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A study of “*Medicine: light in twilight*” as a mirror of social realism and quest for identity

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Abstract:

This study paper aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the various good and negative effects of migration. On the one hand, this analysis explores the impact of migration on both individuals and communities. Conversely, this study explores the obstacles encountered by migrating families, namely those that encounter financial hardships or encounter problems in acclimating to unfamiliar socio-political contexts. The aforementioned issues are examined within the context of Professor Vikas Sharma's notable scholarly contribution, titled "Medicine: Light in Twilight."

Professor Sharma's story is notable for its depiction of poignant and genuine narratives that encompass a wide temporal range, from the pre-partition era to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The inclusion of a comprehensive timeline serves to effectively captivate readers' attention and maintain their interest throughout the tale. Significantly, the narrative consciously avoids the tendency to idealize or romanticize, instead striving to authentically portray the intricacies of modern-day society. The primary focus is on portraying the actual and authentic facets of existence, so facilitating readers in acquiring a thorough comprehension of their environment.

The literary work showcases a wide range of individuals from various generations, each of whom assumes a meaningful role. The roles of individuals can be subject to critical analysis, providing insights into their individual contributions and their broader influence on societal standards and prevailing ideas.

This research aims to elucidate the diverse manifestations of adversity encountered by male protagonists, encompassing affliction, displacement, estrangement, banishment, existential dilemmas, maltreatment, solitude, as well as societal and economic upheavals. The aforementioned problems are examined within the framework of upholding notions of honor and dignity. This study investigates the experiences of a family who underwent relocation, resulting in the abandonment of their community, land, and business. This study examines the potential utilization of these problems as a powerful mechanism for the family to reconstruct and reinstate their perception of self and honor within the societal framework of their unfamiliar environment. Professor Vikas Sharma has adeptly portrayed the experiences of individuals, regardless of gender, who have encountered substantial challenges due to their decision to go from one place to another in search of an improved and more peaceful life.

Keywords: Migration, social realism, alienation, sufferings of male and female and COVID-19. The themes explored in the text include exile, abuse, rootlessness, the yearning for home, and the dilemma of identity.

Introduction:

The novel *Medicine: Light in Twilight* is grounded on the genre of social realism, which aims to faithfully represent reality by presenting ordinary events as they unfold in real life. The readers are provided with a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the relationship between modernism and reality due to Professor Vikas Sharma's deliberate choice to present the narrative in a realistic manner, devoid of any dramatization or romanticization. The author also endeavors to portray the authentic sociopolitical situations of the working class and unveil the underlying power dynamics that contribute to the insecure living conditions experienced by this social group. The objective of this study is to shed light on the underlying conflicts that arise between a dominant and oppressive entity and the individuals or groups it specifically targets.

The author emphasizes the significance of superficial appearances above underlying realities. The author exhibits a heightened focus on the significance of social and economic stratification, with specific attention directed towards the interests and issues faced by individuals belonging to the middle socioeconomic class. Realist literature rejects the utilization of imaginative idealization and instead prioritizes the development of people and places that are firmly rooted in realism. Realist literature encompasses the depiction of comprehensive details pertaining to the occurrences of mundane life, sometimes employing local vernacular. The portrayal of the social classes inside the country is strongly reliant on the development of characters in the novel, therefore becoming a crucial component.

The realm of literature encompasses an extensive array of diverse elements, each possessing the capacity to engender a remarkable masterpiece. Inside the realm of creative production, it is imperative to acknowledge the inherent significance that lies inside each individual thread. Similarly, the narration of a literary narrative can be executed with a diverse range of storytelling techniques. Realist literature is a literary approach that seeks to elucidate the human experience without embellishment or subjective romanticism. This particular style is one of the narrative tactics employed. Realist literature is sometimes associated with the literary movement that transpired in 19th century France, although it should be noted that realism is not confined to a particular era or group of authors. An approach that derives from an assessment of reality in terms of natural processes, realism has traditionally been concerned mostly with the prosaic features of everyday living in the middle and lower classes. The protagonist in this particular literary composition is a construct that is shaped by the societal context in which they exist, and the setting of the narrative serves as a crucial element in the progression of the plot's dramatic complexities. The literary technique commonly referred to as realism is employed to effectively capture and portray an actual depiction or reflection of reality.

The term "social" encompasses various aspects of human behavior that entail demonstrating

care for others. In other terms, "Social Realism" is an analytical framework that extensively delves into the comprehension of societal existence. Moreover, it can be argued that sociology is a cognitive faculty that empowers individuals to scrutinize the essence and purpose of social structures, alongside the diverse customs and establishments that constitute society, and their mechanisms of operation. This phenomenon entails the cognitive exploration of diverse social processes. The field of social realism encompasses several aspects such as family, class, marriage, school, politics, inter-relations, economy, morality, religion, and educational standards, which are all characterized by factual elements. Social realism is a genre that focuses on the examination of individual, societal, and cultural transformations across various domains of human existence, while also acknowledging the intricate and subtle intricacies that accompany these changes. This study primarily focuses on social readjustments and maladjustments, encompassing issues such as unemployment, discontent among young, industrial indiscipline, crime, and conflict. Additionally, it examines the underlying causes and consequences associated with these social problems.

The term "social realism" refers to a perceptive portrayal of societal circumstances, often accompanied by a moral awareness. Social insight refers to an elevated state of awareness or comprehensive comprehension of the social and cultural environment. This phenomenon is commonly known as a perception of social reality. Being socially conscious is akin to possessing an awareness that is shaped by a social philosophy. The statement implies a profound degree of engagement with societal matters and a strong commitment to the principles and objectives of socialism. The notion of social realism embraces various dimensions of society, including the cultivation of social consciousness, the acquisition of social knowledge, and the development of social understanding. The phrase refers to a comprehensive concept that signifies a thorough and systematic comprehension of the interconnected sociopolitical framework in its whole. It is an all-encompassing phrase. Social realism use fiction as a means to examine the intricate layers that constitute the social fabric. The objective of the writer is to depict the multifaceted nature of society and the numerous mechanisms that govern it by carefully choosing a suitable narrative, characters, language, and fictional style. The concept of "social realism" encompasses a broader scope beyond the confines of the literary realist genre.

Conversely, the approach employed by the author in handling realism, as well as their treatment of social phenomena and events inside society, can significantly contribute to the narrative's efficacy. Writers continue to employ this technique as a means of creatively representing reality within their literary compositions, so assuming agency over its transformative potential. The emergence of social realism might be interpreted as a response to idealism and the exaggerated self-perception fostered by romanticism. The Industrial Revolution had profound consequences, serving as a catalyst for the expansion of urban areas and the emergence of slums on an unprecedented scale.

This stark contrast between the ostentatious displays of wealth by the upper classes and the growing awareness of social issues prompted a new sense of social consciousness. In response, social realists committed themselves to challenging the notion of art solely for aesthetic pleasure, rejecting any style that merely appealed to the senses or emotions. The authors focused their attention on the unpalatable realities of contemporary society and exhibited a sense of compassion for individuals belonging to the working class, particularly those who are less privileged. The individuals executed the task in an objective manner, meticulously documenting their observations with precise accuracy.

The story chronicles the experiences of five immigrant families who were forcibly displaced from their country of origin and eventually resettled in Meerut, India, having originated from Lahore, Pakistan. Throughout their journey, they faced a multitude of obstacles and ultimately emerged victorious in overcoming them. During a lecture delivered to his five disciples, namely Kunj Behari Lal, Ghan Shyam, Gopal Das, Rajendra Narain, and Krishna Prasad, Swami Giri Maharaj asserted that the fear of death should be dispelled. Death, an inevitable occurrence, affects all individuals irrespective of their socioeconomic standing or material possessions. Second, whether or not a person is affluent, they will still have to go through terrible times. The affluent individuals are afflicted by an unquenchable need for increased wealth, leading to persistent unhappiness in their lives. The profound anguish experienced by individuals living in extreme poverty stems from their inability to fulfill their most basic needs. Moreover, it is worth noting that each individual exists in solitude and ultimately experiences the process of mortality in isolation. At the conclusion of his discourse, the speaker articulated the imperative for all individuals to adhere to four fundamental principles, namely Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Furthermore, he emphasized that attaining liberation is the pinnacle of human existence.

After the completion of the discourse, Kunj Behari Lal extended an invitation to Swami Ji to visit his habitual abode, where a meal consisting of roti, dal, and rice was graciously provided. After consuming his meal, Swami Ji conveyed to Kunj Behari that the prevailing circumstances in Lahore, Islamabad, Rawal Pindi, and other cities have become unfavorable. The safety of remaining in these areas has been compromised due to the presence of volunteers from the Muslim League and other parties who are primarily driven by self-interest. Swami Ji advised Kunj Behari to promptly depart from the village along with his friends and their families. Kunj Behari resided in a small settlement where he rented a shop, generating a monthly income of forty rupees. Considering his limited skills, he deliberated on whether to continue residing in the village or seek employment elsewhere.

Upon confiding in Swami Ji regarding his predicament, the latter assured him by stating, "Rest assured, as per the indications in your palm lines, a promising future awaits you beyond the confines of this village." It is advisable to remain hopeful. Following Swami Ji's reassurance regarding the forthcoming resolution of Kunj Behari's predicament, the latter proceeded with caution

and inquired, "What about the prospects of Ghan Shyam, Gopal Das, Rajendra Narain, and Krishna Prasad?" Swami Ji provided a response by inquiring, "Regarding whom are you inquiring?" "Is it possible for you to arrange accommodations for their residence in that location as well?" Swami Ji responded to Kunj Behari's inquiries by stating, "If you and your three friends also desire to establish yourselves in Meerut, there should be no obstacles." The subsequent day, Kunj Behari reached an agreement with his neighbor Farhat Ali to sell all the items from the shop to him for a sum of three thousand rupees. In a similar state of helplessness as Kunj Behari, Ghan Shyam, Gopal Das, and Rajendra Narain each relinquished their possessions, businesses, and lands in a manner akin to Kunj Behari's sale of his belongings at reduced prices.

Krishna Prasad, a renowned Vaidya residing in the hamlet of Badarpur, possessed a fifty bighas landholding and derived a satisfactory livelihood from it. His aspiration to depart from the village, however, was impeded by the aforementioned landholding. Consequently, he sought information regarding the whereabouts of Seth Sukhmal in Meerut and expressed his intention to join him promptly after concluding the sale of his land. Swami Ji, accompanied by a group of eight individuals, embarked on a journey from Lahore to Meerut. The group consisted of Kunj Behari and his spouse Madhu, Ghan Shyam and his spouse Kavita, Gopal Das and his spouse Rani, as well as Rajendra Narain and his spouse Shakuntala. With the exception of Swami Ji, who had prior experience, all members of the group were experiencing rail travel for the first time. Swami Ji assured them that a new society, education system, businesses, town, and urban amenities would soon be within their reach.

All individuals relocated to Meerut, a novel location for them, with the intention of starting anew and leaving behind their previous experiences. During their stay at the Jain Dharmshala in Sadar Meerut, Kunj Behari Lal, Ghan Shyam, Gopal Das, and Rajendra Narain each occupied a separate room. Adjacent to the Dharmashala, the four male members individually rented a shop for a combined sum of two rupees. Gopal Das engaged in the production and sale of samosas, jalebis, and rasgullas, offering them at the prices prevalent in Badarpur village. Rajendra Narain specialized in extracting cream from milk and utilizing it to produce pure ghee. Kunj Behari established a provision store, while Ghan Shyam initiated a milk dairy. Gopal Das continued to prepare and sell samosas, jalebis, and rasgullas at the aforementioned rates of Badarpur village.

As a consequence, all four families eventually settled in Meerut, while Krishna Prasad, also known as Vaidya Ji, encountered difficulties in selling his fifty bighas of land due to a limited number of potential buyers. The majority of Muslims expressed a strong desire to acquire these properties, often resorting to forceful means, in their eagerness to purchase them at inflated prices. Kamal Naini, Vaidya Ji's daughter, developed a close relationship with Salim, who deceived her by falsely claiming to have completed his education at Lahore High School and securing a teaching

position at a primary school with a monthly salary of thirty rupees. Salim's sole interest in Kamal Naini stems from his desire to inherit her fifty bighas of land, leading him to convince her not to accompany her parents to Meerut, so they could live together as a married couple in Lahore.

One day, Vaidya Ji observed Salim engaging in a clandestine act of kissing Naini in a field. Subsequently, Vaidya Ji made the decision to sell his entire land to Ali, a well-known farmer from a neighboring village, for a sum of eighty thousand rupees. Upon learning that Naini's father had already sold all of his land to Ali, Salim devised a plan to sell Naini to a spinster named Gooli, who resided in the Red Light Area of Lahore. Salim anticipated receiving a payment of two thousand rupees for this transaction.

Vaidya Ji departed from the village to Meerut, leaving behind her daughter Kamal Naini. The individual experienced emotional distress due to the disobedience of his sole daughter, leading to the acceptance of an inevitable situation. Salim experienced a profound sense of melancholy subsequent to the departure of Vaidya Ji, despite having spent a day in the company of Naini at her residence. Salim escorted Naini to the urban area, where she subsequently found herself situated within the Red Light District. In this location, Salim proceeded to engage in the transactional exchange of Naini's services, selling her to an individual named Gooli for a sum of one thousand rupees.

The supervisor instructed a patron to proceed to her designated area in order to address a situation pertaining to a sexual encounter. The individual exhibited a courageous resistance and engaged in physical altercation with the patron. On the subsequent evening, the customer named Balak Ram was sent to her assigned room, evoking a sense of sympathy inside him. The individual requested that she depart from her residence during the nocturnal hours, specifically after 2 o'clock, and provided her with instructions on the path to follow in order to reach the railway station. Balak Ram made the decision to depart from Lahore and pursue employment opportunities in post-independence India, opting to travel alongside Kamal Naini from the railway station. Vaidya Ji and his wife Saroja experienced a sense of happiness upon encountering Kamal Naini in Meerut, accompanied by Balak Ram. The eyes of both the mother and daughter were filled with tears of guilt. Saroja expressed her gratitude to Balak Ram for his timely defense of Naini during a crucial moment. Naini expressed remorse for her inappropriate behavior and defiance, and made a commitment to consistently adhere to her parents' instructions.

In conclusion, it can be inferred that the aforementioned points collectively support the notion that...

The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the rise of popularity for an artistic trend known as social realism. It is a form of narrative as well as an artistic style. It gives a genuine portrayal of people and their lives; the day-to-day lives of laborers and individuals living in poverty, specifically. Since it is grounded on reality, there is no room for any romantic embellishments in this account.

Instead, it seeks to highlight the shortcomings of human nature. In point of fact, the renowned Bengali author Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya penned his debut novel *Rajmohan's Wife* in the English language. The story deals with a variety of contemporary societal concerns, including the repercussions of an unhappy marriage on the wife, and the work is titled *Rajmohan's Wife*. The spectrum of topics covered by Indian writing in English is quite extensive. Through its depiction of life in India and Indians living in other parts of the world, it depicts not just Indian culture but also Indian tradition, social ideals, and even Indian history.

Recent works of Indian literature written in English have been making an effort to find words to reflect the contemporary challenges faced by Indian people. The first generation of Indian authors writing in English explored topics such as nationalism, the liberation fight, the partition of India, social reform, the tension between rural and urban areas, freedom, and the condition of the untouchables and the landless poor. During that time period, one of the most prevalent subjects in Indian works written in English was depicting social problems with the intention of bringing about social change. *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand, *Swami and Friends* by R.K. Narayan, and *Kanthapura* by Raja Rao are just a few of the illustrious works that have been cited as having made significant contributions to the movement toward social reform. These paintings portrayed Indian society, particularly the common man rather than the elite and the sophisticated, favoring the ordinary above the extraordinary, exploring the back alleys of the outcasts, peasants, and working people. The literature of this time period devotes considerable attention to a number of issues pertaining to social reform, including the exploitation of untouchables, landless peasants, tea garden workers, and factory workers, as well as other related topics.

The protagonists in Vikas Sharma's narrative grapple with issues pertaining to self-identity. Identity, as commonly understood, refers to the psychological state in which an individual recognizes that their distinct amalgamation of experiences and attributes renders them uniquely themselves. In essence, it revolves around one's perception of oneself. This aspect becomes evident through the portrayal of characters in all four of Vikas Sharma's literary works, as they embark on a quest to ascertain their own identities. These narratives explore themes such as modernization, alienation, homelessness, and the shared anguish experienced by both genders. The novel titled *Medicine: Light in Twilight* is situated within the contexts of pre- and post-independence eras, with the authors expressing their intention to accurately depict the tumultuous aftermath of Pakistan's transformation into India.

The relocation of five Hindu families from a village outside of Lahore, Pakistan illustrates the concepts of change, challenge, and response to societal difficulties. This story is told in the film *Medicine: Light at Twilight*. While it's true that they are Hindu, they are new to India and everything about their lives—including the language they speak and the culture in which they were raised—is

different. They essentially began their lives from scratch. Moreover, the novel's characters—including Kunj Behari and his wife Madhu, Ghan Shyam and his wife Kavita, Gopal Das and his wife Rani, Rajendra Narain and his wife Shakuntala, and Krishna Prasad alias Vaidya Ji and his wife Saroja, etc.—all have unique roles and shades based on their characteristics, but they share an upbeat outlook on life. Salim and Gooli are two further examples of contrasting characteristics; both are materialistic and avaricious. Professor Vikas Sharma's portrayal of people who uproot their lives, move somewhere new, and forge new identities is spot-on. It's possible to read various themes into the varying tones of the icons, including but not limited to: male suffering, mistreatment, modernity, materialism, loneliness, love, complication, divorce, modernity, and pandemic and other problems prevailing in the society at the contemporary time.

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