

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

Azadi: An autobiographical study

Dr. Firoz Shaikh*

Abstract:

Literature covers the public and private space. It narrates public frenzy and personal fears. It is not only a composition that tells a story of historical, political, social, cultural events but it also dramatizes a situation, expresses emotions, analysis and advocates and promotes ideas. Mainly it comes from the author's or writer's mind with his/her experiences of life, fantasy and life events. Major writers like Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Jane Austen are most famous for respectively drama, poem, novel etc. genres of literature. But a writer like James Joyce is famous for an autobiographical novel A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

The first Indian novel written in English is Rajmohan's Wife written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay published in 1864. But true jest of Indian writing in English came after partition. The partition of India is considered as the major historical and pathetic event not only in the history of India, but also of the entire human race. The phenomena of partition changed the history of India and the offspring of the process of partition i.e. Pakistan.

Chaman Nahal Azadi (1975) one of the four novels written about the author's acquaintances and understanding of Gandhi deals with the unique background of the time of declaration of partition, the dreadful events that followed the partition and the helpless situation of the refugees who felt alienated after the partition. Chaman Nahal wrote his novel based on his own experience of spending his formative years in Sialkot the partition was declared. The author Chaman Nahal was born and brought up in Sialkot; hence, one can say that the novel has many autobiographical elements. This paper aims to find out the autobiographical elements in Chaman Nahal novel Azadi.

Key words: Novels, Partition, Autobiography, Stream of consciousness

Introduction:

Azadi, one of the most notable novels of post-independence, has been considered to be Chaman Nahal's best novel. In the year 1977, the novel had earned the India's prestigious 'Sahitya Academy Award'. The novel also won 'The Federation of Indian Publisher Award'. Chapman Nahal himself had been a refugee and had gone through the suffering and loss that millions of innocent citizens had to go through.

*Dr. Firoz Shaikh ,Asso. Professor & Head, Dept. of English, Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Mehta University, Junagadh

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

It was the first-hand suffering that enabled him to write his novels on partition quiet realistically. The novel is based on the Sialkot and the suffering that the city witnessed. The author Chaman Nahal was born and brought up in Sialkot; hence, what can say that there are lots of autobiographical elements in it. The author himself has admitted that the novel, 'Azadi' has many elements that are directly and/or indirectly has to do with his first-hand experience of the horrific events followed by partition.

Literature comes from society. It reflects the society. It is a mirror of the society. It has different types or genres like novel, short story, poem, drama etc. Autobiography is also a genre of literature. The word autobiography literary means auto-SELF, bio-LIFE, graph-WRITING. An autobiography is the story of someone's life written or otherwise told by that person. Some novels do have elements of the autobiography. An autobiography mostly written in first person point of view. Some novels written in third person's point of view. But they also have an autobiographical element. One of the examples of these types of novels is A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce.

In the novel Azadi by Chaman Nahal we can also find autobiographical elements.

Birth Place:

Chaman Nahal was born and brought up in Sialkot. Now Sialkot is in Pakistan but before partition it was in India. His family suffered a lot in Sialkot and then they moved to Delhi India after partition.

Like Chaman Nahal, In the novel Azadi, Lala Kanshi Ram and his wife Prabha Rani, his son Arun Kumar, his daughter Madhu also lived in Sialkot. After partition they came to Delhi- the capital of India.

The Character of Arun as a true shadow of Chaman Nahal:

Whenever we are trying to study autobiographical elements in Chaman Nahal's Azadi. We should be aware about the character, who represent the author Chaman Nahal himself. Arun as a protagonist of the novel represent the true shadow of Chaman Nahal in the novel Azadi. In the novel Arun's birthdate was: "It was the third of June, 1947. As in other place in the novel the age of Lala Kanshi Ram and Prabha Rani presented was: "Lala Kanshi Ram was now fifty and Prabha Rani was forty-eight".

When Arun was born, she had suffered badly.... Lala Kanshi Ram knew it was a punishment from gods for continuing to mate, when they were as old as that. (He was thirty and she was twenty-eight).

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

When Arun was born, the age of Lala Kanshi Ram was thirty and Prabha Rani was twenty-eight years old. When the novel Azadi started their ages were respectively fifty and forty-eight. So, Arun was twenty years old in June, 1947.

Chaman Nahal was born in 1927. Arun was also born in 1927. Because in the year 1947 Arun's age was twenty years. Age of Arun and Chaman Nahal was also comparatively same at that time. This suggests that Chaman Nahal's age matched with the age of the character of Arun in the novel Azadi.

Stream of consciousness:

Stream of consciousness means a continuous flow of ideas, thoughts and feelings, as they are experienced by a person; a style of writing that expresses keys without using the usual methods of description and conversation.

Mostly these types of methods used in autobiographical novels. We shall find stream of consciousness in the novel Azadi. Where Arun's sister Madhu and her husband killed by Muslim mob when they were coming to Sialkot by train. Arun went to find their dead bodies. When he returned, he was in deep thoughts in remembrance of his sister. At this moment Chaman Nahal used stream of consciousness.

Early in life Madhu was struck with smallpox and
the disease had left deep marks on her face...
'Hunh!' she said in contempt of these who taught her
ugly...
'Eh, Arun', she called out
'You think I am ugly?'
'No, you are very beautiful' he replied.

Chaman Nahal as a student in his true life and Arun as a student in the novel Azadi:

Chaman Nahal was born in Sialkot and studied in Sialkot. After the partition and his family moved to Delhi and he further studied in Delhi. He did his masters in English at university of Delhi in 1948.

In the novel Azadi, Arun started study in Sialkot. When we move towards the ending of the novel, he started study in Delhi college.

It was some days before Arun was able to meet Noor
at the college.

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

It was some days before Arun was able to meet Noor at the college.

Arun heard the news at the river. He had joined Hindu college-One of the four men's colleges in Delhi- as a student.

Suffering during partition:

During partition Chaman Nahal and his family suffered a lot in Sialkot and lived in the camp. Then they moved to Delhi and lived there. In the novel Azadi, family of Lala Kashi Ram lived in Sialkot during partition Lala Kashi Ram, his son Arun and the whole family were also suffered a lot. The description of their suffering was truly draw by the author Chaman Nahalas he himself was experienced it so deeply.

'Our problem is to get organised and leave' said
Chaudhary Barkat Ali
'The attack will come around eleven. We have six
hours.'
'Where will we go?'....
'We have no choice, we've got to the refugee camp'
announced Lala Kanshi Ram.

The camp's life of Arun in the novel and True camp life of Chaman Nahal:

During partition time Chaman Nahal and his family lived in the camp for some time. They lived there in very difficult and dangerous situation. Then they came to Delhi. In the novel 'Azadi', Arun and his family also lived in the camp during partition. The second part of the novel depends on the camp life and struggle. In the last part of the novel, they came to Delhi.

Lala Kashi Ram allowed Padmini and Chandni the charwoman and her daughter, to move in with his family. The remaining families moved together into the fourth tent.

Conclusion:

The birth place of Arun and Chaman Nahar were same. They both were born in Sialkot. The age of the character Arun in the novel and the age of the author Chaman Nahal were same. These points suggest that Arun is a shadow of Chaman Nahal. The stream of consciousness is mostly used in autobiographical novels, we found the stream of

Saarth

E-Journal of Research

ISSN NO: 2395-339X

consciousness in the novel Azadi. Arun's and Chaman Nahal's student life were also matched. Arun in the novel and Chaman Nahal in his life were suffered during partition and they both were lived in the camp during partition. With the above discussion, it can be said that Azadi is an autobiographical novel and character of Arun represents the character of Chaman Nahal himself.

References:

- Abrams, M. H., and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. A Glossary of Literary Terms. Cengage Learning, 2015.
- Arsude, Sheetal Suresh. "Partition Novels Saga of Pain Train to Pakistan Tamas and Azadi." Shodhgangainflibnet: Partition Novels Saga of Pain Train to Pakistan Tamas and Azadi, Aurangabad, hdl.handle.net/10603/74710.
- Belliappa, K.C. "The Elusive Classic: Khushwant Singh's Train to Pakistan and Chaman Nahal's Azadi." The Literary Criterion 15.2(1980).
- Dhawan, R.K. Three Contemporary Novelists. New Delhi: Classical Publishing Company, 1985.
- Desai, Achala A. "The Autobiographical Novels of Mulk Raj Anand a Study." Shodhgangainflibnet: The Autobiographical Novels of Mulk Raj Anand a Study, Dharwad, 1 Jan. 1970, hdl.handle.net/10603/93698.
- Dwivedi, A.N. Studies in Contemporary Indian Fiction in English. New Delhi: Kitab Mahal, 1987.
- Gill, Tejaswant S. "A Row Over Azadi." Indian Book Chronicle 14.11-12 (Nov-Dec 1989).
- Nahal, Chaman Lal. Azadi. Penguin Books, 2001.
- Naik, M. K. A History of Indian English Literature. Sahitya Akadem, 1982.
- Sharma, D. R. "The Novels of Chaman Nahal." The Journal of Indian Writing in English 7.1. (1979).
- Singh, Rosy. "On the Genre of Autobiography: Typology and Evolution." The Delhi University Journal of The Humanities and The Social Sciences, 2015, journals.du.ac.in/humsoc/pdf/singh%20Autobiography.pdf.
- Subbaroyan, C. "Autobiographies in English by Indians a Study of the Autobiographies." Shodhgangainflibnet: Autobiographies in English by Indians _ a Study of the Autobiographies of the I C S Men, Tiruchirappalli, 1 Jan. 1970, hdl.handle.net/10603/117089.
