



CAN LOVE HAPPEN TWICE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL REALISM BY RAVINDER SINGH

DR. VIBHATI VASANTRAO KULKARNI

Associate Professor in English
N.E.S. Science College, Nanded,
. (MS) INDIA

ABSTRACT

Ravinder Singh is the bestselling author of novels like I Too Had a Love Story (2008), Can Love Happen Twice? (2011), and Like It Happened Yesterday (2013). The novel, Can Love Happen Twice? is a sequel to the novel I Too Had a Love Story. It continues the story of Ravin, who is the protagonist of I Too Had a Love Story. Can Love Happen Twice? presents a tragic love story of Ravin with Simar. The story of Can Love Happen Twice? provides the psychological realism by painting the landscape overwhelming with the emotions and feelings not only of Ravin and Simar but also of the friends, families and people who are connected with them. Their love, rejection, and expectations shape his psychological landscape. The novel explains how the relationship between Ravin and Simar impacts their mental states, their responses and their behaviours. The paper aims to present the psychology of Ravin and Simar through a detailed and emotional narrative that captures their inner turmoil, thoughts, and feelings and discuss Can Love Happen Twice? as a psychological realism.

Key Words: *Psychological Realism, stream of consciousness, mental health, inner conflicts and self-reflection. etc.*

INTRODUCTION

Psychology aims to understand how people think, feel, and perform both individually and in groups. As one of the most diverse and complex fields of study psychology seeks to explain a wide range of human experiences, from basic mental processes like insight and memory to

DR. VIBHATI VASANTRAO KULKARNI

1 Page

more complex topics like emotions, personality, and mental disorders. Thus, psychology is concerned with the thoughtful underlying mechanisms that initiate human behavior. Psychological realism is a type of literary genre with an outrageous growth in the field of literature and it has come into prominence in the early twentieth century. Psychological realism is a fictional narration. It focuses on the character's psychology. It is a character-centric methodology in the field of literary studies. It revolves around the motives behind the role of the character. *Can Love Happen Twice?* is a narrative that presents the psychological trauma of heartbreak and rejection of love. It showcases the protagonist's journey through depression and recovery in a rehabilitation center. The narrative also reveals the psychology of Simar, beloved of Ravin, the protagonist.

Can Love Happen Twice? by Ravinder Singh employs psychological realism to depict the emotional and mental states of its characters, particularly the protagonist, Ravin. Here are some aspects of psychological realism in the novel:

Ravin and Simar met in Belgium. They began with mutual attraction and gradually found the strong bond of an emotional love relationship after spending time and sharing experiences. Simar makes him believe that love can happen twice. She carries joy and optimism into Ravin's life. Ravin collapsed mentally after the catastrophic death of his first love, Khushi. Simar tries to heal him with happiness and gives him a way to find peace and love. His first love for Khushi and the succeeding heartbreak after her death are narrated in a way that highlights his pitiful situation. He was suffering from the profound impact of his loss. The novel describes Ravin's struggle with melancholy following the breakup with Simar. His inability to adjust to the same emotional trauma is evident in his behavior, thoughts, and interactions with others. Ravin's mental health issues reveal his sorrowful agony. His depression is expressed through his erratic actions and words. His mad behavior, such as running barefoot on the streets and shouting that he doesn't want to live, shows his desperation and the wound of his sorrowful mind.

Variations in Emotions:

Ravin as a protagonist of both the novels *I Too Had a Love Story* and *Can Love Happen Twice?* builds the theme of psychological realism. The novels narrate the psychological impact of relationships on Ravin due to his failure in love. His deep love for Khushi and his intricate relationship with Simar describe the variations in emotions of the characters. The support from his friends and family is all crucial in shaping his mental state. Ravin's self-reflection is evident in his thoughts and conversations. Ravin frequently talks about his past memories. He expresses his intense feelings. He provides his future insight moving through his psychological path.

Singh narrates effectively Ravin's psychology. He successfully presents the character's mental struggles. The author reveals Ravin's mental condition through the following lines and creates sympathy for the protagonist:

He was later moved to the general ward. All this time we were here in Chandigarh with him. Ravin's physical health improved, but his emotional and mental condition still demanded care. As soon as his injuries healed, we found that though his brain was perfectly fine it was under tremendous stress and trauma. Going by the advice of Ravin's psychiatrists and the bunch of doctors at the hospital, it was decided to admit him into a rehabilitation centre in Shimla. (Singh, 2011:156)

Stream-of-Consciousness Writing:

Can Love Happen Twice? is an example of stream-of-consciousness writing. The novel gives readers full access to the psychological journey through mind of Ravin, the protagonist. It also opens up the thoughts and feelings of Ravin who is trying to be normal at the end. He keeps the readers engaged with the alluring interpretation of the psyche of Ravin. When the narrator met at the centre, Ravin said,

The Belgian summer has stayed within me and probably always will. I haven't given up. I will soon be all good and I will write another bestseller. You'll see. (Singh, 2011:156)

Thus, the author has command over the psychological development of the novel. He makes it easy to understand the emotions of Ravin.

Complex Character Motivations:

The characters in the novel, especially Ravin and Simar, are presented with complex motivations and conflicting desires. Ravin's longing for love and his fear of losing it again are central to his actions. Simar's desire for independence and a luxurious lifestyle, juxtaposed with her love for Ravin, adds depth to her character.

Mental Health of Ravin:

Ravin was totally emotional and so his well-being is closely tied to his romantic relationships with Kushi and Simar. The narrator describes Ravin's mental state in the following words:

One day Ravin mentioned that he wasn't able to concentrate on his work and that he wasn't able to sleep properly. I could sense that he was gradually sinking into deep depression. His voice was enough to convey that to me. The next time I called him up, his mother picked up the call and I found out

DR. VIBHATI VASANTRAO KULKARNI

3 Page

through her that Ravin wasn't going to office any more. He had been fired from his job. The reasons were obvious. (Singh, 2011: 153)

The novel successfully addresses mental health issues realistically. The author depicts Ravin's inner conflicts and state of mind. Ravin's admission to a rehabilitation center and his treatment for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) are depicted with sensitivity and accuracy. The portrayal of his slow and painful recovery process adds to the psychological realism. Ravin really tries to recover with pains and struggles. So many times his meetings with the psychiatrist and admission in the rehabilitation center signify his efforts to fight with mental trauma. He seems hopeful and every moment he struggles to come out of his memories. Ravin expresses his internal trauma and a thunder of thoughts are transmitted through his emotions expressed to Simar and his friends. His confusion about accepting Simar's changing decision about her priorities and his strong feelings about devoted love and commitment depict layers to his psychological suffering and cult of his mind. The novel captures Ravin's flexibility and changing emotions about hope. His resolution to live life, his will to write another bestseller, and his infrequent laughter amidst pain show the art of his enduring spirit.

Inner Conflicts and Self-Reflection:

Moments of self-reflection narrated in the novel explain Ravin's mindset. Like Hamlet in Shakespeare, Ravin contemplates his past. He struggles to resolve his love for Simar. He cannot handle his responsibilities and was fired from his job. The narrator portrays the minutes of his mental state. Simar falls in love with Ravin after she reads his book, *I Too Had a Love Story*. Finally, she refuses to marry him and decides to take care of her parents. She also doesn't want to compromise with the middle-class life of Ravin, as she belongs to a rich family. At the end, when she knows about Ravin's mental trauma. She feels pity for him and decides to meet him. This shows the inner conflicts in the minds of Ravin and Simar.

Realistic Dialogue and Interactions:

As in the psychological novel, the plot of *Can Love Happen Twice?* is subordinate to and dependent upon the probing delineation of Ravin, the central character. Events in the novel are sometimes not presented in chronological order but rather as they occur in the character's thought associations, memories, fantasies, reveries, contemplations, and dreams. The interactions between Ravin and Simar, especially during moments of conflict and emotional vulnerability, are crafted to reflect genuine human behavior. The realistic dialogues capture the nuances of their psychological states, making their experiences relatable. Simar's interest in listening to Ravin's story is also very important in the story since it becomes a catalyst to help Ravin to be more open with her instead of burying his pain of losing Khushi on his own.

Psychology with Satisfied Intimacy:

The relationship between Ravin and Simar is built upon a trust where Simar has become comfortable enough to share her secret wish to Ravin. It means that Ravin has become her lover. Simar says: "Once, when we met late after sundown, Simar shared a secret wish of hers." (Singh, 2011: 96). This is suitable with Erikson's idea of intimacy which is sharing each other support because telling wish is an act to gain support and motivation from others.

Young Adulthood:

The novel is a fine example of young adulthood. It presents the romantic love relationship of Simar and Ravin, which helps them to accomplish their need for intimacy. Erikson believes that there are four aspects required to build satisfied intimacy in romantic relationships which are being able to listen, support each other, share physical intimacy and share companionship with each other. In the beginning of Ravin and Simar's relationship where Simar is genuinely interested in Ravin's story. Simar's words "...she stopped me and said, I am here only to listen to your story" (Singh, 2011: 69) reflects that she tries to build intimacy with Ravin by getting to know him more as it is stated by psychosocial development theory that being a good listener is required to build intimacy between a couple.

Complexity of Relationship:

In *Can Love Happen Twice?* the psychology of Simar and Ravin is a fine example of complex relationships layered with personal desires, attitudes, priorities, insecurities and responsibilities. The actions and decisions taken by these characters present a blend of emotional vulnerability, self-centeredness, and a struggle to reconcile love with ambitions. The analysis of Simar's psychological profile shows her reluctance to live with Ravin's family due to her fear of familial responsibilities. She feels anxiety about expectations such as cooking, caregiving, and performing traditional roles, which she thinks are restrictions on her free life.

Psychological Insecurity:

Simar's reluctance in marrying Ravin and her decision to continue her education after her MBA suggest an escaping from commitment. She uses her career as a reason to postpone decisions about their future together. Simar's insecurities exhibit her concerns about becoming the "second girl" in Ravin's life, dominated by the memory of his first love, Khushi. This reflects her need for authentication and exclusivity in Ravin's life. Her selfishness is apparent in her inability to conciliate or sympathize with Ravin's responsibilities toward his family. She arranges her dreams and comfort over their shared future.

CONCLUSION:

The psychological realism in *Can Love Happen Twice?* increases the emotional bearing of the story, permitting readers to unite deeply with the characters' experiences and recognize the complexities of their spiritual, emotional and expressive lives. In the novel, internal conditions of the characters are predisposed by and in turn generate external events in a meaningful association. The prominence of the inner life of characters is a central element of the fiction. Simar's psychology is a mix of love, ambition, and self-interest. Simar genuinely cares for Ravin, her inability to compromise, her materialistic aspirations, and her fear of losing independence ultimately drive a block between them. Her character serves as a contrast to Ravin's selfless love, highlighting the challenges of harmonizing individual desires with the demands of a relationship. The relationship between Ravin and Simar is a tragic tale of love that is unable to survive under the burdens of conflicting urgencies and outlooks. While they share candid affection and emotional intimacy, their inability to compromise and align their visions for the future ultimately leads to heartbreak. Their story serves as a reminder of the importance of communication, balanced mind, maturity, mutual understanding, and shared values in sustaining a relationship.

REFERENCES:

- Singh, Ravinder. *I Too Had a Love Story*, Penguin metro Reads by penguin books, 2012. Print.
- ... *Can love Happen Twice?* Penguin metro Reads by penguin Books. 2011. Print.
- <https://ejournal.unesa.ac.id/index.php>
- https://link.springer.com/10.1007%2F978-0-387-79061-9_1535
- <https://www.wisdomlib.org/concept/psychological-realism>