

SEPARATION, HOSTILITY, AND INNER CONFLICT IN THE NOVELS OF NAMITA GOKHALE

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ABSTRACT:

The literary artist develops his theme with the help of conflict—external or internal or both. Most of the psychologist's study conflict in correlation to frustration, stresses, and strains. Unfortunately, conflict is studied by them as a part of abnormal psychology. S.K. Mangal remarks:

The term conflict is variously used. There may be conflicts between the ideologies of two sects, religions, and organizations. Conflicts may arise between husband and wife, father and his son, and teacher and the taught. They may also show their presence among brothers and sisters, members of an organization or community, states of a country and countries of the world a large. Apart from these external or outer conflicts there are inner or internal conflicts within the man which are more dangerous to his well-being. These conflicts are called psychological conflicts.¹

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Douglas and Holland regard conflict a plain emotional, state which results from a tension between opposed wishes and forces. Barney and Lehner accept conflict as a state of tension due to two opposing desires. So, conflict arises due to two or more incompatible trends in behavior. Due to conflict, a person feels frustration and stress. Sometimes he fails to achieve his goal due to his authorities and senior family members. Various theories have been given by the scholars such as approach—avoidance conflict, avoidance—avoidance conflict, approach-avoidance conflict etc. Conflicts may arise due to home Government, school environment, occupational environment, social and cultural environment etc. Freud, James C. Coleman, Robert W. Lundin etc. deal with this complex conflict in details that often leads to disastrous results. Robert W. Lundin remarks:

Approach-avoidance conflicts are probably the most common in our lives, but they can be disrupting. Frequently, events in our daily existence have both positively and negatively reinforcing properties. A child may look forward to and dread his first day at school. A girl anticipates with joy the possibilities of a new date but fears she may blunder and not be asked again. School work may be positively reinforcing properties in its interest, but the long hours involved in finishing it can be aversive. A student may want to take a course because he enjoys the subject matter, but he finds the instructor a bore.²

Most of the literary artists analyze the consequences of conflict. Robert W. Lundin accepts the effect of conflict and remarks:

Like frustration it is reasonable to assume that conflict also has an additive effect in that too much conflict, particularly in the early developmental periods, will reduce one's tolerance for it and hence lead to maladaptive behavior. Since conflict is an inevitable

part of our daily existences, we must either learn to resolve the conflicts whenever possible or, at least, develop a degree of tolerance for them.³

Anxiety, depression aggression, violent behaviour etc. are to be studied to analyze the theory of conflict. James C. Coleman studies the motives, competencies, stress tolerance etc. to understand the general principles of human behavior. He remarks:

Since stress—beyond a minimal level—threatens the well-being of the organism, it engenders automatic, persistent attempts at its resolution; it forces a person a person to do something about. What is done depends on many factors, including one's frame of reference, motives, competencies, stress tolerance, environmental limitations and supports, prior mental set and social demands, and expectations. Sometimes inner forces play the dominant role in determining one's stress reactions; at other times environmental conditions are of primary importance.⁴

While discussing the theory of plot and character, Aristotle analyzed the importance of conflict. One finds conflict between two opposite forces in the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Plutarch etc. There is conflict between good and evil in the tragedies and comedies of Shakespeare. Conflict between God and Satan is well known.

Namita Gokhale, a popular novelist of 21st century has painted conflict between Priya and Faro in *Paro: Dreams of Passion*. Paro's husband observes the flirting nature of his wife and naturally the conflict arises between husband and wife. Both get separated without any feeling of remorse. Paro gets a son from Bucky Bhandpur and conflict soon arises between them. Now she chooses to live with Virendra known as Lenin. She enjoys life at his cost. As he loses his money slowly she starts flirting with Shambhu Nath Mishra though she regarded him 'a Kala Kutta'. She does not spare even Priya's husband Suresh. One fails to understand her approach to life. She is always under stress and fails to adjust in different circumstances. On the contrary, Priya flirts with Mr. B.R even after marriage with Suresh. When her brother as well as Suresh warn her, she returns to her home. She avoids her previous approach to sex and starts writing a diary. Here Namita Gokhale exposes the 'asli memsahib' of modern age who fails to adjust with external circumstances.

In *Gods, Graves and Grandmother*, Namita Gokhale describes the anti-conflict between Hindus and Muslims. Ammi, a Kothewali, reaches Delhi with her granddaughter Gudiya. Her daughter is duped by the clever beggar Riyasuddin. She establishes an ordinary shrine of God under the Peepul tree. Her plan succeeds though Sunder Pahalwan creates a little trouble for her. As she had been a singer, she recites Hindu Bhajana melodiously and touches the hearts of people. The conflict between Hindus and Muslims is pretty old and yet Ammi becomes Mataji and a big Hindu temple is constructed at that place. Nobody knows the past history of Ammi and hence the communal conflict does not arise. Gudiya is loved by the Principal of Academy and the unfortunate girl fails to understand her future. She is made for Kalki who deserts her soon. There is conflict between Liladevi and Phoolwati. However, Phoolwati is sincere to Gudiya in every situation and both of love each other. One has to appreciate the wisdom of Ammi as she does not establish a mosque. She knows that Muslim women don't enter the mosque and hence the question of financial gain does not arise. Had Gudiya stayed with Madam Lamba, she would not have suffered miserably. However, the conflict between the material values and spiritual values has been referred by the artist but not developed fully.

In *The Book Of Shadows*, the artist has pointed out the conflict between Rachita and Anand's sister. The latter fails to tolerate the faithlessness of the former and throws acid upon her face. Here Rachita escapes to Ranikhet to lead the life of a recluse. Namita Gokhale mixes the natural and supernatural elements and creates the atmosphere of Gothic romances. The conflict between the people of Kumaon region and those of European countries has been highlighted here. One observes the conflict between the past and present of Rachita. The hunters meet their doom. Even father Benedictus dies as he fails to sympathize with the butterflies. Rachita runs from the realities of life and leads a lonely life. Finally, she decides to return to normal life as her student reached Ranikhet with her boyfriend.

In *Shakuntala The Play Of Memory*, Namita Gokhale describes how the heroine is a victim of inner conflict. After marriage with Srijan she often aspires to be a Sadhvi like her mother-in-law. But her lusts for adventure and sex don't allow her to reach the Buddhist Math. She is jealous of Mamalini though the latter does not harm her. She loves Nearchus at first sight, enjoys sex with him in the first meeting and deserts her home. There seems to be no 'cause for depression in her life as she is satisfied with Srijan. Yet she wants to see the world and pays a heavy price for that.

In *A Himalayan Love Story*, she describes the conflict between Mukul and Hiranand Joshi. Caste barrier proves fatal for Parvati. Conflict between wife and husband has also been referred here. Mukul does not dare to reveal the fact of his marriage with Adelaine to his mother. Parvati finally dies a tragic death and leaves Ira behind to take care of herself.

In *The Book of Shiva*, she describes the conflict between Lord Shiva and the Asuras. She accepts Shiva as. Neelkanth she takes the poison that comes out of Samudra Manthan.

Thus, Namita Gokhale describes the conflict between man and society, between man and fate, between truth and falsehood, between lust and love, and between good and evil. Due to her positive vision, she condemns lust, anarchy, role of muscle power, corrupt politicians, ego, violence, greed, jealousy, orthodoxy etc.

REFERENCES

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3. Ibid., p.115.
4. James C. Coleman: *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*; Bombay: Scott. Foresman and Company, 1976, p. 118.