. P. Budholia who not only gave expert guidance in the particular field of this research work and in general field of English Literature, he also guided me in other subjects which were necessary for acquiring background knowledge for the present work. He also helped me at every step with constant encouragement, boosting my confidence and providing me a blue-

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