



Humor and Sarcasm in the Works of Madhusudan Patil

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Writers are usually found stuck in their cultural moorings. Unconscious of this limitation they are unable to cross the cultural barriers. But it is not so in the case of Dr. Madhusudan Patil. This can be attributed to his multicultural upbringing. He was born on 15th April 1941 in Amravati district of Maharashtra. His father was a soldier in the army of Maharaja Jivajirav Sindhia. He did his schooling from local school and for college education he took admission in King Edward College, Amravati but he failed to complete it and started farming in his native village. It was destiny that brought him to erstwhile Punjab. He did his M.A. from regional center of Punjab University situated at Rohtak. After that he struggled a lot to get a job. In an interview Mr. Patil confesses in his trademark humorous tone:-

“शिक्षा और पांच साल नौकरी के लिए संघर्ष करना पड़ा। पंजाब में मराठी नाम के कारण नकारा जाता। महाराष्ट्र में आता तो पूछते पंजाब से एम.ए. क्यों किया।” (121 गर्ग)

His marriage with a Punjabi girl exacerbated his condition further. This act isolated him both from his family and society. After a long struggle he got a job as a lecturer in Jat college, Hissar where he served for almost three decades.

By nature Dr. Patil is introvert and a recluse. Commenting on his nature Swami Wahid Kazmi writes:

“प्रायः गुमसुम और लिए-दिए से रहने वाले डॉ. पाटिल का स्वभाव आवृत रहता है। उनसे बोल-बतलाकर, उन्हें बरत कर यह नहीं कहा जा सकता, पर यह सच है कि बातचीत और व्यवहार के क्षणों में भी उनके भीतर कितने ही व्यंग्यशावक कुदते-फुदकते रहते हैं। मतलब उनका व्यंग्यकार कहीं बाहर से उड़कर उनसे नहीं आ चिपका, वह उनके स्वभाव से जन्मा है अतः जन्मजात है।” (qutd.in 121 गर्ग)

Mr. Patil has written many books which are repository of his rich satires. This collection includes *अध व्यंग्यम् (1981)*, *हमस ब एक है (1987)*, *शिकायत है उनसे (1990)*, *देखने में छोटे लगे (1992)*, *मामेंक शरणम् (1998)*, *प्रेम भी हाट बिकाय (2004)* For his tilt towards the genre of satire writing he holds responsible to the tiffs and bantering between his parents. Irony is that Mr. Patil is left alone to face the world as his parents die early. Dr. Patil writes:

“पिताजी आशीर्वाद देते कि तु सारी उम्र गधा ही रहेगा। शायद उसी का प्रभाव था कि नतग्रीव होकर पिटते रहना आदत बन गई थी। बड़े लोग इसी को सहनशीलता करते हैं। जब-जब जरूरत से ज्यादा लाद दिया जाता तो दुलती झाड़ने की तबीयत करती। आगे चलकर यही दुलती व्यंग्य बनी। मराठी के भाषिक विनोद ने इसे हवा दी। सामाजिक अवमानता ने इसे खूब सींचा। सामाजिक अवरोधों ने उन पर हँसने की प्रवृत्ति दी। अपनी निस्पृहता ने विद्रोह करने की शक्ति दी। (123 व्यंग्य वैविध)

Before focusing on the works of Dr. Patil it is necessary to throw some light on the meaning of satire and its place in the literary genres. According to Gilbert Highet, satire is not considered the greatest type of literature. It cannot rival tragic drama and epic poetry. Still, it is one of the most original, challenging, and memorable forms. In English it has been practiced by some energetic minds – Voltaire , Rabelais, Petronius, Swift; by some exquisitely graceful stylists - Pope, Horace, Aristophanes; and occasionally , as a paragon, by some great geniuses – Lucretius, Goethe, Shakespeare. It pictures real men and women, often in lurid colors, but always with unforgettable clarity. It uses the bold and vivid language of its own time, eschewing stale clichés and dead conventions. Where other patterns of literature tend sometimes to be formal and remote, satire is free, easy and direct. In the works of finest satirists there is minimum of convention, the maximum of reality.

Men have written satire on the gravest of themes and most trivial, the most austere and most licentious, the most sacred and the most profane, the most delicate and the most disgusting. There are few topics which satirists cannot handle. However, we can say that the type of subjects preferred by satire is always concrete, usually topical, often personal. It deals with actual cases, mentions real people by name or describes them unmistakably(and often unflatteringly), talks of this moment and this city, and this special, very recent, very fresh deposit of corruption whose stench is still in the satirist’s curling nostrils. This fact involves one of the chief problems the satirist has to face. To write satire, he must describe, decry, and denounce the here and now. In fifty years, when he is dead, will not his subjects also be dead, dried up, forgotten? If so, how can

he hope to produce a permanent work of art? Open Dryden at one of his most famous satires, *Mac Flecknoe*. Full of good jokes, it is written with infectious gusto, but what is about? Who is its victim, Sh-? The notes say he was Shadwell, but who now knows, or cares, who Shadwell was? And what is the point of calling him Mac Flecknoe, and relating one nonentity to another? It is all sunk in oblivion now, and utterly unimportant. Open Pope's ambitious *Dunciad*, and read:

Silence, ye wolves! While Ralph to Cynthia howls,
And makes night hideous – Answer him ye owls!
Sense, speech and measure, living tongues and dead,
Let all give way – and Morris may thine inspirer, beer,
Though stale, not ripe, though thin, yet never clear.(3. 165)

Who on earth are these characters? Pope himself was aware that they were obscure even in his own time and would soon be forgotten; apparently he felt the paradox implicit in his work and the work of many satirists, that he was expending his genius on giving a kind of immortality to the unimportant and ephemeral; but he could not resist one of the satirist's strongest impulses, hatred. Yet this passage shows, in a small way, not only a principal defect of satire, but a principal merit: the energy and originality of its style. To us, Ralph, Morris, and Welsted are quite unknown. But we can still enjoy the biting paradoxes: the bad rhymester singing to the moon louder than howling wolves, a soloist with a choir of ululating owls; the thin stale trickle of Welsted's pale poetic brew. We can admire the deftly turned phrases – “makes night hideous” adapted from *Hamlet*, and the fine line about beer parodied from Denham's famous description of the Thames in *Copper's Hill*. We can laugh at the mock gravity of his apostrophe to these triflers and bunglers; and if we are satirically inclined, we can, for Welsted, and Morris, and Ralph, substitute other names, the names of today's howlers and babblers and dribblers. It is in this way that good satire, although topical, becomes general and permanent.

In nearly all good satire two special methods, or attitudes, are essential. The first is to describe a painful or absurd situation, or a foolish or wicked person or group, as vividly as possible. The satirical writer believes that most people are purblind, insensitive, perhaps anesthetized by custom and dullness and resignation. He wishes them to see the truth – at least that part of the truth which they habitually ignore. Second, when a satirist uses uncompromisingly clear language to describe unpleasant facts and people, he intends to do more

than merely make a statement. He intends to shock his reader. By compelling them to look at a sight they had missed or shunned, he first makes them realize the truth, and then moves them to feelings of protest. Most satirists enhance those feelings by careful choice of language. They employ not only accurate descriptive words, but also words which are apt to startle and dismay the average reader. Brutally direct phrases, taboo expressions, nauseating imagery, callous and crude slang – these are parts of the vocabulary of almost every satirist.

This leads us to the final test for the satire. The final test for the satire is the typical emotion which the author feels, and wishes to evoke in his readers. It is a blend of amusement and contempt. In some satirists, the amusement far outweighs the contempt. In others it almost disappears: it changes into a sour sneer, or a grim smile, or a wry awareness that life cannot all be reasonable or noble. But, whether it is uttered in a hearty laugh, or in that characteristic involuntary expression of scorn, the still-born laugh, a single exhalation coupled with a backward gesture of the head - it is inseparable from satire. Even if the contempt which the satirist feels may grow into furious hatred, he will still express his hatred in terms of suitable, not to murderous hostility, but to scorn.

In Hindi literature, according to Mr. Patil, the origin of satire can be traced to *Bhartendu Age*. It is after sixties that satire writing has attained an independent and novel existence. According to Mr. Patil satire is demand of the time, The journey of satire started with humour, but slowly and steadily compassion, anger and contemplation get associated with it. Just like Addison the aim of satires written by Mr. Patil is ‘to temper wit with morality and to enliven morality with wit.’ According to Patil there are many reasons for the development satire in today’s India. After independence whatever efforts were made to created human values for the reconstruction of India appear as if they lay waste. A process of disenchantment has begun. Mr. Patil writes:-

इस व्यंग्य लेखन में अपार प्यार है राष्ट्रीय चेतना के प्रति, बेहद नफरत है राष्ट्रव्यापी ढोंग के प्रति। व्यंग्य की प्रतिबद्धता आडम्बर के उद्घाटन के प्रति है। फूट के बीज बोकर राष्ट्रीय एकता की भाषणीय फसल लहलाती दिखाने वाले राजनीतिक किसानों के आडम्बर को आज के व्यंग्यकार अपने व्यंग्य बाणों से धराशायी करते हैं। समकालीन व्यंग्य लेखन इसी प्रेम और घृणा से उपजे सात्विक आक्रोश की अभिव्यक्ति का साहित्यिक रूप है। (11, व्यंग्यालोचन विमर्श)

In his book *शिकायत है उनसे* Mr. Patil has compiled 24 satirical essays. There is an essay of same title in the book. In it Mr. Patil asserts that after erecting the board of *Sataymev Jayate* the sycophants have sold so much of falsehood that no other merchant might have sold it. After

listening their falsehood common man has lost his faith over the truth. In his other essay "देसां में देस" Mr. Patil satirizes the irony of modern Haryana - "दूध, घी की नदियों के स्थान पर आज तालाब हैं देशी दारू कै"(24) In his essay "अद्वैतवादी हम" and "शिकायत है गुरुओं से" he takes a dig at the modern education system, psychology of students, and work ethics of the teachers. A reading of these essay make people think. "मार्च में आपका भविष्य" is a satire on those who derive profit form the month of march as it is budget month. This book is repository of Mr. Patil's apt, witty and satirical comments, for example:-

"हमारा लोकतंत्र हमें यही सिखाता है कि बकरी व शेर एक घाट का पानी पियें, लेकिन घाट शेरों का ही रहेगा" (48)

"राष्ट्र निर्माण अध्यापक नहीं नेता करता है" (53)

"शिक्षा ऐसी नीति है जिसमें परिवर्तन की सदैव संभावना रहती है। (पृ. 105)

In *मामेंक शरणम्* Mr. Patil has written 20 satirical essay which target the follies and foibles prevalent in the society, "शुभाशुभ ग्रहों के चक्कर" is concerned with the folly of common Indian to get entrapped in the quagmire of astrology and how he wastes his precious time and money in this superstitious practice.

Every Single sentence written in "लाइब्रेरी-संस्कृति" is apt and well meant, for example, "दस बीस हजार का वी.सी.आर/वी.पी.सी. सहर्ष वालों का तर्क है कि पुस्तकें बहुत महंगी हो गई है।" (36)

In "बैरंग यात्रा" the target of his satire are the passengers who travel without ticket. There is a feeble tickle felt by the reader when he reads such sentences, "रेल यात्रा के बारे में बरसों से सुनते और देखते आ रहे हैं कि वहाँ टिकट यात्रा के कई आयाम हैं। एक तो विभाग वालों की वह पैतृक सम्पत्ति है। दूसरे, दैनिक यात्रियों का बेटिकट यात्रा करना मौलिक अधिकार है।" (48)

In his essay "मामेंक शरणम्" Patil has mocked the bureaucracy of our nation. Patil asserts:- "ऊपर वाला परमपिता या गॉडफादर निर्गुण निराकार होता है परंतु इस पुण्य भूमि पर उसका अवतार होता है सरकारी अफसर, जो उसी का सगुण-साकार रूप धारे ऊँचे सिंहासन पर शोभायमान होता है।"(55)

His other essay, for example, "चप्पल चोर सम्मेलन", "सपनों की रानी को प्रेम पत्र", "कुछ बातें हवा-हवाई", are epitome of maturity of style, depth of thoughts, aptness of emotions and lucidity of language. Language abounds with 'Haryanvi' words and local color can easily be traced.

His satires become more sharp in his next book titled *प्रेम भी हाट बिकाय*. Every essay in this collection is rich in the use of adjectives, metaphors, similes and figures of speech. "बुरे ऊँसे मेहमान बुंलाकर" is sad story of every family which is visited by a stubborn and indifferent visitor. Mr. Patil writes –

“दिन-ब-दिन हमारा घर शरणार्थी शिविर की तरह लगने लगा था। घर में शीतयुद्ध की स्थिति बनती जा रही थी। दोनों पक्षों की ओर से मंत्रणाएँ चलती। रात को दोनों शिविर अपनी रणनीति तय करते परन्तु सुबह उठते ही फ्रेंडली मैच विद्वद्ग हो जाता।”(12)

In another essay titled “पुरुषों के हक में”, Mr. Patil evokes humour bordering to laughter when he asserts, “सिर्फ पुरुष दुर्दशा लिखने से शहीद हो गया तो इतिहास पुरुष के रूप में मेरा नाम स्वर्ण अक्षरों में लिखा जाएगा।”(18)

The “man” of Mr. Patil positions himself helplessly in the long queue, he runs on the roads and suffers from the allegations of dowry.

Saint Kabir says, “प्रेम न बाड़ी ऊपजै, प्रेम न हाट बिकाय” (as quoted in वैभ्य वैविध्य) but according to Mr. Patil in today’s scenario the opposite is true and “प्रेम भी हाट बिकाय”. According to Patil if you don’t believe him one should visit any restraint where one can easily see numerous love-smitten young couple indulged in various activities of showcasing their love.

The epitome of perfect satire can be experienced in the following lines written by Mr. Patil, picked out from his essay in this collection :-

“हस्बैंड (पति) वह है जो हँस-हँस कर अपना बैंड बनवाए।”(31)

“हिन्दी दिवस वर्ष में एक दिन होता है, जिसमें उच्चाधिकारी हिन्दी के अंग्रेजी में गुण गाते हैं।”(36)

“उम्र बढ़ी तो नौकरी से छुट्टी, पर तत्पश्चात् पेशन प्राप्ति के लिए टेन्शन बेहाल कर देती है। परिवार में बेटी को दामाद ले जाता है और बेटे को बहू, माँ बाप रह जाते हैं निश्चित।”

It is worth appreciation that Mr. Patil has mirrored a very clear image of the contemporary society in his satires. It is up to the will of the society whether it is interested in reformation or not, but the satirist has done his duty.

After reading his satires one easily feels that Dr. Patil deserves better popularity than he is enjoying at present. He has not limited his satires only upto the politics of our nation but he extends the scope of this art to include such topics as –beauty parlors, buffet parties, courts, copying in examinations, lottery, misuse of English. It is worth mention that Mr. Patil has made the butt of satire the follies and foibles prevalent in every section of society.

Commenting on Mr. Patil, Dr. Gulshan Roy writes:-

“डॉ. मधुसूदन पाटिल के व्यंग्य में अमर सटीकता, तीखापन, आस्था और संवेदना है तो इसका कारण उनका जीवन-संघर्ष है, उनका शाशवत मूल्यों के प्रति समर्पण भाव है और जीवन की पेचीदा राहों पर निर्भीक भाव से बढ़ते जाने की तत्परता है। इन्हीं गुणों ने उन्हें व्यंग्य के प्रति निष्ठावान बनाया है। उनमें बड़बोलापन नहीं, अपितु बड़बोलेपन के प्रति भी एक व्यंग्य भाव है...प्रायः उन्हें पता नहीं चल पाता कि वे स्वयं में व्यंग्य के कितने बड़े पात्र हैं। (11 quoted in व्यंग्य वैविध्य)

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