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PURITY AND POLLUTION IN ANANTHAMURTHY'S NOVEL: SAMSKARA

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ABSTRACT

U R Ananthamurthy, novelist, short story writer, poet, playwright, and literary critic, is one of India's most celebrated modern writers. He is one of the most important representatives of the 'Navya' movement. The present research paper deals with the controversial debate (argument) interpreted as a decaying of Bramhanical orthodoxies and people are open to (raise) think towards modernism. 'Samskara'-(rite of passage, ritual, preparation, transformations, as well as death rites) has been received an equal number of accolades as well as widely criticisms. The novel exhibits the double standards of Bramhanical patriarchy, breaking the pretensions of Brahmins and attacks their superstitious credence. The protagonist Praneshacharya has command over the Vedic scriptures and returned with the title "Crest-Jewel of Vedic Learning" from Banaras with penance and disciplined way. The another epicenter character Narayanappa, a tarnished man denouncing non-Bramhanical rituals in the same hamlet of Durvasapura. Acharya represents spiritual school (purity) where as Narayanappa represents material school (pollution).Both are presented as foil and counter foil to each other, and are affected albeit in non-identical manner by the traditions of their social milieu.

**KEYWORDS:** Brahmanism, non- Brahmanism, orthodox, modernism, Samskara, criticism, patriarchy, superstitions, protagonist, epicenter, existence, caste, oppression, dharma.

**Samskara'** is an important novel of the sixties. It is a religious novella about a decaying Brahmin colony in a Karnataka village, an allegory rich in realistic detail. The object of this paper is Indian societies are inherently hierarchical, and caste seeks to uphold this, by underscoring the notion of ritual purity and pollution. It seems to be a learned Brahmin's existential crisis one way, in another a choice of lapsed Brahmin to exist as irredeemable. While Narayanappa makes a great show of defying the dictates of his Dharma with his wanton ways, Praneshacharya flouts them subversively. Chandri, whole-some and honest, who lives her dharma to the fullest. This paper analyses the existential values and codes of religion, tradition, and culture in orthodoxical Brahmanism as well as patriarchal oppression practiced on low-caste, non-Brahmins in post-colonial Indian era. Samskara presents before us Bramhanical rites, rituals, orthodoxies, religious controversies, social hierarchy, caste, non-Bramhanical activities, seduction and sacrifice, and complex

relationships all the characters are sketched as inter locked in the novel accordingly. Caste is multidimensional; non-discursive, material, and patriarchal.

The roots of Brahmanism had been laid on the deepest strict boundaries in ancient Indian society. It resembles in Durvasapura in the words of SUSHEELA PUNITHA” **The Brahmins of Durvasapura are like mindless sheep, lost and wandering from shepherd to shepherd to be led towards green pastures when all they wanted was the permission to eat to assuage their hunger**”. It seems to be a controversial question to perform rites to died Narayanappa, a rebellion Brahmin, who could not be excommunicated from his fellow Brahmins in his village. Manu said, **‘if a man has flouted the norms of caste, he should be excommunicated’**. Praneshacharya is immensely bounded and depended on Holy Scriptures, who has utter faith and hope that scriptures had solutions for all human problems. Both of them are two sides of the same coin lived a life of will. Acharya follows Bramhanical Niyamas married to a cripple serving her for many years, he proudly says **“By marrying an invalid, get ripe and ready**” also has been doing his religious discourse to the community besides his priestly duties in Hanuman temple. This has been doing without demur he believes everything is pre-ordained with self sense of fulfillment.

Narayanappa an anti-hero by birth a Brahmin and has been living totally free and wayward life. He drinks, smokes, eats meat, does everything that an orthodox Brahmin ought not to do and even cohobating an outcaste woman, Chandri, for a concubine. Ananthamurthy created this character to question traditional Brahmanism and caste system. There must have been some Brahmins who flouted the rules. Narayanappa made a challenge to Acharya saying **“Let’s see who wins in the end-you or me. I’ll destroy the Brahmanism, I certainly will. My only sorrow is that there’s no Brahmanism really left to destroy in this place –except you”**. At the outset of the novel Ananthamurthy is clear which appears in these words of ambiguity **“I’ll destroy the brahmanism’, ‘except you’**. Ananthamurthy awakening us partly as hedonist and reformer not to follow the superstitious believes and caste system blindly and follow the Brahmanism by saying **‘except you’** through the voice of Narayanappa. Samskara deals with the ritual and religion and a contemporary reworking of ancient Bramhanical themes and myths. Ananthamurthy said **‘I think my novel goes beyond questions of caste and gains an epic dimension’**.

Chandri represents a kind of abundant sexuality. The entire narration, handled with the acute realistic techniques. Being an untouchable woman Chandri is unable to cremate and to do the death ceremony to Narayanappa. Chandri born to a prostitute but is faithful to her own. She fulfills her responsibilities as mistress by living with Narayanappa for ten years. After his death, she fortifies her progeny by sleeping with Praneshacharya. By remembering the words of her mother **‘prostitutes should get pregnant by such holy men, a more faithful redemption of the original would be’** she thinks such a man is Acharya, in looks, in character, and in charisma. Acharya touches Chandri most un-preparedly something aroused in him and unites with her. The only thing that is pure in the novel is the meeting .His sexual self is aroused and there is no question of right or wrong, only pure joy. He has set of absurd questions before and after his meeting with Chandri. Their meeting reminds us a single great episode of the Indian epic Mahabharata, Parashara the great sage, and while in boat, he falls in love with the fish smelling Matsyagandhi.

In **Ghatashraddha** (The Ritual, 1963).The widow, Yamunakka, is excommunicated when she becomes pregnant. As a widow, her head had been shaved with the assumption that she was now pure. Chandri is faithful to Narayanappa but desired to Praneshacharya without any guilt. Praneshacharya is living Nrayanappa’s life it is completed his sleeping with Chandri. Praneshacharya is not a hypocrite in renouncing marital pleasure but he is guilty of bad faith. His sexual self is aroused and there is no question of right or wrong, only pure joy. I was made aware of this by my friend, Rajiv Taranath. He said, **“you create a whole set of absurd events like whether the body of Naranappa should be burnt or not and afterwards you make Praneshacharya wonder if what he did was right. And in between the two sets of episodes there is an experience that is neither right nor wrong. It is beyond right and wrong”**. While compared to other women in the village Durvasapura, Chandri (a whore) is woman of Samskari who suffered a lot to do rituals for Narayanappa with whom she connected ten years. It seems to be the pure act, she asked many to conduct cremation for the dead body of Narayanappa by offering everything with her in spite belonging to low caste

woman. She could not bare-lying Narayanappa as lifeless and decomposing body before her eye who stepped to invite Muslims to cremate for Narayanappa's dead body. Most of the people in the village have discussed it is not good for everyone if cremation has not conducted. Can he be cremated? Has he the right to a decent Brahmin funeral? What man has the right to judge another? Who of us is without sin? Samskara, although satire on Brahmanism, probably it is not the major one, it is one of its aspects. It is local and topical in nature, is subordinated to a deeper and more universal theme.

Praneshacharya perched on the high pedestal on which his own learning and the esteem of his fellow Brahmins placed him. His conduct is loftily idealistic based on extreme a asceticism and sacrifice, his motive is not excommunicating Narayanappa is far from being entirely pure. it is not only his compassion but a "terrible" and "uncontrollable willfulness" which makes him determined to force Narayanappa to "walk the narrow path ."In such a resolve ".he asks himself. "How much was willfulness, and how much the kindness in his bowels?"since Praneshacharya is trying to live up to an impossible ideal ,it is not surprising that he should fail to sustain for ever his intolerable burden and succumb to Chandri's invitation in the forest when he wakes up, he his understandably remorseful and feel that he has lost the worth and merit he had accumulated. He asks Chandri to tell the Brahmins what has happened. He knows that he has lost his moral authority and is willing to do the funeral rites himself.

On waking up, he feels "as though held turned over and fallen into his childhood, lying in his mother's lap and finding rest there after fatigue".

The novel ends inconclusively, with Praneshacharya waiting "anxious, expectant" while being driven back to Durvasapura, unable to make a choice which would free him completely and commit him firmly to a "demoniac" world. There can be no doubt, however, that his transition, unfortunate from an orthodox stand point, has been fortunate from a human one.

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