

RENEWAL OF RELATIONSHIPS: ANALYTICAL STUDY OF *AWASTHE* BY U R ANANTHAMURTHY

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ABSTRACT

The paper entitled 'Renewal of Relationships: Analytical Study of *Awasthe* by U R Ananthamurthy' based on U R Ananthamurthy's novel *Awasthe* which was translated by Shanthinatha Desai. U R Ananthamurthy is Kannada Writer and the author of the acclaimed work *Samskara*. Ananthamurthy concentrates in all his works the confrontation between culture and human nature - how culture and system curtails the real self of individual, how it deconstructs individuality etc. He has portrays the liminal state of post independent India in all his works. He depicts most of his works the concept of clash and dilemma of the Indians who are 'in between stage' - Indian tradition and western culture. The chosen work discusses the degeneration of post- independent era and how an individual confronts with it. This paper mainly based on two women characters in *Awasthe* - Lucina and Gouri Despande. Paper discusses how the protagonist, Krishnappa Gowda, got awareness from the ladies and the changes occur in his life. How the women break the cultural barriers and the sources which made them to turn against the societal norms are also discussed. Feminist aspects elucidates through Osho's concepts - action, reaction and awareness. Osho's teachings defy categorization, covering everything from the individual quest for meaning to the most urgent social and political issues facing society today. How the action and reaction of the women characters help the protagonists to get awareness is the central idea of the paper. It also includes the two different contextual meanings of renewal - 'to make something new' and 'to begin something again' in association with the chosen women characters.

KEYWORDS: Novel, U R Ananthamurthy, Culture and Human Nature

INTRODUCTION

Ananthamurthy's novels include powerful women characters. He presents women characters in a way that full of self potentiality and depth. In each novel we can encounter with a woman who is balanced and capable of handling the situations in a smooth manner. More than reacting on the basis of emotional outbursts they are acting according to their real self. For example, Chandri in *Samskara*, Saroja and Radha in *Bhava*, Gouri Despande in *Awasthe* etc They are powerful and courageous and capable of accepting the past and live in the present. They are more actors than reactors which made them powerful and courageous. Ananthamurthy uses his work to convey the message to go back to India's rich tradition. Readers can hear the calling back of our past. According to him the rich tradition and system of India - based on nature and its rules - will provide a release from this liminal stage.

Osho is a philosopher who introduced novel ideas to spirituality. He believed in the transformation of mundane into sacred. His teachings are based on day to day life especially full-fledged human life. He said "I never use the word renunciation at all. I say: Rejoice in life, in love, in meditation, in the beauties of the world, in the ecstasy of existence -

rejoice in everything! Transform the mundane into the sacred. Transform this shore into the other shore, transform the earth into paradise.” (Osho 1) The protagonist is transforming from the mundane world to the path of pursuit of being. Ananthamurthy is end up the character in the state of rejoicing the nature and day to day life. It can be considered as the protagonist started his journey towards being.

The name of the protagonist is Krishnappa Gowda, a man who has got strong political ideologies and believes. He has taken social service as his part of routine. But the political scenario of the post-independent era has dishevelled him totally. The novel is a sensitive study of an honest and idealistic politician and his inner consciousness than a mere objective presentation of the political situation. The novel uses flash back technique. Through the narration of protagonist and his re-collections give a picture of his past life and which also reveals his existential angst. Author used the juxtaposition of past and present for narration. The self analyses of each character, their re-collections, memories, anxieties etc give a full form to the fiction. Novel starts in the present. Krishnappa is paralysed. He is narrating his past life to Nagesh, a youth from the village who wants to write krishnappa’s biography. He is a family man. Sita is his wife. She is working in a bank as clerk. She is an ordinary woman. He has got a daughter. Krishnappa has relationship with a lot of bourgeois in his political career. Some become his friends throughout his political journey. He confronted with different varieties of persons in his life. From each person he got different insights.

Krishnappa belongs to a low class family. His father died and mother is with her brother helping sister-in-law. He is good at his studies. Seeing his interests in studies Maheswarayya joined him to school. He sponsored his studies. Krishnappa started his revolutionary attitude and leadership from college. He becomes the leader of hostel. He solved all the problems of students. He wants to become a writer but he end up in a politician. His rationale approach and oratory make him hero of the college even among rich students. He started to grow up with certain ideologies towards life. He wanted to make all his rationale and ideal approaches as practical. Krishnappa used to explain, “how much a man had to suffer, particularly a man in whose case there was a big gap between his existing condition and his desired condition, before his mask became his real face. Even as he is dying now, he is not free from suffering.” (6)

He has met Gouri Deshpande during his college days. He is the senior in his class because of his late schooling. He is a legend to all girls. He has known for his indifferences to examinations and his intelligence and independent thinking. He is a strong man and wears khadi dhoti and shirt. Among girls he nicknamed as ‘African Prince’. Gouri is his classmate. She is seven or eight years younger than him. She is a famous singer and dancer in the college. Students came to know that she doesn’t have a normal accepted family background. Her mother has left her husband and now living with a merchant openly as his mistress. He has built a special bungalow for Gouri and her mother and has kept a car and driver for them. She usually kept herself aloof from others. Krishnappa and Gouri never spoke each other. Because of his revolutionary action Krishnappa got enemies in college. They spread a rumour between Krishnappa and Gouri and drawn obscene pictures and dialogues on the college walls. The incidents, compromising the problem, protecting her from students comment, lead to the sprouting of their relationship. Once he has gone to Gouri’s house. The atmosphere was quite pleasant and her mother is an open minded woman they treated him well. He came to know a different story from Gouri regarding their family. Her father stole money from bank and caught by police. Mother chose Nanjappa, the merchant for their living and existence. They didn’t talk much. He left and wrote a letter to Gouri. “...you either win over the daily meanness around you, or become its victim – that is the law of life.” (22) They spoke a few but it has depth and understanding. An intellectual and understanding kinship sprouted between them. She is a person who always shown the

boldness to follow her heart. The trueness and openness attracted him to Gouri. She is more practical than ideal.

Krishnappa has a friend called Annaji. It is Krishnappa who gave the name to him. He doesn't know never asked his real name. Annaj is a middle aged man and have attractive personality. According to situation and people he constantly changes his name and profession. Eventhough Krishnappa knows about the reality he keeps on serving him and be with him for his talks. He is a good orator and also a revolutionist. His highly philosophy coated talk and ideologies have attracted Krishnappa. Annaji believes in individual power. "Man transcends his environment – I don't want to argue this point. This is the truth of my experience." (27) He does not believe in mere reforms. Mere reforms would not change the system. "Revolution is the law of social process. We are the catalyst or the midwives who hasten the process... there is a difference between beating the dry daily routines through illusions and winning them over in terms of reality." (28) Annaji's talks inspired him and in other words Annji used Krishnappa as his tool. Eventhough he inspired by Annaji's principles Annaji's personal life disturbed him. So with the revolutionary he has left and he started the revolution against system (s) with the confidence of Annaji's comment about him "He is one of those who is original in his thinking and who can practice grass root politics." (45) He decided to leave college education and decided to fight against systems as a catalyst. He slowly changed into an individual fighter with utopian ideals. He sometimes sits with an old man, people called him sanyasi, and he doesn't talk just do minimal things for living and lives a peaceful life in an inner area, which has given him a relief for sometimes. "No one knew his name and he spoke to none. Every day in the morning he went down the hill and went to the town. He chose a street every day and standing at one end of it, he recited for an hour the cantos from the Bhagavatgita. In the basket that he kept on the ground by his side people put things like rice, dal and fruit. Once the little basket was full, the sanyasi didn't accept any more. After finishing his recitation, he returned to the hill, cooked his food, and ate. Thats all." (40) Annaji taught him revolution and Sanyasi the life.

Krishnappa gave up college education. He joined in politics. Gouri met Krishnappa in his hostel. They had a healthy talk. In between the talk he falls in a chaotic situation of emotions. "...Krishnappa was caught in the wheel of fire – the circle of love, desire and disappointment." (45) His inferiority complex stopped him to reveal his love towards Gouri verbally. They both separated. Gouri is beautiful, courageous and elegant woman. She has got her own individuality and will power. Krishnappa respects her, admires her and loves her. She is an equal person to him for talk and thought. The politics changed his life drastically. All his believes and ideas loosened one by one in front of the reality. He adapted to the situation. But it changes him totally to another man. The conflict of his belief and reality the political degeneration, his individual army all these shattered Krishnappa.

Politics gives and teaches different persons relations to Krishnappa. He becomes like a person who has condemned to be thrown into the chaos he approached and dealt with all. Gopala Reddy is his friend during those days. He enjoys women. From there Krishnappa met Lucina, a middle class girl and Reddy is the caretaker and sponsor of her studies. She is doing her nursing course in Delhi. She does not have a family. Her father himself desired her. The situation leads her to a relationship. But the man deceived her offering marriage proposal. She escaped from him and accidently reached in the house of Reddy. He has taken care of her. She has affection towards Krishnappa. She came into his life knowing his relationship with other girls. "With Lucina, things were different; he delighted in her very presence. He, who had tried to retain his dignity even during copulation, realised now how ridiculous he was then. He learnt from Lucina that every bit of the human body was a foundation of expectation, excitement and fulfilment. With her intercourse become a union; a song capable of unlimited extension." (133) They continued their relationship for one year. But she tried o hide

her past from him. Slowly he got attracted towards her. When he proposed her she said “I hate the very idea of marriage.”(134) Krishnappa was a little confused, not finding a way to make Lucina realise that he had something within him beyond this love. She wanted to continue her studies in abroad. The attitude of Lucina creates confusion in him especially on his moral values and believes. He met Lucina in his mentally crushed state. Through their relationship he overcomes the clash – his ideas and the real system. The emotional back up from Lucina gives him the confidence to face the situation. He becomes ready to face the degenerated system and political scenario instead of turn against it. But Lucina is searching for betterment in life and situation and happiness. She has chosen Krishnappa only from a peripheral level. She has use the entire situation only for healing the wound from past. He regained the self confidence as a man and a caretaker.

His family life is not at his expectations. Sita always thinks and worried about the price of vegetables and laments when the price of gold increases etc. He has tried his level best to change her as a woman whom he wants. But the attempt ends up in vain. She is a hard worker. She loves her husband and daughter and worried about Krishnappa’s nature. She started to gather money for buying a house and plot for their better living. She is working hardly for her family. She is full of complaints and worries. All these made Krishnappa an arrogant and rude husband and father. Sita would not understand Krishnappa, his ideologies, belief and even his talking style. So he started to avoid her as much as possible. But in his paralysed state he came under the control of Sita. For all basic needs he has to call her. This even worsened the situation. The ego of Krishnappa started to find mistakes and aversion in each doings of Sita. It worsened the family situation. A home nurse was appointed for Krishnappa which helped Sita from over working and Krishnappa from false ego.

Gouri came to meet Krishnappa. When he got the information of her arrival the inferiority complex he had in the past again raised with double strength. She reached Krishnappa’s house. Krishnappa observed the changes in her physically and mentally. Her dressing style, attitude manners all changed. She smoked in front of Krishnappa and even offered one cigarette to him. Krishnappa introduced Gouri to his family and friends. Sita started to doubt the relationship between Gouri and Krishnappa. Gouri analysed the situation and for betterment she decided to change Krishnappa to some other place. She thought the change of environment will help for his better treatment and mental refreshment too. They shifted – Gouri, krishnappa’s mother and Krishnappa- to Veeranna’s guest house. Gouri stated water therapy for him and released Jyothi, home nurse, from the daily in charge. She started to involve in his life full and fully the twenty four hours. They talked about their gone past and their college days. Gouri has taken the situation fully – singing, talking, discussions, excercises, bathing, sleeping all. The unrevealed love of both got a cosy atmosphere to sprout. Through her nursing “he was filled with a feeling of gratefulness when he found that she didn’t show any distress or nausea at the nakedness of his diseased body.” (177) They united through their bodies. “...They searched all the nooks and corners, as if to awaken by their touch the hidden springs of life...His body warmed up, sprouting and springing.” (178) For the daily check up Jyothi came in the morning and she noticed the transformation in Krishnappa. He resurrected like a phoenix from mental paralyses and it reflected all over the body. Apart from that the thought “she had protected him, keeping him clean and pure somewhere in the core of her heart, became increasingly strong.” (180) made him to resurrect. He started to think in proper way and behave in proper way, the way what he wants really. Gouri’s action made all the changes in him. She made her understand his wife’s love and care towards him. “Why are you living with a woman whom you look down upon, in such a manner? It appears as though you have deliberately searched for a woman inferior to you, and married her in order to nourish your conceit.” (168) The question touched her ego and he accepted the fact. Only Gouri can ask such question to him. She had the potential to act according to her needs and wishes. She always follows and listen her inner sound not the

outer world. She is in the system of culture and society and follows her decision. Her husband is in Delhi. In village everyone started to talk against her. Even Krishnappa's mother had the same feeling towards her. But he faced all of them with a calm n pleasant smile. Osho explains only an actor can produce this smile – a smile from heart. If one's doings are with consciousness it is an act. They can enjoy each moment simply be there. Gouri enjoyed at its fullest her each moment with Krishnappa. That fullness of her action spread the energy to Krishnappa. Because of her action he awakened and even aware about the existence of each body part. "...he feels intensely that he had eyes, ears, neck, stomach..." (178) Krishnappa became aware of himself and his doings while he was with Gouri. According to Osho awareness is remembering of the self. The "constant remembering of the self creates a subtle energy, a very subtle energy in you. You begin to be a crystallized being." (osho 51)

Lucina's reaction and Gouri's action are the two notable turning points in Krishnappa's life. Krishnappa's relationship with Lucina, a new way of relationship compare to existed tradition and culture, helps him to overcome the cultural cliché and jargons. In other words because of her shell of cultural conditioning has broken. She is a seeker of comfortness and happiness. She wants to heal and overcome the trauma happened in the past. She is behaving according to the emotional upcoming. She is just reacting towards them. She does not have a self to act. She is the seeker of outer world. Eventhough reaction is a common word Osho used it as from a different context. According to Osho reaction comes from periphery. It is not a total thing. It is purely based on emotions. We just react for somebody's doing. Here Lucina is reacting towards her wounded experience. Through Krishnappa she is trying to heal the wound which has got by the ex lover and also an escape from the bitter mental trauma happened in her childhood from her father. She is just covering the waves of broken emotions through Krishnapp. He becomes a mere man in front of Lucina which peeled the hardest coat of him – the cultural conditioning. He is freer to act after that. Lucina gave him emotional care when he needed and that made him to wake up from the first fall. In the case of Gouri it was action rather than reaction. Krishnappa's relationship with Gouri is a new beginning of their already existed relationship. It is a beginning of something again especially with more force or enthusiasm. Action is not a peripheral outburst but from inner core. It is total and it is comes from oneself, from the core or centre. His union with Gouri has taken him to the world of renewal, awareness and confidence. He realised his situation and his immature behaviour towards family because of Gouri's presence and companionship. She also made him understood he is a mere tool in the present political predicament.

Krishnappa transformed and renewed to a person who is ready to or wants to enjoy the day to day life and happenings. He told to Gouri "what I must do now is to try and see whether I can stand on my legs with the help of this stick... I have two desires yet. I would like to sit under the banyan tree, and experience the eternity of time. And I would like to experience that same sense of wonder I used to feel, when I saw that rare bird." (189) Krishnappa started to rejoice the world and his actions. The novel ends up with this sentence "Krishnappa realized the vanity of speaking anything more... He then crawled, pushing the ball with the stick." (190) The ending gives the readers a hope of ray and a sign of renewal in the life of Krishnappa.

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