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**Discussions on Abstraction and Symbolism in Urdu Novels (with special reference to Anis Nagi)**

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**Abstract**

Anis Nagi is a prominent Urdu Fiction writer. This research explores the symbolic and abstract elements within Anis Nagi's Urdu novels, focusing on how these literary devices contribute to philosophical depth and narrative complexity. Symbols and Abstract in Urdu fiction often reflect not only individual psychological states but also broader socio-political and historical realities. Abstract narrative forms challenge conventional storytelling by introducing ambiguity, layering of meaning, and reader engagement through interpretation. The study aims to investigate how selected Urdu Novels of Anis Nagi —have employed symbolism and abstraction to enrich the intellectual landscape of Urdu Novel. Through textual analysis and theoretical frameworks such as structuralism and hermeneutics, this paper examines how these literary techniques shape reader perception and reflect evolving ideas of identity, existence, and reality in Urdu narrative traditions. Various novels of Anis Nagi as "Deewar kay Peechay", "Putlian", "Aik Grm Mosam ki Kahani", "Main aor Who", "Choothon ki Kahani", "Camp", "Aik Adhoori Sarguzisht", "Aik Lamha Soch Ka", and "Mahasira" have been discussed in this regard.

**Key Words:**

Anis Nagi, Urdu Novel, "Deewar kay Peechay", "Putlian", "Aik Grm Mosam ki Kahani", "Main aor Who", "Choothon ki Kahani", "Camp", "Aik Adhoori Sarguzisht", "Aik Lamha Soch Ka", "Mahasira".

**Literature Review**

When we look at the discussions of abstraction and symbolism, it is clear that these two are almost the same. When we look at abstraction, it comes to light that abstraction is an Urdu term. In English, it is called Abstraction. An idea that can be felt. It is a type of painting and art. That is, a painting in which the author or painter paints a picture only through colors. For example, the artist uses the language of colors while the writer uses the language of emotions. For example, the writers describe or imagine black splashes as a sign of violence,

sometimes they compare black to hunger and sometimes to death. This imagery is called abstraction. It is a human quality that he creates images with his imagination. Now we will try to learn about symbolism. Symbolism means using an object, character or image to represent a deeper meaning or something else. That is, to show something with its hidden meaning instead of its original. This hidden meaning is often cultural and civilizational. In literature, symbolism means to connect an event, story or tragedy, a character with a larger or deeper meaning. For example, presenting the color white as innocence or the dove as a symbol of peace. The act of using metaphorical meanings in poetry or prose instead of literal meanings is called symbolism. For example, if a poet simply expresses thoughts, feelings or vague concepts in poetry, it will be considered abstraction. However, if a poet presents "sun" as a symbol of hope, "darkness" as a symbol of despair and "water" as a symbol of life, it will be symbolism. From the above discussion, it has become clear that symbolism and abstraction are close terms. In this regard, Ibn Farid further explains it by saying.

“Alamat sirf aik shai ke liye hoti hai lekin  
numaindagi poori zaat, talluq ya amal ke liye hoti  
hai. Maslan, pencil, qalam, nakhun geer, aur  
hathora waghera mardana sanfi aaza ka badal hain,  
aur bottle, box, jaib, ghaar, makaan waghera  
zanana sanfi aaza ka badal hain. Iss ke barkhilaaf,  
girja ghar, mandir, jungle, jhari waghera zanana  
sanfi aaza ki numaindagi karte hain, aur saanp,  
machli, coat, hat waghera mardana sanfi aaza ki  
numaaindagi karte hain. In alamaat par ghaur  
karein toh amal shaamil hai. Yeh badal ki tarah  
saakin ya jaamid nahi”(1)

When we look at the history of Urdu novels, from the beginning to the present day, there are many novelists who have slight glimpses of symbolism and abstraction, but they do not completely get rid of these characteristics. Here we will discuss abstraction and symbolism in the novels of the famous Urdu novelist Anis Nagi. Anis Nagi has written a dozen novels, including his first novel "Behind the Wall" and then "Putliyan", "Ek Garm Mosam Ki Kahani", "Main Aur Woh", "Choothon Ki Kahani", "Camp" and "Mahasra" etc. His first novel is "Behind the Wall". It is a story of a national tragedy. This novel tells stories of confusion and problems, including court problems, domestic unrest, incompetence of government representatives, an abundance of prostitutes, and a whole host of problems that are opening the floodgates of the 21st century system, but despite this, not a single person raises his voice against these

problems. Thus, this novel includes a narrative of human defeat. In this regard, the author himself says.

“Aik hi zehen se nikalte hue takhleeqi raaste, kisi hayati ya nai tehqeeq ke mohtaaj nahi hote. Asal masla takhleeqi tajurbay ki ma'anvi haisiyat ka hai ke woh kis had tak apne jaa'iz wujood ka jawaaz faraham karti hai. Kya is ki mojooda shakal is ki aakhri aur hatmi shakal hai? Ya yeh mi'yaar naa-guzir tor par tehqeeqi tajurbay ke asri rabton aur tehzeebi kinaayon ko awalan zair-e-bahas laata hai. Is ke saath hi woh mu'asir zindagi mein masail ki moziyat ka taayun karta hai aur dusri taraf yehi takhleeqi tajurba apni lisani shanakht ka ta'aruf karata hai... Mein is azeem takhleeqi silsilay ki aad mein Urdu ke purane aur naye novel ki tardeed ka khwahishmand nahi hun balkeh yeh kehna chahta hun ke Urdu mein novel ki aik mantiqi shakal hai jis mein waqiyat aur kirdaaron ki mazhaka khaiz misalein qaim ki jaati hain lekin aaghaz, aik anjaam aur kirdaaron ke mekaniki irtiqa ko tasawwur kiya jata hai. In tamam tasawwuraat ko shikast-o-rekht zaroori hai”(2)

This is the true story of a professor who questions everything. He has questions about every evil, every injustice, every oppression. When he asks everyone questions, everyone gets fed up with him. Even his family members stay away from him. No one talks to him. Later, people consider him a foreign agent. This professor's name is Ahmed. Everyone is fed up with him. His crime is that he wants to get answers to every question. He wants to change every flaw in this system, but no one supports him; rather, people isolate him, and thus he becomes a part of this rotten system. The same social effects are released in his existence that the entire society was helpless against. In fact, Qazi Javed says about this novel.

“Anis Nagi ka Professor, la-yaani kainaati mein phenka hua anti-hero hai. Woh bargashtagi ki tajseem hai. Roohani taur par jala watan, be-jar, be-khanaman aur be-imaan hai. Fitrat se bargashta, mazhab se mehroom aur ijtema se latalluq hai. Professor ke roop mein Anis Nagi ne lanyanait ka raaz ifsha kiya hai... Basa auqat toh hero ka karb hamare liye na-qabil-e-bardasht ho jata hai

kyun ke is ki haqeeqat mein hum sab ka bhed  
poshida hai. Is ke hawale se hum apne apne  
wajood ke tajrube se az-sar-e-nau do-char hote  
hain”(3)

In this novel, Anis Nagi has depicted the inner life of the officials and brought to light images of their financial and social corruption. In short, this novel mentions a society that has lost its moral values. Every individual in this society is suffering the punishment for his own actions. Every person is criticizing others, but he himself is practically zero inside. In short, the society is suffering from insensitivity. At first, Professor Ahmed tries hard to change this society, but then his courage fails. He is tired of fighting this system. He gets so fed up with his internal problems and the disrespect spread in society that he stands out somewhere. He is on the verge of getting lost somewhere. That is, he is suffering from breakdowns due to social values in every aspect.

“Professor shuru se aakhir tak aisi shakhsiyat hain  
jin mein sach bolne ka sauda samaya hua hai. Woh  
bhi aik aise ma'ashre mein keh jis mein afraad ki  
aksariyat haq goyi, sachai aur haqeeqat parasti ko  
ahmiyat toh deti hai lekin sirf zabani ya kitabi had  
tak, magar jab amal ka waqt hota hai toh  
munafiqat se kaam leti hai. Humare ma'ashre mein  
waqai yeh tazad mojud hai aur is ko tasleem kiye  
baghair chara nahi. Go is puri soorat-e-haal se  
ma'ashre ki mazhakka khezi jhalakti hai aur yeh  
woh mazhakka khezi hi hai keh jis ney Anees  
Nagi se novel takhleeq karaya hai." (4)

Anis Nagi's other novels include "Main aor Woh", whose main character is also a female character. She suffers from despair and social inequality. The theme of this novel is human loneliness, which is also found in Western creators Franz Kafka and Al-Bircamio. Therefore, the influences of the above-mentioned authors are found on this novel. It is the story of a family trapped in Algeria and the main character is also one of them who wants to get his family out of problems but is unable to do anything and thus becomes lonely. He says, "Where did I get stuck?" See here.

”Agar mere waalid meherbaan hote, toh mein ”  
unke saaye ki ungli pakad leta, lekin mein toh  
daimi hiraas mein tha. Unka naam Ibrahim tha aur  
mein inn haalaat mein kaise Ismail ban sakta  
tha”(5).

The reason is that when this man was born, he was deprived of his father's affection due to having many children. In another place, he says about himself.

“Meri apne aap se ya halaat se naraazgi bewajah nahi hai. Jab taqdeer, tadbeer ka rasta rok le toh phir do hi raaste hain. Sar-e-tasleem kham ya baghawat. Dono raaste halakat ki taraf jaate hain. Ek batadreej aur dusra nagahani. Mein dono mein se koi rasta muntakhib na kar saka. Iss liye nataaqti ki badbadahat aur apne andar sulagte rehne ke aarzay meri zindagi ke saath saaye ki tarah chalte rahay.”(6)

Thus, these words of Dr. Mumtaz Ahmed Khan regarding this novel are worth writing with great poignancy.

*Yeh hero kam-o-besh usi nafsiati framework se ta'alluq rakhta hai jaisa ke 'Deewar ke Peeche' ka professor. Donon per wujoodi lamhaat guzarte hain aur donon qanoootiyat ka shikaar maloom hote hain. Jaise kisi shayar ne kaha: "Zindagi hai ek safar, aur hum musafir hain majboor, Har qadam pe hai ek nayi deewar, har nazar hai benoor.”(7)*

Anis's third novel, "Zawaal", also tells the sad story of man's eternal helplessness. It narrates the tragedy of two generations. It describes the mental anguish of an officer who does not have enough authority to meet his expenses. In fact, Anis Nagi himself suffered from such problems in his life. This means that most of his novels are a reprint of his autobiographies. That is, the hero of "Zawaal", Ahsan, is the same as Anis Nagi has said about himself in his autobiography "Ek Adhuri Sargasht”.

“Bachpan se hee, mein ne tarah tarah ki mehroomiyon ka shikaar dekha. Mere walid, mere siwa, apne har bete ke liye safar mein khareeda tohfa laate. Mein un ki taraf dekhta, toh wo khamosh ho jaate. Agar mein dabe lafzon mein ehtijaj bhi karta, toh wo behad darusht zabaan istemaal karte. Wo itne ghusse wale the ke mein ne abhi tak aisa mizaaj kahin nahin dekha. Shayad yahi wajah hai ke un ke inteqal ke baad un ka koi naqsh mere takhayyul pe murattasim nahin hai. Un ki koi baat bhi mujhe yaad nahin. Na hee wo mujhe khwabon mein milte hain”(8)

His wife also said the same thing. She says

“Anees ki shakhsiyat par bachpan ke ehssaas-e-kamtari ka saaya umr bhar chhaaya raha. Woh khudpasand aur apni zaat mein gum rehne wala banda ban gaya. Jaise koi kehta hai, 'Khud se itni mohabbat, ke auron ko bhool baithe, yeh kaisi khud gharzi hai, jo dil ko roo baithe.' Anees ne apne ahle khana ke saath kabhi mohabbat bantne ki koshish na ki, shayad isliye woh har waqt nalaan aur naraaz rehta tha. 'Mihroomi ka shikwa har dam, khud ki ghalti ka na gumaan, aisi fitrat thi uski, jaise saahil se shikwa kare dariya ka toofan.' Dosron ko ilzaam dena uski aadat ban gayi thi.”(9)

Anis Nagi's next novel, "Ek grm Mosam ki kahani" explores the 1857 War of Independence. In this novel, he has for the first time told the story of people who suffered from hunger, poverty, loneliness, and oppression due to this war. The true stories of the day and night of these people are part of this novel. Here are the words of Dr. Khalid Ashraf regarding this.

“Is se qabl inqilab ki jo tareekhein tasneef ki gayi hain, un mein aam taur par ghaddaron ki siyah kaariyon ko to pesh kiya jata raha hai, lekin aam aadmi ki zalimana behisi aur iqtedar ke saath pehli baar mauzu banaya gaya hai”(10)

Another novel by Anis Nagi with a historical approach is "Aik Lamha Soch Ka" (1991), which deals with the historical events that took place during the occupation of Delhi by the British government and the overthrow of Bahadur Shah. It was a historical tragedy that we cannot forget. The main character of the novel is "Rehman" who goes to Delhi two hundred years ago and thus unconsciously encounters such events that his soul trembles. In the novel "Mahisra", Anis Nagi has written about the conditions in Pakistan from 1947 to 1992 that the characters Salim, Sohail, Kausar, Shagufta and Mahmud are witnessing the destruction of the country due to the insensitivity, injustice, oppression and nepotism found in this society. Because there is a law of the jungle in the entire country and the supremacy of the constitution and the constitution is non-existent. The word "right" has become a big insult in the face of the powerful. This novel is a symbolic siege. The world is a wall in which everyone is surrounded and we have no moral status. Another similar novel is "The Fortress" which was published in 1994. This novel also seems to be an extension of the siege and it contains events related to the same novel. The novel "Lamp" is written in the context of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan

and then the victory of the Mujahideen. This novel shows sympathy for the Afghan brothers that even after such a fierce war, their wounds are still healing and they are suffering from the torment of patriotism. Another is that there has not been a ceasefire between their different factions yet. All the characters in this novel suffer from anxiety and helplessness. Here we end our discussion with these lines from a character in this novel.

”Mein ab bilkul azaad hun, khud se bhi aur ye dunya se bhi; shayad ye darya azal ki jaanib ” rawaan hai”(11)

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