

***Discovering Stephen Gill: A Collection of Papers and Articles.* Ed. Nilanshu Kumar Agarwal. New Delhi: AuthorsPress, 2008, pp. 168+xxiv, Rs. 475, ISBN 978-81-7273-469-5.**

Dr. Nilanshu Kumar Agarwal, significant name as a poet and critic has bombed the literary scenario with his seminal book on Stephen Gill. In the book, several critics have tried to discover Stephen Gill by their scholarly papers. This anthology contains 18 papers on diverse themes and works of Stephen Gill. In the preface of this anthology Dr. Agarwal describes his plan, "The present critical anthology is an attempt to examine the various literary merits of this harbinger of peace (xiv)." In the foreword of this anthology Asoka Weerasinghe writes, "When I was approached to write a foreword to the collection of essays on Stephen Gill's literary writings, the first word that flashed past my mind was Eirenepoios, the ancient Greek word for 'peace makers' or 'Peace Poets'. During the last two decades Stephen has chosen the path of being a torch bearer for humanity through poetry. His unique poetic prism has shown a powerful array of nuances that shed light for peaceful co-existence. He has shown the power of poetry with its ability to philosophize in his poems as in *Songs of Harmony* and in *Shrine* (v)."

The first paper of this anthology is by Prof. A.N. Dwivedi. This paper is entitled 'Fissures and Fractures: Identity Crisis in Gill's Poetry'. In this paper Prof. Dwivedi made a hectic search for self identity in Stephen Gill's works. He writes, "He was insecure everywhere, and nobody cared for his safety and that of his family. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were disinclined towards him. He felt, in Chaucer's words, like 'a fish out of pond' in India. The severe identity crisis at home compelled him to leave for Ethiopia on a teaching assignment, and after three years he went to England and thence to Canada. He has been living in Canada as an immigrant for the last three decades, but there too he is faced with numerous problems, the cultural conflict and the identity-crisis being the worst ones (1-2)."

The second paper entitled 'The Dialectics of Diasporic Experience: A Reading of Stephen Gill' is by D. Parameswari. In this paper she searches the immigrant experiences in Gill's novel *Immigrant* through the character of Reghu: "The diasporic man maps his vision of life in order to transform his attitudes. Reghu slowly develops a tendency to give in though he is angry at being cheated on several occasions. He is sorry that things aren't working out. He is peace-loving and law-abiding citizen, yet he hates to think there is no freedom to do what he likes as long as he does not disturb others. He is in a mood to drink, in order to shed his tears and inhibitions. He also wishes to dance, till every limb of his body becomes exhausted, and he does so. Feeling sick he vomits on the floor, for he thinks he need not be concerned about others when no one is bothered about him. Perhaps, this is his revenge against the strange new land which oppresses and horrifies him (17-18)."

In the next pedantic paper entitled 'Green Dove in the Shrine: Ecoconcerns in Stephen Gill's *Shrine*', T. Ravichandran raises Gill's concern for the earth, the environment, and the nature: "Even Gill narrates the whole trauma he underwent in ecological metaphors. During the days of turbulence when he expected that he being a Christian, the Bishop of New Delhi would send a vehicle to rescue him and his family, he is disappointed to note 'how easily shepherds can forget their flock'. By this metaphor, he identifies the innocent victims as 'sheep'. Often he associates unpleasant, fearful and, cruel things with 'wolf' and 'shark' whereas the fertile things of life, such as the poetic imagination, are referred to in terms of 'plants' and 'crops' (29)."

In the next paper entitled "Sociation and Reghu Nath in Gill's *Immigrant: A Study*", G. Dominic Savio and S.J.Kala attempt at exploring the phenomenon of sociation that Reghu Nath is involved in-- a milieu full of contradictions, "The process

of sociation that Reghu Nath, the protagonist of *Immigrant* engages in as a grown-up man at an alien land is noteworthy. His relationship with other individuals, groups and masses is a painstaking effort towards sociation. His pattern of interaction is classified and analysed differentiating between 'Form' and 'content' based on formal sociology (37)."

The fifth paper entitled 'Stephen Gill's *Life's Vagaries: A Critique*' is by Ashok Kumar and Roopali. In this paper both of them try to analyze Gill's collection of 14 short stories entitled *Life's Vagaries*.

Sailendra Narayan Tripathy searches dove of peace in Gill's poetry volume *Shrine* in his scholarly paper 'Seeking the Dove of Peace: The Poetry of Stephen Gill'. Next paper entitled 'In the Fire of Self: A Critique of Stephen Gill's *Shrine*' is by Kanwar Dinesh Singh. In this paper he has discussed Gill's treatment of the wretched and abject condition of the contemporary world: "The present-day world, as depicted by Stephen Gill, is ridden by chaos, anarchy, violence, animosity, killing, pillage, fights, famine, starvation, want, poverty, malnutrition, disease, epidemic, medicine, scarcity, untimely deaths, stress, exhaustion, refugee camps, differences, disharmony, ethnic funds, lust, intolerance, bigotry, slight, injustice, ignorance, erroneous notions and assumptions, lack of sympathy and understanding etc. (62)."

Nilofar Akhtar searches diasporic consciousness in Gill through her paper entitled 'Stephen Gill's *Immigrant: A Study in Diasporic Consciousness*': "Stephen Gill has depicted, in his novel, this hybridity of the 'Immigrant' who is strutting across two spaces--geographical and cultural. He is looking forward towards the country of his settlement for acceptance and involvement and simultaneously, yearning for his 'imaginary homeland' (66)."

Nikola Dimitrov searches paradoxes in the works of Gill in the paper entitled 'Paradoxes in the Works of Stephen Gill'. O.P. Dwivedi dissects cross-cultural conflicts in Gill's novel *Immigrant* in his scholarly paper entitled 'Cross-Cultural Conflicts in Stephen Gill's *Immigrant*': "Immigrant revolves round the central figure of Reghu Nath, whose sufferings and harrowing experiences in Canada constitute the crux of the novel. The novel opens with Reghu Nath flying from India over the Atlantic and landing in Montreal (Canada). Fear begins to grip him as soon as he lands in Canada, as the plane is late by seven hours and this makes him anxious about his registration at the University of Ottawa. But this is just the beginning of his long and anguished stay in Canada (78)."

Shweta Saxena in her paper entitled 'Angst of Alienation in Stephen Gill's Poetry' tries to reveal that in Stephen Gill's poetry the angst of alienation was experienced as a positive force that impelled him to become a committed artist.

Nilanshu Kumar Agarwal writes a scholarly paper on Gill's sensibility in his paper entitled 'A Critique of Stephen Gill's Literary Sensibility': "Finally, it may be forcefully asserted that Gill's emotional cries, arising out of religious fanaticism and racial prejudices, are sufficient to give him a permanent place in the history of Indo-Canadian literature (109)." Dr. Agarwal also provides us ample information on diasporic writing in his interview entitled 'Stephen Gill on his Writing and Diaspora: An Interview'.

P.Raja writes an illuminating paper entitled 'The Power of the Written Word: A Note on the poetry of Stephen Gill' on poetic creations of Stephen Gill. Next two papers entitled 'Rainbow Strings: Hope in the Poetry of Dr. Stephen Gill' by Ann Iverson and 'Stephen Gill: Poet and Protester for Peace' by John Paul Loucky are shortest one and these look more than comments rather than papers. If both of them have expanded their papers these would have been wonderful.

Seventh paper is also a good one by Aju Mukhopadhyay entitled 'Poet Stephen Gill: A Dreamer of Peace'. The last paper entitled 'Stephen Gill: A Time-

Tested Person With A Time-Trusted Vision' by Tholana Ashok Chakravarthy is also a short paper.

Although this anthology is well crafted and chiseled but there is repetition of themes in some papers and some papers are too short to be a paper. This anthology is a must read for every avid reader and scholars on Stephen Gill though the price Rs. 475 looks quite much.