

TRECENTO

EDITION 26



THE ENGLISH LITERARY SOCIETY
SHRI RAM COLLEGE OF COMMERCE

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AN INTRODUCTION TO

TRECENTO

Trecento - literally meaning 'Three Hundred' - is a name that reflects our commitment to reaching new heights and embarking on challenging journeys. With over 2000 readers, trecento consists of engaging literary articles, insightful book reviews, author interviews and captivating poetry. It has established itself as a trusted and knowledgeable resource for literary enthusiasts. Our cherished newsletter 'Trecento' showcases a diverse collection of poems, stories and articles that capture the essence of human emotions and experiences with each edition. It is a platform where budding writers find their voice, sharing their unique perspectives and inspiring narratives, a testament to the beauty of words and the brilliance of our literary community.

MOON AND MIND



it was end of june
and I stomped through the end of the field
my neon shirt sticking to my skin
like nets stick to fish in the sea.

another test of fire,
datesheets never ending like stamps
on my right hand,
it will be over soon
and I'll be woman again
laughing with my best friends.

you don't see earth collapsing inside my eyes,
liars in every corner of my mind,
i sit on a see-saw at midnight
and push myself off the ground, towards the sky.

they say, death dies in silence
and thoughts appear in theatre of imagination
disconnected from your true self,
so don't put stock in them
but I am watching, in the audience,
and every dancer looks right at me,
convincingly, staring daggers daily.

so, I skip parties but I'm having a blast,
everyday I am watching cars crash
and in my room, I'm my own horror show,
my theatrical production, my broken stars.

somedays, peace is found in strange places.
i look at the moon and think,
look how god punctured a hole in the sky
and gazes at me with his brilliant white eye.

-Dikshya Mohapatra



BARGAINING LIFE: A POET'S JOURNEY

FROM DESPAIR TO EMBRACE

Ethan was a college student tired of his life and with no hope as all his life he went fulfilling others and his parent's expectations one day he decided to end this perpetual agony and he wrote this in his last note to his parents:

*In the quiet dusk, where shadows softly play,
I pen a tale of words I long to convey.
To parents dear, with hearts so true,
My gratitude blooms in every hue*

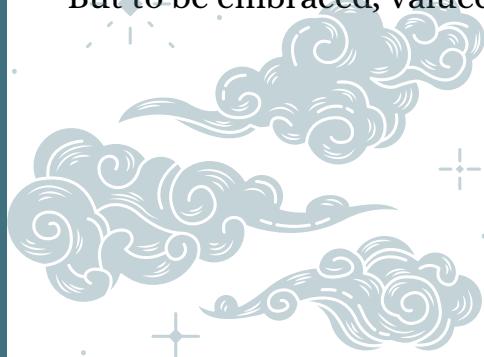
*With the compass of your expectations, I traveled a long way, now
my legs won't work it's turning dark with no place to stay*

*In the darkness of despairs, my luggage grows heavy, my verses
once vibrant, now whisper echos of melancholy*

*In the quiet embrace of the eternal truth,
Where shadows dance, and whispers soothe.
I'm going, accepting like a fragile breath,
The inevitability of life meeting death.*

After writing this note to his parents Ethan was ready to accept the eternal truth sitting at the edge of a cliff out of nowhere an old man looking around 75 to 80 sat beside him and said to Ethan.

I understand the weight of the burden unseen,
But within the struggle of the journey lies the strength unforeseen,
Life canvas is huge with many paintings yet to unfold,
Stories yet unwritten, yet untold
For life is a precious gift, not to be wasted or tossed,
But to be embraced, valued, in every victory and loss.



So, my child, don't let despair dictate your fate,
Embrace the dawn, for it's never too late.

Confront your parents with a heart open wide, In their love and
understanding, let your strength abide."

Ethan bowed and went home realizing the meaning of life and as years
passed he became a great poet and he still thanked himself for that day.

-Anurag Rohilla



ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SELF - LOVE

“To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong romance.”

- Oscar Wilde

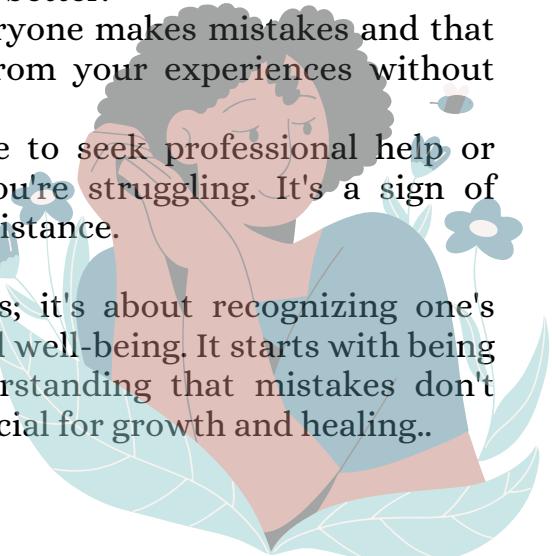
Try to name the top three people you love the most. pretty ironic that you do not love yourself Why so? It is because often as kids we are not told about self-love which is the most important thing in life, setting ourselves as our priority is always misunderstood as being selfish. But let me tell you, being selfish and loving yourself is the opposite thing. Let's try to understand this with a story.

The writer found themselves amidst two distinct groups of friends. The first group provided solace, offering support during tough times and filling the writer's spirit with energy and positivity. Conversely, the second group often made the writer feel inferior, leaving them drained and disheartened after interactions. One day, the writer made a pivotal decision: to distance themselves from the second group. This wasn't an act of selfishness; it was an act of self-love.

Now the question arises of how to practice self-love. So to start with:

- **Practice self-compassion:** Be kind and understanding to yourself. Don't be harsh on yourself, you also have feelings, you're also human.
- **Set Boundaries:** Learn to say no to things that drain your energy.
- **Take care of your body:** Engage in activities that promote physical health, such as exercise, balanced nutrition, proper sleep, and regular check-ups. Treating your body well contributes to a positive self-image
- **Nurture your mind:** Feed your mind with positive thoughts and affirmations. Practice mindfulness, meditation, or journaling to understand your thoughts and emotions better.
- **Forgive yourself:** Acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes and that they don't define your worth. Learn from your experiences without dwelling on self-criticism.
- **Seek help when needed:** Don't hesitate to seek professional help or support from friends and family if you're struggling. It's a sign of strength to recognize when you need assistance.

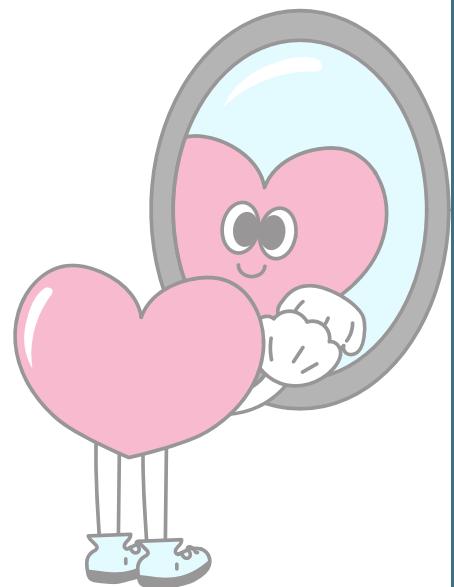
Remember Self-love isn't about selfishness; it's about recognizing one's worth and prioritizing mental and emotional well-being. It starts with being kind and compassionate to oneself. Understanding that mistakes don't define worth and that self-forgiveness is crucial for growth and healing..



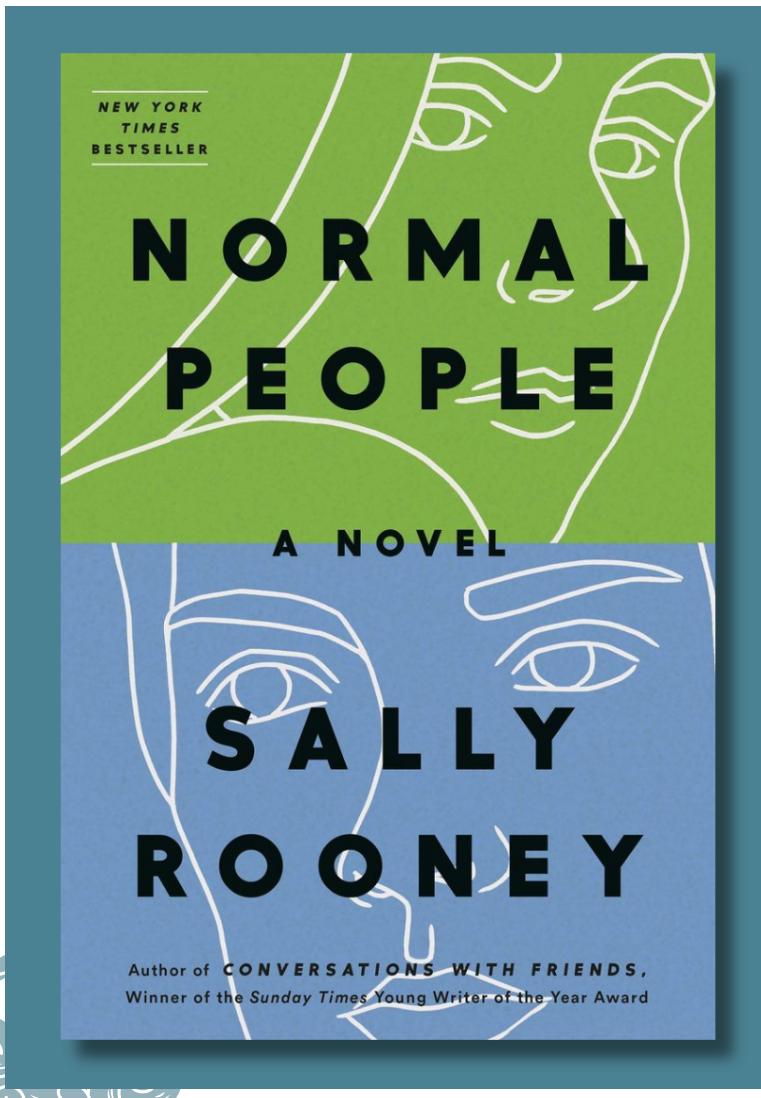
And to end this there is a poem :

"Looking in the mirror, I saw the truth,
A journey inside from seed to fruit,
not seeking perfection, infinitely far,
but embracing every flaw and every scar
Between the chaos of life,
I stand tall embracing every rise and every fall,
through sunsets and storm,
I will cherish me, a constant companion always free
Yet within these flaws, life's grand design,
Self-love blooms, uniquely mine."

-Anurag Rohilla



BOOK REVIEW



NORMAL PEOPLE
By Sally Rooney



The promising author's second book- as successful as her first, if not more, offers a deeper insight into her amazing literary talent. This is one of the few books that deserves all the hype it has received upon its release.

It is not really genre defying as a coming of age, young adult novel, but I promise you won't regret picking it up. It provides an amazing conversation on people confronting their anxieties about the future and about their present lives; written so inexplicably beautifully that you are able to live their life as your own.

The book has been both a commercial and critical success, having featured in Vanity Fair's spread of "this season's best new books and the must-have bags to stash them in" among others.

'Some people just move through the world in a different way'

Painted into an emotional and social background, it's a story about two people, Marriane and Connell with intertwined lives across four years, some of which they spend together and some apart.

Through its 270 short pages, it provides a dive into the hearts and minds of the two teenagers and the people around them and their daily routines , first in a small town in Ireland , and then in the hustle and bustle of Dublin . The book is a success in being able to talk about mental distress and sex without ever being salacious. Throughout this book ,you are never meant to feel like a voyeur but instead like a participant in their lives. It is a very real book in how it portrays young people , people in 'undefined 'relationships , people not knowing what they want to do with their lives , but still moving along . Marriane and Connell both confront their demons throughout the book. Marriane, in the form of her mentally and sometimes physically abusive family and Connell suffering due to the social class he is born into . Marriane lives in a big white house and Connell's mother cleans that castle.

I read the book in one sitting , engrossed in it all through the night, and even though I had a very tiring day earlier, I couldn't put it down .

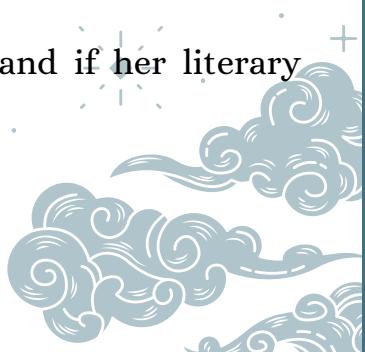
Of course one reason was that the book is quite easy to read , but it was only one reason of many . How the two protagonists deal and live with their anxiety and not so perfect lives , really resonated with me at that time , as I too was going through the often uncomfortable transition of a student going from school to college; studying up on one entrance exam after another and just going through each day full of this dread .

The book also shows how everything is transient and you can never really be too sure of what's to come, no matter how much you try . As school students , while Marriane is considered a bit of a freak, and is unpopular and disliked; Connell is adored by everyone . But this all changes when they go to the prestigious Trinity College in Dublin. There , Marriane is accepted for her weirdness by her peers while Connell finds it difficult to fit in the same social circle as her's. Connell eventually lands himself into a deep depression but is able to find solace in writing , realising that he is actually pretty good at it . This is a both a freeing and a bit disheartening revelation for him , for he had believed that sports would be his life. They have this connection which connects them through each others Worlds , and they are both kindhearted and sensitive to never leave each other in misery . The feelings of loneliness are also highlighted , something they both go through even when they are surrounded by people , for they both yearn for deeper connections

At its most basic level, it still remains a love story but a bit different from what you would imagine. It is also a story of mutual dependence on each other, how they are unable to leave one another , using each other as a crutch even though they have outgrown their relationship . It presents how no relationships can ever be perfect .But then you realise no real people are perfect . They are no rebels like Romeo Juliet or protagonists in some other epic , just normal people trying to find their footing in the world. They are both a bit damaged, but are trying their best; and it makes you really root for them.

“Life offers up these moments of joy despite everything” It is a bit heavy handed sometimes , but the bleakness is also cut by showing us they too have had happier moments in life. The belief is reassuring that they can still be happy , that it is not necessary for such sensitive people to always prod along. They can walk sometimes, even run .

Sally Rooney artistically writes the Irish millennial , and if her literary history is anything to go by , she is just getting started.



SYMPHONY OF MIND

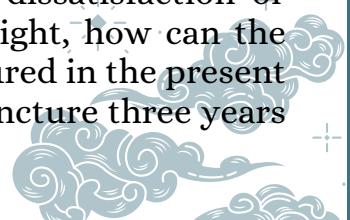
ARE YOUR GOALS REALLY YOURS ?

You understand what's happening, you are at some point and your mind is limited by the exposure and experiences it has had.

And your goals automatically arise from the limited exposure you've had. You don't really 'make' goals, they just come to you. There is no 'You' in the so-called 'Your goals'. If you think these are your goals, No! they are not. How did you decide your goals as a 4 year old ? You had probably watched a movie or you've heard something from somewhere. And that influence decided for itself, where are you in all that ?

You come, let's say, from a small village where you only see the government machinery functioning, there's no private industry there. All you see is a network of the government, then it's pretty obvious that the only goal that will arise in your mind is to become a government employee or a civil servant. It's no surprise that in the civil services, most of the selections are from the most underdeveloped states. And from the states with a higher level of development, there are hardly people preparing for the civil services, very few Gujaratis for example prepare and get selected. Now it should be clear that your goals are not really yours, they come from the influences upon you and you don't have to decide them, they get decided on their own. And it's a very mechanical process. To chase goals is to become a part of that mechanical process, and anything that is mechanical is pre-programmed and dead.

Secondly, as you read this right now, do you have any goal in mind ? When you are really enjoying or that you are fully engaged, absorbed, then the mind doesn't run towards goals. The mind runs after goals only when it is sad, dissatisfied, frustrated and miserable. In your moments of joy, when you are really happy, are you still thinking about goals ? Goals disappear in your moments of joy. But goals come back when you are frustrated. The more frustrated you are, the more goal centric your life will be. And it would have been alright could the goals remove the frustration. But there's a problem, frustration is right now and the goals are always for the future. That's like imagining that I am sick right now, but I'll take medicine two years later. Absurd and ridiculous ? Well! that's the story of our goals. All goals are false medicines. Goals arise from a sense of dissatisfaction or discomfort with the present. But if the present isn't alright, how can the future heal it. If the present isn't alright, shouldn't it be cured in the present or will you say that my leg is bleeding but I'll apply the tincture three years later.



If you are unhappy right now, be happy right now. But when we are unhappy we start planning, we start setting up goals, don't we ? And that's such a foolish thing, how can a goal heal your misery if the misery is right now.

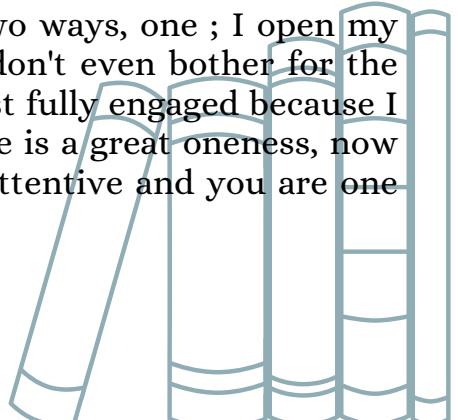
Even while reading this, there can be two kinds of people. Some who are fully absorbed, they don't have any space for goals, goals are out of their minds. And others who aren't fully absorbed, now these are the people who will have goals. They would be thinking about what to do in the next hour, what to do on sunday, 6 months later something is going to happen, what to do in the exams and there is no limit to the flight their imaginations might be taking.

I am not just generally condemning goals. You know, all that is stupidity, to reject something outright. Here, we are trying to understand what these goals actually are, when do I set up goals and where do these goals come from?

But I can understand your difficulty. You may argue that without goals life will become aimless and reasonless. But why do you think there must be a reason in life ? Why do you think there must be a reason to live ? Is living not sufficient that you want to add a reason to it ?

Yes, that's the thing, living is not sufficient because we aren't sufficiently living. When you are living fully, then you don't want to add a reason to it, then you don't say that without a reason it's not tasty enough, let me add some spices to it. It's already good, wonderful, isn't it ? Why do you want to add a purpose, a goal, a reason ? Why ? Because we find something missing, and you would be surprised to know what's missing. Life is missing from our lives. Joy is missing. Love is missing. And that's not missing from the future, that's missing from the present. In your moments of love, you won't be thinking of goals, let me assure you. When all these things are missing from lifhood , you want to compensate for them. And this is such a false compensation. You want to compensate for them by creating imaginary goals for the future. This will not help. Whatever is missing right now, must be obtained right now, there is no other way at all.

I want to study something, alright ? There are two ways, one ; I open my book and I am so deeply engrossed in it, that I don't even bother for the time. Mind you, I am not pushing myself, I am just fully engaged because I paid attention. And when you pay attention, there is a great oneness, now you don't need somebody to push you. You are attentive and you are one with the book now. That is one way of living.



Thanks to these goals ! we are never able to study properly. What's more important when you sit for studies ? The goal obviously, because you are studying for the sake of some goal. The goal could be a particular percentage or a particular day when the examination is to be held. And if we could get that particular percentage without studying, we

rather not study. Because marks are the real thing, studies aren't important. That is why the moment a semester is gone, what do you do with your books ? You throw them away. And it doesn't matter to you, how much of the previous semesters can you really recall. Ask those who excel in academics. Do they have goals or do they have love for their subject ? Ask them. When you have goals, those goals are the real thing, understand !

But if there's a love for studies, will that particular percentage not come by itself ? If someone loves a particular subject, how will he perform in that subject ? Does he need to set up goals ? But we set up goals, because there is no love and why there's no love ? Because we never attend to our books. Love is not something which we are to learn from somewhere, love comes with attention. When you are deeply with something, that is love. Are you ever deeply with your books ? No! Because your mind is occupied with the thought of the examination. There is no love possible between you and the book. For you, the book is something to be used and thrown away. It's a very exploitative approach. It's inhumane.

And remember we don't have this approach reserved only for books. The tragedy is that, same is our approach even towards human beings and nature and everything else in life. Use somebody for your goals, couple goals? Seriously! How can there be love when there are goals. How would you feel if you go on a date and the fellow has a goal, that this is what I want to get from her? And often that's what happens. Even in love, you have goals. And when you can't get them, you start feeling frustrated. Then, there's a breakup, you know, my desires are not being fulfilled.

Let's make it a little spicy!

Did we make a goal to be born? When the biggest thing in our so-called 'Life' happened without our participation, without our consent. Now, why are you so occupied with goals? How many of us gave an application to our parents, so that they may conceive you?

Maybe you did. I mean, anything is possible in India. This is a land of great miracles. How many of us breathe out of our own hard work and effort? Things are happening. Let's allow them to happen. Let's not resist. There's a Zen saying which says, ' Just Get out of your own way', things will happen. There will be a beautiful movement. Clear the path. Don't obstruct it. Let it flow. Just mind that it must be an aware flow not a dead flow. A flow in which you know what's happening. And knowing is sufficient. Knowing is just sufficient.

But you see, it requires a movement away from the ego to let go of goals. Ego says I will control. And in this, there is only suffering.

Getting too complicated? Fine! You concern yourself only with life and life is 'right now'. Forget about everything else. Have faith that there is an intelligent design at work even when you are wandering randomly. Something is happening. Something utterly beautiful is happening. We may not be conscious enough to fathom that design. Maybe in hindsight, you'll discover. Oh! that's how it happened.

I know it scares. There's no security in it. It's unpredictable. But let's not be too bothered about controlling things. Let things flow a little. Just be aware. And out of awareness, actions happen spontaneously not through goals. That's what I call 'The spontaneous dance of intelligence'.

It sounds attractive, right? But it also sounds scary. Both attraction and aversion are there simultaneously. But that's what happens in a love affair. You are deeply attracted but there's also some fear. And this is the biggest, the highest and the only true love affair possible. A love affair with life itself. Allowing the unpredictable to come every moment and welcoming it without resisting it. Unbelievable! How can it be so?

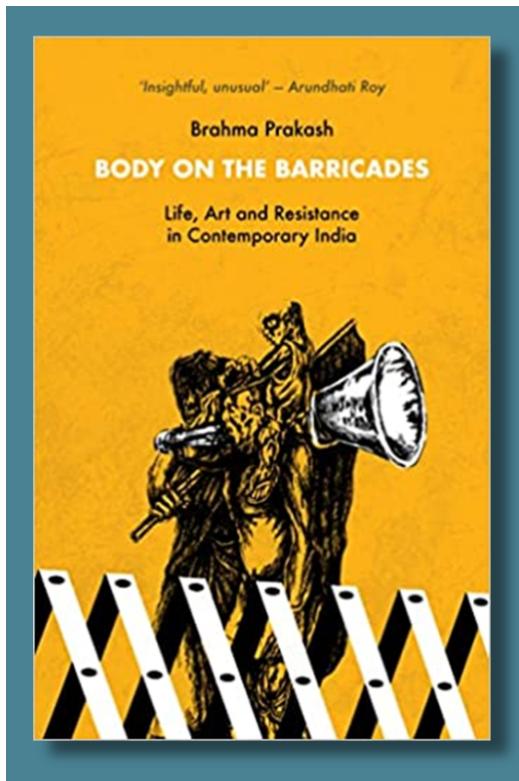
Dear friend, it's not simply that in your deepest moments of love, you find that your eyes are closed. You have set yourself free and allowed the madness to take over you. There's faith. There's love.

With this, let me take leave of you dear reader. I am here, always there for you.

-Anubhav Patel

POLITICAL STRUGGLE

I am a political science student interested in literary expressions of protest. I notice that a concern for the restless youth, like me, worldwide is the growing authoritarianism in the polity and how it will affect their open-minded critical consciousness development via academic freedom. In this milieu, I have found the following book as a literary and political meditation on resisting authoritarianism.



Brahma Prakash, the author, is a Professor at the School of Arts and Aesthetics in the Jawaharlal Nehru University. As a commentator put it, this book of his is “lyrical, searing and powerful”. It addresses political struggle against authoritarianism in India as “performance, making visible protest as embodied, dramatized. The body bearing its caste, gender, religious community identity, is presented in the thick of battle against the coercive power of the state, of dominant groups. Scholarly rigour blends with the power of emotions that set this body, these bodies, in motion—rage, grief, solidarity, love, hatred.”

The book is an ensemble of a series of meditations on these lines, i.e. on the curtailment of life, art and freedom with the rise of authoritarianism in contemporary India. As the author points out, “the biggest weapon unleashed by any authoritarian regime is fear. It wants us to live in fear—the fear of numbers, the fear of the majority, the fear that if you do not vote, the nation will fall. But the authority feels afraid if we stop fearing. The point is not to lose hope. The point is not to succumb to the malevolence of power.” There are possibilities of resistance. And there are the fundamentals of life and art that cannot be curtailed under any circumstances. This is the thrusting message of the book.

It may be noted that “barricade” has a strange history as also an evolving meaning. “It is an object that people created on the streets to defend themselves against armies, but today it is turned against them. It has become an instrument in the hand of the police and armies to curtail movement.” When it becomes a potent weapon in the hands of the resisting underdogs, it is not only a physical object that the underdogs deploy to obstruct and to strike. It is also an appearance of agents and allegory of politics—“It is about the body resisting the barricades, breaking the barricades, crossing the barricades; in the absence of space, the body appearing on the barricades; or the body turning into barricade and creating space. When bodies assemble on the streets, they open time and space ‘outside’ and against the established architecture and temporality of the regime they are against...In the situation of extreme barricading, one has no option but to move. Against the barricading, movement is the utopia that gives us hope. But against the rampant movement and performance of capital, it is the barricade and the pause that create resistance.”

So, Brahma Prakash first discusses the situation of breathlessness as a profoundly physiological and political situation in which there is vulnerability as also immense mobilising capacities in which every limb tries to act in defence of life. The impasse between hope and hopelessness not only irritates us but also motivates us to participate in action. Then he discusses the curtailment of the word by the culture of demagoguery. Then he discusses how the new regime of control that follows curbs minorities’ lives and rights. After which, he deals with the plight of the migrant labourers in light of the curtailment of their bodies and movements.

“During the Covid-19 pandemic, the authorities expected them to stay in one place or move in an assembly line. But, they drifted away from the designated places. They undertook a walk that showed both the vulnerability and the potentiality of their movements. Then he moves on to discussing the curbing of dissenting voices by the authorities. He shows how the attack on poets and artists is an attack on indispensable human capacities, as an attack on the bodies of sensibilities, the fundamental ideas of freedom, their rhythm, and words, and as an attack on the chord that echoes the unstuck word. Then he deals with the farmers’ protests in Delhi and its enduring spirit that led to the authoritarian regime’s surrender. Which teaches us the lesson that curtailment, unless opposed, never stops. Curtailment in terms of criminalizing the right to protest, using surveillance as the primary engagement of sovereign power and the media carrying the campaign of fear and hatred against the protesters was met with the indomitable spirit and unique gestures of protest of the farmers. Lastly, how the authoritarian regime afraid of protests and subversion, questions and criticisms, and truth and dialogue, can even ban mourning and grieving is dealt with.

The beautiful prose of this book can be supplemented with the enraging poetry of political resistance. Political poetry as a means of political change for economic empowerment as well, is fascinating. I have explored this genre of poetry.

For example, I have read “Still I Rise” by Maya Angelou thus:

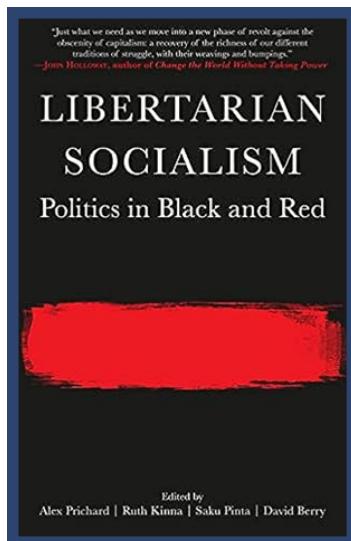
*You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.*

*Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.
Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?
Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
*I rise.**

There is no pro-people economics and general welfare worth talking about without first sorting out the authoritarian political morass permeating the world now. And this governmental authoritarianism is supporting the hegemony of plutocrats whose dictatorial smoke is all around suffocating us to die.



In light of this, I can join the debates on the authoritarian and non-authoritarian approaches to economic development and may settle for libertarian socialist pathway (see picture of the book below) to establishing a people's economy. Based on the key principles of decentralisation, workers' control and mutual aid, libertarian socialism is an anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist political current that emphasises self-governance and workers' self-management. It is contrasted from other forms of socialism by its rejection of state ownership and from other forms of libertarianism by its rejection of private property. Many youth like in the Occupy Movement a decade ago, are attracted to these ideas.



To conclude, how politics and economics can be done differently to establish a people's economy without depending on the principles of authoritarianism and capitalism is the moot question worthy of my attention.



References:

<https://peopleconomy.org/about-the-toolkit/#:~:text=Pathways%20to%20a%20People's%20Economy%20was%20developed%20by%20a%20team,conditions%20from%20the%20bottom%20up.>

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-By Dr. A J C Bose, PhD

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