

***The Spirit of Age and Ideas in the Novels of PCK Prem* Ed: P.V.Laxmiprasad,
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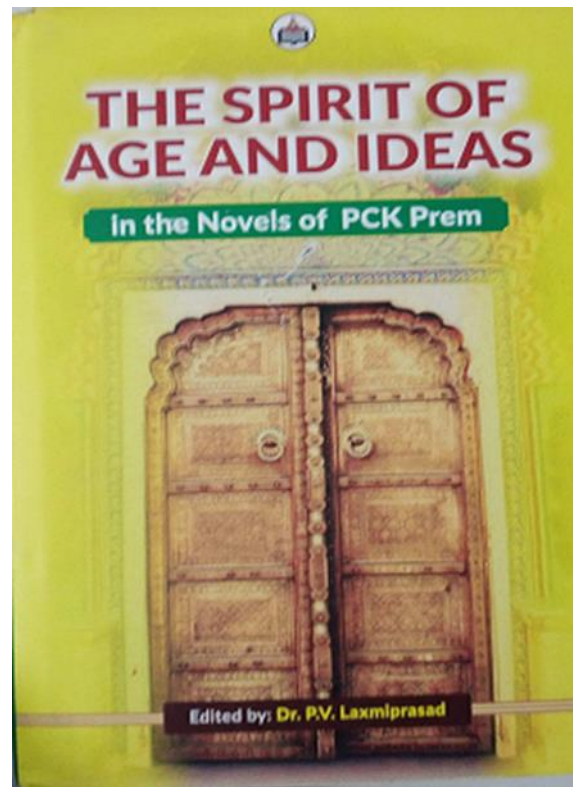
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P.V. Laxmi Prasad has taken on the important task of editing critical works based on the novels of PCK Prem. These critical essays would suffice the researchers to gain insights on the socio-political state of affairs of a multicultural country like India. As a prominent author, PCK Prem delves deep into each stratum of society and exposes its vices and virtues. This edited volume serves the needs of the hour, and the editor has rightly chosen an author who would lead the readers on a righteous path.

The critics have analysed the most famous six novels of PCK Prem i.e. *Rainbows at Midnight*, *A Handsome Man*, *A Heart for the Man*, *Not Their Lives*, *A Night of Storms*, and *It Shall Be Green Again*. There are 26 papers, and four critics,

namely Sheeba S. Nair, Arabati Pradeepkumar, Sulakshana Sharma and Chambial D.C impressed by the works of Prem, have analysed two works. Though the titles of the articles vary, all the critics who have chosen a specific novel have drawn a linear thread of connectivity in analyzing the novel.

Five critics, namely Sheeba S.Nair, Arabati Pradeepkumar, Anju S.Nair, Rajkumar Mishra and Saji. M have analysed the novel *Rainbows at Midnight*. The novel explores the existential crises an ordinary man faces in his life. The protagonist Amba, struggles to understand his life and the incidents that happen around him. Through the protagonist Amba, PCK Prem explores the reality of life - ironically, man is not the real self as he poses; he wears a mask – he is unreal, imitative and a total force. The critics bring to limelight the hypocritical aspect of the



characters in the society. Man is prone to a series of temptations, and during these times of tribulations, he tries to stand firm and prove to the outer world that he is strong, but actually, in his subconscious mind there is oscillation, he wavers. The character Amba experiences war, the psyche of Amba differs at each point of time; as a professor he was able to handle the love of a student and channel her, but when he works in an office he yields to Rita's physical charms but could not marry her. Though he appears to be upright and virtuous at times, he succumbs to human weakness, but his inner strength helps him overcome the weakness successfully. Through this novel *Rainbows at Midnight*, Prem depicts the fact that man is Janus faced. The critics elaborate on humiliation, marginalization, corruption, discrimination and the dichotomy between the rich and the poor. The rich manipulate the poor. Finally, Amba enlightens Rita and she learns the lesson that principles should not be compromised. This novel of PCK Prem is a whip to society. Both the writer and the critics have lashed the society for its hypocrisy. The critics have depicted the dilemma of the modern ultra man who wants to succeed at the cost of values. The corrupt political system in India demands the civil servants to serve against ethics, morality and righteousness. Even those who want to be honest and free from vices are pulled into the environment of corruption. The critics express their views on the post-independent India and the impact of colonization, which has deteriorated the country's fundamental principles.

In the novel *It Shall be Green Again*, the critics Chambial D.C. and T.V. Reddy focus on the concept of friendship. Friendships last for a lifetime. In spite of all the basic necessities of life, man wants to nurture his friendship, which keeps him happy and contented. The commitments in life pull a man to earn a livelihood and live as a breadwinner for the family, ultimately living a dual life and changing paths. Raja Thakur, the protagonist, is portrayed as a politician, and his friend Manu is portrayed as a businessman. There is a contrast between these two characters. From the conversation with his friend, Manu discerns that though he is successful, he is not happy. Manu manifests that his love for women and wine has put his family life at stake. The thoughts of his childhood days brought him happiness, but Manu understood that he was a barren mountain and wondered whether it would be green again. Thakur lost his values for the glamour of the world around him. The critics focus on Thakur's week quest for the lost relationship. This novel, like the other novels of Prem is a social commentary.

The next novel analysed by critics is *A Handsome Man*. Sulakshana Sharma, Sheeba S.Nair, Nagamani.S, Poonam Dwivedi, Anita Arul.X, Gobindo Sahoo, and Arabati Pradeepkumar have given a detailed account of the novel and its characters. Sulaksha Sharma has gone a little

further and has used the terms ‘Deontology’ and ‘Teleology’ specifically for the character Jaycee in terms of the approaches to ethics or moral philosophy. The critic classifies the theory of teleology into ‘egoism’ and ‘utilitarianism’. The terms ‘selfishness’ and ‘selflessness’ is understood through a mind blogging concept ‘selfishly selfless’. The protagonist Jaycee is rational, practical, selfish, scandalous, lustful, and corrupt and loses the chance to redeem himself.

Lily Arul Sharmila, Divyasree J.S. and Chambial D.C have perused *A Heart for the Man*, which is about the oppressive world that bothers only intellectual because man dies hard to seek a sense of contentment in life – this is true in the case of Amber and Sojan portrayed by Prem. The focus of the critics rests on the modern man’s search for continuity, relations of past and present, cynicism, struggle to adjust, and life on earth is filled with anxiety and expression of strong emotions. Man also understands that all the problems lead towards something better, and man clings on to life with a hope that something good is in store, this enunciates the principle elements of eternal love between the soul and sacrifices for the other. Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve one’s condition.

The novel *Not Their Lives* unravels the mystery and miracle of life. Suresh Chandra Pande, Naveena. A, Kalpna Rajput, Srilatha. G have analysed the clash between ethical principles and morality. Throughout the novel, there is a fight against injustice and untruth. Each man is unique, and it is his free will to follow good or bad. Religion plays a significant role in moulding a man, but in some instances, people under the guise of religion lead a diabolic and malevolent force and do anything for money and women. Through this novel, Prem represents the real world; controversially, he also reveals that good people like Vicky, who represent benevolent force, are also part of this world and have abundant love and virtue.

A Night of Storms has been analysed by Sulakshana Sharma, Manas Bakshi, Malliarjun Patil, Chambial D.C and Aswathy Ramachandran. This novel also represents the duality of human nature, a man may be ambi or aniyam, avatar or doppelganger. A clash between the good and the evil in a man persists. In this clash, the true self is lost, and life becomes meaningless, persistent and chaotic. Psychologically, the term ‘Dissociative identity disorder’ is the presence of two or more distinct identities in an individual that alternatively control individual’s behaviour. *A Night of Storms* deals with the multi-layered faces and masks of the protagonist. In the struggle between Manu and Manto, the Manto of Manu triumphs, he admits his folly and futile attempt at deception. The psyche of the protagonist suffers due to low esteem when he knows about the truth of his birth, rootlessness and a sense of belonging nowhere. The

identity of a common man is in dilemma which leads to disaster. Rootlessness and being nowhere evades optimism, and a sense of nothingness or emptiness is spread. The critics scrutinize the novel in the spotlight of rootlessness.

Finally, the editor of this beautiful book has also added the interview with PCK Prem, this interview is an eye opener for the new generation to know the views and ideologies of the author, the editor has taken much effort to conduct the consultation and add this in this edited volume which serves as a tribute to PCK Prem.