

Degeneration Of Heritage & Tradition by Cultural Conflict In The Context Of *Samskara* By U. R. Ananthamurthy

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Abstract

U.R.Ananthamurthy's novel *Samskara* presented as a critique of traditional society and how there has a crisis of identity and culture. The novel can be classified into three potential aspects: 'Existentialist', 'Culturalist', and 'Evolutionist'. He deliberately created two prominent converse figure Pranesacharya and Naranappa to establish religious discourses. Pranesacharya, a Spiritual, Responsible and well aware about Hindu tradition where Naranappa, a Reprobate, abandoned his wife and lived with a prostitute named as Chandri, he used to eats the fish dedicated to Lord Ganapati with his muslim friends. Ananthamurthy dramatizes the moral liabilities in the face of Pranesacharya which we got to know from the Sudden death of Naranappa that how he maintains traditional Brahminical purity while managing the burial of a Reprobate. Though Pranesacharya's image as the ideal brahmin is later perished when he slept with Chandri, he is questioning himself in his conscious mind whether one can enjoy all the elements of mundane pleasure while remaining a truly devoted Brahmin Simultaneously. But the conflict arises because Pranesacharya's all this activities viewed as less negative in the novel, rather it comes as a positive step which opens the path of regeneration and fulfills him physically & emotionally. This Paper is about how the Society of Agrahara is in the changing phase of lifestyle which affects their Socio-religious and Socio-cultural ethics due to this modernization.

Keywords: Tradition, Heritage, Untouchability, Purgation, Rituals, Devotion.

Ananthamurthy deals with psychological issues of people where he puts his students in the dilemma regarding whether we can blame those characters or not. *Samskara* was popular but remains the centre of controversy. *Samskara* perfectly portrays the contemporary scenario where the society divided into four sections Shudras, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas, Brahmins. Dalits are conventionally considered as untouchables. Ananthamurthy's stylization of story telling severely criticized by contemporary critics. Religious and social rituals play a prominent role in the story, marking cultural boundaries and enforcing caste divisions. Rituals shape the rhythm of village life and signify loyalty to tradition. They range from daily prayers and sacrifices to complex

funeral ceremonies. But ritual performance also turns into a battlefield for existential crises and moral disputes.

Brahmins are considered as consecrate and authentic within caste system but they are in a jeopardy due to Naranappa's deeds and Cuandri's presence. Anathamurthy analysing how caste functions as a system of privilege, oppression, and power is provided by critical caste theory, which is based on the writings of academics such as B.R. Ambedkar and others. It draws attention to how social systems including gender, class, and religion connect with caste. "Samskara" provides a critical caste theory-based, nuanced examination of religion and caste. The story asks readers to consider the intricacies of morality, power, and identity in a caste-ridden society.

Dalits people always marginalized by cultural imperialism, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak commented in her essay "In post-colonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern – a space of difference. Now, who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern.... Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus; they don't need the word 'subaltern'.... They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are... they're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern..." (Spivak 45-46)

Meenakshi Mukherjee's lucid essay (1985) begins by repudiating Naipaul's charge that Samskara dealt with a barbaric civilization, saying that the significance of the novel lies in the attempt to exploit the tension between an ethos 'where identity is determined by karma and varna on the one hand and 'a new awareness of self.' (Realism and Reality: The novel and society in India :167)

U R Anathamurthy, an eminent novelist, short story writer of kannada literature. His novel Samskara published in the year of 1965. It was later translated into English by A.K.Ramanujan in the year 1976. This novel tried to expose the hypocrisy of brahmanical culture and brings the light on how they spoil their own ancient spiritual life. The beginning of this novel is the death of an orthodox Brahmin named as Naranappa.

Though the prominent figures are Praneshacharya and Chandri. Anathamurthy introduced Praneshacharya as 'a crest jewel of vedanta'. Despite of being the most educated person in their community but committed the worst sin against religion. He married to an invalid woman for the sake of his purity. He is just making his image unequivocal by serving this lady. Naranappa who died, he was an impious character. His used to live with Chandri, a whore from kundapara. He used to eat meat with muslim people and broke all their brahmanical values. The problem is after his death no one is ready to cremate his body due to his past deeds. Everyone just worried about their own virtue that if they participate in the cremation they might lost their brahminhood.

Anathamurthy brings the intimacy between Praneshacharya and Chandri at the right time. The time everyone just bemused regarding the cremation. Praneshacharya reached to maruthy temple to find the answer on this matter. He had not get any answers and left the temple.

On the way to Durvasapura, he came across Chandri. Chandri falls at Praneshacharya's feet and her breasts touched his feet where he lost all his chastity. Anathamurthy presented a hegemonic culture in the society where brahmins are the main pillar. By the excuse of casteism they have build their own norms where they do not allow Chandri not only because she is a concubine but also she is from lower caste woman. Such internal degenerated value they inherited over the years where a woman like Chandri became the victim. Anathamurthy through the characterization of Chandri depicted a different insights of our society. Brahmin men are also humiliating their wife, they commented such as their wives in general, have 'Sunken eyes', 'Hollow cheeks', and their 'breasts gag and fall'.

The novel ends with a bewilderment, Praneshacharya goes on a long journey to find his own self after the cremation of Bhagirathi. In his soliloquy he tell himself: "We shape ourselves through our choices bring form and line to this thing we call our person. Naranappa became the person he chose to be. I chose to be something else and lived by it. But suddenly, I turned at some turning. I am not free till I realise that the turning? Dualties , conflict, rushed into my life. I hung suspended between two truths, like Fri shanku. How did the ancient sages face such experience?" (Samskara:85)

Through the different layers of criticism, Anathamurthy tried to portray the hypocrisy of brahmin society. At the same Anathamurthy respected few characters from the novel because they really maintain some religious values. Anathamurthy shared his childhood experiences in the novel, he tells:"In my village everyone thought that Samskara was a totally realistic novel and they identified every character with a living person in the agrahara. And when I went back to my village the woman next door said, "Oh Anathu, you have created Chandri perfectly." Each and every character was real."(2007:370)

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