



Research Paper-Education

The use of flashback technique as a mean to express the sadness and pain by Sunetra Gupta in her Memories of Rain

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Abstract:

Sunetra Gupta's debut novel 'Memories of Rain' gets the Sahitya Academy Award for the year 1996. It has been started on a rainy Friday when Moni is walking down the Oxford Street in the afternoon Moni. She has been married to Antony for Ten Years and has a six-year-old daughter. It certainly opens the gates of remembrance. The novel is mainly about three characters- Moni, Anthony and Anna. It is an astounding debut novel by the novelist as it is a kind of contemplation on the East-West split through the account of marriage of a gorgeous looking Indian girl with an average Englishman. The novelist has used the flashback technique or we can say stream of consciousness technique in this novel in order to bring upon the past into surface. This technique has been effectively used here by the novelist.

Keywords: *Rain, Memory, Marriage, Stream of consciousness technique, East-West Culture*

Sunetra Gupta, a well-known translator of Rabindranath Tagore, has written one of the most remarkable novels of all time entitled 'Memories of Rain' which eventually got the Sahitya Academy Award for the year 1996 though it is first published in 1992. Sunetra has used so many poetic techniques and symbolic language in her debut novel that this novel has become a classic of Indian English Literature. However, it was not easy for her as the original title, "The Dregs of a poet's Dream" has been immediately discarded by the publishers, and she has to think over the title all over again but she eventually has decided that 'Memories of Rain' should be an appropriate title, so it has been fixed and is approved by the publishers as well. The novelist has used the flashback technique or we can say stream of consciousness technique in this novel in order to bring upon the past into surface. This technique has been effectively used here by the novelist.

It is often regarded as an experimental book with the multi-cultural features. She has employed a stream of consciousness technique in its fullest, as the novel merely talks about a week's time but it has included in it the events of past through the memory lane by the flashback of a marriage between Moni and Antony, an Indian girl and an English man. It brings out the conflict of cultural disparities and in the pain of unfaithfulness and misapprehension.

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in the afternoon Moni. She has been married to Antony for Ten Years and has a six-year-old daughter. While walking, she sees a woman squeezing an ice-cream cone to feed the pigeons and giving them water in a plastic bowl. However, when she sees this, she reflects upon the period when her grandmother used to tell her so many things. It certainly opens the gates of remembrance. She recalls that the birds cannot drink because her grandmother, many years ago, says that the pigeons can only satisfy their thirst by opening their beaks to drops of rain. This small first paragraph sets the tone for the story, which discloses the weekend then after. Afterwards, the story includes a sequence of flashbacks and reminiscences of Moni which she demonstrates. By these accounts, she also expresses the difference between her native country India and her adopted country England. She remembers the first meeting of her with Antony who happens to be a friend of her brother. He is an intellectual man and a hard-working student who loves his studies. He is from Europe. Moni's brother introduces Moni while Anthony accompanies him to their home. Anthony sees Moni once again at dinner and has no patience. Anthony and Moni are very happy when her brother leaves. They fall in love with each other. Anthony has gone crazy for Moni and experiences a weird coldness in his limbs when he listens to the sound of Moni's windy voice but Anthony cannot recognize the words, "in the dense obsession of this deep dark rainy or tread secret, silent, like the night, past all eyes." (10) Anthony has been extremely appreciative of Moni's voice, her abilities and her fascination. He even goes to Moni and says to her that she has an attractive voice. When Anthony sits with a cup of tea and he listens to the a song sung by Moni, he feels mesmerized and says, "in this moonlit night, they have all gone wandering in the forest in this mad springtime wind, in this moonlit night." (Gupta, 12) However, the magic charm of her song spread across the wide fields.

I will not go into the inebriated spring winds
I will sit alone, content, in the corner
I will not go forth into the drunken winds (Gupta,12)

This mild little London drizzle reminds her of the 1978 Calcutta monsoon where,

The rain poured from the skies not to purify the earth, but to spite it
to churn the parched fields into festering wounds, rinse the choked city sewers on to the streets
sprinkle the pillows with the nausea of mould... (Gupta, 17)

On one such day Anthony suddenly lands all the way from London in order to learn and study whatever possible as far as Bengali theatre is concerned. He is brought to the house of Moni, and he immediately falls in love with her who emerges to him as 'the ghost of beauty'. They fall in love. "There, on the darkened roof top, amid the thunder of the festival of fire, he reaches out to take her into his feverish hands, kisses her burning cheek." (Gupta, 42)

After that, they decide to get married. Consequently, she is brought the demi-paradise, an island. When they settle in London, she quickly finds the job in a library as she accepts the job of an administrator.

Everything goes well for some time but slowly the intoxication of their stifling covetousness diminishes. Consequently his obsession for the wife turns into sheer affection and nothing more than that. He starts involving with number of women for physical hunger. However, he has so many illegal affairs, and finally he feels love for a tall and attractive English blonde woman named Anna who is more accustomed to him mentally, and she drags him to the environment which he belongs to.

Moni comes to know about the relationship and she tolerates it in good grace at first but then she slowly recoils into the gentle mourning of her stillness and has become voiceless with bitter misery. She gradually develops a harsh depression which can be seen through her sad eyes. She always thinks that he will never discard her, but can she really go on with this? This question lies in her mind.

Moni turns into a disloyal wife to Anthony as she has started an affair with her old lover, Health cliff even after she has a girl child. The reason behind this is Anthony's approach who is always, in some way or the other, remained apathetic to his wife Moni which leads her into making this adultery. On the other hand, Anna's love for Anthony is intense and it is known by Moni too. Consequently she becomes silent and modest in their convoluted foreplay. She finds it hard to understand the reason for her sadness. However, Moni still trusts Anthony and has the admiration, fondness and love for him, even after everything. The green eyes of Moni observe the dark eyes of Anthony settle towards the grass green eyes of Anna. The love of Anthony for Anna is a demonstration of his flashing obsession of his alternating passion for her. The love of Anthony and Anna is just like insanity driven through the rain, driven without any proper direction through the pouring rain. Day by day, Moni does not want to live with Anthony. At the end, she goes to Calcutta with her daughter as it is difficult for her to cope up all these. Moni will certainly miss Anthony's affection, his tall shade behind the door, the force of his limbs outside the bedcovers, the shadow of ceramic upon Anthony's pale palms, the dry dimness of Anthony's inflexible hair against Moni's skin,

On this last night of spring, I have come empty- handed,
 garlandless
 a silent flute cries, the smile dies on your lips
 in your eyes a wet indignation
 when did this spring pass by, where is my song? (Gupta,93)

Thus, the end of the novel is tragic. The title is apt because the life of Moni goes through from ups and down like a rain which drips in fast sometimes and slow sometimes. It is also to be noticed that Moni narrates all these things in a rainy season. Thus, the novel is quite amazing as it deals with so many aspects.

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