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## Author's Self in Literature

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Our circumstances and our experiences mould our personality. Author is no exception, being more sensitive than others; the experiences of life make the author resort to bring out the conflict in the form of literature. Literature is born out of conflicts and confusion. The problems of life act and reaction takes place in realms of mind. The inner mind is the battle field where emotions and values interact and a new genre, a new form of creative activity is born. Life is not always generous. It is sometimes very generous, sometimes the problems have a crippling effect. Some instances of life have a very deep effect on the psyche of a person. If that person is an author the catharsis of emotional stress shows itself in the form of literary creation. Sometimes it is in the form of autobiographical note in the fiction or sometimes it is the experience of a near and dear one or any acquaintance which deeply affects the author and a character is shaped on these lines. This is seen in most of the authors, be it in India or outside when we look at the English authors right from Dickens as James Joyce to R.K, Narayan, Anita Desai, Raja Rao, Jhumpa Lahiri and Arundhati Roy. The childhood influences have a great deal of role in shaping up the personalities of most of these authors.

If we take up R.K. Narayan, it is seen that his stories and novels are influenced to a great extent by his experience of his married life. He loved his wife and married her in spite of adverse astrological warnings. As luck would have it the premonitions were proved to be true and he lost his wife to death. He was greatly disturbed and must have felt great anguish. He must have even sometimes pondered whether he had committed a mistake by marrying his wife. All this disturbance can be sensed in his stories where he is obsessed with the seventh house of "Janam Kundali" which depicts the conjugal happiness in one's horoscope. His novel *The English Teacher* depicts this, when the author wrote this novel he was passing through very rough phase of his life. He was financially struggling and his wife had died. He was trying to come to terms with his life. All this confusion and conflict of mind along with influence of Indian beliefs and attitude can be traced in his writings. Lakshmi Holmstrom says:

Some beliefs which are common places of Indian thought and which most closely affect the novelist in his interpretation of human character and human action are ; Varnasramadharma or a man's role and duties according to his place in a scheme of castes and also according to his stage of life, Karma or the principle of deeds and consequences: which is worked out both in this life and in successive births until the ultimate release....(103).

The hero of *The English Teacher* Krishna loves his wife very much. She dies and the response of the protagonist towards the death of his wife resembles to that of the author. He is not able to accept the reality and tries to communicate with his dead wife through séances. Krishna is able to see his wife towards the end of the novel:

My mind trembled with this rhythm. I forgot myself and my own existence. I fell into a deep drowse, whispering, "My wife! Wife! How long? How could I say? When I opened my eyes again she were sitting on my bed looking at me with an extra ordinary smile in her eyes.

"Susila!Susila", I cried. "You here", "yes I am here". I sat up leaning on my pillow. "Why do you disturb yourself". She asked (183).

Krishna gazes out of the window, his wife is also with him, he can feel the cool breeze as well as the presence of his wife,

We stood out of the window, gazing on a slender red streak over the eastern rim of the earth. A cool breeze lapped our faces, the boundaries of our personalities suddenly dissolved. It was moment of rare immutable joy –a moment for which one feels grateful to life and death (184).

The author had given voice to his own doubts and misery and longing in his book and has achieved peace and towards the end through Krishna, the hero of the novel who has been able to lead a harmonious life towards the end after being successful in his quest to communicate with his wife even after her death, when he realized that death is only a short episode in great drama of life. The writing of this novel must have resulted in catharsis of the emotion he felt after the death of his wife and he is able to realize the transitoriness of life. Likewise Raja Rao's novel

*The Serpent And The Rope* we can see autobiographical note. He married Camille Mouly in 1931. She taught French at Montpellier. The marriage broke down. He depicted the breakdown of their marriage in the novel. The novel is philosophical which relates the story of an intellectual Brahman and his wife seeking spiritual truth in India, France and England. Raja Rao lost his mother when he was a child. The novel has this longing and this influence where he doted on his little mother and his half sister Saroja. His story reveals meaning within meaning like a box within a box and another box in that box. Every reading reveals a different meaning. The troubled married life of Ramaswami, the chief protagonist of the novel, hints at the same difficulty and spiritual quest of the author. His novel is semi-autobiographical and quest of the author for self-realization and the path adopted by him are beautifully revealed in the novel.

The novels of V.S. Naipaul e.g. *A House for Mr. Biswas* reveal author's own quest for establishing his identity in an alien land. It was based on experiences of his father when he came to a foreign land. The details are not entirely autobiographical but the feeling of alienation and homesickness underlying the various incidents is the same. The quest to establish one's identity in the alien land where one belongs to marginalized section of society is based on first hand experiences of his father is confirmed by his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, "Intuition led me to a large book about our family life". When Mr. Biswas migrates to another country to earn his livelihood and marries a daughter of his boss, he is always trying to win favor of his in-laws. All his efforts fail and he is not able to win their favor instead he is treated with indifference. When someone ignores it hurts and Mr. Biswas feels the hurt. He remarks to his son, "I am just somebody- Nobody at all" (279).

Novels of Manju Kapur also reveal autobiographical touches and are sometimes considered to be semi autobiographical. It is not that the stories are the stories of author's life but whatever affects the author and has a deep impact on his/her psyche gets recorded in the consciousness and when it incubates there over a period of time, the seed germinates and it is metamorphosed into a new form which shapes a new story where the protagonist grapples with the questions faced by the author or some close person at one time are explored for answers. Sometimes the author arrives at conclusion and sometimes the endings are ambivalent, the question remaining unanswered and the solution left to the imagination of the readers. The problems or solution may be for identity or self realization or meaning of life, whatever may be the quest the social and cultural milieu

deeply affects the solutions. The author cannot escape either the time or place. The issues change with time, place and cultural realities.

The novels of Manju Kapur *Difficult Daughters*, *Married Women* and *Home* explore the position of women within patriarchal structure of society where women are always at receiving end and they are struggling to assert their identity. They are not ready to affirm to the self-sacrificing image of their mothers and women of previous generation. They are educated and financially independent and assert their individuality through their economic independence. They revolt against her patriarchal tradition of society and are bold enough to voice their protest. In spite of all their independence however they stop short of making total revolt. They break one shackle to get entangled in the other. The subject like sexual dysfunction, marital discord, extramarital relation etc. considered to be a taboo hitherto have been touched by Ms. Kapur. She has also delineated the conditions prevailing in the country after demolition of Babri Masjid in her novel *Married Women*.

In *Difficult Daughters* Virmati revolts against traditional attitude of her family and asserts her independence by marrying Prof. Harish who is already married she by breaking one prison she lands into another. He follows the norms of the society and he has the same male-dominated attitude towards women-oriented issues:

‘Darling’ ... “Co-wives are part of our social tradition. If you refuse me you will be changing nothing. I don’t live with her in any meaningful way”(112)

It is not that only Indian English writers are obsessed with their life experiences and contemporary issues even the English authors outside India have expressed their self in their fiction especially in the psychological novels where it is not that easy to comprehend the inner realities with outside world so easily. Let us take the examples of James Joyce. When we read this novel *A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man* we realize that the novel is in fact, the spiritual autobiography of the author. The story depicts the childhood influences and adolescent years of the author. It is, however, not an autobiography. The protagonist Stephen Dedalus sometimes seems James Joyce and sometimes he is not. The book traces the intellectual, moral and artistic development of the author from childhood to the completion of his education. Any

fictional work uses the material from life but that material is arranged, changed, dramatized and then fictionalized to assist the theme of the novel.

The same has been done with this work also. The experiences of the author are raw material for the life of the protagonist but this raw material is sifted, selected, purged and shaped to suit the pivotal theme of novel that is metamorphosis of a young man into an artist.

All these examples prove that whatever the critics may assert the author and his consciousness, his self, somehow asserts itself, though an inner subversion takes place before the process of artistic creation starts and it is often difficult to point out the autobiographical details or experiences of immediate family members or acquaintances but there is an element of familiarity which keeps on emerging time and again with a mischievous glint to dare the people recognize the actual source whatever affects the author from infancy to adulthood forms the core content of his personality which pervades his creation at one level or the other. It is visible in English literature whether it be the work of Charles Dickens, James Joyce, R.K. Narayan or Raja Rao, Arundhati Roy or Manju Kapur.

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