



‘Kahani’ (The Story) within us and beyond: Decoding Amitabh Bhattacharya’s lyrics from an existential perspective

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Abstract— It may also be taken as an analogy regarding the significance of retaining moderation and equilibrium in one's life. Amitabh firmly believes in the existentialist perspective that acknowledges life's transience and fleetingness. The conventional ways of thinking and doing are unable to grasp the complexity of human existence. Both of these ideas are congruent with a sense of uncertainty about the nature of human life and the connection between people and the wider environment in which they live. After World War II, the fragmented world was forced to re-evaluate human existence and look for meaning and purpose in life. Amitabh Bhattacharya's 'Kahani' (the story), a contemporary song, prompts its listeners to discover the authenticity of life.

Keywords— Absurdism, Determinism, Existentialism, Free will, Meaning and Purpose of Life, Monism

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, the fragmented world was forced to re-evaluate human existence and look for meaning and purpose in life. Through writings, songs, and poems, the search continues. Amitabh Bhattacharya's Kahani (the story), a contemporary song, prompts its listeners to discover the authenticity of life. In this research paper, I will examine how Amitabh asks what it means to be human and will also break down each line from an existential point of view.

Absurdism is a fundamental component of existentialism, which holds that we have no control over our future and are unsure of our lives. According to absurdism, attempts to bring order or rationality to the world are ultimately futile because life has no inherent meaning (Camus, pp. 3–18). Absurdism frequently depicts individuals as confronting an overwhelming sense of chaos and confusion, highlighting the human struggle to find meaning and purpose in an irrational universe. The concept of uncertainty is reflected in the line "What's happening, neither you nor I know". Human existence is marked by existential angst—a sense of uncertainty brought on by the awareness of their mortality and the unpredictability of their future (Sartre, pp. 259–309).

Besides being shaped by the world around them, individuals are also shaped by it. An object or entity that exists independently of human consciousness is considered to be "Being in itself" (Sartre, p. 38) These things each have a distinct nature or essence that serves as both their definition and their purpose. Contrarily, "being for itself" refers to human awareness (Sartre, p. 70). Human awareness is characterized by its capacity to transcend its limits of existence and is always evolving. Both of these ideas are congruent with a sense of uncertainty about the nature of human life and the connection between people and the wider environment in which they live. The capacity for self-reflection and awareness that only humans possess makes them distinctive. "I'm not sure if we are the story, or the story is in us" raises issues regarding the essence of our existence just as Heidegger's idea of "Dasein," or "being there," underlines the significance of human existence prior to essence (Heidegger, pp. 42–84), by refuting Descartes' "I think therefore I am," (Descartes, p. 18).

Instead of aiming for a fictitious sense of completion or assurance, the phrase "When it feels incomplete, write it incompletely and leave the other half out" conveys a readiness to embrace ambiguity and uncertainty. The

conventional ways of thinking and doing are unable to grasp the complexity of human existence. It is necessary to be open to the new and to challenge preconceived notions and ideas (Nietzsche, pp. 3–43). The phrase "When it feels incomplete, write it incompletely and leave the other half out" demonstrates a sensation of desolation as well as the concept that life is not always entirely comprehended or intelligible because of the constraints on human understanding and Kant's perspective of it being worthwhile to leave certain things unanswered (Kant, pp. 337–38).

Amitabh uses the metaphor of rainwater in his writing, saying, "Life is akin to rainwater, fill half of it and leave the other half empty" alluding to the idea of the "golden mean," which highlights the virtue of establishing harmony among two extremities. The notion of the golden mean (Aristotle, pp. 37–38) was developed by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. It may also be taken as an analogy regarding the significance of retaining moderation and equilibrium in one's life. By accepting that life is neither whole nor void, we may strive towards discovering a medium path that enables us to live a life that is both purposeful and meaningful.

Monism emphasizes the inherent oneness of all things while attempting to transcend the dualities and divisions that usually keep us from connecting with the reality surrounding us. In this circumstance, the question "Are we a drop in the ocean, or the ocean itself?" seems appropriate. Although the imagery of the ocean promotes a perception of oneness and unity, the idea of a drop in the ocean provides an impression of distinction and uniqueness.

The idea of determinism holds that everything, including human behaviour, is ultimately determined by forces outside of volition. This perspective holds that our decisions and behaviours are just the outcomes of earlier causes and situations and that our lives are predetermined. The lines on our palms may be seen in this situation as a representation of the predestined path our lives have taken. On the reverse side, the idea of free will holds that individuals have the capacity to make decisions that are not influenced by other forces. This perspective contends that our decisions determine the course of our life and that we are accountable for both the activities we choose and the results they produce. In this situation, it would be believed that the lines on our hands have no bearing on the decisions we make and the trajectory of our life. A similar idea is used in Hindu philosophical texts like the Geeta (Chapter 2, Verse 47) and Katha Upanishad (Chapter 1, Verse 3) to show that human fate is decided by our acts and not by luck. Although God is denied in Buddhist doctrine, we still have a conscience that allows

us to follow the moral path. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which states that "It is not in the stars to hold our destiny, but in ourselves" (Shakespeare, p. 10) has a similar notion of "fate." The line, "Is our life shaped by the creases on our palms? Or does your decision-making determine your future?" links to the debate between determinism and free will in philosophy. It calls into question whether or not we have free will and the capacity to make decisions that affect how our lives turn out.

The expression, "Is it our mastery to comprehend? Or is it preferable not to comprehend it?" places a premium on individual autonomy and the capacity to make decisions that are true to oneself. It calls into question the necessity and worth of seeking insight into all facets of life, as well as whether doing so is essential or advantageous. Even if there are certain things that are inherently out of our ken, the thirst for knowledge and understanding is a necessary component of being human. Individuals should make an effort to comprehend the world around them, and yet they should also be mindful of how little we actually know about it.

The idea of impermanence and the ephemeral nature of life are the concepts that Amitabh is entirely aware of. He firmly believes in the existentialist perspective that acknowledges life's transience and fleetingness. The line "It's like butterflies perched on blossoms, allow it to stay there at times and fly away at others" can be seen as a metaphor for life's transience and the importance of living in the present. It suggests that, like butterflies perched on flowers, we ought to let events and occurrences happen naturally and appreciate them while they last, rather than attempting to hold onto or control them.

The question, "Is it more than enough, or is it insufficient?" is indicative of Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy of "Wille zum Leben" (Will to Life) (Schopenhauer, vol. 2). According to Schopenhauer, people's appetites are insatiable, they are continuously seeking more, and they are never satisfied with what they already have. This viewpoint is consistent with Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy, which claimed that individuals must face the underlying emptiness and meaninglessness of existence in order to find meaning and purpose in their own lives (Sartre, pp. 37–118).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "Kahani" is an exquisite song that captures the essence of life in painstaking depth. The song's lyrics confront our assumptions and worldviews and implore us to contemplate life's intricacies. The melody is both poetic and philosophical, taking cues from numerous intellectual thoughts including existentialism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. It makes us reflect on our existence and wonder

if we are truly the writers of our own stories or just passive bystanders in a wider tale. Ultimately, it's a provocative artistic endeavour that appeals to everyone who is inquisitive about the secrets of existence.

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