









# Where Love Has Gone

**Vandana Kumari Jena**

**I**t has been eighteen years since Mrinalini left me and she has not communicated with me ever since, but I still go to the mailbox with eager anticipation on every birthday, as I did this time. It is empty, as usual. I feel a pang of disappointment. It feels like a short sharp stab of pain, although I know that the postman hardly delivers post these days. People now send things through courier. Or Speed post. Or through Porter services. When we were living together, she used to send me a birthday card and a gift on my birthday, although we lived in the same house. The card and the gift were delivered by the postman. He had known me for years. He delivered the gift by hand. He rang the doorbell, smiled and wished me a very happy birthday, and handed me the small package and the card. The gift was usually small but beautiful, a paper knife, a paper cutter, a small painting, a tablecloth- artistic, beautiful and inexpensive. Her gifts told me much about her. The gift box was tastefully decorated. Only Mrinalini could twist the ribbons into a beautiful rose and tie it on the top. I loved her gifts. I would open the package carefully, smoothen out the paper, and keep it carefully. I would keep the gifts in the almirah.

Mrinalini. Where is she? I tried to look for her, but failed. Mrinalini who smells like the sweet-smelling Myrtle. She wafted into my life on wings of rapture and disappeared soon afterwards. Happiness is ephemeral. It never lasts. I was always the cynic. I always believe it. "Happiness is a state of mind. It is in your hands to be happy or unhappy," That is what Mrinalini the optimist said. If I really think about it, there was nothing spectacular about her, and yet I have never met anyone more endearing.

I met Mrinalini at the park near my house in Vasant Vihar in New Delhi, on her knees, as she peered into the paw of her puppy, trying to remove a pin. I was in the park along with my friend Samay.

Mrinalini, Samay and I were in college together. St. Stephen's College. The most prestigious college in Delhi. She was everything I was not- affable and charming, a human dynamo who excelled in everything and took part in everything. I was the cynic, the recluse. She was the star in the college play, feted and admired by everyone. I was the one who wrote the play but really who cares about the playwright, unless of



course one is William Shakespeare? A few years later we decided to get married. We both joined the corporate world.

I wish I could say that our marriage was blissful. It was for five years and then Mrinalini became pregnant. "I am pregnant," she said. She was ecstatic. But her stomach had begun to balloon. She looked like a six-month pregnant woman while I had been abroad for six months and had returned just three months ago. She hugged me and said, "Vikrant. I am so excited." She did not see my face darken, nor the myriad expressions that chased my face, not the doubts which hovered in my mind. "We will convert the small bedroom into a nursery," she said. "I will put a blue and pink wallpaper, which will be appropriate, whether it is a boy or a girl. What do you say Vikrant?"

"I say, just tell me who the father is because it certainly can't be me," I could not believe the words would come out so cruelly. Her face turned pale. As did mine. I did not tell her that my mother, who had come to visit us, had planted the seeds of doubt in my mind, had insisted that Mrinalini looked six months pregnant. Mrinalini clenched her lower lip to stop herself from crying, as I did to prevent my anger from boiling over. Her eyes shone with unshed tears, while my eyes darkened and became smoky like a burning bushfire. "Do you realize what you are saying," she asked, her voice calm, the kind of calm just before a hurricane makes a nightfall. I said, "I

mean every word of it. I may not be knowledgeable about pregnancy, but I realize you are about to deliver in the next three months and I returned home only three months ago. It doesn't need a genius to do the math." "No, it doesn't," she said. "Bye Vikrant," she said as she walked out of the door, suitcase in hand. She did not even call for a taxi. I saw her cross the road and stand at the bus stop and I did not know whether she took a taxi or boarded a bus. I did not care either. She quit her job and disappeared.

And then she began to come in my dreams. I did not know why. Mrinalini had betrayed me. It was not I who had let her down, then why did I feel so guilty in the years that followed? My mother tried her best to persuade me to marry again, but I didn't. We were never divorced. We were just separated. The truth was I could never forget Mrinalini. Her presence pervaded the entire household, even when she was not there. However, after eighteen years Mrinalini was just a memory.

On this birthday, my forty-eighth, eighteen years after Mrinalini left me, I heard the doorbell ring. A courier boy stood at the door. He had a red cap on his head and wore dark glasses. He carried with him a small parcel wrapped in a blue gift paper and ribbon. I opened the paper hurriedly, even as he turned away to go away. The box contained a note which simply said, "Liked your gift?" I removed the tissue paper lining the box, but the box was empty. Why did Mrinalini

send me a gift after eighteen years and where did the gift go? "You!" I shouted at the young man who did not have a motorcycle, or a cycle, which courier boys usually have. He was walking towards the bus stop. "You," I said to the delivery boy, "The box is empty." He turned around and said, "Empty?" He put his hand on his head, running his fingers through it. "Empty?" He said again, as he removed his dark glasses. I looked at him in amazement. He was the mirror image of me. The way I looked years ago and not now, and then I realized that he was the gift. "What's your name?" I asked gruffly, dragging the words that seemed stuck somewhere deep inside my throat. "Rishabh," he said, as he looked closely at me. "Mrinalini, where is she? I asked. "She died a month ago, but she had wrapped up this gift and asked me to hand it over to you personally." I noticed a slight twitch in his left eye. Mrinalini had noticed it in my eye too. It was a tell. She said it told her when I was being creative with the truth, a polite way of saying when I was lying! Mrinalini was alive. My gut said so. I was sure that had she had passed away I would have known. The twitch in Rishabh's eye said so too. "My son," I said, drawing him into an embrace. He struggled free. "I am a posthumous child," he said. "My father died seven months before I was born. My mother said so." "Mrinalini, where did she work when she was alive?" I asked. "When you kicked her out of your life you lost the right to know anything about her," he said. "Where are you going?" I asked, wanting to prolong the conversation as much as I could. "That's my uncle," he said, pointing at the bus stop where my friend Samay was standing. I realized that it was Samay who had stood beside Mrinalini as she had brought up our son single-handedly. I had been in touch with Samay over the years. But I had no idea that he was a pillar of support for Mrinalini. I realized that Samay was a better man than me.

I did not chase after Rishabh. I knew that I could always find Samay and Rishabh if I tried. And perhaps through him I could find Mrinalini too.

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Mushtaque B Barq

The crimson on the horizon was about to bid farewell when a shabby old man rushed into the maqtab, his frayed gown trailing across the stone floor. As the veil slipped from his face, the lamps along the walls guttered and died, as though breath itself had been withdrawn from them. The Dervish sat unmoved upon his throne. Around him, his disciples, who moments earlier had been reciting sacred verses from memory, stared at their volumes in disbelief as the words began to fade, thinning like mist beneath a rising sun.

Beyond the library lay the prayer hall, empty and vast. The old man crossed into it and stationed himself in its far corner. With each step he took into that vacant space, the darkness thickened, not as an absence, but as a presence. It pressed inward, settling into lungs and pulse, claiming breath itself. Light did not vanish at once. It retreated.

The Dervish did not rise. This was his seat, his territory.

"A king is king only upon his throne," he muttered, his voice low but firm. "Once he steps away, the throne becomes a mere chair, desolate timber."

From the shadows, the old man answered calmly, "A throne is only another way of accepting defeat. A worn patch of jute is enough to please the Lord."

Anger flared. The Dervish raised his voice and summoned his disciples, but his command dissolved before it reached them. He called again, straining his lungs, yet the darkness absorbed every sound.

"Have you all turned deaf?" he roared. "To deny your master is to defy the Sacred Covenant!"

No one responded. Silence had already taken authority.

Then, to the widening vision of the disciples, the old man began to expand. His presence unfurled as though a veil had been torn from the world itself. What had been a fragile body grew immense, no longer merely flesh but a descent of incandescent clarity. Fire gathered in his eyes, a gaze capable of dissolving resolve and marrow alike. The radiance revealed everything it touched. Every knot in the carpet stood distinct, even the slow pilgrimage of an ant across the stone floor. Yet the Dervish, still gripping his throne, appeared reduced, a carved idol presiding over an absence.

The old man swept his gaze across the hall. It pierced through eyelids and thought alike, widening the pupils of the disciples toward something unbounded. A single drop of that vision seized their sight and pressed back the borders of understanding. They crossed mysteries without words.



Behind them, the Dervish remained fixed, brooding over the elaborate poultry of his own conceit, hoarding illusions for a future without dawn. What had once been mere recitation has long been transformed into a vibration, taking hold of every breath, making it move like a wave, at times randomly yet involuntarily following a rhyme. The verses were no longer alphabetical rush of expressions but pulse, no longer memory but mercy. Each syllable breathed and felt by the heart that had undergone transformation.

Moved by love for his former master, one disciple stepped forward, his voice trembling.

"O Holy One," he pleaded, "may I call my master here, that he too might find refuge in this light?"

The old man smiled, warmth passing briefly across his face.

"You are faithful," he said. "Go. Call him."

As the disciple departed, the old man's gentleness sharpened.

"Why did none of you plead for him?" his voice asked, firm now. "Have his years of guidance vanished so quickly from your hearts? How easily the hand that led you here was forgotten."

No one answered. Heads bowed. Necks bent beneath the quiet weight of their shame.

Then the old man drew his gown close. His radiance receded, thinning until he appeared once more as a fragile skeleton folded into shadow. Darkness returned, not as punishment, but as withdrawal.

"I am losing my way" one of the disciple shouted.

"I am tumbling down" another shouted.

"I am not able to see anything, it is pitch dark" the third one responded.

There was a chaos around, they all felt as if they were pushed through a tunnel of darkness with no way to escape.

As their unrest grew heavier, the cries reverberated against the silence hanging on the walls, ushering in a profound shift. The vertigo of fall ceased; it was as if the earth had regained its silent and slow movement after a tremor. The vibrations of the silence, amidst this strange buoyancy, harmonized their state and station. And once again, they found their master anchoring their wobbling boats.

The brief sun of revelation had passed, leaving the disciples unsettled, more aware of loss than of ignorance. When the disciple returned with the Dervish, he halted in astonishment. All the disciples stood and parted, forming a silent path toward the old man. Seeing this, the Dervish raised his hands and prayed.

"O Lord, grant every saint such disciples."

He lowered himself to the floor, leaving the throne untouched. Darkness gathered around him. There was a pause. A held breath. "Amen," the old man replied.

"The other end of the tunnel appeared as a dot of light, with every pulse, it broadened its scope till they all found a way to come out of it, with their master at the mouth of it receiving them all. The intensity of the light almost shattered their mind; they fell like chocking masses.

The master realised their unrest and suggested:

"Close your eyes, and the light will stop blinding you."

Then his gaze entered the Dervish like a constellation striking a mirror. The reflection fractured. In

that breaking, the Dervish opened. The disciples watched as their master was undone and reformed, not in elevation, but in truth. When darkness settled again, it no longer mattered. Another light had taken root, quiet and enduring, within every heart.

"Light," the old man said, "is not what the sun gives, but what escapes through the cracks of a broken heart."

The maqtab stirred, not with flame, but with devotion. The disciples turned inward, away from spectacle and shadow, toward the inner chambers of their own souls. There they found love, the steady blaze of the old man, and the restored image of their master. The walls, the throne, the shelves loosened their hold. When the disciples reached for their books, they found only blankness. The ink had fled the page and settled instead within the heart of the Dervish. He had become the Book.

The old man rose.

"The library is closed," he announced. "The Book is open. Go, and read it by the light of love."

Maqtab looked like a mystified sanctuary. The silence was more than calmness, but a sacred stillness.

"Every pulse is a book that requires an egoless mind to read, read, read and read...." the old man kept muttering.

As he turned to depart, the chandelier burst into brilliance, washing the hall of shadow. In that sudden clarity, everything was visible, except the old man himself. He had gathered his dazzling darkness into the folds of his gown and vanished, leaving the hall transformed and the master reborn.



**Muhammad Maroof Shah**

*"No man can live without joy. That is why one deprived of spiritual joy goes over to carnal pleasures."*

## St. Thomas Aquinas

*"Everyone wants pleasure. More deeply, everyone wants happiness. Most deeply, everyone wants joy."*

Peter Kreeft

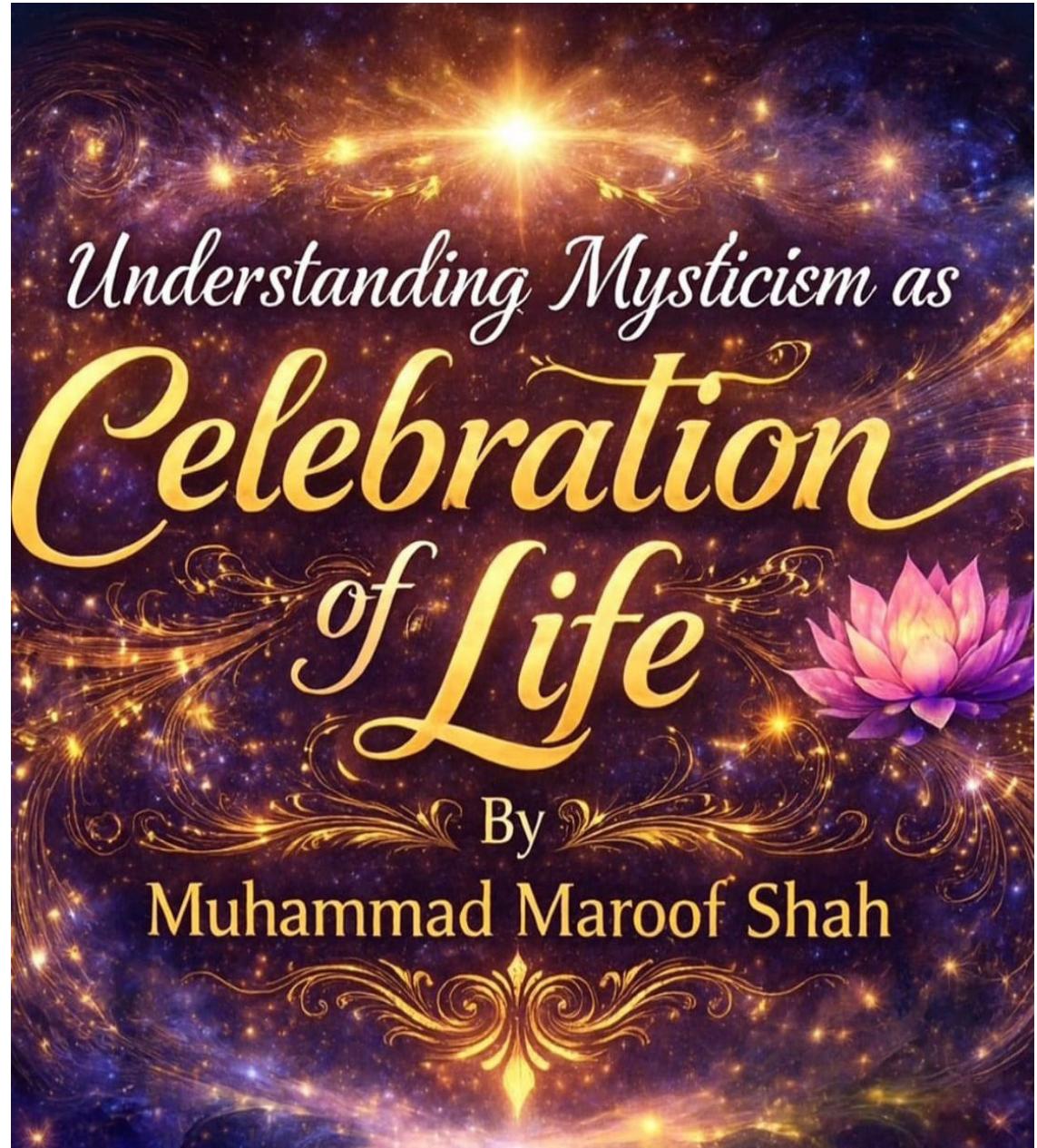
In the battle of ideas between religious and secularist camps, a few major misconceptions about mysticism call for attention. First, that mysticism is suspicious of the world and its joys, cultivates higher world at the cost of this world and is quietist and status quoist. Mysticism has also been suspect of indulging in misty and mystifying narratives and nurturing juiceless hyper-ascetic life interspersed with subjectivist ecstasies. Evelyn Underhill in her pioneering study on *Mysticism* has dispelled these charges to clarify the standpoint of world fraternity of mystics.

Underscoring the idea that those who take religion truly seriously and Underhill notes in this context that Dante, initiated into Reality as Paradise, sees the whole universe laugh with delight as it glorifies God and the awful countenance of Perfect Love adorned with smiles. The souls of the great theologians "dance to music and laughter in the Heaven of the Sun; the loving seraphs, in their ecstatic joy whirl about the Being of God." St. Francis illustrates quite eloquently with his life and works the fruits of contemplative life as playful rejoicing in Absolute. The mystic dwells high in heavens and thus with gods who are ever happy. They run, rejoice and make merry joining "the eager dance of the Universe about the One." Patmore has said, "If we may credit certain hints in the lives of the saints, love raises the spirit above the sphere of reverence and worship into one of laughter and dalliance: a sphere in which the soul says:-

Shall I, a gnat which dances in  
Thy ray

Dare to be reverent.

In the lives of the great theopatetic mystics we find, as Underhill notes, an amazing superabundant vitality, enhancement of man's small derivative life by the Absolute Life. The history of mysticism testifies to the great vitality, the great fruitful lives of works, active creative life of mystics. Mystics have not generally been deniers of the world, morons with diminished life energy. The mystic is reborn into new, intense, vigorous, creative and veritable life, life of action even though contemplation itself is a sort of action. Quietist mysticism isn't the whole of mysticism. Prophetic mysticism has been primarily activist.



The mystic is ideally the ruler of the world as the great mystic Plato has taught this. God who represents Life force itself works through the mystic, the latter having become a medium for the same. Ideally mysticism has sought the Reality "which seems from the human standpoint at once static and dynamic, transcendent and immanent, eternal and temporal: accepted both the absolute World of Pure Being and the unresting World of Becoming as integral parts of its vision of Truth, demanding on its side a dual response." The mystic inwardly is just witnessing consciousness, far from the madding crowd, unidentified with samsaric becoming. But outwardly his career can be one of "superhuman industry."

Mysticism savors or discovers the beauty, and the splendour, of the living World of Becoming. It is to participate in the "great life of the All." It is an attitude of gratitude to Life Principle (which traditions call as Spirit), acceptance of All or Totality or Existence and appropriating this Cosmic Will. Mysticism finds and celebrates the revelations of the Transcendent Life not in some remote plane of being, in metaphysical abstractions, in ecstatic

states, but "in the normal acts of our diurnal experience, suddenly made significant to us. Not in the backwaters of existence, not amongst subtle arguments and occult doctrines, but in all those places where the direct and simple life of earth goes on." God is three pounds of flex or a cup of tea for the Zen mystics and in fact for all mystics who enjoy all things in God.

The world is a work of art; the Good essentially wants to be radiated by its very nature and not for some end or purpose humanly conceived. Existence as such can't be but purposeless, it only celebrates itself. One can't ask what is the purpose of heaven or God – they are their own ends. Life only glorifies Life. This is the meaning of the verses of scriptures where God glorifies himself or asks man to glorify His name or bless His prophets.

The mystic is indeed "a part of the great melody of the Divine." To the whole life of St. Francis was one long march to music through the world as Underhill notes. To sing seemed to him a primary spiritual function. Underhill has referred to the romantic quality of the Unitive Life - its gaiety, free-

dom and joy. Many mystics have expressed themselves in verse. This is only because the super-abundant joy that wells within them needs such a medium to express. Sufi love songs are well known. Less known are songs of Christian mystics. St. John of the Cross wrote love songs to his Love. St. Rose of Lima sang deuts with the birds. St. Teresa wrote rustic hymns and carols. In St. Catherine of Genoa, sang, in a spirit of child-like happiness, gay songs about her Love.

We need, however, to note that though the end or fruit of mystical journey is simply joyful basking in the sunbeams it may necessitate passing through the "night of the senses" in which one learns to distinguish the substance of Reality from the accidents under which it is perceived. We can't afford giving free reign to the desiring self which craves for sensory enjoyment and still thinks that one can thereby transcend it. The self which witnessess is not the self which desires.

(The author has widely published in the journals of mysticism and Islamic philosophy and published a book length critical study on New Age Spirituality.)

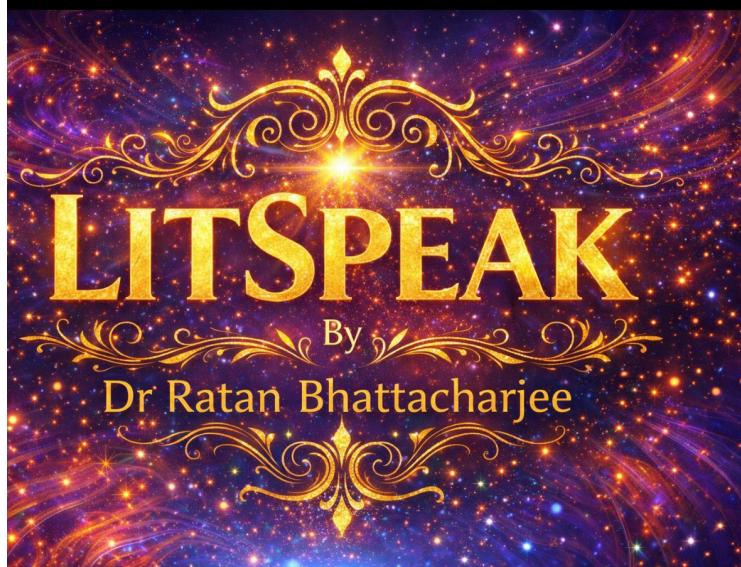
# When Young Neruda Matures



Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

Young Pablo Neruda and Old Pablo Neruda were one person but two hearts. Young Pablo does not describe love, he inhabits it. He writes as if love were air, soil, memory, hunger, and destiny all at once. His love poems travel across languages, continents, and generations. Even in Bengal—where Tagore, Jibanananda, and Nazrul already occupy the heart—Young Neruda is read, recited, translated, and loved. Known as one of the 20th century's greatest love poets, Young Neruda's work connects the intensity of desire to the natural world, highlighting love as both a physical sensation and a spiritual, almost elemental, force. Born in 1904 in Parral, Chile, as Ricardo Eliécer Nefatal Reyes Basoalto, Neruda adopted his pen name early. He grew up in the rainy southern landscapes of Temuco—forests, rivers, fog, railway tracks, and distant mountains. That geography would later enter his love poetry. Unlike conventional romantic poetry that exists in salons and drawing rooms, Young Neruda's love emerges from earth, wind, fruit, salt, darkness, and stars. He does not separate body from nature. His early fame rests largely on a book written when he was barely twenty: "Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair" (1924). It remains one of the most widely ready poetry collections in world literature. The poems in Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair are written from the perspective of intense youthful longing. Yet they are not naive. They already reveal a poet who senses that love is inseparable from absence, distance, and loss. The most striking feature of Neruda's love imagery is his fusion of the beloved woman with nature. Unlike conventional romantic poetry that compares a woman to a flower or moon only superficially, Neruda dissolves the boundary between body and earth. The beloved does not resemble nature—she becomes nature.

In Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair he writes: "Body of a woman, white hills, white thighs." The woman's body turns into landscape. The lover becomes a traveler moving across valleys, hills, forests. This is not simply sensual description; it is an imaginative geography. Love becomes exploration. Desire becomes a journey through terrain." Her hair is night./Her skin is wheat fields./Her voice is wind moving through leaves." Through this imagery Neruda suggests that loving another person reconnects the human being with the natural world.



The lover rediscovers the earth through the beloved. This explains why many of his love poems are set outdoors: twilight skies, rivers, forests, and sea-coasts. Love, in Neruda, cannot exist inside walls alone. It requires the cosmos. Night is perhaps the most recurring image in Neruda's love poetry.

The famous line—“Tonight I can write the saddest lines.” Stars in Neruda are particularly meaningful. They represent permanence. Human love may end, but the universe continues. When he looks at the stars after losing the beloved, he experiences a painful contrast: nature is eternal, but relationships are fragile. In one poem he observes the night sky and realizes she is no longer beside him. Personal sorrow expands into cosmic sadness.

Another unique aspect of Neruda's imagery is his use of silence. Love is not always expressed through speech. Sometimes its deepest presence appears as stillness. In Poem 15 he writes: "I like for you to be still: it is as though you were absent." At first this seems contradictory. But Neruda is capturing a subtle emotional state: when two people love deeply, communication can exist without words. Silence itself becomes language. In his poetry, absence is not emptiness. It is a powerful presence created by longing. Being Chilean, Neruda grew up near the Pacific Ocean, and the sea enters his love imagery constantly. The ocean symbolizes depth, rhythm, and emotional turbulence. Waves resemble desire—advancing and retreating. The tide resembles longing—returning repeatedly. Foam resembles fleeting passion—beautiful yet temporary. Sometimes the beloved herself becomes oceanic. She is vast, mysterious, and impossible to fully possess. The lover stands like a shore, receiving her and losing her again.

Perhaps the most famous opening line in modern love poetry: "Tonight I can write the saddest lines." The line is deceptively simple. No elaborate metaphor, no classical ornament. Yet he carries a vast emotional

universe. The poem does not merely speak of a lost beloved—it recreates the psychological condition of remembering love after it has ended. Neruda understood something crucial: love is most powerfully felt not only in possession but in memory. Many poets celebrate union. Neruda often writes from separation. The speaker recalls the woman beneath the starry sky: “I loved her, and sometimes she loved me too.” The tenderness lies in the word sometimes. Love here is not idealized perfection; it is human, uneven, fragile. This honesty distinguishes Neruda from sentimental romantic poetry. He acknowledges uncertainty, insecurity, and emotional asymmetry.

One of Neruda's greatest innovations was transforming the beloved's body into a geography. He does not describe beauty as a list of physical features. Instead, he maps the woman onto nature itself: Her hair becomes night./Her skin becomes wheat./Her voice becomes wind./Her silence becomes distance. In one poem he writes: "Body of a woman, white hills, white thighs." This is not mere sensuality. It is a poetic philosophy. The beloved is not just a person; she is earth itself—fertile, mysterious, vast. Neruda's Chilean environment—oceans, deserts, forests—enters the erotic imagination. Love becomes cosmological. Unlike Victorian love poetry that spiritualizes love, Neruda refuses to separate soul and body. For him, desire is sacred. Physical longing is not a fall from grace; it is a path toward existence itself. In this sense, young Neruda's love poetry echoes ancient traditions—Greek lyric poets, the Biblical Song of Songs, and even certain strands of Indian bhakti where devotion and eroticism merge. Yet Neruda's poems are not only passionate; they are profoundly lonely. Many readers notice that even when the beloved is present, a shadow of absence already exists.

absence already exists. He anticipates loss while loving. In another famous poem: "Love is so short, forgetting is so long." This single line explains the emotional architecture of his work. Love

occupies a brief moment of time, but memory extends endlessly. The pain of remembering becomes almost more significant than the joy of loving. Certain elements appear again and again: Night, Stars, Wind, Trees, Ocean and Silence. Night in Neruda is not darkness alone. It is intimacy. Lovers meet when the world disappears. Silence allows emotions to speak. The stars become witnesses. In Poem 15, he writes: "I like for you to be still: it is as though you were absent." The line seems paradoxical. Why would a lover want absence? But Neruda is describing a deep emotional state—love so intense that presence becomes quiet contemplation.

The second Neruda is not old but mature who is still a symbolic poet but engaged with history, colonialism, and social struggle. As Neruda matured, his poetry changed. He became a diplomat, political activist, and eventually a Nobel Prize laureate (1971). His later works—*Canto General*, *Residence on Earth*—Yet love never disappeared. It evolved. His love poems at this stage, especially in *The Captain's Verses* and *100 Love Sonnets*, are calmer, deeper, and more reflective. The young poet burns; the older poet understands. In *100 Love Sonnets*, dedicated to his wife Matilde Urrutia, love becomes companionship. The earlier poems speak of desire and distance; the later poems speak of daily life: Bread, House, Morning Coffee or Shared Time. Here Neruda makes a revolutionary claim: ordinary life is romantic. Love is not only moonlight—it is also washing, walking, cooking, aging together. In Sonnet XVII he writes: "I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret, between the shadow and the soul." This is mature poets reflection on love—quiet, stable, interior. No theatrical suffering. No dramatic loss. Instead, an enduring connection beyond display.

Many readers are surprised that a committed political poet could also be one of the greatest romantic poets. But for Neruda, these were not contradictions. Love for a person and love for humanity emerged from the same emotional source. His poetry suggests: To love one human deeply is to learn how to love the world. Even when writing about workers, miners, and oppressed peoples, the same tenderness appears. The emotional vocabulary of his love poems becomes the ethical vocabulary of his political poems. There are several reasons Neruda's love poems continue to be read across cultures, including South Asia. He uses direct speech rather than ornate diction.

Readers feel spoken to, not lectured. He admits jealousy, uncertainty, and loss. He does not pretend love is perfect. His poems appeal to touch, smell, and sound—not just thought. One can feel them. Although rooted in Chile, the emotions are human everywhere. A reader in Kashmir

**CONT. ON PAGE 13**

# THE CROW AND THE CAT



Dr Saima Manzoor

In every aspect, they were as extremely apart as possible. Like day and night, like white and black, like flowers and thorn, like river and desert, like beauty and beast, like good and evil. It was never too difficult for her to acknowledge where she stood on that spectrum. It wasn't even too hard to accept her role. She would be the night as calmly as it was possible. She had no problem in being dark as the darkest hour of dusk. She would accept being a thorn or the desert or the beast or the most evil thing there ever was. The only difficulty was that wherever she stood, it meant that he stood farther away from her. That every step towards accepting herself meant a million steps away from him. That was the problem. A problem that demanded a solution. Any solution. Whenever she thought about this little conundrum, she would close her eyes and see a dark black crow sitting alone on a branch of a barren tree.

Quiet, observing, puzzled, troubled, hurt, sad or maybe just wise. The crow that just sat on the branch, maybe contemplating a difficult flight or a troubling journey, barely moving. Like it wasn't even alive. The crow who had taken far too many arduous flights, gone to extreme lengths and had seen a world far beyond the reach of any mediocre creature. The crow who was able to look at any difficult circumstance and without hesitation had been able to stand with what was right. The crow who had seen far too many struggles, more than enough for its lifetime, more than enough to render it wise. Maybe that is what rendered the crow silent.

Under that barren tree, a little further away, she would see a cat. A beautiful, delicate, adorable cat, with deep colourful expressive eyes, a shining coat of smooth silky white fur having strands of grey hair just here and there, rendering the cat's beautiful white coat of fur to a complete perfection. The cat would walk in the earthy green grass with a gait that was sure-footed, graceful and just as lovable. One would think that the cat had no flaw, it would never tumble or fail or founder or flunk. The cat was infallible. The crow would observe the cat from a small distance, wondering how a creature was able to master perfection so gracefully. The crow was mesmerised by something as ordinary as a cat. But then again, this was no ordinary cat. It was a creature of total perfection, worthy of all love and admiration there ever was. And the crow was intelligent as well as



wise enough to understand the difference between the cat and itself. It looked at the cat in admiration and wondered whether the dreams were any different for the perfect and the imperfect.

"What do you dream about?" asked the crow.

"Happiness", the cat replied, "as it is not only a dream but a necessity, birth-right, to be more precise".

"True,,, to some extent" the crow thought. "Do you know what it looks like, happiness?" the crow asked, trying to see behind the cat's big green alive eyes.

"I know what it feels like", the cat replied, extremely certain of its answer.

"And how does it feel,,, happy I would guess", the crow remarked sarcastically.

"Like every living thing is supposed to feel, there is no alternate way to live other than a happy life. There is no reason one should not

be living life to its full and complete glory" the cat answered impatiently.

"And what is it that makes you happy, loving or being loved?" asked the crow with a desire to know the cat more.

"There are more reasons to be happy than just those two. In addition to loving and being loved, I want peace, content, respect as well as admiration. And only when I achieve all of these things, I accept the presence of someone in my life."

The crow wondered to itself how could just one soul be able to achieve everything! To grant one soul nearly every beautiful and joyous thing while another soul starved until eternity. What a cruel distribution. But maybe it had something to do with the cat's ability to accept happiness that created more room for happiness. The crow on the other hand had never even known peace and joy and love. The crow

wouldn't even recognise it. Maybe that's why the cruel distribution. What beauty does a painite have in the hands of a penurious ignorant! One has to be beautiful to accept beautiful or maybe vice-versa.

"Do you love someone?" the crow asked the cat knowing very well that the answer would never be what it wanted and hoped it to be but still wishing that maybe there might be a tiny possibility of a true miracle.

"Mostly myself" the cat replied with a sense of pride and walked away from the barren tree and towards the garden full of flowers and birds and bees. And the crow kept gazing at the cat until it was no longer in sight.

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# **Fit to Fail: Exploring the Reality of Heart Attacks Beyond Fitness**



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**H**eart attacks are commonly portrayed as the predictable result of years of ill behaviour, such as smoking, poor food, obesity, uncontrolled diabetes, and physical inactivity. Previously, there was the notion that if you ate well and exercised regularly, your heart would remain healthy. This narrative is familiar because it instills a sense of control like live well, exercise regularly, and your heart will be protected. However, clinical reality is increasingly questioning this premise. Cardiac incidents have been documented in young professionals, regular gym users, athletes, and people who have no clear symptoms or risk factors. This widening gap between perception and reality forces us to confront an uncomfortable question, what are we overlooking?

Cardiovascular disease continues to be the leading cause of mortality worldwide. In India, the burden is particularly concerning, with coronary artery disease manifesting nearly a decade earlier than in many Western populations. More troubling is the rising number of myocardial infarctions occurring in individuals who do not fit the "classic" high-risk profile. No prior angina. No significant functional limitation. No dramatic warning signs. And yet, a sudden cardiac event. Traditional risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes, smoking, dyslipidaemia, obesity, and sedentary lifestyle continue to be important in assessing cardiovascular risk. They are reliable, evidence-based disease predictions. However, the absence of apparent obesity or sedentary behaviour does not imply immunity. Cardiovascular risk is complex, with multiple systems operating quietly beneath a healthy veneer. One of the most significant misconceptions is equating physical fitness with metabolic health. A person may have a normal body mass index (BMI), exercise regularly, and appear slim, yet nevertheless have considerable visceral adiposity, which is metabolically active fat surrounding internal organs. Unlike subcutaneous fat, visceral fat directly contributes to insulin resistance, systemic inflammation, endothelial dysfunction, and atherosclerosis progression. Atherosclerosis is a silent and pro-



gressive disorder. Plaques can form gradually within coronary arteries over time, without presenting symptoms. Importantly, the risk of a heart attack is not always proportional to the degree of artery constriction. Many acute myocardial infarctions are caused by the rupture of tiny, unstable plaques, rather than substantially occluded arteries. A previously non-obstructive plaque can suddenly burst, causing thrombus development and blockage of blood flow. This explains why people with no past chest symptoms might have a rapid cardiac episode. Genetics has a significant and frequently underappreciated role. A positive family history of premature coronary artery disease raises lifetime risk dramatically, even in those with otherwise healthy lifestyles. Certain hereditary lipid abnormalities, particularly increased lipoprotein(a), are independent and strong predictors of coronary events. Unlike LDL cholesterol, Lipoprotein(a) levels are mostly hereditary and do not respond significantly to exercise. Without targeted screening, such inherited hazards go undiscovered. Chronic psychological stress complicates the situation. Urbanisation, job stress, financial difficulties, sleep deprivation, and chronic mental stress all activate the sympathetic nervous system, increasing circulating stress chemicals including cortisol and catecholamines. Over time, chronic sympathetic activity causes hypertension, endothelial damage, inflammatory alterations, and plaque instability. Even in physically active people, persistent stress can reduce the cardioprotective effects of exercise. Sleep patterns are also important. Inadequate or poor-quality sleep has been associated to metabolic dysfunction, higher inflammatory markers, and increased cardiovascular risk. Modern lifestyles frequently normalise sleep deprivation, yet its cumulative physiological impact

can be significant. The environment also has an impact on general health as well as cardiac health. Most people are aware of these realities, but they prefer to disregard them. Some people care; they eat well and exercise regularly, but what happened was that they suffered a heart attack. When everything appears to be in order, there is often something wrong going on. Changes in the working environment, as well as the need to stay ahead of today's competitive attitude, have left little room for relaxation and calmness. This has an impact on not only their health, but also their relationships with family and friends. Thus, a lot of emotions are piling up in the form of stress, which is one of the leading causes of heart attacks in people who eat well and exercise regularly. Not only that, but stress, smoking, alcohol consumption, and a lack of sleep all contribute to it. Adults need at least 8 hours of restful sleep.

"Eat right, sleep tight, and exercise light" should be this generation's new life philosophy.

None of this reduces the importance of physical activity. Regular exercise improves lipid profiles, increases insulin sensitivity, decreases blood pressure, boosts endothelial function, and reduces cardiovascular risk. However, it must be viewed as one component of a broader preventative plan, not as a guarantee of invulnerability. Many people rely on annual health checks, which include basic fasting glucose and cholesterol measures. While informative, these indicators may not accurately reflect cardiovascular vulnerability. A more nuanced approach may include detailed lipid profiling (including non-HDL cholesterol), HbA1c, blood pressure monitoring, family history evaluation, and, in some cases, advanced markers such as Lipoprotein(a), high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-CRP), or coronary artery calcium scoring. Risk categorisation

should be individual based rather than general. Equally important is public awareness of atypical presentations. Cardiac symptoms may not always be severe. Unexplained weariness, shortness of breath, epigastric discomfort, upper back pain, jaw pain, or a feeling of unusual heaviness may indicate cardiac ischaemia, especially in young adults and women. Dismissing these symptoms because one "looks healthy" can result in a delay in vital care. The purpose is not to create fear, but to encourage informed attentiveness. A healthy lifestyle remains fundamental and necessary. However, true cardiovascular protection requires a combination of lifestyle modifications, awareness, screening, and individualised risk assessment. Heart attacks do not usually present themselves. Risk accumulates quietly over time. Recognising this intricacy and responding before any event occurs may be the most effective action of all.

This suggests that we should reconsider public health messages. Instead, of imposing strenuous daily exercise on everyone, we should encourage personalised, moderate, and diverse physical activities. It urges us to listen to our body, strike a balance between activity and rest, and recognise that health encompasses physical, mental, and emotional dimensions. By doing so, we want to live a healthier lifestyle that decreases risks and promotes overall wellness. It also demonstrates the importance of scientific research in keeping us informed about what is best for our health. "Fit to Fail" teaches us that true health is not easy.

The overarching message is that cardiovascular disease is influenced by a combination of genetics, metabolism, inflammation, environment, and lifestyle. Fitness greatly minimises danger, but it does not eliminate it. The heart responds to biology, not appearances or assumptions.

# Between Literature and Cinema: Reading Teesri Kasam through Anant's Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam



Dr. Purnima

Title: Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam

Author: Anant

Publisher: Keekat Publication

Year &amp; Place of Publication: 2023, Bihar

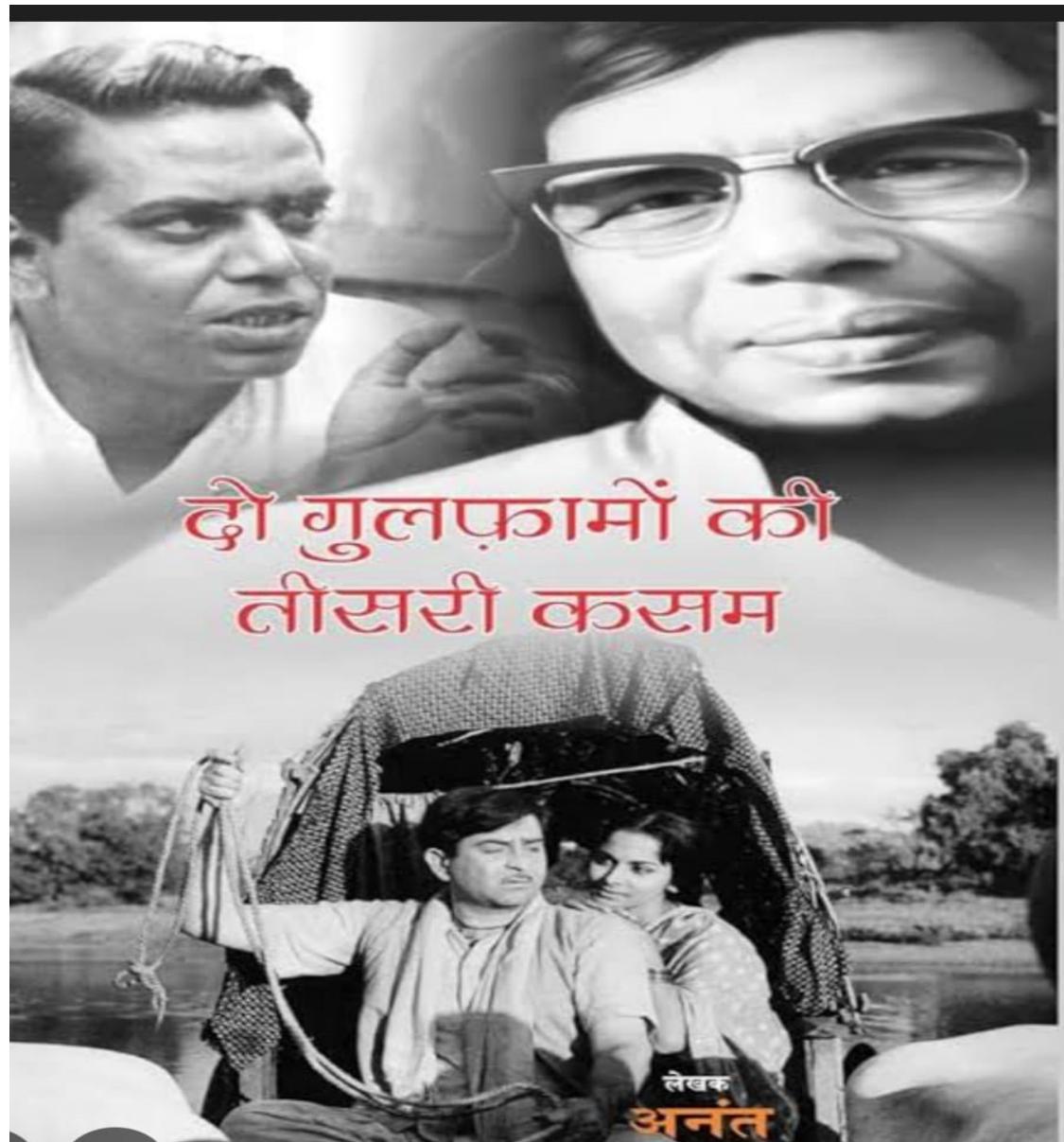
Pages: Approximately 240 pages

Price: 500

Indian cinema, despite being one of the largest film industries in the world, remains insufficiently documented through sustained, well-researched, and critically sensitive textual scholarship. While popular narratives, biographies, and anecdotal recollections abound, serious works that investigate the intricate relationship between literature, cinema, folk culture, and artistic sincerity are relatively rare. Anant's Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam is a significant intervention in this landscape. The book is not merely an account of the making of the classic Hindi film Teesri Kasam; rather, it is an in-depth cultural chronicle that examines how a literary imagination, cinematic vision, and personal commitment intersected to produce a work of lasting artistic value.

At the heart of the book lies Teesri Kasam—a film adapted from Phanishwarnath Renu's celebrated short story Mare Gaye Gulafam. The film narrates a platonic romance between Hiraman, a simple bullock-cart driver, and Hirabai, a Nautanki dancer. This seemingly modest narrative becomes, in Anant's reading, a profound meditation on innocence, unfulfilled desire, moral restraint, and the emotional textures of rural life. Anant situates the film within its socio-cultural context, emphasizing that Teesri Kasam is not merely a cinematic product but a poetic extension of Renu's literary sensibility and Shailendra's deeply humane artistic ethos.

The book opens by introducing the reader to the surreal and culturally vibrant world of Nautanki, folk performance, and rural Bihar. Anant meticulously reconstructs the local ambience that shaped Renu's imagination and later influenced the cinematic language of Teesri Kasam. Through the chapter "Aji Mare Gaye Gulafam" ("The Smitten Gentleman"), the reader is introduced not only to the protagonists



Hiraman and Hirabai but also to the layered folklore embedded in the narrative, such as the story of the boatwoman Mahua, locally remembered as Mahua Ghatwarin. By drawing attention to these folkloric elements, Anant reveals how Teesri Kasam absorbs indigenous cultural memory and translates it into visual poetry.

One of the major strengths of Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam lies in its archival depth. Anant does not rely solely on secondary accounts or popular myths surrounding the film. Instead, he traces the real-life inspirations behind the characters, documenting how Hiraman was modeled on a herdsman in Renu's household and how Hirabai was loosely inspired by the celebrated Nautanki performer Gulabbai. The chapter "Kaun Hain Hiraman aur

Hirabai?" ("Who are Hiraman and Hirabai?") stands out for its careful attempt to bridge fiction and reality, thereby reinforcing the film's roots in lived experience.

The book devotes substantial attention to the discovery and cinematic journey of Teesri Kasam. Anant documents how the story reached filmmaker Shailendra through Navendu Ghosh and how it gradually moved from the Indo-Nepal borderlands of Bihar to the heart of Hindi cinema in Mumbai. The inclusion of historical letters—especially Shailendra's correspondence with Renu—adds authenticity and emotional weight to the narrative. These documents illuminate the trust, mutual respect, and creative alignment between the two artists, emphasizing that the film emerged from dialogue rather than dominion.

Anant's portrayal of Shailendra is particularly nuanced and empathetic. Commonly remembered as an iconic lyricist, Shailendra's role as a producer and visionary filmmaker is often overlooked. Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam restores this neglected dimension of his artistic identity. Anant narrates the formation of the production house "Image Makers," the assembling of the creative team, and the collaborative efforts of actors, technicians, cinematographer Subrata Mitra, music directors Shankar-Jaikishan, and others. Through anecdotes and documented incidents, the book conveys the collective labor that underpinned the film's aesthetic achievement.

The chapter "Renu ke Bol, Shailendra ke Geet" ("Renu's Words,

**CONT. ON PAGE 15**

# An Exciting Time: A Review of Introduction to the Environmental Humanities

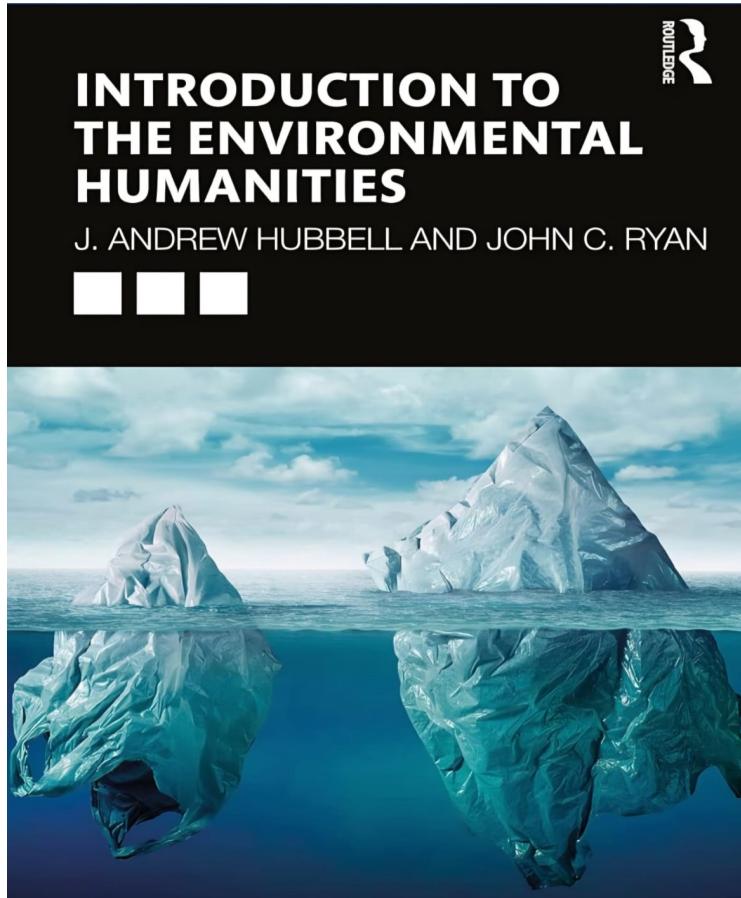


Dr Tanmoy Bhattacharjee

Book: Introduction to the Environmental Humanities  
Authors: J. Andrew Hubbell and John C. Ryan  
Publisher: Routledge, 2022, London and New York  
Pages: 289  
Price: INR 4369

**T**he emergence of *Introduction to the Environmental Humanities* is far from accidental. Much like Daniel Chiu Suaraz's recent *Biologists Unite* (2025), which incisively unmasks the euphemism embedded in the phrase "biodiversity loss," J. Andrew Hubbell and John C. Ryan confront the suffocating egotism of human centrism. They write: "Without attentiveness to the other, we suffocate within the confines of our own egotism. We can think of no more powerful way to counter the current culture of toxic individualism, which is the very root of our environmental crises, than cultivating attentiveness. Perhaps climate change, species extinction, and attention deficit disorder (ADD) are all related symptoms of the Anthropocene culture" (50). Although the authors emphasize in their prefatory note that the book is primarily designed for undergraduate readers, its scope extends well beyond introductory pedagogy. Through carefully curated, chapter by chapter case studies, Hubbell and Ryan dissect the "related symptoms of the Anthropocene culture" with precision, provoking readers to grapple with the questions and methods that define environmental humanism (x). The result is a critical work that not only illuminates the entanglements of ecological crisis and cultural practice but also challenges the reader to cultivate attentiveness as an ethical and intellectual stance against toxic individualism.

The tour de force that captivates contemporary academia and unites fourteen rigorously analysed chapters on environmental humanities into a coherent manifesto lies in its unmistakable commitment to multidisciplinarity. The authors presuppose that both general readers and aspiring EH scholars must first grasp the broad intellectual context from which this discipline emerged. Thus, they trace the pivotal environmental turn in the post-World War II era, inviting entrepreneurial readers into the layered palimpsest of history to underscore the inevitability of this field's growth. Their



broader aim—sustained with the creative intensity of a Joycean interplay between text and subtext—is nothing less than steering human civilization away from its existential brink. As Hubbell and Ryan themselves assert: “Environmental Humanities is both a product of and an agent in the radical reorganization of knowledge. In another context, we would strenuously defend this reorganization as necessary if we are to reorient human civilization away from its existential brink, a crisis caused in no small part by the knowledge-power division fomented since the Enlightenment” (ix).

Unlike many works of similar scope and temperament, Environmental Humanities—beginning with “Reflection 1.1”—redefines its inclusive exclusivity by engaging directly with readers’ everyday experiences, their seemingly ordinary yet significant encounters with the environment, and the many questions that often remain unaddressed. Its appeal is resonant, cascading like a dais toward the audience, especially for the novice student confronted with the opening summons: “Select an environmental issue frequently reported in the media. How might a discipline-crossing, boundary-defying, and policy-focused strategy lead to solutions to the issue?” (6). This meaningful invitation immediately acknowledges the reader’s autonomy, freedom, and potential. As any

good introductory text should, it assures the readership that the critical formulations offered at each "Waypoint" are open to debate, discussion, and even disillusionment.

This is precisely why Hubbell and Ryan sustain a spirit of continuum in their phrasing, never closing off interpretation but instead opening it outward: "Put simply, EH opens our eyes, minds, and hearts to the interconnections between all life in a radically changing world" (5). Such an appeal to openness is inseparable from the pursuit of a "good life" for all beings, approached through science, religion, politics, arts, and the humanities alike. The breadth of this vision recalls the shanti mantra from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad: "Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah" (Translation: Om, may all beings be happy).

Throughout, the authors are careful not to leave readers misguided, oversimplifying, or distorting meaning. For instance, in the chapter "Ecological Literary Studies," as they explore the idea of "being at home in the world" (181), they invoke Gary Snyder's *A Place in Space* while emphasizing the fundamental implication of "learning to dwell." Like teachers guiding learners through the *modus vivendi* of place in both life and literature, they stress that "the ability to identify with a place is the necessary first step toward developing identity, belonging, and purpose"

(181). Lawrence Buell, in *Writing for an Endangered World*, echoes this concern differently: "That one of literary imagination's traditional specialties has been to evoke and create a sense of place is all the more reason why place should have place in a book such as this" (56).

Most charmingly, Wendell Berry is recalled in connection with the exfoliation of dwelling—a concept at once traditional and contemporary. For Berry, dwelling is the “process of developing reciprocal relations with the biotic community,” and “being at home in the world” is when we become most fully human (182). This idea resonates unmistakably with Rabindranath Tagore’s song: “Viswa sathe joge jethay biharo/ seikhane jog tomar sathe amaro” (My translation: Where souls unite in joyous wandering, there let my spirit join with yours).

Environmental Humanities unfolds like a broad boulevard, lined with shade-giving trees that offer respite to travellers navigating the ebb and flow of this evolving field. Along the way, readers encounter waypoints such as “Case Study,” “Reflection,” “Weblinks,” “References,” “Annotated Bibliography,” and concise “Chapter Summaries,” each serving as a ready reckoner for deeper engagement. Those who prefer a leisurely pace may pause beneath these intellectual canopies, reflecting at their own comfort, while others seeking more active engagement can turn to the exercises at the close of each chapter for self-assessment and growth. For instance, one exercise invites readers to select a favourite work of literature and analyse its representation of the environment, classifying it through the tropes outlined in Case Study 10.2: is it sublime, beautiful, or picturesque? (185). The experience is further enriched by visual encounters with works such as “Among the Sierra Nevada” (1868), “Little Red Riding Hood” (1911), and “Poppy Field” (1890), which open avenues for grappling with nuanced notions of the sublime, the beautiful, and the picturesque. In this way, Environmental Humanities acts as a whistleblower for new expeditions in a still-flourishing discipline, and its merit strongly calls for translation into many more languages across the world.

the world. **(Dr Tanmoy Bhattacharjee, Assistant Professor of English at Women's Christian College, Kolkata, and Post-doctoral Fellow at Lincoln University College, Malaysia, is the author of Sarojini Naidu: Sufi and Bhakti Influence. He is the editor of Understanding Environment, Eco-Tales of India, and As Leaves Rustle (Spadina Literary Review, Canada). He is currently translating SabarKatha under the Rupkatha Project in collaboration with ULB, Belgium. He can be mailed at [tanmoy.cu06@gmail.com](mailto:tanmoy.cu06@gmail.com))**



**"Paradigm Of Feelings"****Elpiola Lluka**

When I first came to this place,  
my thoughts inked full of colours...  
Unending letters my brain embrace,  
as papers gave me creative powers.

Where the sunbeams shine the most,  
soul is resting on its laurels;  
In darkness the feelings improve lost,  
By bird's chirrup they're smelling florals...

In heart of my chest the fire is burning,  
all my thoughts are annihilated...  
The heartbeats in purple are turning,  
reminds me bunch of memories decimated...

Beyond skyline we meet the past,  
across the soul it is nurturing...  
Fighting itself in pathway so fast,  
and shot an arrow in heart luring...

By then the glory crimson is showing,  
blended with ashes and flames...  
Feelings as arrows are bowing,  
In love battle the heart always blames...

**(Elpiola Lluka, from Albania is a globally published poet. She got many awards and lives to write on Nature and Society )**

**AMONG THE ODES OF TIME****Maria Kolovou Roumelioti**

Time, you make me hurt...  
What do I owe you?  
You offered me cloudy water  
As medicine, to drink! ...

And I, the mortal, walked  
With a thirsty body  
My hands built the sky  
My feet the soil!....

I left my armor  
A nest, for what will come  
And responsibility always embroiders me

With what I have suffered!....

My roots dry up  
I watered them with tears  
Inside me, the soul is a sea  
That had only salt!....

The temporary envied me  
I fell into delusion  
In tragic irony  
Slave of the undertaker!...

In the pains of time  
The truth falters  
Mud fell into the eyes  
And the world collapses!....

All the beautiful things are over  
The hourglass is empty  
In time the shooting  
I will find the new homeland!....

**(Maria Kolovou Roumelioti is a Greek Poet and her poems are published in global anthologies and magazines )**

**IS ANYBODY LISTENING****Rafiya Sayeed**

From under the rubble of shredded  
dreams and broken promises,  
she is sobbing beneath the heap  
topped with tiles of shimmering lies.

The crushed humanity is bleeding,  
is shattered into million pieces that  
float in and out the cloudy waters  
of red rivers and grey lakes.

I catch a whiff of broil and blood,  
snow and sorrow, greenery and grief,  
meadows and misery, hope and horror,  
treachery and tragedy in her breath.

**(Rafiya Sayeed is a writer and educator from Kashmir. She writes poetry, essays and review works. She is inspired by nature and simple life experiences to write her verses. Her work has been featured in various anthologies, newspapers and online literary magazines.)**

CONT. FROM PAGE 11

Shailendra's Songs") is among the most engaging sections of the book. Here, Anant explores how the film's songs function not as interruptions but as integral extensions of the narrative. The lyrics, steeped in regional dialects and folk rhythms, mirror the emotional landscape of the characters. Anant convincingly argues that these songs are poetic transcriptions of Renu's prose, transformed through Shailendra's lyrical genius. The discussion of Majrooh Sultanpuri writing from jail and the careful placement of songs within the film's structure underscores the cultural and emotional intelligence behind the soundtrack.

Equally compelling is Anant's account of the struggles involved in the film's production. The chapter "Filmkan ka Sangharshmay Safarnama" ("The Struggles of the Cinematographic Journey") meticulously documents logistical difficulties, budget overruns, and delays that extended the film's completion from six months to nearly six years. Rather than sensationalizing these challenges, Anant presents them as inevitable consequences of attempting a poetic, non-commercial cinema within an industry driven by formula and speed. This section also highlights the tension between imagination and execution—a central dilemma in all forms of artistic creation.

One of the most emotionally resonant portions of the book is the discussion of Shailendra's personal turmoil and eventual demise. Popular narratives often attribute Shailendra's untimely death to the commercial failure of *Teesri Kasam* and the debts incurred during its making. Anant revisits this assumption with sensitivity and historical rigor. Drawing on diary entries and contemporaneous accounts, he suggests that while Shailendra was concerned about financial pressures, he was not entirely consumed by despair. Plans to renovate his office and write songs for Shankar-Jaikishan indicate a forward-looking mindset. This balanced portrayal avoids romanticizing tragedy and instead situates Shailendra within the complex realities of artistic labor.

The later chapters of *Do Gulfamoni ki Teesri Kasam* reflect on the film's eventual recognition and enduring legacy. Though *Teesri Kasam* did not achieve immediate commercial success, it gradually came to be recognized as a classic of Indian cinema. Anant frames this delayed recognition as a "victorious battle," suggesting that true art often transcends temporal market logic. The penultimate and final chapters—focusing on Hirabai as a dream figure and Shailendra's symbolic martyrdom—elevate the narrative to a philosophical plane, encouraging readers to reconsider the relationship between sacrifice, memory, and artistic immortality.

Stylistically, Anant's writing is marked by clarity, restraint, and sincerity. The book avoids heavy theoretical jargon and does not

assert critical superiority. Instead, it adopts a patient, almost archival tone, allowing facts, letters, interviews, and narratives to speak for themselves. This approach aligns with Anant's own assertion that reading cinema is akin to dusting an old album—recovering memories without imposing ego. The absence of excessive critical posturing makes the book accessible to both scholars and general readers.

Importantly, Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam makes a valuable contribution to the study of Indian cinema by foregrounding regional literature and folk culture. It underscores how Renu's "deshaj asmita"

(indigenous identity) shaped the film's ethos and how Shailendra's poetic sensibility translated that ethos into cinematic language. The book thus becomes an essential text for students of film studies, literature, cultural studies, and anyone interested in adaptation as a creative dialogue rather than mere conversion.

In conclusion, Do Gulfamon ki Teesri Kasam is a rare, committed, and meaningful work that preserves the artistic history of one of Indian cinema's most poetic films. Anant succeeds in demonstrating that the making of Teesri Kasam is as compelling as the film itself. The book

stands as both documentation and homage—honoring two “Gulfams” whose shared devotion produced a cinematic work that continues to touch the soul. By bridging literature and cinema with empathy and rigor, Anant’s work fills a crucial gap in Indian cultural scholarship and deserves wide readership and critical attention.

**(Dr. Purnima is an academic, writer, and researcher with a sustained interest in literature, cinema. Through her critical writing and reviews, she seeks to foreground understudied artistic contributions and promote reflective engagement with Indian literature and cinema.)**

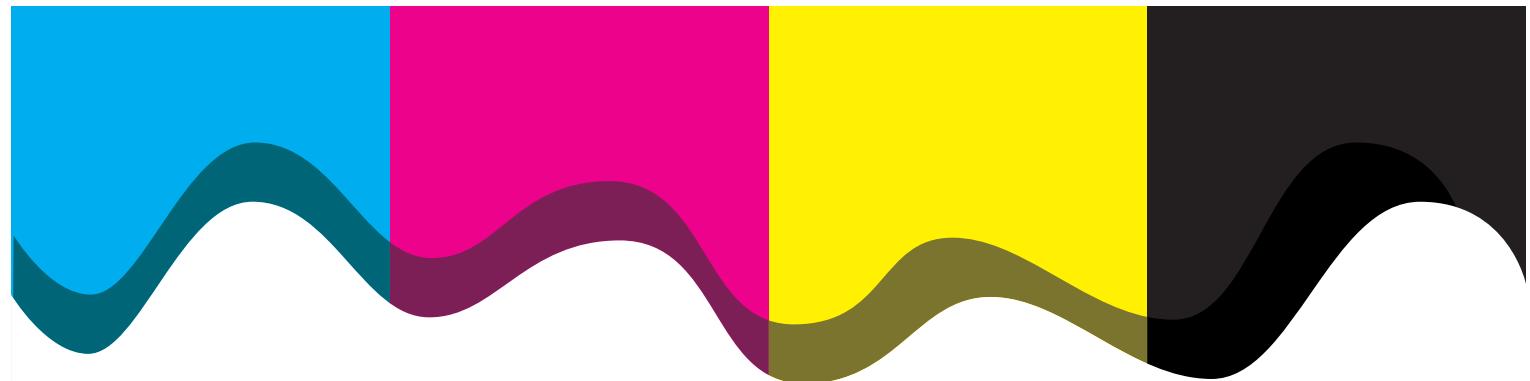
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