

REPRESENTING UNTOUCHABILITY:
A CRITICAL STUDY OF K.V.RAGHUPATHI'S THE
UNTOUCHABLE PIGLET

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Abstract

The Untouchable Piglet is one of the short stories of K.V Raghupathi's *The Untouchable Piglet* (2015). The short story depicts the satire in the society as how the casteism is still evident and into practice by the people. The piglet represented in the short story is considered untouchable and seen through casteist lenses so are the people of the lower caste considered to be untouchable. The author takes a daring step and he saves the piglet from the misery and he is not bothered about other people's reaction. Through this short story the author tries to give an implied meaning that in the creation of God everything has its own purpose and nothing can be termed to be low it is the human who created the differences. Though God created the species differently but he never saw any difference in them so should be the human with humanity. If the humanity is lost then nothing is there to hold on in this earth.

Keywords:

Untouchable;
Humanity;
Caste.

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1. Author Introduction

K. V. Raghupathi is an Indian author. He was born in 1957. He is best known for his poetry in English language but in Indian mood. His poetry is rooted in the abundance of philosophy, nature, transcendentalism, imagery and social perspectives, and replete with similes, metaphors, personifications, apostrophe, irony, climax, anti-climax and full of rhetoric and symbols. More often he takes the readers on the spiritual exploration of radical philosophical thoughts which strongly speak through all the collections. K.V. Raghupathi received Post-graduate degree in English Literature and Ph.D. in 1979 and 1997 from Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. He holds PGDTE from the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.

He began writing seriously in 1985. Since then he has published Fourteen books which include: Ten Books in English Verse: Desert Blooms (1987), Echoes Silent (1988), The Images of a Growing Dying City (1989), Small Reflections (2000), Voice of the Valley (2003), Wisdom of the Peepal Tree (2003), Samarpana (2006), Dispersed Symphonies (2010), Orphan and Other Poems (2010) and Between me and the Babe(2014); Four Critical Books: Emerson's Orientalism (2007) and Brave New Wave: 21 Indian English Poets (2009), and Critical Exposition of Gopal Honnalgere Poems (2011); Two Books on Yoga: Yoga for Peace (2006) and Yoga and Zen: A Monograph (2007) and Two Novels: The Invalid (2012) and The Disappointed (2014). He has attended many conferences and seminars and presented papers on literature, language and philosophy. He has published innumerable articles in various international journals. After having taught for twelve years in S.V.University, Tirupati and Yogi Vemana University, Kadapa for four and half years he moved to Central University of Tamilnadu, Thiruvarur, where he has been teaching in the Department English since 29.12.2011. He is a great lover and promote of classical Karnatic music.

(Authors blog <http://kvraghupathi.webs.com/myprofile.htm>)

He is a recipient of several awards that include Michael Madhusudhan Dutt Award, Kolkata in 2001, H.D.Thoreau Fellowship, Dhvanyaloka, Mysore in 2000, The Best Chosen Poet for 2003, Poetry Society of India, New Delhi, A Citation and Cash Award by Chennai Poet's Circle, Chennai and Rock Pebbles National Award for 2014, Bhuvanesar.

Short story can be read in a single sitting and within few pages it conveys a moral and gives pleasure to the readers. It is a way in which the story can be told in the other way and every word in the short story has meaning. It is easy to read and people get to know the plot of the story very soon. It has limited characters and the setting is also simple with the direct theme. It gives a moral within few pages. The *Untouchable Piglet* is a collection of Short stories by K.V.Raghupathi in which I have chosen one short story named *The Untouchable Piglet* which tells about the caste and caste based ideology imposed on the people and how the animal is also associated with the low caste with casteist mindset.

The author begins the story as a memory flashed him as in 1996 in the month of August he used to live in a zinc sheet roofed house and managed his livelihood. He used to live a very simple life and for the natures call he used to go to the opposite private school. Though he was not allowed and the security guard would yell at him he had the habit to go regularly. The author's main hobby was to go for a long walk in the evenings as it was his biggest entertainment. One day when he was about to start for his walk he heard the squealing of the piglets mixed with dogs barking. It was a usual way when the animals of different species meet so the author got ready for the walk but as the time went the squealing intensified. The author understood that something went wrong and he came out to his distress he saw the piglet struck between the pikes of the grill gate and was unable to get the hind part of its body out from the pikes of the gate. Many people were observing it and none came forward to save it. Its mother was chasing the dogs which were barking and biting the hind part of the piglet. The mother pig was struggling alone to save its baby from the dogs as the other piglets ran helter and skelter.

The author noticed one thing that no one came forward in the crowd to help the piglet and people just kept observing it. As the piglet is associated with the lower caste people and the dark skin and the shabby body kept them reminded of the people who were black in colour and shabby. As the white people feed on the white pig which is neat and clean they don't wish to even bother about the black pigs which feed on the human's facet and dung. On the other hand it is considered untouchable as it is been bred by the lower caste people the Madigas.

The casteism plays a major role in India. Caste is the worst exploitation ever in the history which is not fully abolished. As A.L Rawal says:

Caste is a prison; caste is identity; caste is a job, caste is surety in life; caste is an opportunity; caste is the circle of human endeavour, caste makes one anti-national because when people are divided in castes they become mutually warring nations; caste is sovereignty; caste is past; present and future; caste is fruit of the past, caste is unchangeable while religion is changeable. People change their religion like clothes but practice caste within their new religion – in India at least. Caste is an automatic system of life. When a Brahmin dies his son automatically takes his place and so is the case with the other three castes. Caste is a shelter, caste is an asset, to the high caste is a liability to the so-called low”. (4)

Dalits are the people who are economically, politically and socially exploited and are forced to live as untouchables outside the village doing all the low level jobs offered to them by the privileged people of the society. They were not allowed to live a life with dignity they were treated as the suppressed class of Indian society. The minority Aryans who settled in the river of Ganges defeated the majority indigenous Dalits. Hindu scriptures and religious texts treated Dalits as slaves. Caste was not God created ideas but it was manmade ideologies to suppress and to dominate the other which is deeply rooted in the Indian Hindu tradition. The Brahmins considered the Dalits as impure and low by birth. The Brahmin speaks about ‘punarjanma’ which mean ‘re-birth’ and they propose a rule towards the Dalit and make them believe that their situation as a slave is due to the adharma done by them in the previous birth and they have to obey the Brahmins and do all the odd jobs imposed to them in order to attain a prosperous birth next time.

In *Untouchable God* (2013) written by Kancha Ilaiah states about the life of a Paraiyah and Paraiyah men is described as

“He was black as buffalo, his hair was longish and he had no upper garment, only a loin cloth round his waist. Of medium height, he had a slight, rather sparse beard. The boniness of his

frame was unmitigated by muscle, and his skin, robbed early of its natural tautness, hung in wrinkles.” (2)

The summer days of Paraiyah went on starving and they would feed on the dead cattle which died of airborne disease. The hope of chicken or mutton would go unmet for years and in some families it would go thus for a generation. Paraiyah felt sad because “Instead he suffered the endless pain that came when a human being was forced to lead the life of a dog.” (4)

The black, shabby and unclean things are always associated with the Dalits so is the piglet considered to be untouchable. As D.C.Ahir in his book *Dr. Ambedkar on British Raj* states that Untouchable are those who cause pollution only by physical touch. There are people who cause pollution if they come within a certain distance. They are known as unapproachable. Again there are people who are in the worse position than the unapproachable. They cause pollution if they come within sight. They are known as unseeable... The table of social precedence attached to the cochin report shows that while a Nanyar can pollute a man of a higher caste only by touching him, people of kammalan group pollute at a distance of 24 feet, Toddy drawers at 36 feet, Palyan or Cheruman cultivators at 48 feet: while in the case of Paraiyan (Pariahs) who eat beef, the range of pollution is stated to be no less than 64 feet. (10)

In this short story the author express his deep sympathy for the Piglet which is seen as Untouchable comparing its physical ability to that of the low caste Madigas. None came forward to save the pig so the author decided to save the pig so he took a long stick to chase away the dogs. He went with the stick and chased the dogs but the dogs started to attack him and the mother piglet felt that the author was doing some harm to the piglet. Finally he chased the dogs by pelting stones and hitting with stick and the author wanted to hold the hind part of the pig to let it out he yelled at the watch women of the school to get a waste cloth and she immediately came with the waste cloth. The author caught hold of the hind part of the pig with waste cloth and got it out from the pikes of the grill. As it was freed it ran to its mom and the piglets went to the nearby bush. The people looked with indifference and in spite of it the author felt that he has did a heroic deed as no one came forward to help the untouchable pig. Though the technology is growing on one hand the mindset of the people sometimes remains the same and they are not

able to come out of the casteist ideology which is there in the history and continues even today. The mindset of the people has to change so that they can form as casteless society. Through this short story the author puts forth the mindset of the society which has to change as the change has to come from within and not from the outside force.

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