

**THE DELIVERY OF A POWERFUL SOCIAL MESSAGE, THROUGH
THE INHERENT INNOCENCE OF THE SOUL, IN “PHOOLU KA
KURTA”, A SHORT STORY BY YASHPAL**

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THE BRILLIANCE OF THE STORY IN DELIVERING THE SOCIAL MESSAGE

The social message in this story is the evil and cruelty of child marriage, and the utter blindness of the society and the men in it, who do not realize how cruel tradition can be.

There are many ways to show this. The obvious way to show it is to show the actual suffering. Many authors have done that with delicacy, sensitivity and humanity.

But Yashpal goes beyond that kind of construct. His genius in this short story is to show through the innocence of children. He shows through a single incident that a child has no clue to what he is going into. The laughing in the end at the joke caused by the young child pulling up her “kurta” to cover her face, at the end, is perceived by the author, as the most cruel reaction as an inexcusable social oppression.

On the surface it looks like a simple story but the depth of the story hits you and you are brought face to face with the stark cruelty of the child marriage, by being shown the cruelty through utter innocence. You realize that one person's problem is everyone's problem. You realize it because of the construction of the story.

That is the special genius of Yashpal. It is more than honesty that goes into making this type of a story. A very deep thought, creative imagination goes to hit upon an idea like this. And Yashpal has that. That is what elevates the story, makes the point indirectly and shows such extreme innocence of the girl, and the picture of a girl who does not even know what it means to show her body, who IS a girl, breaks the reader's heart. That is what the intent of Yashpal is, because that is what the cruelty fully is.

A writer does not teach. His function is to reach- deep into the human soul. In the case of the issue of child marriage the writer MUST write in such a way that people reading him, should hang their heads in shame. THAT is what Yashpal accomplishes in this pithy, hard hitting and utterly human story.

Innocence and its meaning in Phoolo's Kurta and anger at social injustice

Innocence is a human quality. Innocence in the deepest sense is not stupid ignorance, but the natural horror of confronting evil. This story is not just about the innocence of the girl, but also the witness, the writer himself, and the reader too. Innocence in the deepest sense and the highest

, is utter goodness and humanity. Are we not all innocent deep within us? Is it not the aim of a progressive society to RETAIN innocence and lead appositively good and utterly benevolent life? Is it right, is there reason at all in committing crimes, knowingly?

Thus this short explosive story, told through just a simple twist at he end, elevates our real, genuine nature as a human being. We feel- we do not need this.

Thus the story is a revolutionary story and deserves a place among he best stories on the themes of social injustice ever written.

The other theme is anger. The witness, the author himself is angry and twisted by pain at the end. Anger is a fire that alone can ground to dust the evils of society perceived with stark nakedness.

Anger is what the story s about, anger at man's cruelty towards man. The impositions on man that makes him cruel in our blind world. The very issue of blindness is brought forth.

How easily we do inhuman things, with no thought. The story stops the mind to think. That is a function of literature. The other function is to do that in a heart breaking way and the writer delivers that.

The importance of a non propagandist yet message oriented literature.

Literature's function is not propaganda but sometimes the social reality is such that the anger burst forth and it gets elevated to literature. It touches the heart and makes us think. Such directly

message oriented literature does have a place obviously because the blindness of people conforming to tradition can reach cruelly dangerous levels.

More broadly each story IS message in that it concretizes life. And you cannot do that, without communicating some theme and each theme indirectly carries not one but many layered messages.

But this story is directly conveys a message but with the power of literature, and hus it achieves the twin aim of fostering social change with a hard hitting protest.

Artists are custodians of humanity and reason and this makes the story progressive by prtesting the non-progressive nature of society that still exists today.

By implication It also highlights many other social issues that are related - lack of independence in people, the desensitizing of man, the lower status of women, the clack of courage and sub human living.

REFERENCE BOOK:

PHOOLO KA KURTA (SHORT STORY) WRITTEN BY YASHPAL