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Silent Days Speak Aloud: A Critical Study of Jaydeep Sarangi's *Silent Days*

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Abstract

Jaydeep Sarangi, the poet, critic, academic, and reviewer produces poems full of hopes and aspirations, dreams and allegories standing on the ruins of time and tide with problem ridden socio-cultural modern framework. His *Silent Days*, a collection of fifty poems, was published after his successful release of the collection of poems *From Dulong to Beas*. His silent days are eloquent in the pages of his poetic veins and blood. He is the perfect "son of the soil" with realistic approaches showered by intellectual corners. He is the 'silent pilgrim' on the bank of the river 'Dulong' invoking the mother earth to get back the 'land of red hearts' for the hungry people of the red soil. His heart oozes for the people who have lost their lands, cultures, prayers and vibrations to protest against the suppressed authority. He opines for the land and life of his inheritors gunned down and long trudges by night— "the loose strand from Ma's 'Saree 'reminds me/That my own ones dwell, in the land of red soil." His sensual organs also drugged with the alluring red, emotions touched with vegetation, visions revisit bows and arrows. And he does not hesitate to confirm his psyche with them in his flowering "I am on your side"— "the red soil… Leads to another." (17) Their folk dance, oral history, wild fabrics give breath in his sweet heart— "you are not ….side" (17). Dalit…My dream …I am "(17). How optimistic he is to voice the voiceless indigenous world. His dream is to reach their stories and histories to the windows of the world. So he expresses "It's my dream …In indigenous ink". He stressed on how fore fathers are connected in the mindscape. By meditation he can connect with his ancestors, their feelings, their voices and advices. The smell of the red soil still lingers in his prayer ploughed heart, his heart bleeds, and his pen draws the plough with its sweats and toils. He is hungry with intellectual blessings riding on a chariot culturing the experiences of silent days. Days are coloured, days are romanticized, days are modernized, and days are blessed with rhythmic dance of life drama. So my article is an attempt to stress how sarangi's poems highlighted and portrayed the seamy side of the lives of dalits and have- not's, the poor and downtroddens and slum-dwellers and how he voices the voiceless to arise and awake to fulfill their dreams.

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Are you feeling tired of thinking new things? Do you think deeply about yourself? Have you the heart to feel deeply about the downtrodden and have-nots? Are you exhausted with questions and questions? Do you dream for the future generations? Do you want to get satisfactory notes from all such questions? Then wait is over. Sarangi's *Silent Days* has answers to all these questions. This is a collection of fifty poems, which was published after his collection of poems, *From Dulong to Beas*. It is in a continuation of his journey from Dulong, where he grew up. Perhaps we should say it is from Dulong to Perth, where the *Silent Days* was released at the Westerly Center, University of Western Australia.

Sarangi was born in Jhargram, "beyond the Gangetic plains of Bengal, with the most exotic beauties of undulating topography culminating in hill ranges of Belpahari and Kankrajhor and near the Dulong river. "Dr. Dora Sales says about Sarangi his "poetic voice delves into the question of identity, India, Bangali.... only to transcend limits and become, above all human. The images are deeply grounded in, contexualized in India, in particular and precise places. But the hues and meanings are openly universal.....As we all know; India has a rich literary tradition. Jaydeep Sarangi is a splendid member of this endless family. Truly, a poet of note." Dulong, where Sarangi had started not only his life journey but his poetry too, is a small river flowing slowly through the Midnapur forests in West Bengal. Beas or Vipasha is one of the five rivers of Punjab, known by the Greeks as Hyphasis. It is also said to be the river where Alexander stopped.

His silent days are eloquent in the pages of his poetic veins and blood. He is the perfect "son of the soil" with realistic approaches showered by intellectual corners. He is the 'silent pilgrim' on the bank of the river 'Dulong' invoking the mother earth to get back the 'land of red hearts' for the hungry people of the red soil. His heart oozes for the people who have lost their lands, cultures, prayers and vibrations to protest against the suppressed authority. His nostalgia grips down memory lane and he is:

> Longing for the red soil
> Corrodes me day by day
> Like the ticking of a clock
> Tick. Tick. Tick…..
> I know, I'm controlled among the hunting freak tribal children. (p. 14)

He opines for the land and life of his inheritors gunned down and long trudges by night—

> … the loose strand from Ma's 'Saree' reminds me
> That my own ones dwell, in the land of red soil.

His sensual organs also drugged with the alluring red, emotions touched with vegetation, visions revisit bows and arrows. And he does not hesitate to confirm his psyche with them in his flowering "I am on your side"—

> the red soil…
> Leads to another. (p. 17)

Their folk dance, oral history, wild fabrics give breath in his sweet heart:

> you are not ….side (p. 17)
> Dalit…
> My dream …I am (p. 17)

How optimistic he is to voice the voiceless indigenous world. His dream is to reach their stories and histories to the windows of the world. So he expresses "It's my dream …In indigenous ink". His poem "I am" speaks of being oneness. As a writer, he is a part of them. His pen burns and speaks "the seed …liquid." His silent days are touched with bitter sweet days. His sweet days with earthen touch and simplicity awaken the peaceful energy. He expresses, "And I am …Castor oil". (p.19)

His poem "Refugee" strikes his alienation from the homeland. Time and again his mind elopes to his native land and living in a new land is like living like 'flying fish' between home and away. The poet is vigoured with the voices of the soil, water, and air. His versatile fertility in every sphere of human life waves in the eternal flow of 'lifetrons'. In the poem "In a way away from home", he firmly determines his presence with the "aborigines". He affirms, "I landed and announced …helpness!" (p. 33) He feels homeless in his own land and so his pen becomes sword to fight against the injustice done to the voiceless.

Standing on the bank of river Dulong his heart springs in mythic history. In "The Torch" he opines, "with conch ….feelings." (p. 43) In his vision "the white flocks of book fly across.. Dulong stream." He also paints how village girls suffer and how they depict their stories in disorderly letters. They sing of their lost glory: "singing woes ….wordy pool." (p. 43) He also expresses his family history in full throated ease with outburst of emotion and in melancholy strain. "The sap of History …./Black ink" (p. 52).

Time and again his Dalit spirit congratulates but sometimes how people neglect to speak out his identity as 'dalit'. So he speaks – "she counts …Pain". (p. 60). He, like Chandidas, gives the clarion call to

> wake up …hilly heights.
> Above all humanity

He not only speaks of the Dalits but his pen fluids to the modern mask shaped society. His versatile credit blooms the garden with love, selfhood, time, modern life with personal sketchy notes.

His opening poem is an attack against the modern mask shaped humanity. He thunders - "dear old sucker for light …superb." (p. 11) And he protests with words, "I take your clothes off."

In the poem "The Guest" the poet refreshes the process of his poetic zeal. His heart is ready to accept thoughts which come spontaneously. He invites them like guests - "Rolling time ….thoughts." (p. 13) His poetry sketches the modern hurry in this mobile age. Mobile is the medium of great communication but it snatches the peace of mind of the modern people. With the busy routine he does not miss to have an affectionate love through his poetry. His daughter Titas's fanciful ideas get fulfilled by cartoon network:

with small steps
You discover
Newer lands—
Imaginative and your very own.

Like Derozio's poem in his "Sonnets to the pupils of Hindu College", the poet also envisions the dreaming future through her daughter's eyes:

oneday
Our treasured dreams
In your eyes
Would reflect
and give shade to burning old age. ("For Titas" p.16)

He depicts the sad history of women crushed under the brutal youths. In a very mournful note he expresses —

brutal within is voiced
When her innocent body crumbles
She bleeds
As the nation under a colonial rule.
Our youth is touched
With blood at their mouth.
("A Rose is a Rose" p. 20)

He also gets fear for her flower like daughter's flowery imagination that may be smashed —

I am a man too
I too have a darling daughter
And I fear, the world where she is a flower.
The sky is deep blue today
But, we never know what follows the next day.

Living in this is a problematic situation. He protests against the injustice of the society. In his poem "As you go" his protestive voice erupts—

turn left
To right
Draw straight lines
On the white blank papers.
("As you go" p. 23)

Theme of time is vastly reflected in his poem "Growing old with time". Time's immortal journey scheme is inevitable. It is the invader of all things -

time has become reflection
A mirror and a flame,
Of my petty little corner of mind,
The silent underground in the barrels of bones.

"Selfhood" theme pervades his poem. Formation of "self" as reflected in the *Gita* is also dealt in the form of self-realisation in his divine poetry. In the poem "Where are we going"? he expresses-

I am a flowing river,
Evolving every moment.
So many things remain under the cover.

He changes and reforms within and with the process of purification he recreates within his selfhood -

I destroy and preserve my within
In every changing hour,
with a little palpation of the Brahminical order.
("Where are we going?" p. 25)

His silent days are eloquent in his poetry. He thinks each small thing has its own complete life of its own and in its own way it nourishes the thoughts of sorrows and sufferings, hopes and aspirations, joys and happiness. He is a great votary of time. Every time has its own value and new oratory lesson. Like T.S. Eliot and Jayanta Mahapatra he signifies the importance of time and moment. He is engaged in utilizing time in the recharging battering of time. A day will come when he will get the achievement of his hard toil in time's sketchy framework. He pines to save the value of time present and time past——

It is true and fair,
I'm waiting for an announcement,
Fast losing my long cherished red rose
Its charm and colour
In daily gospel of preparing my face;
What are really my native and loving own.

How excellently he strikes the keynote of work culture and its achievement. The imagery of 'Shadow' and 'sunrise' are really touchy with the framework of darkness to light-

I shall ask the Woodcutter
To cut my shadow as it is difficult to wait for sunrise ("Silent Days" p. 26)

He protests against the pollution in Kolkata in the beautiful morning. Modern urbanization shadowed the beautiful morning sun. Dawn is delayed to the city dwellers. Night is favourite, morning is rejected. Still the poet enjoys Church bells and twittering seeps. He writes in the poem "Morning" -

The day in Kolkata opens, delayed by
A dim sun, to the haze of
Last night's fervour. The note of
Church bells and twittering seep into every details.

Through the Yogic rhythm and meditative mood he bridges the gulf between noisy and the sublime inner peace of mind. Being an ardent follower of Yoga therapy he recharges his Kundalini Shakti and wipes out the corrupted carbonated pollution of mind.

Yogic chants follow a
Rhythm of bridge between a noisy head and a calm mind.
("Morning" p. 27)

Days after days our environment is getting polluted, but is there any Lord Shiva, the Nilkantha to devour the poisonous elements. In the poem "My Other" he stresses on the habit of waiting and waiting. Waiting gives a new grandeur to our life. With time's rosy wings he flights to the new blossom of life with mature outlook. He expresses-

my colleagues trace a few snow-white lines on my hair
And wrinkles here and there.

There is always a process to be old
To hold the handle of the chair tight.
("My Other" p. 28)

His poem "We are connected" stresses on how fore fathers are connected in the mindscape. By meditation he can connect with his ancestors, their feelings, their voices and advices. Images after images piled with the touch of red and green symbol. The smell of the red soil still lingers in his prayer ploughed heart, his heart bleeds, his pen draws the plough with its sweats and toils. He mourns and draws the lines –

Like a plough head on the back of a farmer
I carry my ancestors.
Images huddle together
In a collage dipping signals
Red and green!

He respects the farmers for their harvesting and greening the fields with their hard toil and sweats of their physic. He utters-

Familiar faces paint green fields
When a harvest ripening
In seasons of renewal.
("Life without You" p. 30)

The shadow imagery reflects in his untitled poem –

My shadow follows me
As I walk down my dreams
I know myself well, as deep –sea animal.

He is hungry with intellectual blessings riding on a chariot culturing the experiences of silent days. Days are coloured, days are romanticized, days are modernized, days are blessed with rhythmic dance of life drama. He is always introspective as self-judgment becomes the key factor of his poetic album. He wants to judge and recreate within self. His thoughts are one with Stephen Gill's poem "Self"-

Every day
I check the mirror
To be sure

If the reflection is
Mine.

Sarangi's silent mind movie depicts the inner conflict and the battle between loss and gain of life. He paints —

I discover my pains painted in brush
Of truth
Or lost in the bush in an alien land,
Forbidden to share with you.
("In Front of Me" p. 41)

In his poem "Friendship" his friendship opines with creative opening of the heart. Creativity unlocks the door of our heart, and creativity comes spontaneously in profuse strains. We may be reminded of the lines of Jayanta Mahapatra in his "Door of Paper"- "There is a door in the heart of man which never opens. Or if it does at times, we are not aware of its opening. When it does it goes on to reveal another world—a world where time falls away, and space grows; perhaps the self-fills with vastness and light." ("Door of Paper" p. 1)

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