



CHETAN BHAGAT'S 2 STATES: A PSYCHOANALYTIC READING

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ABSTRACT:

Chetan Bhagat's *2 States: The story of My Marriage* deals with the hardships of the two protagonists Krish and Ananya. To rebel or fight is easy but to convince the parents is tough. The differences in State, Language, Culture and Tradition between them creates chaos and confusions in the story. The couple undergo a tough battle to fulfil their dream wedding. Bhagat, on the other hand portrays the emotional conflicts between Krish and his father. Krish's hatred with him can be taken as an act of repression. This paper is an attempt to study on the psychoanalytical concepts in the novel.

Keywords: unconscious mind, repression, emotions, depression, anxiety, psychopath

Introduction:

Sigmund Freud's contributions to the development of psychoanalytical theories are innumerable. His theories, therapeutic methods, to analyse the functions of both conscious and unconscious levels of mind is a boon to the field of psychology. In literature, one may psychoanalyze a particular character in any literary work using the theories of Freud. Psychoanalytic criticism interpret texts in various ways to analyse the desires, emotions, psyche of the characters projected by the author M.H.Abrams in his *A Handbook of Literary Terms States* the importance of Freudian concepts to analyse literature as,

Freud proposes that literature and the other arts, like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consist of the imagined or fantasied, fulfilment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standards of mortality and propriety (248)

2 States the story of my marriage:

Chetan Bhagat deals with various issues like monotonous academic system, corruption and scandals in politics, caste discrimination, gender bias etc in India in almost all of his novels. The novel chosen for the study is quite unique, as it focuses on the difference in culture, language, food and identity in two important states in India – Punjab and Tamilnadu respectively. Both Krish and Ananya hails

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from the above mentioned states, meets in Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad where they pursue their master's degree. They become friends in the beginning later on they fall in love with each other unmindful of the bias in their culture and language.

The love between them grows stronger and they decided to get married with the consent of the elders in the family. The young protagonists are ready to accept the new changes in the family and society. But the elders are very strict in tradition, rituals, beliefs and conventions. Neither Krish's mother nor Ananya's family is ready to approve the marriage. The young lovers are very strong in the decision, not to elope but to get the consent of the elders to have a happy wedding life. They took many efforts to bring harmony between the two families. They arrange special meetings among the elders in various occasions to let them share their opinions.

Chetan Bhagat's *2 States* portrays the emotional struggle of a father and a son. From the beginning of the novel, Krish mentions this towards the strict father. To implement discipline in the family, he strongly opposes gathering of relatives, watching TV etc. After retired from the Armed Forces, he joins hand with friends to start business. His mess with higher authorities in the army shows his uncontrollable anger.

There is no one-on-one conversation between the father and the son for many years. The only consoling soul in the family to uphold the spirit of Krish is his mother Kavitha. Being a single child in the family, Krish needs to maintain the balance in this bond. Kavitha's role as a quiet mother shows her concern for both the father and son. Her tough battles with Mr. Malhotra after her wedding is a typical representation of male chauvinism. Krish admits the fact of denying his matriarchal relatives due to the strict orders of his father. Kavitha finds opportunities to invite her siblings during the absence of Malhotra, which Krish admits as,

'my father didn't come home until late so my mother had taken the risk and invited her sister home for lunch. Some Indian men cannot stand any happiness in their wives' lives, which includes her meeting her siblings' (*2 States* 67).

Lack of Parental care:

Love and care of parents plays an important role in the psyche of a child. Krish never sees that in his lifetime. On the other hand, he receives abundant love from Kavitha, his mother. From biscuits to bride, Kavitha interferes in the choices made by Krish. When the love between Krish and Ananya is revealed to Malhotra, the whole family is under severe emotional trauma. Krish spends sleepless nights thinking about the quarrel. He finds emotional comfort. Freud in his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1895) coined 'Oedipus complex' which refers to the child's unconscious sexual desire for the opposite sex parent and hatred for the same-sex parent. In the novel, a letter from Krish's father disturbs him a lot. His mind is conceived with hatred towards his father. Family issues, problems in love life, pressures in workplace stimulates the level of anxiety within him. In the late night, he visits his mother to have a peaceful sleep. He says, I came back to my bed and tossed the letter in the bin. I felt light after speaking to my mother and drifted off to sleep in five minutes. What would the world be without mothers? (*2 States* 159).

Bhagat celebrates 'motherhood' in the novel and equally a kind of bitterness towards the attitude of his father is mentioned in some chapters. Human mind is a complex process which can express love and hatred at the same time. Elizabeth Auchincloss' *The Psychoanalytic Model of the Mind* refers to negative Oedipus complex as 'hatred for the opposite-sex-parent (110). This hatred is beyond the limit when the father and son deal with the problem in sharing the same house. Krish's extreme revulsion is revealed when his father says,

'I hope you leave home soon.'

I hope you leave this world soon, I responded mentally as I took my plate and left the room. (*2 States* 59)

Repression:

Sigmund Freud's theory of repression throws light on his urging the patients to remember the past in a conscious state. The past experiences in one's life eventually mixes up with the present time. To decide a healthy future, one needs to hold positive approach towards the life. Human beings bury the past incidents within the mind and voluntarily prevents them to mess in the present. This act of repression is also a defence mechanism to never permit the bitter past to mix up with the present happiness. Freud in his *Five Lectures on Psycho Analysis* mentions the struggles of his patients to recall the past memories as:

...there was some force that prevented them from becoming conscious and compelled them to remain unconscious... pushed the pathogenetic experiences in question out of consciousness. I gave the name of repression to this hypothetical process (28-29).

The conversations between Krish and Guruji in Pondicherry Ashram reveals the repression in Krish's mind. He struggles a lot to recollect the quarrel between his father and him. His pain come out as emotional outburst during his recollection. His father mocks Krish for crying like a weak man. He can't bear the disgusted glances and gave his father a slap.

Krish's repressed memories are recollected during the therapy session with Guruji. By revealing it to him, Krish tries to minimise the feelings of guilt and anxiety. Holding a baggage of anger, pain and loss is heavy for him. To stop the never-ending inner sufferings of Krish, Guruji offers 'Forgiveness' as a solution. He says, for you, forgiving doesn't make the person who hurt you feel better, it makes you feel better' (2 States 168). All counselling, meditations and therapy sessions offers lightness in his conscious mind. He feels light and decides to surrender to God.

To convince the parents is an unending task for both Krish and Ananya in which they fail often. The reconciliation between the two families in Goa fails and results in a kind of disgrace to Ananya's parents. Ananya's sudden breakup in relationship puts Krish in severe emotional turmoil. Bala, his friend takes him to a psychiatrist Dr. Iyer. During the counselling session, Krish exercises wide range of emotions like frustrations, anxieties, depressions and sudden unpredictable emotions. His sleepless nights and longings for love disturbs him a lot. Krish understands the tight situation in his house. This restricted communication results in a serious mental disorder known as 'split personality' (*Dictionary of Psychopathology* 57) within him. Krish's encounter between him and his freaked-out me goes on like this:

Calm down, Krish this is going to pass. I told myself. This was the sensible me talking. No baby, this time you are so fucked. This is how you will feel for the rest of your life, the freaked-out me said. That's nonsense. Whatever crap happens in life, one gets used to it ... The world's most sensible person and the biggest idiot both stay within us. The worst part is, you can't ever tell who is who (242-243).

This alternative personalities in one's mind will create disorder. To get a better recognition and smooth life, every individual is striving hard. A kind of split personality will occur when violation in social, cultural or psychological norms happen.

To live a normal life in this complicated world is a dream. The primary instinct of any individual to lead a life with tolerance and liberty needs energy to balance the emotions. The world offers different emotions, different experiences to all of us. The basic understanding of all these variations is necessary for a peaceful life. Krish and Ananya tries to pacify the differences between the families. Mr.Malhotra, the father plays a significant role in convincing the elders. To resolve the problems, he makes secret moves for his son. The final chapters show a major twist in the relationship between Krish and his father Malhotra. In the contemporary world, all are playing crucial roles in multiple ways. To settle as a normal is a probability, which Krish admits as:

why does it have to be a choice? Why can't mom get her relatives and you come as well? Why can't we be a normal family for once? I thought. I guess there are no normal families in the world. Everyone is a psycho and the average of all psychos is what we call normal (247).

Bhagat's portrayal of female characters in the novel shows his concern for the opposite sex. Mrs. Kavitha is a silent sufferer, whose only hope is her son. As a responsible mother, she tolerates with the elders in the family to maintain the balance in the family. Familial relationships in the story adds more flavour in the course of life. Radha Swaminathan, Ananya's mother, on the other hand achieves her desire without violating the traditional beliefs. Her interest in constant learning promotes her success to the next level. Mr.Swaminathan and others are astonished by her hidden talents. The younger women in the story like Anaya and Minti are steady in their passion. With a balanced mind, Ananya thinks a lot before she dives into action. Her potential to convince the elders is executed carefully without hurting the beliefs of them. On the whole, women characters in the novel stand strong as pillar of support to the men, which is inevitable for peaceful existence.

Conclusion:

The writer Chetan Bhagat is a renowned columnist, motivational speaker and excellent screenplay writer. He has got many opportunities to meet the young students in and around India. He is travelling

to many educational institutions to deliver motivational lectures. His chance to meet the youth of today has helped him to analyse closely the problems and aspirations of them. His interpretations with them provides him an idea about the pulse of the younger generation, which he depicts well in his novels.

Bhagat's *2 States* satisfies the readers by providing the importance of maintaining cordial relationship with others. To meet the outside world isn't easy. Every character in the novel is characterised with such demands. The psychoanalytic reading of the novel helps the readers to understand the inner psyche of the characters. The ego, unconscious mind, repressions and dreams are interpreted and analysed carefully. More than a love story, the novel projects a close reading of the conscious mind of the characters which is essential in the present day.

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