

Cultural Aspects of Gandhian Perception in Bhabani Bhattacharya's Shadow from Ladakh

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the Cultural Aspects of Gandhian Perception in Bhabani Bhattacharya's "Shadow from Ladakh." Bhattacharya's novel was published in the year 1966 and it is conflicting with two thoughts described by Gandhigram and Steeltown. He got Sahitya Academy Award, the coveted Indian award for his Shadow from Ladakh in 1967. In every part of the novel, the writer endeavors to bring about the combination of large-scale and small-scale industrialization, the East and the West encounter, Gandhian asceticism and Tagore aestheticism, the traditional and the modern values, village and town, Indian and Chinese, and the old generation and the new generation. In the novel opening, the towns of the two poles are hopeless in meeting each other. Gandhigram explains a model of the country India as envisaged by the father of the nation. The village people have collected Satyajit to guide the conditions of traditional village and to regulate its life so that it may become an example and a source of inspiration to the rest of the country. Educated in Cambridge, he has seen responsibility as a teacher at Shantiniketan, and at one level, he shows the impression of Tagore's educational views and philosophy of life. Characteristically, it is Shantiniketan that he first meets his future wife, Suruchi, a woman of great dynamism, adorned with excellence and the gift of song. The novel is not opposite the approaching experience of Chinese aggression in 1962. The shadow of the armed opposition with the unexpected opponent at Ladakh was cast everywhere. His experiences in the West and their integration with the Indian Ethos culminated in his novel being much-celebrated.

Keywords: Indian Ethos, The Old Generation and the New Generation, and Culture.

1. Introduction

Satyajit, Gandhi's pure follower in the novel, has imagined another village, Gandhigram, based on the systems of Gandhi's Sevagram. Self-sufficiency of the country is one of the essential aspects of Gandhian knowledge, so is the Gandhigram's. Satyajit and Bhashkar both point at the same end, but their midpoints are poles apart and to each other. Satyajit considers what Gandhi said: "Mechanisation, was inevitable when there was a shortage of labor. It became needless and evil when there was a surplus of hands. The problem in India was not how to find leisure for the teeming millions in its villages, but how to utilize their idle hours." (29)

The novel shows Bhattacharya's assimilation of Gandhian principles in a more sophisticated and thoughtful way. The novel deals with some of the hot topics of modern India. He looks at independent India's difficulty with her national technical policy in making a selection between large-scale enterprises and small-scale cottage industries. China's unprovoked attack on India has also triggered a discussion about the usefulness of non-violence in the changing geopolitical situation. His novel shows to explore the relevance of Gandhian philosophy in post-independent India. When Bhattacharya discussed his earlier novels, Gandhi was a living force, and his teachings were taken without any challenge. There have been times when a whole reappraisal of Gandhi and what he stood for has been called for. Satyajit is a powerful follower of non-violence. He forms a plan of making a peace march to Ladakh in support of touching the souls of the Chinese and making them give up their aggressive plans. K.R.Chandrasekharan's work of Bhattacharya notes that "Satyajitism represents three things mainly in the novel decentralized small-scale industry on the economic plane, austerity, and repression of instincts on the plane of personal life and non-violence on the plane of international relations." (Chandrasekharan, 109)

Bhaskar is involved in striking at the village because it is a type of conservative opinion, and it stands for values that he desires to destroy. His sincerity and missionary zeal are so high that the Board of Directors of the unit finally approves his scheme of expansion, although they are reluctant to ask for trouble by touching Gandhigram. The Chinese invasion verifies Bhaskar's standpoint and presents added importance to the execution of his system. The Chinese attack defends Bhaskar's position and gives added importance to the achievement of his view. The Central Government at Delhi also comes round to his location and is about to acquire Gandhigram gaining use of its unique powers.

Even when Bhaskar and Sumita move near to each other, and attachment springs between them, people think that they will never join in marriage, since a wide, almost unbridgeable, a gulf exists between their ways of life. Though, somebody believes that she will be a fine, qualified wife for the chief engineer, as she has a rational mind; she will not be a wonderful piece of the Lohapur club but will be her husband's intelligent partner. In the end, there is a perfect compromise between them, for Bhaskar completely agrees with her. K.K.Sharma correctly says as "Their marriage is, in fact, the integration of body, mind, and soul, of western materialism and Indian spiritualism" (Sharma, 77). Despite his winning education in America, he has Indian life in him. So, his westernization is honest. Thus, he is the integration of the East and the West.

Bhaskar and Satyajit satisfy each other to express their various points of opinion. Bhaskar dressed in the westernized style. He stresses the relevance of steel for India. Saying that iron is the means of economic development, he says that India can struggle with poverty and hunger only with machine tools. On the other hand, Satyajit is a powerful man well-rooted in culture. He needs to move forward from the location where Gandhi left off. He has faced the Western method of life. The philosophy of love and non-violence, in Bhaskar's view, is pleasant if it does not gain us cowardly.

Satyajit observes a Cambridge-educated youth, fresh, enthusiastic, and active come under the spell of Gandhi's thoughts and chooses to give his life to the cause of transferring Gandhian views into reality. After turning from England, he serves at Shantiniketan for two years as a teacher, and there he marries a lovely and active girl named Suruchi. In Suruchi's character, Bhattacharya has analyzed to describe an affinity with Gandhi's child-bride and lifelong partner, Kasturbai. After the original euphoric two years of marriage, Suruchi unhappily discovers that a character has previously been set for her by her husband on the orders of his role-model Gandhi, and she feels that Satyajit's self-imposed Brahmacharya wrecks her youth. She intelligently helps her husband in all his endeavors to realize his dreams and plans oriented towards social reforms. In due course of time, a daughter is born to them. Their child's name is Sumita. The meeting between Gandhigram and Steeltown aggravates a crisis when pressed by the frantic demands of the government for more and more weapons and steel. Bhaskar benefits in taking the approval of the government to extend the frontiers of Steeltown to Gandhigram. Unable to bear this onslaught on his life-long goals, so meticulously cherished and protected, Satyajit follows the method used most often by the Mahatma himself, viz. a fast unto death as a move to protect Gandhigram from being occupied by Steeltown.

Satyajit guides Suruchi to marry another man, but it is not reasonable for a tradition-bound woman to come out from spiritual bonds, of course, it is reasonable for a woman born in western culture. In India, a woman always bounds to the legends and ways, and she presents an affirmation at her heart to stick livelong to her husband and looks after her children. So, kind of women level may die for the principle of spiritual bonds but not deviate from systems. Bhaskar, with his fanatical zeal, creates a method for the expansion of the industry, including the annexation and liquidation of Gandhigram. He understands that the plan for the destruction of the model village is not based on technological concerns because for small physical expansion of Steeltown could very well improve in some other way and leave Gandhigram alone.

Satyajit guides Suruchi to have a daughter, Sumita, who is carefully guided by her father and who increasingly, arrives below his power until, at last, she comes to be remembered as the best incarnation of his attitude to life-Satyajit as it is described in the novel. The increase of Satyajit till approximately the end of the story is a growth in the path of asceticism and Gandhian philosophy. He makes up his daughter in his view. For all shows, he is a disciplined Gandhian using the celebration of Gandhian economics and principles in the regulation of the development of Gandhigram and the

behavior of his own life. A trial time comes with the entry of Chinese aggression against India. One purpose of view in the country is that power can be met only with energy, but Satyajit represents a different point of view, particularly that of physical violence.

Sumita and Suruchi gather behind him and rouse the laborers of Steeltown to go on an indefinite strike as a gesture to encourage Satyajit. Sensing loss to the industry and also having mellowed down in position due to his compassion for the five Chinese sisters staying at his home, Bhaskar withdraws his project of extending the factory to Gandhigram. This affects reconciliation between Satyajit and Bhaskar, and they found to understand each other better now. If Satyajit realizes the practical limitations of idealism, Bhaskar starts to understand the significance of ethical values, which Satyajit stands, sees the evils of rivalry, jealousy, and callousness infecting the gains of industrialization.

Suruchi has always needed Sumita to be like any other girl, but the force of Satyajit over her is too profound to allow her anything without austerity. While she was in Moscow, she wanted to buy a bracelet for Sumita, but directly gave up the thought when she realized that she was being brought up in the correct likeness of Satyajit, and these global things had no interest in her. She was not just giving his views, but she had become a part of Satyajit's self. In Moscow, she also realized that Gandhigram had become a spirit, the spirit of a man striving to transcend the physical urges of life.

Sumita is good judgment, something which she never felt before. She is going to be a changed personality due to the impact of certain conditions. The change of her nature is indicated in the novel in the description of her visit to the temple, explained earlier, and her visit to Meadow House, where there was a celebration. There, Sumita followed the dresses of the dancing girls with a fascination. She also observes her mother wearing a green-bordered sari and dark-colored jacket. This dress attracts her, and after coming from Meadow House, when she is alone in her room, she picks up the same sari and jacket. After dressing up in this sari and bearing a red mark of adornment on her brows. As Sumita, Suruchi's daughter, she supports Sumita's love with Bhashkar Roy because she knows that there can be no more magnificent blending of East and West, ancient and current than the marriage of Sumita and Bhashkar. Sumita becomes the joint of culture between Gandhigram and Steeltown, and village and city.

Sumita, the symbol of old-fashioned India, wants brilliant engineers and technocrats like Bhashkar to struggle with poverty and famine. Bhaskar Roy, the symbol of new technology, needs Sumita to make a controlled and judicious use of his scientific knowledge. Bhashkar was educated in the West. He has traveled widely in Europe. Usually, he seldom feels restless and finds it challenging to work continuously. At such minutes, he would ask himself if he is a robot, a thing of iron. He has a typically Westernized outlook on life.

Sumita is a typical Indian woman. She has tremendous respect for Indian spiritual values. A faithful follower of her father, she is an out-and-out Gandhian. When she meets Bhashkar, the two opposing poles irresistibly attract each other. Sumita's marriage ceremony with Bhashkar is symbolic of the mixture of two various cultures and forms of life. Despite the differences between them, she is drawn towards Bhashkar and loves him and presently marries. After marriage, Bhaskar has turned his ideal and character to the village, Satyajit also has developed a lot. K.H.Kunjo Singh points out that: "Bhaskar's falling in love with Sumita brings a synthesis or compromise of the two different ideologies. Bhaskar's attitude to Satyajit and his ideal undergoes a change." (Singh, 115)

Bhattacharya creates Gandhigram, a microcosm of India. In the novel, he explains that Gandhian economics and ethics are exact all over the place and at any time. He also expects that even China can find salvation through the younger age group. To justify his view, he portrays Satyajit's character. Satyajit is a Gandhian character acting as the originator of Gandhigram, where life was founded on discipline and self-restraint, similar to that of Gandhi's Sevagram. He manages the life of the village where Gandhian economics and ethics are worked out. With the provision of wants by the cottage-based manufacturing nears food, the village is self-sufficient. The Co-operative and food own the land has spread to each family according to its wants.

At the end of the novel, everything is in the form of two cultures. Bhaskar's marriage to Sumita is the marriage of Steeltown to Gandhigram. There is a reconciliation of the two ideologists, Bhaskar and Satyajit. Bhaskar attains, in the end, something of Satyajit in his background. Satyajit

emerging from his fast is to start a new stage in his life. Every character comes to a common point after traveling a long path of experience. The very final words in the novel announce that the ascetic girl trained by Satyajit has surrendered herself to the 'terrific wave' which stands for love and fullness of life. The novelist has ended the novel on a sweet note because a life lived fully with due justice to the various planes of existence can only lead to contentment and satisfaction. Bhattacharya's novel *Shadow from Ladakh* is a great range and scope with a type of character. He creates real life, like characters in his novels. In his novel, the story is conspicuous and dominant from the beginning to the end of the story. The cultural attitude of India, imbued with many socio-religious, economic, and thoughtful backgrounds, has a lovely combination.

2. Conclusion

The novel reaches something in exposing Gandhism as different from life. Gandhian non-violence is presented as partially irrelevant and anachronistic, not in cerebral verbiage but through Satyajit's breakdown to evoke a popular response to his Shanti march to Ladakh. It is in a similar vein that the essential discontent in Bhaskar and Roopa impulsive the consciousness of the inadequacy of a purely consumerist, modernist way of life.

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