



REFURBISHMENT OF INDIAN CULTURE IN THE NOVELS OF ANITA RAU BADAMI

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ABSTRACT

The renovation behind the cultural element is fundamental in unifying the nation and for building a healthy society. Reading or writing novels is not a mere act of entertainment but through them one is defining and expressing one's identity and culture. Novels should be born from the living conditions and aspirations of the natives to throw light on the way of the future. Indian English Novels penetrate into the core of Indianness related to the selection of theme, setting, language construction, and above all 'the Indian Spirit'. They should portray the core of Indian ethos. This is the high time to promote Indianness in the global scenario. India has a diversified and rich ethno- cultural context which facilitates Indians to nurture a firm ethos of their own. The portrayal of women in Indian writing in English modern times has also been influenced, in good measure, by the idea of women's liberation which is a social struggle aiming to eliminate forms of oppression based on gender and to gain for women equal economic, social and moral status and rights to determine their own lives as are enjoyed by men. Badami attempts to exhibit the status of women with a realistic touch. The term is used for the emancipation of women with regard to moral, religious, social, political, educational, legal and economic levels. She considers the evolution of man as complete only if the women attain her independence and individuality. This paper focuses on the renovation of culture in the lives of Anita Rau Badami's protagonists.

Key words: renovation, cultural dislocation, Indianness, individuality

The collective perspective of ethos is that the actions and motives a person acquires to repeat similar activities, which lead to habits, are from the society. Along with the individual characters, the communal aspect of ethos was emphasized in the Greek tradition. Ethos is used to denote the guiding ideals, views, values, convictions, and beliefs of a group, community, or nation. Even in the individual dimension, the communal aspect is implicit. While judging the ethos of a rhetor, the audience, which is the miniature form of the society, is reflecting the accepted ethos of the society. As part of

Socialization the individual assimilates and internalizes ethos of the society and later the individual tries to modify the social ethos. The society becomes the soil for the individual to root and to nurture and in turn, the individual contributes to the betterment of society. The process intertwines the society and individual. Once the individual assimilates the ethos, s/he feels at home in the society and moves with the collective psyche. The word ethos also carries the meaning of a comfortable space of a person in the community. From birth, each member of the society is formed in

accordance with the life philosophy of that society. The personal ethos is formed along with the social ethos. The authentic persona is the result of the understanding of and adapting to the ethos of the society. Community consciousness is the part of social existence. The unity of a community depends on how deeply individuals currently identify with the community's ethos. Thus, the ethos helps a standardizing process and to build up solidarity. The communal ethos fosters interpersonal relationships and sense of belongingness and security.

Badami's writings are fully concerned with the status of women, and their struggle for recognition and survival. Her women characters have gradually learnt how to fight for their rights and lived not only as a wife, mother or daughter, but also, as an individual and emerged as a new woman full of confidence and a sense of change. It may appear in various forms, but basically the concept of new woman is concerned with the question of identity among women, who share similar experiences in life. Ethos cannot be merely understood as the ethics or a character of an individual or society. More than that, it is the cardinal spirit of all the basic assumptions which prevail in the society. Ethos is an essential part of a social identity since it gives meaning to the collective behavior. The society is founded on certain socially accepted or objective truths which create a common platform. Identity of persons, groups, organizations, or nations is manifestation of ethos and it is essential for the very existence of the society. The novels depict a realistic picture of modern Indian society. Though we have adopted modern styles, our psychology remains tradition oriented resulting in strains and conflicts of different types. The problem with the protagonist was that though she had acquired high level education and had adopted outward modes and styles of living, her psychology had remained tradition bound.

The identity gives meaning and opportunity to identify with the 'significant others' for the individuals who form the society. The process of developing the personal identity depends on the social identity, which links one to the past ancestry, inter- relate with the present fellow beings and foresee a future descendant with a feeling of

oneness. Ethos is a relatively perceptual framework or underlying spirit which shapes and influences the identity of the individual and the society. The evolution of ethos is continuous and in dynamic process. The social beliefs that underlie ethos can be changed as a result of new, prolonged experiences of the society.

In the Indian tradition, religion, philosophy, spirituality, science, and astronomy cannot be separated from one another and from daily human life. Indian culture, which is pluralistic and complex, is like a banyan tree, which has aerial roots that grows and prop the tree. The tree has a complex structure where the original trunk cannot be distinguished from the rest. Similarly, Indian ethos is always open to the truth and goodness of other cultures. It shows a readiness to borrow and adapt to them without losing its own identity.

Indian culture has a unique nature to accept and assimilate many streams of ideologies without losing its essence. The eclectic approach facilitates the culture to grow in its own comprehensiveness and inclusiveness. India has a long heritage of stable family life. The spirit of family solidarity which provides meaning to the daily lives of Indians is still the core of Indian society. Hence, the children of India are brought up with love and care of parents and relatives.

The goal of life is to attain self- realization through fulfilling both material and spiritual duties. The life principles such as matter, life and mind are connected with the spiritual principles. Life is moving towards the ultimate objective. Since each person is unique, s/he has to follow a path, which is suitable for him/her. In general, there are three paths: the way of knowledge, the way of devotion and the way of action. To select the way, the ultimate objectives should be personalized through continuous reflections. The growth of a nation is a dynamic and continuous process through various troublesome situations. In such situations, the strong bond of relationships between people of the nation based on a common unifying ethos, works as a catalyst to weaken the disintegrating elements.

In the traditional Indian society, the male-ego is the major hindrance for the growth of women.

Instead of interpreting women from the patriarchal point of view, men should put themselves in women's shoes. Only a sound male- ego can motivate women to the front. The empowerment of women includes: environment for holistic development, freedom for decision making, participating in nation building, and job for economic independence. These parameters may facilitate women to contribute effectively to the nation building process. Badami explores the emotional world of women, revealing the various deeper forces at work in feminine sensibility as well as psychology. Quest for the definition of self and search for identity are the main features of the women of Badami, who are seen caught in the flux of conventional and contemporary. Badami focuses on the working psyche of her female characters. They desperately struggle to assert their individuality. Sensitive to the changing times and situations, they revolt against the tradition. The problems of her protagonist rise mostly from situations in the Indian context and differ from those of their Western counterparts. At the beginning Kamini is an angry woman questioning, protesting, and defying every form of domination. After marriage, she becomes timid following the dictates of the society and the roles prescribed by culture. Lastly, she attains a kind of selfhood that leads her to a more secure, meaningful and independent life.

Indian English writers also responded to the situation and oriented the people about the need to respond creatively to build the nation. They used satire and allegory to criticize the personalities who misused power. They presented social evils and sufferings of the people for upholding the democracy. They can empower Indians to embrace the Indianness in all their endeavors. The novels kindle the Indian hearts for being faithful to Indian ethos and the development of the nation. Values play a prominent role in the nation building process. From time immemorial Indian ethos has been giving due significance to noble values as it is carried out in the society through various customs, teachings, and religious practices.

The patriarchal society makes very deceptive comments on women. On the one hand, the writings seem to be enhancing the power of

women but on the other, the same words endangered their empowerment.

Outcome

Women writers have generally written about the problems of the women against the background of changing social, economic, cultural and political patterns. Her mother had been an orthodox old fashioned woman who, as was the general practice then brought her children up with some amount of strict discipline. The mothers were stricter with daughters because daughters were trained to submit and adjust in a new household. For sons it was different. No household chores for sons, these were meant for daughters only. The sons will have to earn bread. They were the ones who would carry on the family name and light the pyres of their parents. She was too young to understand the mother's logic. She resented this discriminatory treatment.

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