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Golden Research Thoughts



THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOVEL OF KRISHAN

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ABSTRACT:

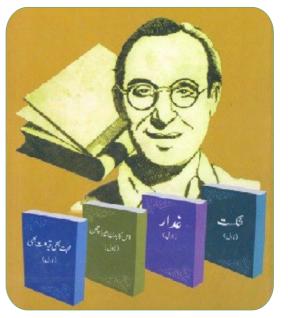
Anand won the Sahitya Akademi award for his novel, Morning Face which was published in 1968. Krishan narrates his story in the first person narrative. Being an auto-biographical novel, the novel suggests a number of parallels in he authors's personal life. Paul verghese wrote to Anand, 'The portrait of Krishan in Morning Face resembles the portrait of the novelist in his adolescence'. Anand told P. K. Rajan, 'The autobiographical novels become very important as sources indicative of energies let loose in my young life'. Like the young Anand, his hero also perceives the inconsistencies of the contemporary world. The religious disposition of Krishan's Mother, the compromising nature of his father, Krishan's bad schooling, the death of Krishnan's cousin, resemble experiences in Anand's young life.

KEYWORDS: Novel, Morning Face, Auto-Biographical, Religious.

INTRODUCTION:

Krishan moves from place to place, from Nowshera to Amritsar, then to his elder brother's house in Ludhiana, goes and stays in cantonment at Zhelum, pays visits to villages like Alampur in Kangra valley and his grandmother's village, Baska for purely domestic reasons. His stay in these places and his educational career gives him a set of adolescent companions like his brothers-Ganesh and Shiv, his cousin Kaushalya who dies a premature death, his cousins Dev Raj and Sushila, the sweeper boy Gughi, Dhan Singh, Buddhu and a number of school-mates. But the centre of action and the center of interest is Krishan, Krishan is an active participant in the action of the novel.

Krishan is a boy of seven years, when the action of the novel begins and he completes his twelfth year at the close of the novel. In the course of action, we see his getting high fever on many occasions, he is delicate in health. He is subject to frequent illnesses. He has small frame with big ego. Master Bishan Singh in the P. B. N. High School calls him, 'Choobia'. He is fair in complexion. But he is aware of his diminutive physical frame. His eyes are bold and searching. Ganesh and other boys in the school call him, 'weepy, Biju faced'. Though small in appearance,



Krishan plays hockey with his friends and is sensitive to the happenings around him.

Krishan's formal and informal education does shape his personality. Krishan and his elder brother, Ganesh join the fifth primary class in Pandit Baij Nath High school, Amritsar. His days at this P. B. N. High School are not happy. The demonic teachers in the school tortured these boys. Boys are owls, donkeys and buffaloes for the drill master, Havildar Lehna Singh. The teachers try to drive sense into children with the cane. Krishan completes his high school education in the Government high school, Ludhiana and in cantonment school at Jhelum. This education at three places in different schools offers him a set of bad teachers like, Bishan Singh, Budh Singh who makes homosexual advances to Krishan. Some good teachers like Master Shah Nawaz whose class is like heaven for Krishan, Raja Fazal Muhammad, Master Hari Chand, Lala Amarnath help Krishan in his education. Krishan passes his examinations inspite of his physical

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weakness due to frequent illnesses. Krishan prefers stories and the school in which one can grow on one's own. Krishan is fluent in reading English texts. The informal education and the experiences teach him a lot about life. The Arya Samajist uncle Dev Datt, the young graduate Lala Kedar Nath, Dr. Chuni Lal and his wife enlighten and instruct Krishan about our freedom movement and meaningless rituals. They tell Krishan about the role of D. A. V. College in educating the young rebels and how the British were trying to suppress the freedom movement. The brutal attacks of the police on people in Amritsar and Jhelum make him a strong opponent of the Brithish Govt. He hates his father for supporting the British. In his father's small library and with the help of the books given to him by Dev Dutt and Dr. Chunilal, he is able to read the books like Manmohan's History of India, M. K. Gandhi's Hind Swaraj. Maxim Gorky's Mother and a number of such good books. Nourished on this formal and informal education, Krishan becomes a bitter critic of the British government. As a result, he joins the procession which is organized to welcome Lala Lajpat Rai. His father's influence and the intervention of an Irish officer save him from the expulsion from the school.

Because of this education, Krishan aspires for the modern life. Bakha, Munoo and Lalu accept British ways of life as modern ways. They try to imitate to British masters. But Krishan comprehends the significance of this evil power in India. His love of modern life takes interesting turn. He is not interested in British caps and cigarattes. Krishan is good at his expression in English. He hates rituals. He prefers American ways of life, to British ways. Krishan says, 'And I was so excited by the passion of hatred against the Angrezi sarkar which uncle Dev Dutt had infused into his words that I certainly did not any more want to be a sahib of British variety but of the American kind, when I grew up, to go to America, rather than to England'. Krishan thinks that American straw hat on his head will present him as Abraham Lincoin. He likes the Americans for their anti-British ways. His comprehension of the evil effects of British power in India is his attraction for modern life in India. He expresses his sympathy to those who want to destroy British power and make our country free.

Krishan grows up from the state of innocence to the State of experience. His quest for identity in the ritual ridden society leads to his gradual loss of innocence. His family, education, religion, face a severe test at the hands of this sensitive boy. He wonders at the material plans, of his parents. They are after material gains. His father takes bribes. His parents force his aunt Devaki, to adopt their son, Ganesh in order to retain the family property of dead uncle, Pratap. Krishan is not happy with his parents love for money. His mother is a religion woman. Krishan is named after the Hindu God-Krishna. Krishana's father joins and leaves Arya samaj in order to continue his service to the British Government. Krishan hates this compromising attitude of his father. His mother's devotion to Gods and spirits is under constant scrutiny of this sensitive boy. Krishan observes the rituals performed by his mother. His mother believes in ghosts and spirits. She thinks that the ghost of Sain Lok haunts her family. Being a young boy, Krishan is afraid of these evil spirits. But he is dead against the rituals and all powerful Gods. His anger against God bursts out in these words, 'Who are you above the vast sky, that you gaze down on us, but never care about our troubles... Tyrant, Torturer, Strike me dead for my bad deeds now, if you have the power, To court your wrath I spit on your face'. This is Krishan's open revolt against Almighty God. Krishan's innocence tries to clear his confusions in these words, 'No shutting my eyes even to the hypocrisy of my family. Perhaps, if I faced ugly things like caste, my father's compromises and the superstitions of the priests, I may discover expressiveness and strength in words-provided I could keep my heart open and pure and innocent'. Krishan hates his Coppersmith profession. He dislikes the rituals performed by Mahant Nandgir. To begin with, he is nicknamed Bully, but later on he disapproves of this title. He wants others to treat him not as a child but as grown-up boy. He terms the white sahibs as 'the murderers'. He hates the world of lies, violence and hypocrisy. His moral panic troubles him. He wants to communicate his ghaoon-manoon (state of confusion) to others.

Krishan tries to clear his confusion. This attempt to clear his confusion is nothing but to establish his identity. His answer to his confusions is twofold. He tries to join the Indian freedom movement. This is his political action. He tries to write poems and books. Krishan takes a sacred vow under the supervision of Dr. Chuni Lal that he will work hard in order to free our country. Krishan's mentors like Dr. Chuni Lal and uncle Dev Dutt instruct him about the historical events like Rowlatt act, Gaddhar party, Home Rule act, Gandhi's attempt to practice non-violence and so many other things related to the freedom movement. These happenings transformed Krishan's mental make-up. Krishan receives seven stripes on his back for breaking the curfew order.

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His father considers him as a spoilt child because of his anti-government activities. Like Anand's other young boys, Krishan also loves poetry. He reads British and Urdu poetry. He memorises the poems about the adventures of Raja Rasalu. He listens intently to the recitation from Waris Shah's Hir Ranjah by Master Shah Nawaz. He looks to the poetry as a solace to dreary life. He loves words. He wants to be a real poet. He composes his first poem in praise of his aunt Devaki. After the composition of this poem, Krishan remarks. 'I secretly nourished the ambition to learn to put my thoughts and feelings on paper in the worship of the twin ideals of love and beauty'. In the end of the novel, he wants to be a God speaking inspired words with superman strength. Thus he wants to answer his problems with the help of poetry.

The gradual loss of innocence in Krishan makes him aware that Amritsar, the ocean of nectar, has turned out to be city of dreadful nights. Krishan moans over the loss of his innocence, 'The innocence of my childhood was being drowned in the knowledge of ugly, evil things forced on me by the bad grown up talk of Amritsar'. Krishan bears the pain of growing up in the hard world. He wants to live in the world of romance. Finally, he does so by being a poet. The deaths of his close relatives like Kaushalya, Uncle Pratap make him question the mystery of life. His anger against senior generation is clear in his remark, 'All you grown up people, you all seem to know what is good for young people. I don't care what you think about what I must do and must not do'.

Krishan's growing in age makes him aware of the sexual impulses in him. To begin with, he is content with the smell of a woman body. He is happy with the motia and molsari smell of aunt Devaki's body. He listens to gosspis and thus tastes the forbidden fruits of knowledge. He is happy in the company of women. Krishan admits, 'I certainly felt more comfortable in the presence of females. Any how, I had in me the yearning to sit with women, talk to them and be fondled by them'. Aunt Devaki and his elder brother Harishs extramarital relation, Mumtaz are his objects of love. But this love moves on two planes : Mother-son love and beloved-lover love. It remains on emotional level. Master Budh Singh tries to make homosexual advances to him. Krishan tries to play this game with his friend Buddhu in exchange of fine payment of one anna to him. Krishan tries to ride on a mare. At this juncture, he finds his pyjamas sudden. Aunt Devaki explains to him, 'All that has happened to you is that you have become a man. Now you can no longer sleep with your arms around my neck. You will have to get a little wife of your own'. This sexually matured Krishan longs for sexual intercourse with the woman. He wants to make love to the bandsman's daughter Helen. Saros Cowasjee praises Anand for the creation of this character in these words: 'The development of Krishan's character is handled with great skill. The boy gradually sheds his innocence as he is initiated into the world of experience, he becomes increasingly aware of the short-coming of his parents and the society in which he is growing up. He struggles to reject their values and seek freedom and love. A sound common sense and the need to put everything to the test seem to be the dominating qualities of his mind. It is Anand's difficult task to show the heroic without making krishan a hero'.

METHODOLOGY:

Krishan and Yasmin write love poems to each other. Krishan writes a novel. The Absent one. He himself comments on creative process; 'As a writer I would have to be like a god, looking on detachedly to communicate the lover's suffering to free myself from my lower self'. Finally, Krishan fails in the fulfillment of his love because Yasmin's husband kills her and prevents her possible elopement with Krishan. The tragic effect of this event impersonalises the tragedy of his personal love and he concludes that catharsis should be the real aim of poetry.

CONCLUSION:

These various places give a variety of experiences to young Krishan. Krishan shows his urge to live. The deaths of aunt Devaki and Yasmin trouble him a lot. He thinks of committing a suicide, but later on comes to the conclusion that he must face the life. According to Marlene Fisher, Krishan grows like a sensitive plant. Krishan advocates the wisdom of the hear

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