

BEES AND PEACE IN AMULYA MALLADI'S *THE SOUND OF LANGUAGE***D. Ghayathry, Ph.D. Scholar**

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Human life stands parallel to bees in many ways. It has got a bee-hive structure signifying inter connectedness, hard work and harmony. Creative writer incorporate bee as an archetypal symbol to denote character development and thematic thrust. Amulya Malladi, the Indian Novelist in English employs bee keeping as a leitmotif in her novel *The Sound of Language* to observe the efficacy of relationship.

The present study necessitates an introduction to bee myth or bee culture in order to analyze its application, relevance in the study of characters and themes in *The Sound of Language*.

The bee has significance in many cultures. For most of human history, honey bees have played a part in our mythology. In Greek Mythology, by all accounts it appears as if the Greeks were fascinated by honey bees and greatly valued honey. Bees were associated strongly with Demeter, the goddess of farming and the earth. They also heavily play into myths of Apollo, Zeus and Orpheus. Honey was considered to be a drink of the Gods, and was symbolic of knowledge and wisdom. The Greeks thus reserved honey for those who were thought to deserve it. Parts of the legacy of Pythagoras states that he consumed only honey for his whole life.

In Egyptian Mythology myth associates honeybees with royalty and power. It is said that bees originated from the tears of the sun God, Ra. When thus tears hit the earth, they were transformed into bees, which immediately began to produce honey. That the bees were diligent workers (which were "governed" by a single bee) only strengthened this perception that bees symbolized royalty. Honey was also used in many religious ceremonies and often was buried alongside the dead.

In Celtic Mythology, Mead was considered to be a drink of immortality in these traditions, and bees were therefore protected by law. Bees were also thought to bring good luck.

In some African cultures, bees play a large part in creation myths. The San people of the Kalahari desert is one such culture. It is said that the honeybee carried a mantis across within this mantis, the bee planted the seed that became the first human.

All the great prophets refer to honey in the scriptures. Speech is honey, it represents softness, justice, virtue and divine goodness. The Koran uses holy terms to talk of bees and honey: “Honey is the first blessing that God gave the earth”(np).

The Bee is considered to be an Emblem of Christ because of its honey and its sting: it represents. His mildness and mercy on one side and His justice on the other.

In many Hindu traditions, the bee symbolizes the human spirit becoming full of knowledge, which is represented by pollen. The Hindu love God, Kamadeva, is often depicted with a bowstring made of honeybees. Additionally the Gods Vishnu, Indra and Krishna have been depicted as bees sitting on lotus flowers. These Gods are said to be Madhava or “nectar born”. Honey is also associated with the bliss of Nirvana.

Amulya Malladi an Indian woman novelist in English desires to portray a society which needs an external factor to initiate people into eloquence, speech, industry and intelligence. Amulya Malladi uses the mythology of bees and honey to substantiate the sweetness of collective community in her work *The Sound of Language*.

To delve deep into the effective handling of the bee symbol, it is essential to focus on the saddening situations in which the protagonist Gunnar, is seen.

Gunner leads a secluded life after the demise of his affectionate wife Anna. He feels bereft without Anna. His life is meaningless. That emptiness tortures him a lot. “But living after her is torture”(35).

Gunnar detaches himself from his family members. He is disinterested to do the household work. He did not pay attention to bee keeping and he fails to check the bee colonies and to escape from the reality he drinks and feels that life is purposeless without Anna. “unable to just lie down in the grave with her”(19).

In such a depressed, despondent state he happens to meet Raihana an Afghan widow, who brings fresh air of happiness, organization, symmetry and skill. In Kabul, Raihana and Aamir lived in a Shabby one – room apartment with bullet – ridden walls and sheets of plastic for windows. She was caked with dirt, her body smelly and belly empty. Her heart constantly drumming with fear. In such a war – torn Kabul, Aamir was killed by the Talibans.

Escaping the turmoil of Kabul, Raihana comes as an refugee and settles in Denmark. To improve her speaking skills, Raihana apprentices herself to Gunnar, who is steadily withdrawing from the world around him.

It is true that bees swarm to suck honey but in the natural process, it facilitates pollination. As a forsaken refugee Raihana came to Denmark to seek her livelihood in an alien land.

It is quite unlikely that Raihana who does not know anything about Danish language will ever develop friendship with Gunnar who keeps himself always aloof from any human interruption and intervention. But bees or bee rearing perform miracles, And that happens between Gunnar and Raihana

Gunnar teaches her language and enlightens her about bee keeping practice. “There was an intimacy in working together like this and now whenever Raihana heard the buzzing of a bee she thought of Gunnar”(141).

In due course Raihana’s confidence, clarity conviction and commitment develops a lot. Her courage to overcome her past shows the kind of transformation in her.

“Her past seemed like something on television not real, someone else’s life” (206).

With the bee keeping practice and her knowledge in spoken skills she can have her own business which paves the way for her economic independence. “She could work for a bee keeper once here Danish is good enough or she could have her own colonies”(210).

So Gunnar’s concern and care shown towards Raihana gives her identity and his moral support makes her to accept her life by forgetting her past. “The buzzing of bees announces the start of spring and bees are the harbingers of renewal” (15).

Like the bee-messenger Raihana swarms up the life Gunnar and takes some of his loneliness away. “When the sun comes out, the bees come to life” (47).

As many research work is done regarding the healing power of the bee, Raihana’s arrival in Gunnar’s life has a massive transforming power. “He didn’t drink during the day anymore, at least not during the days she was there” (141).

The sweetness of the soul depends on how much one cares for others at times of need. The caring of Raihana to Gunnar has a great change in him. “Just fortunate to have found

someone to help during a time when I had no idea how to get up in the morning and get on with my day. She gave me purpose” (210).

The sweetness of relationship shown by Gunnar to Raihana shows his largess when he gives five colonies of Anna’s bees as Raihana’s wedding gift. This gift shows Gunnar’s futuristic view, that Raihana with the help of those colonies may start a new business so that she can mark her own identity.

Raihana’s influence and Raihana’s arrival in Gunnars life brings him blessings and transformation which can also be compared with the bees arrival to one’s home. As the bee carries blessings to the home Raihana can be compared to the honey – carrying bee and Gunnar to the honey – making bee.

This maker who has moulded Raihana has got a matured understanding of life and he goes further analyzing the life of other refugees.

Bees represent a Jungian archetype. In modern psychoanalytical thinking, honey symbolizes the “higher self”, the ultimate consequence of work on one’s inner self. As the result of the transmutation of ephemeral pollen into a delicious food of immortality, honey symbolizes the transformation by initiation, the conversion of the soul and the complete integration of the person.

The relationship which is cultivated between Gunnar and Raihana shows a vigour of transmission, transfiguration and purpose to both of their lives.

Amulya Malladi Keeps writing about relationship because she has got a real bee in her bonnet about it. The significance of the study is that though the novelist has romanticize Bee keeping, any hardly romance between Gunnar and Raihana the relationship between them is purely celestial as much as the nectar of the bee beyond boundaries. “with the bees we have found the peace we have always looked for. Bee-Keeping is more than a hobby, more than livelihood: it is a way of life”(16).

Amulya Malladi’s *The Sound of Language* shows scope for interdisciplinary studies like Literature and entrepreneurship, Literature and Cultural studies, Literature and women empowerment, Literature and Economics, Literature and apiculture in addition to other existing literary reading.

Works Cited

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