A Quest for Truth: A Verisimilitude View in Sudha Murthy's *The Mother I Never Knew*

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Abstract

Sudha Murthy is an Indian writer, philanthropist, author, social worker, and chairman of the Infosys Foundation, she is the definition of versatile and an inspiration to many. She has an in-depth study of human behaviours. Sudha Murthy's works mostly rely on the reality of society and wrong deeds to the weaker. Her bestselling works deal with day-to-day life and its connected struggles. Sudha Murthy's novel **Mother I Never Knew** comprises two novellas and explores the quest by two men- each searching for a mother they never knew they had. The novel runs backward and forward extravagantly. It arouses expectations about the future course of events. In the first novella, injustice is done to Bhagavva by her own husband and mother-in-law. Her stepson Venkatesh didn't know about his step mother and starts to search for his father's past. The paper attempts to study the protagonist's quest for truth and verisimilitude view in Sudha Murthy'snovel **Mother I Never Knew**.

Key Words: Verisimilitude view, Hidden past, Searching, Quest for truth.

Introduction:

Sudha Murthy is best known for her philanthropy and her contribution to literature in Kannada and English. Sudha Murthy started her professional career in computer science and engineering. She is a member of the public healthcare initiatives of the Gates Foundation. Murthy established the Classical Library of India at Harvard University. Sudha Murthy's efforts have been recognized with several national awards including Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan. Through her writing, she has also strived to raise awareness about pressing social issues such as gender inequality, poverty, health care reform, education reform, rural development programs, and more. Sudha Murthy has written notable and amazing books which include short stories, non-fictional stories, novels, travelogues, and books for children too.

Mother I Never Knew is a story written by Sudha Murthy and comprises two novellas that explore the quest of two men-each searching for a mother he never knew he had. I choose the first novella, the story of Venkatesh for my study*. The Mother I Never Knew* is a poignant, dramatic book that reaches deep into the human heart to reveal what we really feel about those closest to us.

Quest in the Novel:

The first story is about Venkatesh a bank manager and an ordinary man. He has a wife Santa and two children Ravi and Gauri. Santa is more practical-minded and shows insensitivity toward her husband's feelings. Ravi is more like his mother and Gauri is a compassionate, sensible, and kind-hearted girl just like her father. Venkatesh felt upset on knowing about his new transfer to Hubli, where he stumbled upon his lookalike one fine day. When he probes further, he discovers his father's hidden past, which includes an abandoned wife and child. Venkatesh is determined to make amends to his impoverished stepmother to repay his father's debt.

Verisimilitude in literature:

Verisimilitude allows us to see things clearly, experience intense emotions meaningful understanding of reality and come to some new profound. Verisimilitude means being believable or having the appearance of being true.

Verisimilitude is truth likeness. In this view, the readers can relatable to the story in some way. A good writer should always make an effort (through a character and their emotions or motivations, the setting, and its geography, etc) to ground their story in just enough credibility that the reader can suspend their sense of disbelief, hopefully to a point approaching enjoyment. C.S. Lewis used Verisimilitude in a similar way in The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe.

The definition of Verisimilitude is, in short, the semblance of truth. A work of fiction with verisimilitude portrays situations, dialogue, and characters in a way that seems authentic and truthful, despite the fact that those elements are made up. In order to immerse themselves in a story, the audience must be willing to accept the story they are hearing. Fiction writers need to know how to use verisimilitude in order to draw readers in by resembling reality.

Quest for truth:

A long search for something that is difficult to find or an attempt to achieve something difficult. The real reason for the quest is always self-knowledge. A quest is a journey toward a specific mission or goal.

Protagonists search for truth:

Venkatesh is a simple and modest person working as a manager at the state bank of India. Due to his transfer, Venkatesh went to Hubli and stayed in Anant Patil's house. He set out for Shiggaon to attend a thread ceremony with Anant Patil. It was an hour's journey from Hubli. Venkatesh slipped out of the house to buy a gift for the boy, where the jewellery shop owner Krishna Chari mistook Venkatesh for Shankar master. Krishna Chari had thought of an uncanny resemblance between Shankar master and Venkatesh. The people in Shiggaon mistook Venkatesh for Shankar master not once but twice. Venkatesh was curious to know about Shankar master who resembled him.

After a few weeks Venkatesh visits the mutt in Sonda. There an old lady mistook him for Shankar master. This time Venkatesh wasn't surprised by the mistaken identity, instead he enquired about Shankar master, a primary school teacher, and his family in Divate Chawl. One day,

he went to their house to meet master. There he observed the condition of their house and understood their poverty. Both master and Venkatesh were shocked and surprised at seeing an exact replica of him. Master looked a little older than him. From their words, it's clear for them that they are the only child of their parents and their fathers have no siblings or cousins with whom they lost touch with. But Venkatesh has several questions and he is very confused as to what the truth is. Then Venkatesh decided to meet Master's mother Bhagavva, who lives in Shishunal.

Bhagavva, an innocent woman. Even she doesn't know the reason behind their exact features. But Venkatesh gets to know the answers to all his questions through her life story. He stared at her and not possible to think of the misery that lay inside her heart. Bhagavva showed him a small envelope and took out a stamp-sized photography of her husband. It's clear that -it was Venkatesh's father. Even though he came to know that the man in both cases was his father, he couldn't understand the mystery of Setu and Madhav.

After a few days Venkatesh on searching his father's wooden lockers, discloses that Setu was the same person as Venkatesh's father Madhav Rao. To know more about his father's first marriage, Venkatesh reached Parimala's house which was his distant relative. He came to know the injustice done to Bhagavva. Venkatesh grandmother abandons Bhagavva on the claim of infidelity. She individually made a decision to desert her and sent a letter to Bhagavva's family without discussing her son. When Venkatesh's father learned about what his mother had done to Bhagavva, he wrote a letter to her and waited for her response. When no news he went to a village in search of her, but she was nowhere to be found. Some people told them that she committed suicide in River Krishna with her child. It took some time for Setu Rao to get back to normal.

Venkatesh felt miserable after listening to her sad story and decides to atone for the injustice done to his half-brother and step-mother. Gauri supports her father in his decisions and on the other hand, Ravi and Shanta blame Venkatesh for his stupid idea of paying them money. But

Venkatesh proceeds ahead with his daughter's support to give them fifty lakhs to repay his father's debt. He felt like a burden of generations had been lifted off their shoulders.

Conclusion:

The Protagonist of the novel, Venkatesh's conflict with his inner self provokes him to find his father's hidden past. The appearance of truth is essential for good writing. Sudha Murthy through the novel delves deeply into the hearts of the characters to uncover their flaws in behaviour and suffering. Despite the elements in the novel being made up, the author's handling of character portrayal, situations, storyline, cultural values, and dialogues seem to be authentic and truthful. Sudha Murthy writes with integrity and stays loyal to the subject at hand.

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