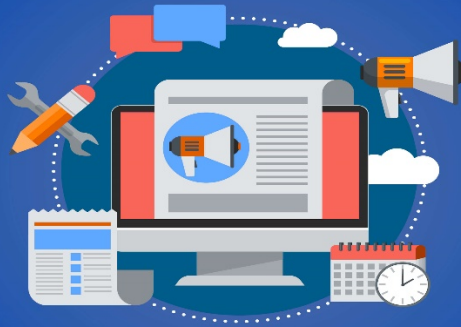


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***Goodbye to Elsa*, by Saros Cowasjee, Publisher: Vision Books Pvt. Ltd,
Year: 2005, Language: English, ISBN- 81-7094-647-6, Pages: 152**

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Saros Cowasjee's *Goodbye to Elsa* is an experimental novel in terms of 'black humor'. Saros Dara Cowasjee (1931-2019) was an Indian- born Canadian novelist, short story writer, commentator, critic, anthologist and screenwriter. Cowasjee was a Professor Emeritus of the University of Regina in Canada. Apart from writing novels he also worked as an editor. His main works are: *O'Casey* (1963), *Stories and Sketches* (1970), *So Many Freedoms* (1977), *Nude Therapy* (1978), *Suffer Little Children* (1982), *The Assistant Professor* (1996), *My Dear Maura* (2005). He had also written Introductions for Mulk Raj Anand.

Goodbye to Elsa (1974) comes under the sub –genre of campus fiction. Campus fictions are type of novels which deal with the story which take place within the fences of academy. The story of *Goodbye to Elsa* is woven around the life of Tristan Elliott as a student at the Army Academy, Universities of Delhi and Leeds College at England and later on as an academic person at Erigon College at Canada. Elliott is the only son of a British father, a pilot, who killed during Burma war, and an Anglo-Indian mother, a nurse at Willington Hospital. Deprived of parental love his childhood assimilates a lot of bitter experiences of anxiety and adultery in himself. Triston Elliott is the central character around whom other characters like Belton, Sheela, Heather Malleison, Nellie, Marie, Marion and Elsa take their part.

The book witnessed the story of Triston Elliott, being an academic person; he indulges in the most insane deed of murder. Elliott lost his father at the early stage of his life and witnessed his mother's promiscuity with Belton, who used to beat him with belt. Little Elliott gets irritated when Belton's daughter Sheela teases and abuses him for his mother's adultery. His beloved Nellie unfortunately gets an accident and losses her legs.

Heather Malleson left him for another man. His supervisor criticizes him a lot and rejects his work many times. Elliott himself gets struck blind in the left eye. Life of Elliott is marked by loneliness and insecurity since his childhood. Later on in his life he takes leave from his work and leaves Elsa and his son with intention to kill himself to get rid from all disillusionment. The story takes a new form where Elliott falls in love with Marie and decides to live for her but she too ditches him for another man. As a result Elliott decides to kill Marie's twin sister Marion as a token of virginal sacrifice to save world from the suffering, and the infected womb. He states that womb is the origin of all problems and leads towards tomb so the reproduction must be stopped to save the world. Being deprived of mother's love, Nellie, Heather, Elsa, Marie and Marion's love he cultivates hatred towards female figure. As a matter of fact, he discards the notion of creation and kills Marion before killing himself.

Goodbye to Elsa deals mainly with three different campuses situated in three different countries- Army Academy in India, The Leeds in England, and The College of Liberal Arts in Erigon, Canada. These three campuses mold the character of Elliott as a student to a scholar and then finally as a lecturer. He joins Army Academy under the influence of his neighbor, Colonel Melvin Ross. He witnessed bullies and brutal ragging at the very first day. Elliott dreams to earn name by serving the country but officers and comrades –in –arms with their malice, hatred and abuses forces him to resigns from the Academy. Tristan takes it as his fate but blames his mother's adultery for their behaviors.

However, he moves on and joins St. Stephens College of Delhi. There he meets first love of his life, Nellie. They both were in love and Tristan likes to kiss her from her legs and love to suck her leg fingers for his satisfaction but there love did not end up in marriage because Nellie loses both her legs in a train accident. Tristan again got dejected and Nellie's loses of legs doubles his depression. This accident incident shows that Cowasjee does not want to give solace to his protagonist. Elliott leaves India and moves to Dublin to study in Trinity College but again he got deceived by a girl Julie and decides to put off his study and leaves Dublin.

The next campus, The Leeds at England, brings a lot of settlements in his life, as he begins his research work, become a member of The India Association, meets Heather

Malleson and Elsa, marriage with Elsa and birth of a son, all the parts provides him momentarily solace but suddenly get deprived from all. He inculcates a sense of alienation and dejection which becomes irreparable to him.

Cowasjee also deals with the power hegemony and academic protocols. At Leeds, Tristan meets, Rajeshwar Dayal, president of The India Association and under his influence Tristan joins The Association and indulges in politicizing the academic matters, and starts raising his voice for the well fare of Indian students in foreign campuses. After some series of events, Tristan gets to know that Association is just a place for immorality and adultery and to put unnecessary pressure on university to follow their illegal and irrelevant demands. At this stage, novelist also depicts the craze of Indian students for foreign girls just for physical sake. At a Students' Union dance organized by the association on the occasion of Diwali, Tristan meets Heather Malleson, and considers her as his dream girl. Tristan also hides his identity to everyone that he is an Anglo- Indian, because Indians have not a good reputation in foreign countries. His relationship with Heather stands on a lot of lies like- he is an English man and Heather is the first lady in his life and on the contrary Heather also cheats him for Moustafa Sadat. Being with Heather, he starts his relationship with Elsa and also connects with Heather just for his physical desires. He gets infuriated when Heather misses her periods. The idea of spending full life as a married man with Heather chilled him and he takes Heather to Shitloo Raman for an abortion, where she gets seduced by Shitloo Raman. However, Heather deserts him and to overcome from this pain Tristan decides to marry Elsa.

Internal rivalry of the campuses is also depicted in its full detail. Tristan meets his two strong rivals at campus- Santosh Kumar and Shituloo Raman and gets cheated by both. Santosh causes humiliation to him by writing a parody to Rajeshwar Dayal under Tristan's name and Shituloo Raman seduces Heather Malleson on the name of helping him for Heather's abortion.

After marrying with Elsa, he starts paying concentration on his research work and gets it completed very soon and joins Erigon College at Canada. The novel gets a detailed picture of campus, departments and associations associated with campuses. Here he witnessed all the aspects of campus and power politics in its full bloom. At Erigon

College, Faculty Wives' Association, a union of the wives of the faculty members, sets as the powerful body of the campus. The Association misused the funds and loves to support butterfly person. The people, who have power hands from behind, get their work published although they were not capable and capable suffers because of the lack of support and power.

The novel sketches the irony that the college bookshop has cigars to sell because faculty members smoked in the premise of the college. It is also irony in itself that an academic person needs her wife even in his academic career, and for that reason Faculty of Wives' Associated got created. The plethora of negative sides present in the campus like- bunking classes just to attend parties, flattery of power peoples, betrayal, rebellious nature of teachers, malice, hatred and lust and power web working under the fences of campus breaks his heart down. It seems that God was also not in his favor, he becomes blind from his left eye. It tensed him that when he will be completely blind he will become burden for Elsa and would have to follow her orders and live on her pity. The idea of this shakes him. He starts hate his work as well as Elsa and his son and decides to leave them to get peaceful death rather to be lived as a blind man.

At that juncture of his life, he meets Marie, the grocery's daughter. Marie reminds him of Nellie. A lot of conversations take place between the two and as soon they became so close to each other. It is first time in Tristan's life when he opens his heart and shares all about his career, his love life, his academic workloads and problems in front of anyone. Marie and Tristan debates about workload and salary proportion of teachers, framing syllabus, conducting exams, lecturing in class for hours without break, participating in academic activities without any interest, students disinterest in study, physical and intellectual labor and power hegemony on the discourse of the campus. They discuss about divorce rate among professors because of their academic matters. Marie takes critical part in debate. Tristan tells Marie about his life and his fear of losing his other eye, and also about his intention to kill himself to get rid of all problems. Marie gives him a ray of hope to live and consequently Tristan proposed her. Marie accepts his proposal and persist him to make a new start in his life and expresses her wish to have a

child by him and convinces Tristan too. Tristan decides to give divorce to Elsa and marry Marie but unfortunately Marie too left him.

After get dejected by Marie, Tristan plans to take revenge by killing Marie's twin sister Marion. He dupes Marion and kills her as a token of virginal sacrifice to save mankind from the infected womb and later on kills himself. The novel questions about the subversion of the notion of regeneration. Tristan takes this step so that future generation will not suffer the same, he has witnessed.

Tristan is a type of man who wants to run away from all the problems and persons he did not want in life. One can forced to ask that which type of person wants to leave his son. Even Elsa was not bad in nature and supported Tristan in every possible way. He does not understand her worth but at his last moment he only remembers Elsa and blubbers, 'I am going Elsa. Goodbye, Elsa'. Novelist tries to depict that the insecurity Tristan develops from an early age in his life, never permits him to trust any lady more in spite of so many love affairs.

Saros Cowasjee has used flash-back technique in this novel. The narrative begins with Tristan's decision to leave his family and later on adds all events of his life. Most of the characteristics of Tristan are come under light after the conversation with Marie. Cowasjee has also used poems of S. T. Coleridge, John Keats, and P.B. Shelly for quotations. A lot of verses from *Bible* and philosophies from Buddhism have also been quoted for multiple reasons. The author uses many forms of writing like- poetry, letter, reportage, criticism etc. in the texture of the text. The novel also talks about imperialism. Tristan's Uncle Kenneth, residing at Leeds, criticizes his Indian figure a lot and abuses him too.

Goodbye to Elsa starts with rushing in life because of fear and ends tragically with the killings. The story oscillates between the present and the past and later on surprisingly turns out to be a text which provides salvation in its own way. The narration is non- linear but witty. Saros Cowasjee mingles comedy and tragedy in an unusual manner. The novel is filled up with irony, comic elements and satire, symbolism, allegory, phrases and slang languages which increase the readability of the novel.

Though the novel gives pessimistic touch to the life but also subsumed the campus issues romance, marriage, divorce, parties and free treatment of sex, flattery, intellectual exploitation, intellectual pretention, snobbery, associations, academic protocols and politics within and without the bars. The novel is also good to read because it gives almost inevitable phenomenon of every campus credos. The pattern of power hegemony is also delineated by Cowasjee without any partiality. *Goodbye to Elsa* also assimilates pattern of subversive notions and discusses about various devices like-intertextuality, hybridity, fantasy, pornographic touch, mixed genres, chutnification and use of slang words. *Goodbye to Elsa* can also be read with the lens of power, politics and campus aspects as well.