

The Parrot in the Cage

- Lekhanath Paudyal

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Understanding

1. Who is the speaker of the poem? Why does he call himself "a twice-born child"?

⇒ The speaker of the poem is a caged bird, a parrot who laments much recalling his happy life in the jungle. He calls himself "a twice-born child" because the parrot used to have a free and wandering life in the forest which was his first life. Now the parrot is trapped inside the cage and is forced to live like a Prisoner, which is his second life.

2. What is the present plight of the speaker? Compare stanzas 2 and 8 and explain how the parent-child relationship becomes significant in the poem.

⇒ The speaker's present plight is to stay in the cage from where he laments remembering for the past happy life. At present, there is no one to hear his pain and suffering. His life is now dead in life. His eyes have swollen due to continuous weeping. His enemies are human beings who put him in a cage.

The significance of the parent-child relationship in the poem lies in the emotional weight it adds to the parrot's predicament. The parrot is not only physically confined but also emotionally distanced from

its family. The theme of family and separation enhances the overall sense of loss and despair felt by the parrot. The poem portrays the universal theme of the bond between parents and children, even extending it to the animal kingdom, emphasizing the pain caused by the disruption of ^{this} natural and fundamental connection.

3. How do you evaluate human sensibility towards the non-human in the poem?

⇒ The poem "parrot in the cage" explains the selfish motive of human beings who do not think about animal rights. They use the animals for their entertainment. In the poem, the parrot is engaged in the cage by human beings. For this reason, the parrot explains the human beings as their enemies. He also said cruel to the human beings because they threaten the parrot to beat him when he refuses to speak.

4. What does the speaker mean by "virtues fair" (stanza 22)? What are these virtues because of which the speaker is exploited?

⇒ In stanza 22, when the speaker refers to "virtues fair", it seems to be an ironic or sarcastic expression. The speaker suggests that virtues, which are typically considered positive qualities or moral principles, become a source of exploitation in the context of the poem. The parrot, possessing qualities such as speech and reasoning abilities (referred to as virtues), finds itself in a situation of confinement and suffering.

The implication is that the parrot's intelligence, the very qualities that could be seen as positive and valuable, become a curse when it interacts with humans. The human race, as portrayed in the poem, is depicted as hostile to those virtues, using them for their own amusement or exploiting them for cruel pleasure. The speaker laments the paradox that having the ability to speak and reason has not brought freedom or kindness but, instead, has led to scolding, threats, and confinement.

In essence, the poem explores the irony that the parrot's virtues, which could be considered assets, are not appreciated by those who have confined it. The exploitation arises from the lack of understanding, empathy, or regard for the inherent value of the parrot's natural attributes.

Rhetoric / Language / Writing

1. "Excruciating must I end my lease" (l. 56): the world, like the cage, does not belong to the human soul or to the bird that lives in the cage for the moment. What does the speaker mean by this expression?

⇒ The line "Excruciating must I end my lease" suggests that the world, like the cage, does not belong to the human soul or to the bird that lives in the cage for the moment, and the caged creature that is bound to live a very painful life before it may finally meet its end. Truly, caged creatures feel happy to live in natural environment. As they were in cage, they have to be there till they die. Their only freedom from cage is death.

The speaker seems to be expressing a sentiment that life, like the cage that confines the bird, is not truly theirs to own or control. The use of "excruciating" suggests intense suffering or pain, indicating a profound dissatisfaction with the current state of being. The speaker might be contemplating the transient nature of life. This sentiment reflects a profound sense of existential angst and a longing for freedom from the limitations or hardships of life.

2. What qualities in the poem would you say help create a universal appeal?

⇒ The poem seems to possess several qualities that contribute to its potential universal appeal:

1) **Themes of Captivity and Freedom:** The theme of captivity and the longing for freedom is a universal human experience. Many people can relate to the desire for autonomy and the struggles associated with confinement, whether literal or metaphorical.

2) **Nature Imagery:** The poem uses vivid imagery of nature, including references to forests, cool waters, and verdant woods.

3) **Human Emotions and Suffering:** The speaker expresses a range of emotions, including sorrow, frustration, and a desire for liberation. These emotional themes are universal and resonate with readers who have experienced similar feelings of confinement or hardship.

4) **Metaphorical Language:** The poem employs metaphor and symbolism, such as iron cage representing confinement and the bird symbolizing the human soul.

5) **Human-Animal Connection:** The poem explores the relationship between humans and animals, particularly the exploitation of the parrot.

6) Yearning for connection: The speaker expresses a deep yearning for connection with loved ones and a sense of loss due to separation. This theme of longing and connection is something that resonates universally.

Overall, the combination of these themes, along with the use of vivid imagery and metaphorical language, contributes the poem's potential to evoke a sense of shared human experience and emotions.

3. How does the speaker move between concepts of freedom and bondage in the poem?

⇒ In the poem, the speaker moves between concepts of freedom and bondage. To free from his bondage, a parrot struggles much to get freedom. But his all efforts to escape from the cage go in vain and become a meaningless struggle. For the sake of his freedom from the cage, he made great effort and endeavor. While doing so, his beak is injured and his wings and legs have much pain. As he could not gain his freedom, he also prays to the gods.

4. Do you think that the speaker's judgement upon mankind in stanza 23 is fair enough? Or, is this an overstatement?

⇒ While judging mankind's behavior, the speaker shows the cruel and injustice treatment of human beings. Human beings are selfish and self-centered in their behavior. If the parrot did not sing, people beat him and give him a bad name like "Peji". In the poem, the parrot laments much recalling the jungle and thinks only about

his freedom. If he got freedom from the cage, he would visit his old parents and relatives. In this regard, I don't think that it is an overstatement but it is a realistic presentation of human atrocity upon the parrot.

Discussion

1. Discuss the differences between God, Destiny, Fate and Providence. What qualities does the speaker attribute to each one of these in the poem?

⇒ I think that fate is blind but providence has eyes - Fate is that which we cannot change. Destiny is that which we ~~re me~~ are meant to do. Providence is God's governing plan for creation as it exists in his own mind, whereas fate is God's governing plan as it exists within creation. Providence considers God's plan from the perspective of the unity of the divine mind. Fate considers God's plan from the perspective of the diversity of the physical world. Providence is general or universal, fate is specific or particular. Providence is the divine plan, fate is the material outworking of that plan.

Among four, fate has tricked the parrot to keep into the cage. So, his destiny is to move here and there inside of the cage and to be insulted.

2. Does the conclusion (stanza 23) support the concept that this poem asserts a Hindu or Buddhist perspective on life?

⇒ In the conclusion, the poem asserts Hindu or Buddhist perspective on life. It tells that Hindu or Buddhist perspective (God, fate, pray) that as we get problem and great tension, we have habit of praying gods. In the poem too, the caged bird, parrot does same thing. As he does not win freedom from cage, he hates mankind and prays the god not to give the birth of parrot till there are human beings in the world.

3. The poem is presented from the parrot's point of view. How different will it be if presented from a human being's point of view?

⇒ The poem will be completely different if the poem is presented from a human being's point of view. They would say that parrot is like their doll and can imitate their voice. It is their friend to pass their boring time.
