

# The Blend of Fancy and Fact in Blind Faith

Ashok Kumar\*

Research Scholar, Chaudhary Divi Lal University, Sirsa

**Abstract – This study is an attempt to determine the blend of fancy and fact in Sagrika Ghose's novel Blind Faith. This novel is fully ripened with occurrences which are fanciful and fictional and yet the novel reflects the realities of life. This novel is ripe with tragedy and pain. Every character has its own story. Every character appears with one's own faith. At some part of this novel fancy is used rather like a collective consciousness. In this age of reasoning and logic such activities would be rubbished as mere concoctions of a fanciful mind. Questions may be raised by a layman regarding the myths that the novel presents. How can a person like Vik alias Karna perform such kinds of activities at the same time? Is the writer experimenting with magic realism or rebuffing it? Or is she probing the psychological maladies to justify human behavior, which is otherwise understood as fanciful?**

-----X-----

## THE BLEND OF FANCY AND FACT IN BLIND FAITH BY SAGRIKA GHOSE

Sagarika Ghose born on November 8, 1964, is a daughter of a former Indian Administrative Servant (1960 batch) and former Director General of Doordarshan, married to a leading national level journalist and news anchor. She is an Indian journalist, news anchor and author. She has been a journalist since 1991 and has worked at *The Times of India*, *Outlook* and *The Indian Express*. She has been the deputy editor and a prime time anchor on the news network CNN-IBN. She resigned as deputy editor of CNN-IBN in July 2014 after the network was taken over by Reliance Industries. She is now consulting editor at *The Times of India*. Ghose received her bachelor's degree in History from St. Stephen's College, Delhi. She was a recipient of the Rhodes scholarship in 1987. She is also a Bachelor's in Modern History from Magdalen College and an M.Phil. from St Antony's College, Oxford. Ghose is the author of two novels, *The Gin Drinkers* and *Blind Faith* worldwide published in 1998 and 2004 respectively. *The Gin Drinkers* was also published in the Netherlands while *Blind Faith* had a wide publication.

The story of *Blind Faith* is the story of woman named Mai or Maya. Each one of us is a great admirer of many things like nature, God, love, music etc. And when these admiration stays for a long time in our mind, we start thinking and fancy comes into play. According to *Oxford learner dictionary*, 'fancy' is "a superficial or transient feeling of liking or attraction" ("Fancy") For Coleridge fancy is concerned with the mechanical operation of the mind, which are responsible for the passive accumulation of data and the storage of such data in the memory. ("Coleridge

"Fancy and Imagination") Coleridge's *Table Talk* also talks about the quality of fancy. Fancy has its own colour and mood. Nobody knows its start and its end. It is related to the ordinary memory but it must receive its material readymade from the law of association. Writers of all ages, foreigner as well as Indian have used fancy in their works.

In her novel *Blind Faith*, an ongoing blend ensues between the ideas of 'fact' and 'fancy' or the 'head' and 'heart.' The blend of these philosophies is a central theme of the *Blind Faith*, not to mention a fundamental crux of human existence as well. Should an individual base his life on fact and rationality, or should he live by the whims of his imagination and fancy, following his heart? Sagrika advances this theme persistently throughout *Blind faith*, employing frequently use of descriptive imagery and metaphors throughout the novel to animate the blend of fact and fancy, and the result of this emphasis is a broader, encompassing critique of industrialized society in general.

In *Blind faith* the blend of fancy and fact is presented very beautifully through different characters. Mia is the main protagonist, who lived with her father Anand, and her mother Mithu in London, until her father drowned in the river due to intense alcohol consumption. Her father was a professor of history as well as a perfect painter. Hence the father comes to represent both fact and fancy. One day Anand made a painting for his daughter Mia. At the back of the painting, Anand wrote in black paint: "To my dearest little Maya, love from Papa". To him Mia was nicknamed as Maya. Thus we see that the very name that he gave to his daughter represents illusion. This painting was displayed in the Tate Modern. In his painting, he

presented the popular Indian scene of the *Kumbh Mela* or the Festival of Pitcher. After Anand's death, Mia once happens to see her father's fancy turning into a real fact in London, as she beholds a man who looked exactly like the picture of the man her father had painted out of his fancy on a paper before his suicide. The painting appears in the Hyde Park of London. There was a demonstration for "purification Journey". (25) When Mia asked Sanatkumara about "purification Journey", he gives a printed paper in her hand and in it words were written:

Rebirth of Pure Love: The Need for a New Inner War

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has dawned. But we have strayed

From the true path.

The true path towards Pure Love is the rebirth of

Simple life pattern.

Let us recreate the peace of the past.

Let us work towards the Rebirth of the Mother Woman.

Let us wage the war with ourselves so we may set

Free our best selves. (25)

A person was standing there. Except for bow and arrows, his face was similar to the man in her father's painting. His name was Karna, (in actual he was Vik who just made his appearance through the help of cosmetics as Karna) who told her that he lived in Delhi and was a part of the mission/ demonstration. In fact, Sanatkumara, demonstration incharge, invites her to visit India at Pavitra Ashram, Bijwasan, and New Delhi for 15 days Purification Retreat. They talk about 'the rebirth of the Mother Woman' (25). At that time she wants to tell him about the painting but she lets it unmentioned for future. Then after some days she meets Vik (Vikram), the suave corporate, who runs a good business of herbal cosmetics in India as well as abroad. At first she wants to marry in London but in order to fulfill her fancy she decided to marry Vik and comes in India to Delhi at Victoria Villa, civil line area of Delhi, a luxurious house with two trees of Jamun and to Semal.

Vik is the only son of Indi or Indira Ray, an IAS officer, who now got blind due to a Retina disease and his Justin, the lover of Indi after her husband's death. She lives in Alqueria, Goa and runs a Motel there.

The coincidence in Mia's life regarding the painting and Karna stretches her fancy to breaking point; she wants to burst into babble of explanations that perhaps her father had just seen a picture in a magazine of Karna at the Kumbh Mela or that it was just an ordinary sadhu's face nevertheless she wants to stay quiet and lets the silence take over. When Karna tells

her to go and see the Kumbh Mela, she asks him 'See what?' he told him "See the sun raises over the Ganga. See how the people surrender to the river. How People surrender to life. See how people learn to love each other. You should go to see the naked sadhu" (84). Thus the words of Karna further stir her fancy of impel her to verify the truth things a persona menace.

Mia is more imaginative than she is moral. She would rather preserve a secret world than ruin the romance by being pedestrian and straight forward. The image of Karna haunts her. She feels a deep sense of relatedness to him. It may be because she preserves the father's powerful legacy by reminding Karna, whom she met in full flesh and blood. First night of their marriage Vik lays exhausted while she stands near the window, wondering if she should tell Karna that she is disappointed with Vik. She imagines him skulking under the cherry tree, a troubadour singing for her to open her window and let him in, so that he could show her what it really means to be lovers. After her marriage she takes her father's painting to Delhi. "Wherever in this world she was, as long as this was up on her wall, Karna would come to her summoned to it like a spirit to a planchette" (103). Not only painting but trees also arouse her fancy. The branches of Semal tree are like skinny outstretched arms and colour is dark bloody, she thinks that she has heard a cry from its branches; a horrible cry and Jamun tree seems to her friendlier. The Semal seems to be screaming particularly loudly in the evenings. It seems to her that tree is watching her. Her passion for Karan seems on extreme when the smell of candles, dry fruits and silk reminds her so strongly that she realizes she cannot stop her thinking from last six months when she came India with Vik. When she meets Karan in Delhi at Victoria Villa she feels amazed. Her obsession with Karna is evident even after her marriage. She finds her fancy and now being fact or reality again. She doesn't want to marry Karan though she attracted to him. Karan said to Mia "a frivolous tycoon, Maya" moaned Karna. "a CEO of money. Come with me. Leave him. It is easy. It is very easy to leave and begin again" (155). At the same time she answered him clearly 'Karna, no! that wouldn't be right. I like Vik. He's been good to me. I have no complaints'. (156). Fancy has great power to understand its destination and when it achieves its destination, a person feels real comforts. Fancy overtakes Mia in the end when she looks at Karna, he seems to fade from view as if it was not Karna, somebody else stood in his place. She feels that he is somebody who is waiting for her at the Kumbh Mela, not Karna, the pilgrims, not her father, but somebody else altogether, distant from her life at the moment. Somebody other was waiting for her.

Karna, actually he is Vik in disguise. He always told Mia that he has to go on a mission. Actually in his mission, he wants to destroy Indi and this Sharkey's

Hotel; because such types of hotels are evil and peoples like Justin and Indi have corrupted this land. He is very impressed by the mythology of Karna in Mahabharata. Kunti's son's name was Karna. Sanatkumara tells Mia about Kunti and Karna "Kunti was too promiscuous, too busy with her lover, the sun, to love her own son. Kunti had too much ego. Karna never got a chance to get his revenge on Kunti"(203) Same things applies to Karna. All his thoughts are very clear when he says: "I don't know about all that. I like the straight stories about the good guys cutting the heads of the bad guys"(115). It was the holy war against oneself. He hated himself above all. He wants to teach Indi a lesson about 'the Pure Love of Mother Women'. He wants to teach him how to behave. When he meets Mia, she makes him doubt about his mission, but he completes his mission to keep his life on stake. Vik brings Mia to the Kumbh Mela so that she might understand his sorrow and gets over her own madness. Actually Vik had nothing to do with the purification journey; Mia sees it clearly in the end. Mia sees Vik when he got out of from water and wails up to her.

Vik' she whispered. "Vik...." "Yes' he whispered back. 'It's me. Fooled you completely, baby. I told you, you would see something in the Kumbh Mela. This is what your father wanted you to see, Mia/ Maya. I wanted you to see how wrong a painting can be" (242). This novel not only is a journey of Mia from fancy to fact, it is also the story of Vik's journey. According to Vik, his own death is the only real punishment for his mother Indi and father Justin. Vik clearly expresses his wish for die when he says to Mia, "Remember, you said you would walk with me down the last and deadliest mile? I'll be waiting for you in Paradise"(243). His own sense of corruption in birth makes him seek purity.

Vik wants pure love from everyone not any hidden or show of love. He expresses all his feeling to Mia as well as Indi and Justin. He decides to marry Mia because they had dead fathers in common. He embraces Mia and says, "All I really wanted was to love and receive love, in the best purest form available. That's all I ever wanted". (243) Same clear hatred he declares: "You are corrupting this village! You should know that there are people who oppose you. That you can't do as you want and get away with it all the time. You have obscene value!"(249) His resolve has been as strong as his mother, although it is misdirected in the opposite direction. Indi has fought for life; Vik has chosen death as the only achievement that would match his mother. He hates himself above all. His death would haunt her, would drive Justin to his own, his death would take away her beauty and send Justin to his grave.

Indi is most intelligent as well as self-determined. During her college time she spent most of her time in

studying so that she could pass civil service exam like her father and she became IAS officer. She had lived her life not for any individual like Justin, her father Anand, mother Sheela Devi and her son, Vik. She lived for the service of her country. She had always acted for common interest. She was not a good mother. When she gave birth to Vik but she had resented him feeding off her body. She wished she could have devised some way by which fetuses were able to be self sufficient, living off some science created uterus she would have nothing to do with. "When Vik was born, he had demanding things from her that she simply could not –would not-give, because she had instead demanded the freedom not to be his mother" (253). Once she decided, she never thought about its result. It became clear when Justin left America, he vowed to his mother that this was the only thing in the world that would make him happy. Each of Indi's fancy became fact as she believed in only in reality. "She fancifully thought of herself as an empire in which Vik had been a freedom fighter, a fighter for his liberty against a blind, brutally beautiful Empire that had pushed a young man to his death.(271)

She was too much farsighted. Whenever Karna appeared in Alqueria, she got the sense of it. There was smell of funny remover, hair dye and nail polish. She challenges Karna to fight. She never admitted her own fault. At last when Vik decided to kill himself, she said to Vik, "Vikram! 'I know it's you. You killed Francis Xavier! There are people dead, burned beyond recognition, because of your hate. Listen to me! Listen to me! We can negotiate! I know it's you! I've known for a long time. Stop now! Stop where you are!"(250)

It is safe to conclude that there is clear evidence of blending of fancy and fact in Sagrika Ghose's *Blind Faith*. This blending comes to light through various characters and incidents. Mia's fancy takes flight when she comes across Karna in Hyde Park and she faces fact when she actually experiences the Kumbh Mela in India. She realizes the futility of her fancy and comes to know that each and every fancy is not true. Vik's fancy to take revenge from her parents in the form of his own death to give them permanent torture is materialized at the end when he shoots himself. It results in Indi's depression and losing of her beauty, and same is the case with Justin. He also passes away within a month after Vik's death.

## REFERENCES

Ghose, Sagrika. *Blind Faith*. New Delhi, Harper Collins Group, 2006. Print.

"Fact and Fancy In Hard Times English Literature Essay." UK Essays. UKEssays.com, November 2013. Web. 8 August 2017.

<<https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-literature/fact-and-fancy-in-hard-times-english-literature-essay.php?cref=1>>

"Fancy." *OLD*. Web. Aug. 11, 2017. <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/fancy>>

"Coleridge "Fancy and Imagination"". *The Literature Network Forums*. Web.Aug.12.2017.

<<http://www.online-literature.com/forums/showthread.php?16344-Coleridge-quot-imagination-and-Fancy-quot&p=172868&viewfull=1#post172868>>

---

### Corresponding Author

**Ashok Kumar\***

Research Scholar, Chaudhary Divi Lal University,  
Sirsa

E-Mail – [ashok.9812177779@gmail.com](mailto:ashok.9812177779@gmail.com)