

Psychic Exploration: Logic is Nothing but Cowardice

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ABSTRACT

Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel "A Sort of Revenge" reflects the psyche of a person. We can explore the inner motives and that makes all the difference. Like Sunil, we are sometimes led to believe that 'logic is nothing but cowardice'. Sunil and Avinash have misunderstanding of each other on the issue of love to Gauri. This is the basis of the novel. Sunil is a coward. He thinks of revenge and his course of life is changed. Others and he himself know that he is unable to act. The author does not spare any opportunity to ridicule him. The narrative is also full of humour. There are many symbols which explore the psyche of the characters. Gauri always remains at the center of Sunil's cowardice. She loved him once but her love remained unrealized. The point of interest in the later part of the novel is Avinash. We also find him a coward. The work has a fine ending. The person who Sunil wanted to revenge was defeated already and its realization brings him the knowledge that he was trying without an enemy. The work is narrated through Sunil's eyes and heart and mind and that becomes the instrument to dip into his psyche. The whole novel is narrated through Sunil's eyes and heart and mind and that becomes the instrument to dip into his psyche.

Key words : Tribes, Culture, Punnadu, Karnataka, Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, Kadukurubas, Bettakurubas, Jenukurubas, Soligas, Yaravas, Odugas, Lambanis, Hadi, Podu

Generally a short novel is based on a single situation or a single sentiment and that remains the focus of it and similarly a single character also become the focus of narration. This can be applied to Sunil Gangopadhyay's novel "A Sort of Revenge" (1)

Thinking reflects the psyche of a person. Through it we can explore the inner motives and that makes all the difference. Like Sunil, we are sometimes led to believe that 'logic is nothing but cowardice, and our lives courage is necessarily irrational.' No one can say what the other's inner is. That's why Sunil and Avinash have misunderstanding of each other on the issue of love to Gauri. This is the basis of the novel "A Sort of revenge". Sunil thinks that Avinash wants him out of Calcutta because he loved Gauri once and now he is marrying her. For this Avinash offers him a job, showing that he is rich. For Sunil, he

takes it as an insult because he isn't having a permanent job. For this small thing he has '

sworn to make him bite the dust.' But he wants to keep cool and plan a decisive course of action because 'An impatient anger will only defeat my purpose. And in that Avinash will remain the victor. It will be his victory rather than my vengeance.'

Sunil knows that he himself is a coward. As he thinks of revenge his course of life is changed. He desires a cup of coffee instead of tea. He avoids going to the office. There's no cold but he wears a jacket. This is not only the matter. He can easily be excited and he does get excited. When he looks into the mirror his face turns cruel and fearsome. To show courage and to have confidence he takes out a 'Bhujali' – a big blade. As he touches its edge a shiver runs down his spine.

Others and he himself know that he is unable to act. The very idea of taking revenge is quite

absurd and foolish for him. His sister in law would 'sure to burst out laughing' if she finds him out making faces before the mirror the way the kids do. Gauri is also having the same belief.

The author does not spare any opportunity to ridicule him. It should also be noted that humorous situations aren't for the sake of comedy. They actually indicate his real self. Bhujali is one with that we get funny incidents. He asks himself "Will I actually strike Avinash with the Bhujali?" He then talks of detective stories. Then he stops at a street corner shop to buy a couple of cigarettes. he thinks shopkeeper served him first though there were others before him. Otherwise on the other days the shopkeeper would attend to others and keep him waiting. He is also 'prepared for a showdown with the conductor.' This narrative is also full of humour. He moves in the streets carelessly as he has Bhujali. To get strength he repeats the word 'vengeance' and wants the world to take note of that he is courageous. He thinks, "standing in broad daylight in the middle of the busy street, raising the glistening dagger, shouting to the world, Watch out, here I come!"

For Sunil no one takes him seriously. 'He is a coward, that kind of statement is repeated (p. 73, 74, 75, 76, 79) one or the other way by the novelist e.g. 'Somehow Gauri is of the view that I am and will always remain a coward'

Other than Bhujali there are many symbols which explore the psyche of the characters. The shaving scene should be looked in this reference. The blade is blunt edged. It brings tears into Sunil's eyes. The season of winter is also expressive. Sunil moves twice round the Martyr's Monument. It suggests that he is unable to fetch any inspiration from it. Reference of red colour hints the ongoing process into the mind e.g. (red) road, blood (red) boil, blood boil in anger (red). The scene at picnic, the maidan scene, and his dealing with the fake police and Avinash deepen the meaning and emphasise that Sunil's inner is unable to cop the situations outside. These symbols are very much relevant and befitting the characters and

their thinking and through them that exploration of minds could be at hand.

It is noteworthy to examine Gauri's character. She always remains at the center of Sunil's cowardice. She loved him once but her love remained unrealized. Sunil never understood it. On the picnic he couldn't save Shantha, Gauri's sister, drowning. Instead of jumping into the pond he had rushed to call the friends. Before they come to the place she had already saved her. When he tried to explain Gauri stopped him and in a contemptuous tone asked him to shut up. She assted everyone knew him he had nothing except a loud voice. We find that she always laughed at him and doesn't give in too much. Sunil had always known her as a quick witted, sharp tongued and self willed girl. He was forced to submit most of the time to her whims, likes and dislikes. But the same Gauri submitted herself to him at the maidan and there Sunil doesn't behave like a lover. Finally he does so but arrival of fake police ruins him. At a time Gauri shows the courage and he behaves as usual. Since this episode she became more scornful and tells him not to touch again.

Gauri is quite changed while Sunil isn't changed at all. She becomes serious and grave. Her face loses all its sharpness. There's no cutting edge in her laughter. She is having pleurisy and then T.B. She3 feels terrible pain on her back. She has to lie down on her tummy and that makes her cry. She has to live on the stuff like milk, eggs, apples, and meat without apices. She wishes Sunil to inquire after her health but Sunil doesn't turn up, hasn't even forgotten his bitterness even though she has. When he meets her after a long time Gauri finds that he is as much fool as he was earlier. She is unable to control her laughter when he tells her that he was looking for revenge on Avinash. For Gauri Avinash's offering a job to him isn't an insult and yet if he thought so he may take revenge on her instead of Avinash. She becomes bitter once again. She remarks: 'If you do manage to have your revenge on Avinash, don't bother to call me again. I will not be the object of a gamble.'

The point of interest in the later part of the novel is Avinash. We also find him a coward. He comes to see Sunil in a drunken condition and talks rudely which initiates a quarrel. He hits Sunil but Sunil thinks it is because he had seen Gauri. The real intension of offering him a job comes out. He says, ' Once I tried to fall in love with her now I have no desire to try again. So don't get the idea I am a rival.' (p.90) Again he says, 'I mean it; I don't want her at all. And it would be so good if you loved each other.' (p.91) Avinash wanted Shantha. One day he had kissed her. For him she was something turned on him like nobody. He was ready to do anything, even to be a slave forever, or lick his boots.

The work has a fine ending. The person who Sunil wanted to revenge was defeated already and its realization brings him the knowledge that he was trying without an enemy. On this same moment he begins to feel light, enjoy the evening and starts loving himself. The Bhujali becomes useless so he wants to throw it away in the pond but he doesn't do it. It makes no sense to throw away something he

had once bought with a great pleasure. He has no desire to touch Avinash. He thinks, 'May be I'll start looking al over again, for someone on whom I can take revenge'. (p.92)

The whole novel is narrated through Sunil's eyes and heart and mind and that becomes the instrument to dip into his psyche. The writer has sought help of symbols, indications, tones, colour contrast, and characters. From the middle of the novel runs through dialogues which are short, quite attractive, and meaningful. There's conversational style. The action takes nearly fifteen to sixteen hours only as it opens in the morning and ends in the evening. The success of the work lies in the swift flow of the action and sentiment. There's nothing which can be a barrier. This is a fine specimen of Sunil Gangopadhyay's fine craftsmanship and it would stand as a light house for other short novels.

References:

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