

Singularities

a peer reviewed international transdisciplinary biannual research journal

ISSN:2348-3369 and Impact factor: 6.875

Vol. 9 Issue 2, July 2022

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Editor's Note

Singularities is into its ninth year of publication and it is a matter of happiness to continue to be a space for meaningful deliberation on issues that matter. At a time when the politics is deliberately making its presence felt in the academia, attempting to rework the warp and weave of scholarship, stitching in racial, prejudicial filters, books/text books are subjected to increased scrutiny by the intelligentsia. A selection of texts chosen for an undergraduate programme is critiqued for its 'cartography of preconceived pedagogical intentions' in the article, Spectres of Textual Compilation in the age of Genderogogy'. Love was the core on which the last edition of Singularities Conference was based and ripples are still on. Dr. Jayaprakash is looking at love as divine and mundane through the perspective of the Bakthi tradition, drawing sustenance from the Narada Bhakti Sutras and Bhagavad Gita. Kuntal Tamang's study of Barry Unsworth's 'Sacred Hunger' and 'Sugar and Rum' attempts an illustration of how these novels effectively present a counter-history and challenge the dominant discourse on Imperialism. The paper makes interesting reading since the world is passing through a stage in which the counter-historical narratives are re-countered with narratives of fascist-communal inclinations. The thread of bigotry and structured bias which is threatening to become the burden of the song comes under attack in Dr. Lata's revisit of Bisham Sahni's 'Tamas', nudging us towards an education rooted in reflection.

Self as a concept has been of perennial scholarly interest and during the postmodern times, the fractured sense of self took center stage of debate. The 'schizophrenic universe of consumerist culture, and the way self is signified into 'imminent sense of meaning', the make of cultural selves - these strands occupy the philosophical musings of Nishant. T. V's 'self-reflections'. Analysis of Mei Mei Evans's 'Oil in Water' in the background of Exxon Valdez Oil spill attempts to understand the plight of the people enveloped in the oil culture suspended between trauma and desire to trace the toxic petrophilia that dominates the current world. Dr. Sreebitha and Dr. Rafseena read Morrison's 'God Help the Child' as a narrative which eventually leads to the construction of the text as an 'alternative, subversive, discourse of motherhood within the black motherhood'. Motherhood is again explored by Dr. Praseetha and Razeena in their article on 'Restructuring the M/Other Revolutionary Praxis', which documents the ancient and living legacy of practicing and defining motherhood beyond the constraints of the biological in Motherhood Manuals. "Enhancing human capabilities to make choices remain one of the objectives of education and one of the factors deciding Human Development Index", states Vineetha. M. K, in her attempt to explore the theoretical tenets postulated by scholars from various disciplines that can be applied in the teaching - learning realm". The eco-centered concerns continue in the articles of Babu Raj and Renjitha which are rooted in ecopoetics and animal studies. The fictional representation of Kashmir is studied in the concluding piece of the journal. 'The unending tussle in Kashmir is a nomadic movement that affects sedentaries', argues Dr. Anusree in her analysis of Mirza Waheed's 'The Collaborator', drawing on Deleuzian ideas.

P. K. Babu., Ph. D
Chief Editor

Contents

1. **Gireesh. C** 9 - 14
Specters of Textual Compilation
in the age of Genderogogy
2. **Dr. Jayaprakash A.** 15 - 22
Bhakti: The Concept and
Practice of Love in Spirituality
3. **Kuntal Tamang** 23 - 31
Overcoming Amnesia : British Imperial History
in Barry Unsworth's Sacred Hunger and Sugar and Rum
4. **Prof. (Dr) Lata Marina Varghese** 32 - 45
The Hate We Teach: Partition and
The Legacy of Fanaticism
5. **Nisanth T. V.** 46 - 54
Self Reflections: Dynamics of Self
and Aesthetics in Consumerist Turn
6. **Priyanka M. C.** 55 - 60
(D)Ripping Oil: Petrocapitalism
in Mei Mei Evans's Oil and Water
7. **Dr. Sreebitha P. V** 61 - 67
Dr. Rafseena M
Construction of Subversive Black Motherhood :
Ruptured Motherline in God Help the Child

8. **Razeena P R** 68 - 74
Dr. Praseetha G
Loving from the Borders : Restructuring the
M/Other Revolutionary Praxis in Select
Motherhood Manuals
9. **M. K. Vineetha** 75 - 80
Inculcating Love of Learning :
Theoretical Explorations
10. **M. P. Baburaj** 81 - 86
Judith Wright: Springs and Roots of Eco-poetics
11. **Renjitha. K. R** 87 - 92
Toward an Understanding of Animal Studies
12. **Dr. Anusree R. S** 93 - 96
Kashmir: A Nation or Territory in The Collaborator

Specters of Textual Compilation in the age of Genderogogy

Abstract

*English language teaching and its pedagogical methodology have often been structured with specific objectives of transactional values of the present in the academy for varied political and cultural reasons. The Common English Textbook, a compilation, of the UG Second Semester (2019 Admission) of the University of Calicut titled *Zeitgeist: Readings on Society and Culture* conceives layers of thematic and conceptual framework that have been devised from the pedagogy of the possibles. The issues of gender reflections have been compiled in one of the sections titled as Gender becomes a point of reference for the genderogogy that clutches in the academy on the logic of comprehensibility and soft transactions of particular concepts to the readers. Genderogogy is a transactional materiality of gender discourse within the parameters of specificity and focuses on the sense of the contemporary. The paper attempts to deconstruct the specific gender pedagogy that marks the anticipated and usual conventions of the syllabi in the field of the humanistic transactions.*

Keywords: Pedagogy, Gender, Genderogogy

In place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art - Susan Sontag

Issue based pedagogical methods in English Language and Literature classes often fail to achieve their estimated goals of promoting either literary aesthetics or the prescribed curricular objectives of language in specific. The compilation of the Under Graduate Common Course (2019 Admission) text book in English of the University Of Calicut titled –*Zeitgeist : Readings on Society and culture* brings various concepts in its fold for transaction. The text contains four 'core' issues or concepts on the specific issues like Indian Constitution and Secularism ,Sustainable Environment, Gender, and Human rights. The paper aims to critique the selective notions on gender as a pedagogical exercise rather than a reference point to face contemporary concepts to the front of discussion. In the preface to the compilation, it is stated as the text "... is designed to introduce undergraduate students to the contemporary discourse which guide a liberal society forward"(Xavier, Zakariya and Divakaran 7).In that sense it posits a reductionist manifesto of anticipated trajectory of liberal voices of the present. The semantic constructions based on the different modules that are directed to concepts of clarified issues reflect the cartography of preconceived pedagogical intentions.

A pedagogical spectre that haunts the academy is the theorophobia of the present and

the contrived assimilation and appropriation of the comprehensible of the popular. In the section titled as Gender, single texts of a story, an essay and a poem are included for transaction. The section includes Adrienne Rich's essay "Claiming an Education", Kate Chopin's story "The Story of an Hour" and Lee Mokobe's "What It's like to Be Transgender". These texts specifically relate to the growing concern of gendered notions of the contemporary manner in which pedagogy of the present is being transacted. The other sections of the text such as Human Rights and Sustainable Environment supplement differences of issues but make a close contact with which the contemporariness of the textuality is being measured to the humanistic positioning. The naturalising strategies of the particular objectives in a literature sessions demand many more areas of discourse. The paper questions the two fold aspects of the compilation of the present and the idea of an issue based syllabi of the gender in academic imaginations.

The compilation of the section or module on gender deals with a variety of feminist voices and transgender positions but the stature shows a closure of ideas within the framework of a separate module that freezes the very meanings in the possibility of sections titled Human Rights. The voices that miss in the gender specific unit to no-gender unit /module comes within the ambit of concepts covered in the name of presentism of the discourse. The universalism of the concepts of the present leads to an impasse of issues in language and literature pedagogy. The signification of the gender paradigm or rather the pedagogy of the gender – Genderology –closures the possibilities into water tight compartment and deters it being open for further significations of mis/readings of the texts. Genderology is the hasty yet focussed, one dimensional application of theories of gender /feminist discourse into certain transactional values for specific in-built meanings and interpretations of the texts. It transacts itself and trans-acts for others too. The very resistance of the gender discourse on the textualities of singular significations is subverted for the pseudo-plural formations of the contemporary humanistic interpretations in the genderology of the academy. Such failures of gender pedagogy comes from the universal claim of the literatures' potential to highlight the high idealisms of humanity, enlightenment and aesthetics of the many. The very idea of literary pedagogy in literature/language classrooms is a mediated confrontations of metonymic violences of languages as pure literary events of meanings. As such the effort of compilation becomes a process of assembling these texts /concepts which have similarity of discursive associations but the crisis lies with the text's insistence as not to be a part of such singular conceptions in its credit of assembled associations.

In the module titled as Human Rights, Nadine Gordimer's story *Amnesty* was introduced to mark a sense of the human in the time of apartheid and segregation . The resistance to be a part of the totality of the compilation logic in the pedagogy of the straight is materialised as such but the text resists every forms of binaries and singularities of key hole readings of fixities and generates matrix of readings on textual aporia. It takes

the same shape of generalization into a single box of specified colour of authentic texts of messages and concerns. There are texts in the same compilation that overlaps and resists the so called fundamentalism of the module symptoms of the chartered discourse of the predetermined trajectory of readings into a pedagogy of the erotics .The question of the transactional value of the literary pedagogy as a regularised format for comprehension needs a critique of the outline of the objectives of the texts. Issues of the contemporary become a pedagogy for the futures . Here the signs of language resist every moment in its self-obsessed meanings on textual fantasies. Here to transact a concept is to identify those elements which catachresis of ideas often raise; how would one face a text at the point of departure of meanings ? Thus the failure to transact a text points to the result of a pedagogy of the concrete materialities of the conventions of readings .

The creation of a genderogogy and its manifestation in the classrooms makes a levelling field of giving 'spaces' to gender as an issue of supplementarity in public educational system. Texts itself make issues of discourse whereas the concepts that are based on the critical/linguistic /aesthetic level fails to achieve its interpretations . The framework on an issue/concept is a clean platform for a single position to be heard. The final section in the compilation overlaps and fluctuates in the aesthetics of humanistic sensibility for better understanding on module symptom . How gender in its transactional mode achieves certain objectives in the readings as a position of the popular and the contemporary becomes crucial when the interpretations stuck as univocal in many ways. The pedagogy of the aesthetics in the English Language and Literature classroom has always been in the area of certain focused abilities to be attained so as to deliver something 'genuine and pure' in academy. But the praxisarises in the amount of intersectional nature of various discourse to the fore that eventually makes a transgressive division of texts to be attributed to a pedagogy of the dispossessed . Conceptual framework encourages the neat divisions in the disclosures of power through particularity of events that have often been conceived as a model of culture and civilization paradigm in educational system.

The insistence for the conceptual clarity in the English Language classroom comes out from the illusion of creating potential citizens in an imaginary platform in which certain discourse predominates that needs to be addressed in the pedagogy of the particular interests. The outcome based curriculum to a separate disciplines of science and humanities has slowly but steadily been incorporated into the domain with the help of the issues of the contemporary. What is lost in between the genderogogy of the disciplines to a marked field of texts in action is that a closure of enunciation of unconventional and unchartered critique on liberal possibilities of state owned mechanism of corrective pedagogy of the masses. The un/conscious obstinacy to award a conceptualism to a eroticization of the pedagogy to the linear conceptions realms may create innumerable openings of further deconstruction of the texts.

A pure pedagogy of conceivable motifs is a dangerous prospect of enforced subjectivity. The apprehension of the texts' sovereignty and the reading of authentic voices have always been taken as a granted prospect for the future. A Compilation is a laboured process of anticipated specters of popular readings even before the death of the wor(l)ds. The premature demise of the texts is the rhetorics and pedagogy of the contemporary. Thus readings and critiques of enunciation always bypass this exercise of compilations and anthology in many ways. But within the compilation itself it is transgressed and overflowed in such a way to open for discursiveness. Compiled texts are the most rigorous patterns of isolated materials of individual meanings.

The selection of certain concepts/issues to the language classrooms provoke a series of questions that put the art of teaching to a new realm of fixities of being . The closure of pedagogy has become the concern of the concept syndrome that has been compiled in the level of an active position of moral pedagogy or the pedagogy of the moral experiences in the transactional ecosystem. The sense of achieving some sort of concepts /ideas through 'legitimate' literary works form languages of contemporariness. Thus the authenticity of the experiences that stem from the autobiographical articulations is the result of the voices from the experience as a source of the perpetual origins of subjectivity of understanding. Autobiography is one of the fictitious forms of pseudo authentic texts that can be duplicated with time and space. Such epistemological differentiations of meaning and discourse always under erasure in the very marking of pedagogy as an art of making something to be transacted as it is.

Textualities overlap as the subjects of interpretations vary from the texts' freedom of reading but the enforced prologue to the meanings of texts put readings into a monolithic enterprise of objectivities. The 'inherent' nature of any text is its refusal to be understood. The resistance to the texts' agency mark the site of meanings and the modules and concepts in the compilation of texts deter it being an open field of significations rather exhibit a closed circuit of prepossessed ideologies of the particular pedagogy. Such a pedagogical enterprise is much more visible and clear in the realm of genderogogy for it proves to be a mismatch of the scheduled nature of its textual frameworks. Textualities overflow so the praxis to the singular concept put into a patterned hole of unilateral ideologies that seizes its very opportunity of eroticisation of pedagogy.

The logical applicability of the compilation makes it a divided portions of modules of conceptual differences in the textual formations of interpretations. As a result the illusion to impart specific goals of instructional objectives in literary class leads to a new form of pedagogy .Conceptual transfer to the disciplinarity may occur in textual formations with generic assemblages of aesthetically bounded anthology in literature. Compilation/ Anthology is a feasible remake of a plural paradigm into a single set of norms. The culture and civilizational model of machines with which the aesthetics of literary texts generate always pose some sort of humanistic imaginations. Here the very intent to create a sort of

discourse in the androgyny field becomes a readymade set of interpretations. The contradictions, mutations, and the paradoxes within the overlapping texts and closures of meaning are invited to eroticity of the minorities; hence meanings unimagined.

The attachment of a compilation presupposes the intent to be understood, disseminated although in a classroom and readings it may overturn itself into abyss of interpretations. Such accidental prospect of readings and pedagogy are possible recovering of the texts. The question is about the entire panorama of pedagogical exercises such as syllabi, textbook, examinations, internals that may route its course in particular dimensions. In the genderology even the very suppositions of the text and its foregrounding may go wrong as it happens in the Human rights section in which Nadine Gordimer's story titled *Amnesty* that comes under the module whereas the story backgrounds the gender propensity to the core of the matter. The soft readings of such a situation is the discretion under which a reader interprets, engages or confronts it for invulnerable method of textualities. It's a possible means onto which a writer owns nothing as per se. But the claiming of its identities and tethering a text even before it's being read may pose situations of mis/readings or no readings. Thus the conceptual models of module and its assemblages create less spaces of alterations than the fabricated attempts to promote a presences of concepts to be delivered in particular order and manner within which the pedagogy of the classrooms are being conditioned to.

The praxis of the pedagogy is the confrontations of a text experiences in itself whereas the genderology views itself from a stipulated order and refuses to be an incorporated mechanism of actualizations. Genderology is the act of the majoritarian readings articulated and materialised in every humanistic pedagogy and the transcendence of such specters of teaching always transgresses the art of readings and makes it an erotic of pedagogical pleasures within. In the module Human Rights, Nadine Gordimer's story *Amnesty* comes under the silent forms of patriarchy and its given space for human rights. So what's human in gender? The rights of the gender becomes a human subject in pedagogy. Thus the androgynous narratives posit less gendered politics of the very idea of autonomy of the compilation in action. The efforts to assemble it in clean and tight distinctions put the in danger of misgivings of the meanings. The correlational aspect of such a muted thematic of appreciation fails when the texts in the area comes under human rights. So the attempt to retrieve the no-lost eroticity in the pedagogy becomes readings in action. The tautology of genderology with its loud enunciations of imposed objectives has been resisted within the domains of politics of the possible. Therefore the labored divisions of concepts and the text-positioning are represented through a double edged propaganda of the masses to be delivered in the public imaginations of the present. The unambiguous nature of text is a myth of the public pedagogy of imaginations that cater the status quo of the compilation syndrome. In that sense the rhetorics of particular reading habits is encouraged so as to involve the compilation as a self sufficient holistic

material for liberal emancipation of the academy.

The rhetorics with which the pedagogy of the contemporary breaks out into several sections in liberal society has unquestioningly been yielded to the illusion of the academic exercises for the sense of academy runs on by a system-owned-symptoms by the statues of its own autonomy. Definitely the very act of transaction makes it newer form of engagements in the text and with readers who await the anticipated result as the adjoined reflections of the 'nowness' of time .Meanings of a particular concept and the insistence to be transacted well in advance makes the idea of gender a sort of special arena of significations. The very incomprehensibility of signs becomes the phobia of the majority that lurks in pedagogy of all arts and when it comes to the aesthetics of teaching spectres are born and reborn.

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Bhakti: The Concept and Practice of Love in Spirituality

Abstract

Introduction

Bhakti is loosely translated as devotion in English, but the Sanskrit word has a combination of meanings of love, devotion, reverence and awe of which the predominant emotion is that of love. The idea of bhakti is core to Indian spiritual thought and is considered by many to be the supreme form of worship. Of the three major spiritual paths of karma, jnana and bhakti, the path of bhakti has been considered superior by many spiritual leaders. As a result, there has been a surge of this feeling of love towards God through various languages and celebrated devotees through the length and breadth of India. This movement of love towards God came to be known as the Bhakti movement.

Objective

This paper aims to explore the nature of love as envisioned in the idea of bhakti and compares it with the mundane concept of love. One of the earliest and major treatises on bhakti is the Narada Bhakti Sutras which defines bhakti and enumerates the method of cultivating it in a spiritual practitioner. Another major text which has an entire chapter devoted to the idea of bhakti is the Bhagavad Gita. This paper analyses the idea of bhakti as contained in these two texts and finds parallels and divergences between mundane love and divine love.

Methodology

After bringing out the nature of bhakti as enumerated in the Narada Bhakti Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, the commentaries on bhakti by spiritual leaders like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Sivananda, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami etc are also explored. The idea of bhakti became popular through saints like Tulsidas, Kabir, Mirabai, Surdas, Jayadeva, Narasimha Mehta, Jnanadeva, Namdev, Tukaram, Guru Nanak etc. It is significant that they were from different parts of India, were not contemporaries and spoke different languages. Most of them were not scholars and hence their words had a significant impact on common folk creating a spiritual wave in the Indian subcontinent.

Conclusion

Bhakti is considered as the pinnacle of spiritual practice and is an attainment which transforms the life of the spiritual aspirant in many ways. It goes on to affect the way the devotee approaches the material world in such a deep manner that the everyday problems are handled with greater efficiency and better results. Thus, cultivation of bhakti is not an

escape from the material existence, but becomes a means to excel in life. After all, the aim of humanity itself is to make things better for everyone and everything around us.

Keywords: Bhakti, Love, Spirituality

Bhakti defined

In the very second verse of the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, Sage Narada defines bhakti thus: “That (devotion), verily, is of the nature of supreme Love of God” (Sivananda 20). The feelings towards God vary from person to person. Since God is considered generally as someone who dispenses fortune or misfortune among people, fear is a common emotion that they have towards God. Therefore we have the term “God-fearing” when referring to people who believe in God. However, Narada makes it clear that love should be the emotion that indicates faith in God. He also wants to emphasize that it is different from the ordinary mundane love that we have towards people or things. Therefore he calls it “parama prema rupaa” which literally means “the form of intense devotion.” Swami Sivananda observes that Narada's concept of divinity is beyond any religious differentiation since the word that Narada used is “asmin” (in this): “Narada's teaching is non-sectarian. He did not use the term Brahman, Ishwar, Rama, Krishna, Siva, etc” (23).

Though Narada describes bhakti using various metaphors, he confesses that to define bhakti in words is an impossible task: “Anirvachaneeyam Premaswarupam. The nature of love towards God is inexpressible in words” (142). Having said that, Narada gives his final verdict on the nature of bhakti: “Gunarahitam kaamanaarahitam pratikshanavardhamaanam avichchinnam Sookshmataramanubhavaroopam. It (divine love) is devoid of all attributes, devoid of all desires, expanding every moment, continuous, most subtle and of the nature of inner experience” (145). Here, Narada makes it clear that however much one may describe and glorify bhakti, it can only be really understood and appreciated by someone who experiences it. The more one indulges in worldly love, the less satisfaction it gives. There is a sense of satiety and feeling of getting cloyed when one enjoys material existence. The feeling of love in the mundane world also gets reduced with increasing association. However, divine love differs in that it is “pratikshanavardhamaanam” as Narada says in the above verse. That is, bhakti increases in the bhakta as time progresses. And it increases not day by day, but moment by moment, indicating the intense and zealous nature of the love for God.

Two other qualities of bhakti that Narada brings out through this verse are unselfishness, “kaamanaarahitam” and its unbreakable, indivisible and imperishable nature, “avichchinnam.” Swami Sivananda comments on these qualities thus:

Worldly love is divisible. A man who has six children distributes his love among all the six. But devotion to the Lord is not divisible.

Divine Love seeks no return, grows from more to more every

moment, knows no break, is subtler than the subtlest and is of the nature pure, inner experience. It is beyond the pale of the three Gunas. It is a spontaneous outpouring of the heart. (147)

When Narada calls bhakti as “anubhavaroopam” or experiential, he means to say that it has to be experienced to be understood. Later, he goes on to say that bhakti is its own proof and cannot be measured by any other tool: “Pramaanaantarasya anapekshatwaat swayam pramaanatwaat. Because it (devotion, love) does not depend on any other proof, as it is proof of itself” (157). Swami Sivananda elucidates this with the day-to-day example of experience of hunger: “When you feel hungry, you know it at once. You have direct experience. You do not listen to intellectual arguments about hunger to feel hungry. If someone says, 'No, you are not hungry,' you say, 'I am hungry. I am an authority to say whether i am hungry or not. No one else can be the authority on this matter’” (159).

The Benefits of Bhakti

The value of Narada's discourse on bhakti is that it defines the nature and behaviour of a person who has developed bhakti. Developing bhakti in the individual will have a bearing on the manner in which the person interacts with the world and therefore is important in the material world. One major quality that a bhakta (a person who has bhakti) attains is contentment. “Tripto Bhavati,” says Narada (25). Contentment is a quality that people have difficulty attaining in material existence. Contentment is not directly proportional to the amount of possessions that one is able to gather in life.

Developing bhakti can also ward off many of the negative aspects in the personality of the individual like depression, over-excitement, hatred and selfishness. The fifth verse says:

Yatrapya na Kinchitvaanchati na sochati
na Dweshti na ramate nosaahee bhavati.

By attaining which (divine love) he does not desire anything else, neither grieves (over any loss or death of dear ones) nor hates anything, does not indulge in sensual pleasures, nor does he feel any urge (for the acquisition of material things). (28)

Exemplars of Bhakti

After describing the nature and benefits of bhakti, Narada names gopis (the cow-maids of Brindawan) as those who were living examples of bhakti: “Yatha vrajagopikaanaam. As for instance, in the case of the cow-maids of Vraja or Brindawan” (78). It is in the example of the Gopis that the common aphorism of “Familiarity breeds contempt” does not hold good. Narada says, “Tatraapi na maahaatmyagyanavismrityapavaada. Even there (the love of the Gopis), there is no particular reason for forgetting the glory and greatness of the Lord” (80-81). Though they enjoyed playing with Krishna as a

cowherd, there was no reason for them to forget that he is the Lord himself. Swami Sivananda notes, “The Gopis danced in the moonlight and played with the Sri Krishna and yet were not unconscious of His divinity, His Omniscience and Omnipotence even for a second. They recognised Him as the soul of the universe and also as their own Atma.”

The Value of Bhakti

Narada places bhakti above action, knowledge and yoga: “Saa tu karmajnanayogebhyopyadhikataraa. It (supreme devotion) is again higher than action, knowledge and Yoga” (89). The reason for such a declaration is given by Narada in the next verse where he says that bhakti comes as a result of these steps and therefore is superior to these steps. Swami Sivananda says, “Various disciplines such as practice of Yoga, religious rites, self-control, vows of various kinds, service of one's teacher, cultivation of divine virtues are described in the sacred scriptures but devotion to the Lord is the end of them all” (92-93).

According to Narada, Bhakti is not a means to get something, it is an end in itself: “Svayam phalaroopateti brahmakumaaraa. Bhakti is its own fruit - thus opines Brahma Kumara (Narada) the son of Brahma” (99). To emphasise the value of bhakti, Narada says that the scriptures which were a means to attain bhakti have to be abandoned: “Yo vedaanapi sannyasyati, kevalamavichchinnaanuragam labhate.” Swami Sivananda clarifies on this verse thus: “By 'Veda' it is meant here the ritualistic portion of the Vedas. The man of realisation does not stand in need of the rituals prescribed by the Vedas but they may be performed in earlier stages as a means for God-realisation” (139).

The Gita on Bhakti

The twelfth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is entirely devoted to discussion on bhakti and is titled “Bhakti Yoga.” To Arjuna's question of who is to be considered superior in devotion, Lord Krishna replies:

Sanniyamyendriya-gramam
sarvatra sama-buddhayah
te prapnuvanti mam eva
sarva-bhuta-hite ratah. (Goyandaka 563)

Krishna says that they alone attain divinity who are able to control their senses, able to maintain equanimity of mind and are dedicated to the welfare of all beings. Here, bhakti becomes a feeling of love and concern to all living beings. Continuing on this line, Krishna declares what kind of a bhakta is dear to him:

advesta sarva-bhutanam
maitrah karuna eva ca
nirmamo nirahankarah

sama-duhkha-sukhah ksami.
santustah satatam yogi
yatatma drdha-niscayah
mayy arpita-mano-buddhir
yo mad-bhaktah sa me priyah. (575)

The devotee dear to him is the person who is without hatred toward any being and has feelings of affection and compassion towards all beings, having no feelings of possessiveness or ego, is equipoised in both happiness and grief and is patient in all situations. Such a dear bhakta is a yogi who is contented at all times, firm of resolve and has surrendered his mind and intellect to the Lord. Further Krishna says:

yasman nodvijate loko
lokan nodvijate ca yah
harsamarsa-bhayodvegair
mukto yah sa ca me priyah. (577)

Such a dear bhakta is not perturbed by the world nor can the world cause any perturbation in return. Such a person is free from exhilaration, anger, fear or anxiety. Thus the indication of bhakti is in composure and a balanced mind and personality. Krishna goes on to say that the devotee dear to him does not expect anything from anyone:

anapeksah sucir daksa
udasino gata-vyathah
sarvarambha-parityagi
yo mad-bhaktah sa me priyah. (578)

Such a beloved bhakta is pure, wise, carefree, disinterested and is free from feelings of doership in every activity engaged in.

yo na hrsyati na dvesti
na socati na kanksati
subhasubha-parityagi
bhaktiman yah sa me priyah. (579)

The dear bhakta is not carried away by excessive happiness nor is ridden by hatred, neither grieves nor desires, and has forsaken all ideas of auspicious or inauspicious.

samah satrau ca mitre ca
tatha manapamanayoh
sitosna-sukha-duhkhesu
samah sanga-vivarjitah
tulya-ninda-stutir mauni
santusto yena kenacit
aniketah sthira-matir

bhaktiman me priyo narah. (581-582)

This beloved bhakta considers friends and enemies the same, and so considers respect or disrespect to oneself with equal attitude. Such a person is unaffected even by physical conditions of heat or cold and is able to maintain balance of mind. The bhakta maintains quietude of mind and considers both praise and blame in the same manner, remaining contented at all times. Though unattached to any physical residences, the devotee's mind remains firm and consistent.

The Bhakti Movement

The bhakti movement in India was not an isolated phenomenon but one that spread across various regions, languages and cultures across the length and breadth of the land. The majority of the spiritual leaders who triggered this movement represented the common people of the land. Most of them were not scholars and hence their words had a significant impact on common folk creating a spiritual wave in the Indian subcontinent. Bhattacharyya traces the history of bhakti movement thus:

The *bhakti* movement was renovated in north India by Ramananda, who was fifth in descent from the great southern teacher Ramanuja. There is a popular saying that *bhakti* arose first in the Dravida land; Ramananda brought it to the north; and Kabir spread it to the seven continents and nine divisions of the world.... Ramananda gave up the use of Sanskrit and started preaching in the language of the people, thus laying the foundation of modern regional literatures. Among his disciples, Ravidasa was a cobbler by birth.... More than thirty hymns of Ravidasa have been incorporated in the Granth Sahib of the Sikhs. Sena, another disciple of Ramananda, was a barber by caste. Dhanna was a peasant and Jat while Pipa was the ruler of a small principality. (“Introduction” xxiii-xxiv)

It could be seen that the bhakti movement was revolutionary in uniting the diversity of the Indian subcontinent on various fronts. It also did not remain the privilege of the upper caste communities. Bhattacharyya gives the example of the butcher Sadan or Sadna whose poems are part of the *Granth Sahib* and the untouchable *Nabhal* famous for his work, *Bhaktamala*. At the same time there were brahmins like Tulsidas and Surdas, whose works were well celebrated in different parts of India (xxiv-xxv). Thus the bhakti movement could be seen as a great leveller of social differences weaving a common cultural fabric of the love towards the divine.

The ideas of Kabir and Guru Nanak who attempted to harmonize Hinduism and Islam, combined with the ideas of devotion put forward by saints of different regions of India brought about a synthesis of the Islamic Sufism and the Hindu Bhakti traditions. Bhattacharyya observes:

Ramananda, Kabir, Namadeva, Nanak, Dadu, Ravidasa, Rajjab, Tulasidasa, Sri Caitanya to name only a few from amongst a host of others, all belonged to this syncretistic trend. But it has also to be admitted that each one of them came to function in a given social situation, in a given region and in the context of a given tradition. In each case, therefore, the movement took different shape, form and style, but the attitude was based on a powerful emotion characterised by an intense love for and devotion to God. (xxv)

Such an intense devotion to the divine united these lovers of God, whether it was Sri Caitanya from Bengal, Narasimha Mehta from Gujarat, Jnanadeva from Maharashtra, Madhvacharya from Karnataka, Ramanuja from Tamil Nadu or Sankaracharya from Kerala.

However the bhakti movement did not remain reduced to spreading a spiritual sentiment, but was a social reform movement too in its larger impact: "One of the direct effects of this movement was the emergence of the language of the masses as the medium of religious expression. Kabir said: *sanskrit kupjal, bhasa bahata nir*, implying that Sanskrit is like the stagnant water of a well while the language of the masses is like an everflowing stream" (xxviii). Kabir's bhakti poems popularly known as dohas were written in vernacular Hindi which included various dialects ranging from Braj, Bhojpuri and Awadhi. The songs of Mirabai were written originally in Rajasthani (xxix). Spirituality which was the privilege of the brahmins was brought down from the ivory tower of elitism and was made accessible to the masses as a result of the bhakti movement. Manorama Kohli observes that Guru Nanak too voiced his spiritual ideals of devotion by hitting at casteist and elitist notions of the religious leaders of those times:

It is this mood of protest against the priestly classes in religion and particularly among the Hindus which Guru Nanak imbibed so strongly that the movement which he guided and the sect of which he was recognized the founder, came to be identified as anti-brahminism. The brahmins and the mullahs who followed religion as a profession were likened to the "blind leading the blind". His policy was a revolt against the tyranny of the class of brahmins. (48)

Nanak fought against the dogmatic manner in which religion was practiced and called for a loving relationship with God. Such a love for God enables the seeker to see and respond to the distress of the fellow members in the society. Nanak enjoined upon his followers to lead a family life so that the spiritual and material halves of existence can be balanced (54).

Though hailing from Gujarat, Mirabai became a national icon of bhakti carving a niche for herself in spirituality which was a highly gendered space. She famously made

fun of the spiritual scholar Jiva Goswami who refused to meet her for the reason that she was a woman. It is said that Mirabai responded that except the Lord all are females. On hearing this, Jiva Goswami realized his mistake and himself became a devotee of Mirabai (Pandey and Zide 58). Narasimha Mehta, also from Gujarat, was also against all discriminations among human beings and went to the settlements of pariahs singing the praise of God (Deshpande 110).

Kusuman observes that Thunchathu Ezhuthachan from Kerala too practiced bhakti as divorced from social discrimination:

To get relieved from the hallucination of this material world the only channel is bhakti - so stated Ezhuthachan. While Manu suggests attainment of *sattva guna*, birth in brahmin caste etc., as preconditions for attaining *mukti*, Ezhuthachan indirectly repudiated this cumbersome method by offering to people of all castes the meticulous observance of *bhakti* and thereby attainment of *mukti* in this life time itself. (192)

Ezhuthachan is famous for his poetic rendering of the story of the Ramayana which is still recited religiously in Kerala during the Malayalam month of *Karkidakam*. Some of the other prophets of bhakti from Kerala were Melpathoor Narayana Bhattatiri, Poonthanam Namboodiri, Kurooramma and Vilvamangalam Swamiyar.

Conclusion

Bhakti is considered as the pinnacle of spiritual practice and is an attainment which transforms the life of the spiritual aspirant in many ways. It goes on to affect the way the devotee approaches the material world in such a deep manner that the everyday problems are handled with greater efficiency and better results. Thus, cultivation of bhakti is not an escape from the material existence, but becomes a means to excel in life. After all, the aim of humanity itself is to make things better for everyone and everything around us.

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Overcoming Amnesia: British Imperial History in Barry Unsworth's *Sacred Hunger* and *Sugar and Rum*

Abstract

The contemporary popular discourse within the erstwhile Empire seeks to dilute, and even erase, the uneasy Imperial history of Britain. There are, in fact, attempts to eulogise the larger European history and perpetuate the idea of a "white man's burden" that is not only essential but also desirable. This dilution is seen across the spectrum from history books and school curricula to the utterances of political leaders and is also manifested through popular opinion polls.

This erasure has led to a misplaced nostalgia about the imperial past and a perpetuation of the capitalist tendency to maximize profits at human cost.

*This paper looks at Barry Unsworth's two novels, *Sugar and Rum* (1990) and the 1992 Booker winning *Sacred Hunger*, both of which look at the British Imperial past and its slave trade. The paper will also examine how the novels effectively present a counter-history and challenge the dominant discourse on Imperialism.*

Keywords : Imperialism, Counter history, Historiography, Slave Trade, Capitalism

History is never a thing of the past. Forms of historical reflection play a crucial role in any attempt to counteract oppression in the present: a culture that seeks to evade the more violent aspects of its own history will only perpetuate them.

(Carl Plasa, *The Discovery of Slavery*. Introduction. p.XIII).

British novelist Barry Unsworth's *Sugar and Rum* (1988) and *Sacred Hunger* (1992) recount the story of British imperial history in the backdrop of Britain's continued attempts to erase the same from its history books and school curricula.

In a June 1977 speech, Margaret Thatcher, the longest serving British Prime Minister of the twentieth century, eulogizes the European past: "the story of our continent is of European man, the Explorer and the trader, the missionary and the settlor, carrying the fruits of his scientific discoveries, of his artistic and cultural achievements, above all of his political values, across every sea and continent. No European need apologise for the

accomplishments of our people in the wider world” (Thatcher 1977). In her representation of the past, Thatcher effaces the “more violent aspects” of European history, an evasion that continues to this day. More recently Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, 2015-2020, proposed that British school children should be taught about the history of British imperialism and colonialism. He noted that “Black history is British history’ and its study should be part of the national curriculum (Corbyn). These proposals have however been met with outrage from several quarters. Maya Jasanoff, in *Misremembering the British Empire*, reports that “A March, 2020, poll found that a third of Britons believed that their empire had done more good than harm for colonies—a higher percentage than in other former imperial powers, including France and Japan. More than a quarter of Britons want the empire back” (Jasanoff). Such responses demonstrate an ignorance about British imperial and colonial history. This paper will analyse Barry Unsworth’s 1992 Booker Prize winning novel, *Sacred Hunger* and *Sugar and Rum* (1988) as narratives of the British imperial past and juxtapose the reading against continuing attempts at erasing the same history from the British national imagination.

Sacred Hunger, co-winner of the Booker Prize with Michael Ondaatje’s “The English Patient” in 1992, is a historical novel about the British slave trade. Set in 1752, the novel is the story of William Kemp, a merchant who pins his last hopes to revive his failing fortunes on a slave ship, *Liverpool Merchant*. He gets the ship ready to participate in the infamous Triangle Trade where the ship carries firearms to the coast of West Africa and trades them for slaves, who are then crammed into the ship and brought to the West Indies where they are traded for a cargo of sugar that is then brought back to England. Kemp is aware that this is risky business so he equips his slave ship with guns to quell any slave revolt and appoints Saul Thurso as captain, a man who will not hesitate to take any measure to get the job done. Kemp believes himself to be a caring man and also sends along Matthew Paris, his nephew, as the ship’s doctor “for reasons of humanity”, much to Thurso’s disgust. It is through Matthew Paris that we see the events on the ship unfold. Paris is a complex character - when he is not treating the slaves onboard the ship he likes to read Voltaire and Pope. His objection to the profit motive, the inhumanity of slavery and the treatment of the human cargo put him at loggerheads with the Captain. When an artist and philosopher, Delblanc joins the ship in Africa, Paris finds a companion with whom he can debate the legitimacy of the entire voyage.

"For most of the 1700s, Britons had seen no inconsistency whatever between trumpeting their freedom at home and buying men, women and children from trading posts in Africa to sell into slavery abroad" (Colley 351-352). By the 1790s British ships were exporting almost 45000 Africans annually, which represented perhaps 60% of the total trade. As long as it lasted, Britain’s slave trade was a major contributor to its economy, buttressing its Mercantile Marine, supplying essential labour to its colonies, providing vital capital for industrialization, and turning Bristol, Glasgow and Liverpool

into Major ports and splendid cities. Not until about the end of the 18th century did British public conscience begin to be concerned about the horrors of the trade. In 1783, the Quakers presented the first anti-slavery petition to Parliament. Four years later the society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade was founded in London. After many years of mass petitioning campaigns, debates and arguments the slave trade was outlawed by both Britain and America in 1807.

"From being the world's greediest and most successful traders of slaves in the 18th century, the British had shifted to being able to preen themselves on being the world's foremost opponents of slavery" (Colley 351). Freeing the slaves made large numbers of Britons feel important, benign and above all patrons and possessors of liberty: it "allowed for a welcome restocking of complacency" (Colley 354). "To praise Britain's role in abolishing the slave trade is only possible if we deny the various forms of economic, political, social and cultural violence that enabled the perpetuation of such a trade – in Britain and its empire – as well as the ongoing legacies of such forms of violence," says Deana Heath (The Print).

An important feature of the colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of fixity in the ideological construction of otherness. Stereotyping is its major discursive strategy. In *Sacred Hunger*, Unsworth exposes the highly exploitative nature of colonial stereotyping through the depiction of Caliban. While the slave ship, *Liverpool Merchant*, is on its way to Africa, back in England Erasmus Kemp participates in 'The Enchanted Isle', a reworking of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* where Caliban is introduced as "venting his mirth at the notion of breeding a race of monsters on Miranda" (*Sacred Hunger* 45). This of course is the stereotypical image of the uncontrolled sexuality of the Africans. By paralleling the performance of *The Enchanted Isle* with the events of slave trade, Unsworth narrows down the gap between history and literature to highlight how present discourse conditions past narratives. In the *Enchanted Isle* all the characteristics ascribed to the Blacks are used to portray Caliban who is the 'abhorred slave', 'the malignant savage' who does not know his own meaning but 'gabbles' like a brute.

Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present for the reader, and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context (Hutcheon 114). The intertextuality in the reworking of *The Tempest* is a way of literally incorporating the textualised past in the text of the present and enables what Hutcheon calls "a contradictory doubleness: the intertext of history and fiction take on parallel status in the reworking of the textual past of both the world and literature" (Hutcheon 85).

The curate Parker playing Caliban sees himself as debased by others, he sees the "savage as noble" (*Sacred Hunger* 182). But Reverend Mansell, who owns shares in the tea plantations, sees the dangers of such an interpretation, which would, by implication, show up Christianity as the corrupting agency and hence would not be "good theology" (*Sacred Hunger* 182). The nexus of trade and ideology is evident here. Unsworth exposes

this hypocrisy that prevents the colonisers from accepting any moral responsibility for the slave trade. Kemp will seek profit from the slave ship, but by sending along Paris as the doctor, he will be “dressing his ship in colours of charity and compassion” (*Sacred Hunger* 29).

The slaves on the 'Liverpool Merchant' are always seen by the traders as deprived, rising in rebellion if given a chance and “without a soul” (*Sacred Hunger* 181). Captain Thurso comments upon Paris's attempt to persuade a dying Negro to eat: “And when you have animals to deal with, it is done by fear, sir, not persuasion” (*Sacred Hunger* 301). Erasmus Kemp considers the slaves “valuable merchandise” (*Sacred Hunger* 215). The perception of racial difference is influenced by economic motives. Also, the objectification of the colonised produces non-European subjects for the domestic audience of imperialism. This is brought out in Barton's deliberate evocation of the African myth in his conversation with Calley: “Africa there's a place for you. Sunshine, golden beaches, as much palm wine as you can drink, trees loaded with fruit... paradise.... An' the wimmen... Hot they are always on fire - it is the climate, it is their nature” (*Sacred Hunger* 85).

The reduction of 'the other' to bestiality, the stereotyping of the African as animal, serves, as Lisa Lowe explains, to delineate the 'boundaries of the human', to characterize people as non-human – as 'unfit for civilization', 'incapable of productive development' and thus beyond the pale of liberal rights and freedoms (Lowe). Frantz Fanon calls this the 'zone of non-being', a zone where the colonial violence could be concealed (Fanon). “The peoples and histories that populated this zone were, in turn, either to be assimilated through the civilising mission or excluded from the British imperial project altogether. Conducted on zones of non-being, these erasures are the locations where colonial brutalities were at once located and forgotten, hidden in plain sight” (Koram and Nisancioglu).

However, this stereotyping is evoked in the novel only to be severely undercut. The statements denouncing African bestiality are given to characters who are themselves rendered as animals. For example, Captain Saul Thurso is shown as a profit making animal, a capitalist predator who throws live slaves into the sea. The slaves themselves are endowed with compassion- “They would sometimes give food to the men who had so ill used them, a charity mysterious and moving” (*Sacred Hunger* 377).

Sacred Hunger also depicts 'white slavery'. The capitalist ideology enslaves both the natives and the white working-class. Billy Blair and Calley are tricked into joining the 'Liverpool Merchant'. Deakin is bought for two guineas and Sullivan is beaten up and thrown into the slaver. The crew is abused, flogged, put in chains. When the food and water supply on the ship is running low they are the ones who suffer. The slaves, being valuable merchandise, are given adequate quantities of food to keep them in as good a shape as possible. The crew is reduced to begging for food from them. Moreover, once the

slaver has unloaded the 'Negroes', there is no need for so many men and to save wages the white crew is either sold to Navy ships or left in the West Indies. Delblanc, in his conversation with Erasmus, says that the trade is profitable only to men at the very top, the rest remain in the same impoverished conditions (*Sacred Hunger* 374-5). This leads to poverty and dehumanising conditions of work for an African as well as a white European worker. The Norwich prison is the end product. The bishop, who has spent a thousand pounds to acquire the Norwich jail is evidently “set on making his investments as profitable as possible, this being a time when the individual pursuit of wealth was regarded as inherently virtuous, on the grounds that it increased the wealth and well-being of the community” (*Sacred Hunger* 158). In the 1980's Margaret Thatcher used the same principle to justify a capitalist economy. Quoting Adam Smith, she says, “The uniform, constant and uninterrupted effort of every man to better his condition, the principle from which public and national as well as private opulence is originally derived, is frequently powerful enough to maintain the natural progress of things towards improvement” (Thatcher 28). The jail is divided into three levels: at the lowest level are those who have no money at all. Here men and women fight with rats in damp cellars for scraps of food: “These were people yielding no profit” (*Sacred Hunger* 158). Higher in scale are those who can pay for food and a private room and it is here that Paris has found lodging. Higher yet are the rich prisoners, who live as the bishop's guests and entertain on a lavish scale. The slave cells of the Company remind Paris of the Norwich jail, conflating the two which foregrounds the similarity between the white working class and the slaves. This is the free enterprise Margaret Thatcher is advocating. And the most significant example of this process of enrichment is the slave trade, “the greatest commercial venture the world had ever seen” (*Sacred Hunger* 130).

Most of the British population in the 18th century was involved in the trade to some degrees as manufacturers, brokers, or wholesalers. Almost two centuries later Thatcher, in her speech to Zurich Economic Society, is very pleased to inform her audience that through the buying of shares, 85 percent of the population has an indirect, if not direct, share in British industry and that a “vast majority of the population is participating in capitalism” (Thatcher 28). This is called a “property owning democracy” in *Sugar and Rum*, the novel that preceded the publication of *Sacred Hunger* and is an indictment of British exploitative capitalist policies. 'Property-owning democracy' means to have “a stake in the future of this country by being able to buy shares in our great industries” (*Sugar and Rum* 187). What these politicians refuse to see or deliberately ignore is the fact that capitalism all over the world is based on exploitative ethics. Benson, the protagonist of *Sugar and Rum*, says, “... only the people that own the property have a share in the democracy, and the more they own the bigger their share... As a matter of fact, the Liverpool slave trade provides the best example of a property owning democracy that I know” (*Sugar and Rum* 188). As Haines' reading of the Bible shows: “Him that has got something already must always try to get more” (*Sacred Hunger* 242).

It is this nexus of trade and Protestantism that makes the hunger for money and profit a “sacred hunger”. Delblanc, with the Rousseauistic philosophy of human perfectibility, provides a critique of this system. His painting depicts the face of Europe in Africa - “... of plunder and death” (*SacredHunger* 328). This sacred hunger is a euphemism for greed and cruelty that reduces man to “flesh and blood sort of money, a walking investment” (*Sacred Hunger* 325). The concept of justice is relativised and seen as yet another tool of maintaining authority and economy by making the slave trade “lawful”. William Kemp talks about founding Liverpool's fortune on slave trade - “A lawful commerce - it is sanctioned by the law of the land” (*Sacred Hunger* 16). Benson, in *Sugar and Rum*, is haunted by the barbarity of the slave trade and wonders about its 'lawfulness'. What is meant here is not the legality of the trade - everyone knew it was perfectly legal. The term lawful was used to mean “permissible, justifiable” (*Sugar and Rum* 151). As Benson later told Carter, “We live in a world where language is used to cloak the most appalling realities” (*Sugar and Rum* 48). And “lawful: one of the great achievements of that age”, so nicely blends the notions of the legal and the permissible.

A reading of various histories by a majority of British historians shows that amid the exhaustive historical data, the sordidness of the slave trade has been erased. Not just today, even at the height of the imperial project, the empire had held a low profile in the British national imaginary. C P Hill in *British Economic and Social History* turns the chapter on slave trade into a biographical sketch of William Wilberforce, the man most closely associated with the abolition of the slave trade. Hill says, “the Crusade had succeeded - at the cost of the destruction of an important trade worth millions of pounds a year” (Hill 61). Dorothy Marshall in *A History of England* devotes just about two pages to trade in Africa while objectively giving 'facts' about Africa, the West Indies, and the slave trade. She calls the slave trade “a grim business not so much because of deliberate brutality, for slaves were valuable merchandise and no captain wanted to arrive with half his cargo dead, as because of the inevitable hardships of the long and overcrowded voyage endured by men...” (Marshall 257). Linda Colley, however, is more explicit than Marshall in her criticism of the slave trade. But significantly, this criticism is made in the chapter entitled “Victories” which focuses on how the world-wide empire, which was the price of so much successful warfare, gave men and women, from different ethnic and social backgrounds, a powerful incentive to be British. Not only is there a deliberate erasure of facts in British histories, Margaret Thatcher claims that “the Victorian era - the heyday of free enterprise in Britain - was also the era of the rise of selflessness and benefaction” (26). And the trend continues to this day. In a sanitized version of history popularized by politicians such as Boris Johnson, Britain became great not because of exploitation of colonies but because of an innate ability to progress. “This colonial thinking persists”, says Maya Good fellow in an opinion piece in *The Guardian*, “the 'backward' became the 'underdeveloped', while the lives and knowledge of some are still considered more important than others. Four billion people are not poor because of some

unhappy accident or an inherent failing; legacies of colonialism, extractive capitalist economies and racialised hierarchies of power produce poverty” (Put our colonial history on the curriculum – then we'll understand who we really are). Jacob Rees Mogg, British politician, noted on Nick Ferrari's LBC show that the British colonial history had some “good bits” that were “really wonderful”. To claim that the empire had “good bits” is to deny that the empire was about the subjugation and exploitation of millions of people. As Koram and Nisancioglu put it in *The Empire that Never Was*, “Nostalgia and amnesia for empire are therefore two sides of the same nationalist coin. The fruits of empire — wealth, power, prestige — required for Britain's 'Greatness', continually crash against the desire to disavow and silence the violence behind it”. Priya Satia, Stanford Professor of History, in *Time's Monster: How History makes History*, argues how the British view of the Empire continues to be cloaked in myth because the historians have made it so. James Mill's *History of British India*, published in three volumes in 1817, works on the basic premise that imperialism brought progress. The parliamentary act, 1807, abolishing the slave trade is presented as proof of Britain's commitment to freedom and liberty everywhere and erases its past as the largest slave trader in the eighteenth century. Niall Ferguson wrote in 2002, “In the end, the British sacrificed her Empire to stop the Germans, Japanese and Italians from keeping theirs. Did not that sacrifice alone expunge all the Empire's other sins?” (*Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*).

The novels uncover the central role that the slave trade and exploitative ethics based on ruthless profit seeking play in the making of Britain and its booming economy in the 18th century and how history is repeating itself in the 20th century. The public narrative about Britain's imperial past matters because it is keenly felt to license present injustice. “Our collective amnesia about the legacy of our colonial past is not getting any better,” the writer and broadcaster Afua Hirsch observes in her podcast “We Need to Talk About the British Empire.” She notes that - “We're engulfed in a sense of denial”. As Pauline says to Benson in *Sugar and Rum*, “We should be angry that these things are allowed to happen in Britain in 1988, that people's lives are being wrecked everywhere you look by the unbridled forces of capitalism” (*Sugar and Rum 34*). The consequence of Thatcher's free economic policy is a Britain of “abandoned projects, derelict enterprise, boarded up ambitions and homeless people” (*Sugar and Rum 17*). In *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie calls it “Mrs Torture's Britain”. What has happened to Hogan, one of Benson's Fictioneers in *Sugar and Rum*, has made him a representative figure of the diseased society. He had a well-paid job as an electrical engineer in the shipyards but owing to the “brutal cost cutting of a callous and short sighted government, led by a woman who cannot hear the cries of the oppressed for the rattle of the cash till, the yard is closed down on grounds of an unprofitability, he becomes redundant and can't find another job due to high unemployment rates. He gets into debt, his house is repossessed by the building society, ...” (*Sugar and Rum 20-21*). As Benson says, “it's time the accountants who rule us

looked up from their balance sheets and started counting the human costs” (*Sugar and Rum 21*).

It is a similar indifference to the human cost in the buying and selling of slaves that pains Benson: In the decade 1783-93, Liverpool delivered a total of 303,737 slaves to the West Indies, which did not include those that had died on the way, say three in ten. The figure goes up to half a million. Then there are the deaths inflicted in the process of capture, the deaths through tribal conflict, the lingering deaths caused by misery, diseases, the destruction of the economic bases of life. “The familiar sense of bafflement and wonder came to him, the suffocating sense of the enormity of it. This was just Liverpool, just ten years (*Sugar and Rum 150*). And “worst of all, impossible to resist, attacking him now with the usual horror, was the knowledge that it had never really stopped...” (*Sugar and Rum 151*)

To rewrite or to represent the past in fiction or in history is in both cases to open it up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological (Hutcheon 110). Unsworth's venture into the past does not take place in a vacuum. The past invoked by him addresses itself to the problems of capitalism. Thatcher, to popularise her capitalist ideology, uses a rhetoric of nationalism, or “official nationalism” as Benedict Anderson calls it - “a conscious, self-protective policy which is linked to the preservation of imperial-dynastic interests” (145). While attempting to reinvest African slaves with a history of their own Barry Unsworth is commenting on Thatcher's structural programme which prioritises profit. Thatcher's abolition of the welfare systems and her anti-trade-unionist stance veers towards the reification of human labour and its consequent dehumanisation. Her facade of economic liberalisation to further her own political agenda, is similar to the hypocrisy practised by the British in the 18th century which is demonstrated in these lines from *Sugar and Rum*:

I own I am shocked at the purchase of slaves,
 And fear those who buy them and sell them as knaves,
 What I hear of their hardships, their tortures and groans
 Is almost enough to draw pity from stones.
 I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
 For how could we do without sugar and rum. (94)

“Every representation of the past has specifiable ideological implications” (White 69). Since history is available to us in a textualised form, which ensures certain ideological underpinnings, the grand narratives are to be challenged and delegitimised in favour of 'local history'. This points towards the concept of historical pluralism. This postmodern pluralist view challenges history's claim to truth. Hutcheon notes in *The Politics of Postmodernism*: “what I have been calling postmortem fiction does not aspire to tell the

truth as much as to question whose truth gets told” (91). The constant parallelism between slavery and capitalism, between slaves and the white working class, in the two novels under discussion, shows that Barry Unsworth is not only articulating those strains of the past which have been pushed aside by the dominant discourse but is also critiquing the ideology behind that discourse. The imaginative fusion of past and present horizons shows history as a construct, as 'something made by ourselves'. Thus Unsworth tells not 'the truth', but just one truth among many that lie untold and silenced.

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The Hate We Teach: Partition and The Legacy of Fanaticism

Abstract

Nothing gains greater currency in Modern India than hate. Now, it is almost fashionable to be a bigot and fundamentalist and there is not much that separates mad fanaticism from vicious communalism. In India, the 'New Normal' is blatant bigotry, bare-faced communalism and publicly-aired prejudices, all of which are considered perfectly all right. The new age social media are harnessed to inject hatred and bigoted communalism into Indian society for political gains. Power politics and hatemongering in the name of religion have sown seeds of instability and violence through the constant barrage of communal statements and virulent speeches made by politicians, on the social media, and through the mainstream channels. This has, over the years, created fertile ground for planting falsehood and hatred into people's minds and are the incitements that fuel communal violence to undermine tolerance and democracy. And with each new mob lynching, it seems history is repeating itself. Such horrific incidents have not only spread anxiety and fear amongst people, especially among the minorities, it has also inspired the once fringe groups to commit crimes with impunity, as they did during the Partition. As newly kindled flames of communal violence begin to flare across India, communal fault lines that existed in the subcontinent for ages, and deepened irrevocably during the bloody partition of India in 1947, are now turning India's unemployed and undereducated youths, particularly those susceptible to the monster of communal polarisation unleashed through expansive propaganda machinery and increasingly divisive politics, into its foot soldiers to spread politics of hatred.

It is against this background I read Bhisham Sahni's novel Tamas, one of the most thought-provoking and powerful novels written about the unspeakable horrors of Partition. Although Tamas, like any other partition novel, highlights the violence inherent in human nature to inflict atrocities through planned genocide, gang rape of women, forcible conversion, displacement and loss, it is also a survivor's witness account on how religion or religiosity becomes a dehumanizing force during the partition. The novel is not only about the politics of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) or the Muslim League or Akali Dal or even about the Indian National Congress or the Communist party. It is about the vulnerability of human nature to hate. What concerns me most as an educator and parent is the way in which young children and teenagers are turned into zealous bigots trained to hate and even kill another human being without remorse or

compunction. Such 'educational training' as depicted in the novel, is highly dangerous for society at large especially in the volatile times in which we live when secular values are threatened and debunked on a daily basis by divisive power politics.

Keywords: Partition, Hate, Fanaticism, Tamas (Novel), Children and Youths

Introduction

“Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old, he will not depart from it” --
Proverb 22:6

Nothing gains greater currency in Modern India than hate. Now, it is almost fashionable to be a bigot and fundamentalist and there is not much that separates mad fanaticism from vicious communalism. In India, the 'New Normal' is blatant bigotry, bare-faced communalism and publicly-aired prejudices, all of which are considered to be perfectly alright. The new age social media are harnessed to inject hatred and bigoted communalism into Indian society for political gains. The Internet has now become more a propagator of propaganda with many political parties and their leaders using social networking into an art form of prejudice and hate that encourage fanatical and self-destructive divisions in our society. Power politics and hate mongering in the name of religion have sown seeds of instability and violence through the constant barrage of communal statements and virulent speeches made by politicians, on the social media, and through the mainstream channels. This has over the years created fertile ground for planting falsehood and hatred into people's minds and are the incitements that fuel communal violence to undermine tolerance and democracy.

It is certainly not prudent to invite trouble in such corrosive times of rising militant nationalism advocated by divisive political forces that have grown exponentially over the years when even an innocuous comment can lead to a spew of hate rhetoric on the digital social media or to something even worse. Today's reality is the proliferation of mind-sets that feeds on a compulsion to destroy other beings who do not share the same beliefs. But with each new mob lynching, it seems history is repeating itself. Such horrific incidents have not only spread anxiety and fear amongst people, especially among the minorities, it has also inspired the once fringe groups to commit crimes with impunity, as they did during the Partition. As newly kindled flames of communal violence begin to flare across India, communal fault lines that existed in the subcontinent for ages, and deepened irrevocably during the bloody partition of India in 1947 are now turning India's unemployed and undereducated youths, particularly those susceptible to the monster of communal polarisation unleashed through expansive propaganda machinery and increasingly divisive politics, into its foot soldiers to spread politics of hatred.

Hate rhetoric are irrational and dangerous to civil society. During partition such hate ideologies gained momentum and entered local politics with each political party having their own ideal of nationhood. Isolated shootings, stabbings, and massacres based on religion began making the news, spreading fear, distrust, and anger. Mass communal violence broke out during the transition to democracy and the resulting power grab and land grabby individuals looking to gain local economic and political power. As news of British departure and the formation of India and Pakistan spread, the violence had spread beyond fringe groups and gangsters to groups of young men across villages and towns. From the oral histories we get to know that the culprits of those initial events were almost always fanatical individuals or groups aligned with right-wing religious ideologies. Fringe elements were aroused by political hate rhetoric and their criminal acts victimized all of humanity, irrespective of religion, in those regions. It is against this background I read Bhisham Sahni's novel *Tamas*, one of the most thought-provoking and powerful novels written about the unspeakable horrors of Partition.

One of the greatest discourses of the 21st century, undoubtedly, is that on fanaticism and intolerance. Fanaticism has fuelled many of the conflicts of the twentieth century and is a universal phenomenon that can manifest itself in almost every sphere of human activity. Although many expressions of fanaticism are negative and destructive, some can be almost neutral or even positive. As a destructive force, fanaticism is gaining power and legitimacy. Some countries are already dominated by fanaticism. We will be helpless to deal with rising fanaticism if we fail to understand its political, economic, religious and psychological roots. Fanaticism is a particular mindset and behavioural trait that is born out of hatred for the enemies and is not limited to the world of religion or politics but it certainly is a threat to democracy and peaceful co-existence. In recent times, the label “fanaticism” is increasingly attached to the perceived threat posed by religious fundamentalism.

The terms fanaticism and fanatic have a historical etymology. In ancient times it was used as a synonym for superstitious raving and comes from a Latin adverb that meant of being in a frenzy, ecstatic, raging, furious, excessive enthusiasm morfanatical. Although there are many expressions of fanaticism not every kind of fanaticism is dangerous to society, some can be almost neutral or even positive. An understanding of its traits will help to recognize those tendencies which can lead to physical or mental violence and brutality. Fanaticism often begins with a sudden, dramatic shift in world-view, often due to an overwhelmingly disturbing experience that is not readily explainable using “ordinary” or familiar frameworks. Fanaticism occurs when people get exposure to a fanatic ideology (there are many religious and political philosophies that lend themselves easily to this kind of mindset) and usually involves a personal connection to a charismatic leader who appears to embody the “purity” promised by the ideology. But at the same time, Fanaticism requires the internalization of information control-the fanatic's new

ideology and personal allegiances must be strengthened and reinforced through the demand to be ever-vigilant against “wrong” thinking, to deny and denigrate information from “outside” sources, and to confess any and all doubts and questioning of one's faith.

Throughout human history there have been fanatics eager to pursue their religious, political or personal agendas. Webster describes a fanatic as “a person with an extreme and uncritical enthusiasm or zeal, as in religion or politics”. But many people are devoted to a certain religion, ideology or political system without being fanatics. There is even a popular usage that one man's fanatic is another man's freedom fighter (Hughes 83). However, in current usage, it more often describes possession by a cause or belief system—religious, nationalist, racist, political, or ideological. The English philosopher John Locke understood the term fanatic as someone who is into learning and this is also one main meaning of the term today. Perkinson sees fanatics as dogmatic people who avoid critical thinking and whose theories, ideology and proposed solutions are absolutely right in their own eyes. Fanatics utilize “us vs. them” language to divide the world in a polarized manner. In India, the best example is the Hindu-Muslim divide that began in the past with the conquest of the Hindu majority nation India or Bharat by the Muslim conquerors in medieval times. The animosity between the two communities that began with loss of privileges in the Royal court, forcible conversion and other economic and social factors continued during the British rule in India. Britain with its policy of 'Divide and Rule' encouraged the fraction between the Hindus and Muslims by siding with one or the other dissenting community when and where it was to their advantage. This deeply entrenched animosity continues unabated even today.

Fanaticism can not only endanger democracy; it can also endanger the smooth functioning of civil society. Democracy means a plurality of opinions that indicates the need for dialogue. Calhoun states that a fanatic abandons all qualities that is intrinsic to democracy. According to Colas, fanaticism opposes civil society because the latter supports tolerance, the free market and freedom of thought. He argues that totalitarianism that hates civil society can be seen as a modern form of fanaticism. However, a fanatic is more than just a narrow-minded and dogmatic person even though they will zealously and by all means impose their convictions on others and will try to subject everyone to their truth, be it through religious or political ideology as is now happening in India. Fanatics are so entrenched in their ideology that they, ironically, regard other fanatics with suspicion and are quite ready to assault each other. If they do not succeed with verbal methods then violence and killing is used. By killing those who have different opinions the possibility for dialogue and debate is eliminated and fear is sown.

To understand the mindset of fanatics, one should closely examine their propaganda. For a fanatic, ideological fervour remains constant. The religious or political fanatic needs to win others over to his faith or ideology and to change the world according to his ideals and will not hesitate in using extreme measures. Political fanaticism is similar in

nature to its religious counterpart, even if here its basic ideologies are rather secular or quasi-religious.

Religion is a major source of potential conflict in the contemporary world. In India the main cause for the rise of fanaticism is religious intolerance, political turmoil and societal instability. Religious fanaticism is defined by blind faith, the persecution of dissents and the absence of reality. It also means uncritical zeal or with an obsessive enthusiasm related to one's own, or one's groups devotion to a religion. Religion plays a prominent role in the processes of hostile 'Othering' and the ensuing violence. In India, the phenomenon of violence resulting from a "community-based perspective" has become so familiar since Partition that it has its own name, 'communal violence', which in public discourse is commonly used to describe, "violence between people belonging to different religiously denominations." The threat to socio-economic interests from competing social forces leads to political mobilisation, with religion being used as a pretext. For instance, the recent mob lynching in certain parts of North India. In the last few centuries, fanatic nationalist and political ideologies have added to fanatic religion as a cause of war and terrorism. The French Revolution proved that secular fanaticism could be as deadly as religious fanaticism. But religion in itself is neither fanatic nor communal.

Religious fanaticism and communalism are two different things although both are used interchangeably. The aspiration to dominate 'others' took concrete form during the colonial period but it has been spreading through the years bringing new groups and new issues into its ambit, with communities drawing contentious boundaries differentiating others, adding sources of "marginalisation", selectively constructing histories, recalling "humiliations", and "defeats", remembering "violent times" and unleashing all kinds of violence. In India communalism, with its propensity to dominate others perceived as real threats, is used in a negative or condemnatory sense and is defined as "secular conflicts between two religious' communities". One could say communalism nurtures a politics of hatred for an identified "other"- "Hindus" in the case of Muslim communalism, and "Muslims" in the case of Hindu communalism. This hatred feeds a politics of violence. Communalism, then, is a particular kind of politicization of religious identity, an ideology that seeks to promote conflict between religious communities. Partition is an example for this.

Two factors responsible for the rise of communalism in India are: policy of 'divide and rule' by the British and the competition for political power between Hindu and Muslim elite. Communal conflicts are distinct from religious conflicts. For instance, the biggest communal controversy during the freedom struggle was the share in power between Hindu and Muslim elites. In post-partition period, all communal controversies, were secular in nature, either for seeking vote or due to economic competition. Thus, religion per se was not responsible for communalism in India as has often been misunderstood. Since religion has a strong appeal among the mass, it was used as an instrument for

political gain by both communities. But in a multi-religious country like India, any attempt to see a religious community as a nation would mean sowing the seeds of antagonism against some other religion/s. (for instance, the attempts to create a new Hindu Rashtra).

Fundamentalism is another concept that usually has a religious connotation. It indicates unwavering attachment to a set of irreducible beliefs, specific scriptures, dogmas, or ideologies, and a strong sense of the importance of maintaining ingroup and outgroup distinctions, leading to an emphasis on purity and the desire to return to a previous ideal from which, its advocates believe, members have strayed. The distinction between fanaticism and fundamentalism is that in the case of fanaticism, fanatical ideas are not always derived from scripture but to one's strongly held beliefs. A fundamentalist is not necessarily fanatical even if some fundamentalists can act very fanatically. But there is a meeting point between religious fundamentalism and religious fanaticism, that is, the scripture.

Another related term is Nationalism. George Orwell refers to Nationalism as the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests. But Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism, which means devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, not for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality. Most religious ideologies are all of them objects of passionate nationalistic feeling. A Nationalist sees history, especially contemporary history, as the endless rise and decline of great power units, and every event that happens seems to him a demonstration that his own side is on the up-grade and some hated rival is on the down-grade. For instance, Hindu Nationalists vs Muslim Nationalists. Every nationalist is haunted by the belief that the past can be altered. It is claimed that much of the propagandist writings of our times are those where material facts are suppressed, dates altered, quotations removed from their context and doctored so as to change their meaning. The primary aim of such propaganda is, of course, to influence contemporary opinion, and those who attempt to rewrite history probably do believe that their own version was what happened and hence feel justified in rearranging the records accordingly.

Majority of the Indians believe in the secular and non-religious concept of nationalism. Although notions about nationalism have now changed, unfortunately, in India, Nationalism, as a movement, was dominated by virulent religious ideologies. While religion or religion-based ideologies are not necessarily related to communalism, in Indian context, during British rule and also after the Britishers left, it led to the

producing of dangerous communal passions that eventually resulted in the holocaust of 1947. Since the late 1990s, the Hindutva ideology has gained immense support and there has been a severe attack on the Gandhi-Nehru secular vision of the nation. The Hindutva brand of new nationalism that has currency today, supports Golwalkar's idea of Muslims as the internal enemy and believe that those who support them are anti-national as is evident in the massacres of 1984 in Delhi or in 2002 in Gujarat. If Bhagat Singh and Subhash Chandra Bose were in favour of violence as a tool to attain freedom, then Gandhi, Nehru and Patel always persisted in the path of non-violence. If Bal Gangadhar Tilak used religion to mobilise Indian masses, then Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo believed that the country needed a religious renaissance for the regeneration of India in general and the Hindus in particular. Although Swami Vivekananda did say that Hinduism was the mother of all religions, in his idea of Hinduism and nationalism, there was no place for hate. Vivekananda embraced all religions, unlike Golwalkar and Savarkar.

All these terminologies on Fanaticism, communalism and nationalism gain coherence when we talk about it in the context of Partition. Partition is central to our idea of nationhood and identity. From a postcolonial perspective, partition is a sensitive and potentially explosive subject that will always evoke strong emotions. India's struggle for freedom from British colonial rule was achieved at a great price. British India was partitioned into Hindu majority India and Muslim majority Pakistan by splitting the province of Punjab and Bengal (West Punjab and East Bengal). Many claim that there hasn't been a more horrifying and tragic chapter in the history of our nation. Partition of India was witness to the greatest mass migration with millions of refugees uprooted from their homeland; shattered, penniless, homeless, and jobless in alien lands-in addition to the physical and emotional trauma of massive permanent displacement and loss of homeland. The religious frenzy and bigotry resulting in unprecedented violence, carnage, genocide /holocaust, gang rape of women are traumatic events that remain painfully etched in the regional consciousness of the people on either side of the border. But no other people forget their historical scars and trauma as readily as Indians do. This is primarily due to the fact that there has been a collective amnesia with regard to the brutality of Partition as evident from communal violence across India in recent times.

Bhisham Sahni's novel *Tamas* appeared in 1974 and was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award in 1975. It was later translated into English. For Bhisham Sahni, the years around the Partition were empty of meaning, of logic, and purpose. They were years of *tamas*, of 'blank darkness'. Unlike many other partition novels, a sense of nostalgia is absent in *Tamas*. Sahni wrote *Tamas* after witnessing the Bombay riots. He felt the conditions which caused the riots in 1947 were alive even in the present. The partition should have put an end to the riots but it did not. People in power have a vested interest in holding on to that power of causing unrest and friction between communities. The novel

takes us to a historical past and depicts the communal riots at Rawalpindi and surrounding areas that occurred in the first week of March 1947, in the wake of partition and tells of the human tragedy and trauma that has left lasting damage to the Indian psyche. According to Sigmund Freud, trauma creates bodily wounds that affect the mind. Freud and Breuer characterized the memory of the psychic trauma as “a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work” (6), stemming from any unspeakable or in assimilable experience. Friedrich Nietzsche in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) states that, 'Only that which does not cease to hurt remains in memory.' (3). It is ironic that Indians, on one hand, seem to forget the trauma of partition and on the other hand are quick to kindle the flames of communal violence that had eventually led to the Partition of India.

Govind Nihalani, in the “Introduction” to the novel *Tamas*, states: “A traumatic historical event usually finds the artistic/ literary response twice. Once, during the event or immediately following it and again after a lapse of time, when the event has found its corner in the collective memory of the generation that witnessed it. The initial response tends to be emotionally intense and personal in character, even melodramatic. On the other hand, when the event is reflected upon with emotional detachment and objectivity, a clearer pattern of the various forces that shaped it is likely to emerge. *Tamas* is the reflective response to the partition of India...” This turbulent period of intense turmoil with unprecedented communal violence provoked by the callous manipulation of religious sentiments of different communities, either as victims or as the aggressors, by people who chose to use religion as a weapon to achieve political objectives. This has been heightened by Bisham Sahni's commitment to secularism and sensitivity to human sufferings in the form of *Tamas*, twenty-three years after the socio-psychological trauma of partition.

The novel *Tamas* is not only about the politics of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) or the Muslim League or Akali Dal or even about the Indian National Congress or the Communist party. It is about the vulnerability of human nature to hate. Though small in size, the novel 'Tamas' has a central theme of communalism at its core. As an anatomy of the partition, *Tamas* shows how communal violence is generated by fundamentalists and extremists in both communities, and how innocent persons are duped into serving the ulterior motives of such people. The novel provides an insight into the contradictions of human nature, the complexities of a fanatic mind, the subversive nature of communal politics, the terror of religious fundamentalism, the undercurrent of faith and hope in the midst of the most violent of tragedies and it tries to impress upon its readers on the futility of communal thinking and its destructive potential, which can destroy human life and society.

Tamas, like any other partition novel, highlights the violence inherent in human nature to inflict atrocities through planned genocide, gang rape of women, forcible conversion,

displacement and loss. Women jump into wells to safe guard their honour. And many young mothers do it along with their children. Religion is used to build up a strong sense of duty to uphold its honour by taking revenge for injuries, real or imaginary, present or past: against 'Turks', 'Kafirs' and 'Sikhras', as is evident in the scenes at the Sikh Gurudwara (Chapter 15). It manifests itself in intense prayer, chanting, appeals to history and past memory. When they emerge to fight each other, it is not their own towns- folk they are battling against but their traditional enemies, the 'Turks' each faced “three hundred years ago” (161). And at the back of the Gurudwara, in the house of Sheikh Ghulam Rasool, the Muslims “.... had overnight turned into crusaders and were preparing to earn merit by killing the infidels.” (163)

Tamas is also a survivor's witness account on how religion or religiosity becomes a dehumanizing force during the partition and how hate takes over otherwise “nice” and sensitive people. Shahnawaz, who has rescued and sheltered his friend Raghunath and his wife, is not free from anti-Hindu hate. Cruelty is not an extraordinary emotion. It comes naturally to us. It is Milkhi, the servant of Raghunath who falls victim to this hatred. His friendship with Raghunath is no assurance of empathy and kindness from him for other Hindus. So, when the leaders of communal parties flaunt their proximity with people from other religions or even when they choose their life partner from the enemy-religion, it does not cure them of their communal politics. The novelists knew that humanity is frail and once you allow hatred to take centre stage, it disables goodness for a very long time. It is, therefore, important to have the ability to recognize it and keep warning people against it.

Conversion to Islam was frequently offered as the price for safety and if the victim exhibited any reluctance or religious scruples, they were subjected to duress and torture. Religion was reduced merely to a package of certain physical marks or symbols during partition. The novel (Chapter 17) raises this issue with a tinge of irony and satire and also the naked portrayal of violence against the other. For example, Iqbal Singh, son of Harnam Singh, is seen as an enemy of the Muslims and is addressed as 'Sikhra', 'Karar' and 'Bastard'. Hate and animosity cannot so easily change into love or sympathy (190) but after Iqbal Singh recites the Kalma, the same people embrace him with open arms. He was no longer an 'enemy', the 'other', but a brother now. He is now Iqbal Ahmed. Before nightfall all signs of Iqbal Singh's Sikhism had been carefully obliterated. (192) A mere change of marks had brought about the transformation. Now he was no longer an enemy but a 'friend' and a 'believer'.

After all the riots, bloodshed and carnage, certain comments made by the Deputy Commissioner, Richard to his wife Liza sticks in mind especially when we see history repeat itself in the name of religion in recent times. Richard tells how the people in the Indian subcontinent did not know their own history. He says, “They belong to the same stock...The first lot came from Central Asia. And those that followed after a lapse of

many centuries were also from the same stock. Their origins, so as to speak, were the same. The first bunch were known as the Aryans...The others who were known as Mussalmans... their roots were the same". (36) When Liza asks if the people were not aware of this fact. Richard replies, "They know nothing...They only know what we tell them." (37)

Later when he tells her that, "There's tension between the Hindus and the Muslims. Trouble can flare up any time. is mounting." (37) Liza asks if they would fight against each other because she was informed that they were fighting against the English. He replies, "They fight against one another in the name of religion and they fight against us in the name of their country." (42) She asks him why he does not prevent it since they originally belonged to the same stock and are one nation at heart. He replies, "...rulers don't look for similarities among the ruled. They are only interested in finding out what can keep them apart."(42). He then tells her, "When the people fight among themselves the ruler is safe." (45).

Often history is conveyed and retold by men about men. Historians who dealt with Partition and related problems were seldom concerned about the trauma of women and children. When we think of India's partition, we think of all the women who were raped, kidnapped or murdered, the multitude of people who lost their lives due to the violence and of the trains full of dead bodies that drove into stations in both India and Pakistan. Honour and purity being the two key factors taken into regard by the religious groups for mass killings. Women and children were killed by men in their families if they could not be shifted to safer places. The former was killed out of the fear of getting raped or abducted, whereas the latter was killed in fear of getting converted. In many villages the women jumped into the wells along with their children in order to avoid getting raped or abducted. These women are considered martyrs as they killed themselves in order to protect their honour. While these tragedies were horrific and need to be remembered, we should also spend some time thinking about how Partition impacted children.

Urvashi Butalia in *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, says that "as subjects of history children are difficult to deal with" (249). Children's minds are vulnerable and impressionable, and seeing such violence and suffering at such close quarters can have a lasting impact on them. Most of the children were either killed, left behind, or deserted. Many such girls as they grew up turned into professions such as prostitution and domestic work. Often these children reached a stage where they lost all hope and considered themselves as unwanted people. Many writers of partition literature have written about the horrific incidents through the eye of its child narrators. However very few have mentioned about the child characters per se. The focus of my study is on a child character in the novel *Tamas*, who is trained to become a fanatic.

What concerns me most as an educator and parent is the way in which young children and teenagers are turned into zealous bigots trained to hate and even kill another human

being without remorse or compunction. Perkinson noticed that fanatical thinking can be cultivated even by the educational system if it offers largely pre-conceived answers and solutions to the questions and problems of humanity. Such education may produce people who are dogmatic, obscurantist, and authoritarian. So in education it is highly imperative to develop critical thinking. According to Harmon, fanaticism can also be induced by interest toward exciting “action”. He says that fanatical attraction to activity at the expense of thought can have great appeal to persons of certain types, including the nihilistic, the immature and the young. It is the young who are fascinated by drama and action. Armies, political parties know about “catching them young”.

The novel shows how an innocent boy, Ranvir is seduced to violence through steady indoctrination to create strong communal loyalties. The recruitment and armament of these private armies of Hindu boys in the locality continue unabated under Master Devbrat, the instructor of the gymnasium cum wrestling pit, who wore Khaki shorts and heavy black boots and spoke in a voice like thunder. He has eight very young Hindu boys to whom he instructs the use of lathis to defend and the use of knife to kill their enemies, the Muslims. While they were still very young, Master Devbrat would fill the minds of these young Hindu boys with stories of heroes whose heroism was chiefly displayed in resistance to Muslim invaders: Shivaji, Rana Pratap etc. Ranvir, the fifteen year old son of Lala Lakshmi Narain, a prominent businessman of the city who is also the President of the Committee and a fundamentalist, is singled out by Master Devbrat for the test which will initiate him into this secret group.

Young Ranvir eyes had not lost their child-like curiosity. They even lacked the earnestness so necessary to undergo the supreme test which would enable him to be part of the fold. But in place of earnestness, he had a sense of bravado, a blind determination to do or die at the behest of his mentor, the fanatic Devbrat (62). Ranvir is held spellbound by Masterji's repeated talk of the marvel of yogic power which he is told can achieve the impossible. Master Devbrat tells him repeatedly that the Muslims are 'unclean' and polluted people and so Ranvir start to look at all Muslims, including his Muslim neighbours as the 'enemy' who should be killed. After completing rapid and intensive courses, the young troop, like Ranvir and Inder are send to battle with the objective of killing Muslims. Ranvir vizualised himself in the role of Shivaji.

After the initiation ceremony, we are told of the great change that takes place in Ranvir. Killing the hen, unflinchingly, had filled him with great self-confidence. He had proved to be the cleverest, smartest and the most dependable member of the squad. He now talked in an over-confident, bragging tone and walked with a swagger. He even threatens to 'murder' the confectioner (a Hindu) who resists him from taking the cauldron from his shop (to pour boiling oil on their enemies). Ranvir reflects that he could have killed the man with no compunction. It would be quite easy to plunge a knife into a man's body. (69) He now has a small band of followers who address him as 'sardar'. The four warriors in his

squad-Inder, Manohar, Shambhu and Dharamdev, their minds filled with stories of gallant Rajput's wait impatiently for action. They wanted to pounce on their enemies, the Muslims, although they are also slightly scared. At the time of riot, Ranvir is with his gang of youths planning to take revenge against the Muslims for the killing of Hindus. It is hinted that it was Ranvir and his gang who might have set fire in the market during the riot.

Ranvir doesn't come home during the riots and his parents are frantic with worry as he is 'volatile by nature and prone to acting thoughtlessly' (111). Lala Lakshmi Narain is sure that Ranvir had gone to the grain market and started something. He blames himself for forcing his son to be a member of the youth squad and doing community service which now had become an obsession with him. He says, "A boy who does not care for his parents-of what good can he be to the community?". (112) His wife too berates him by saying, "Didn't I tell you that there was no need to make a brave Arya out of him? This is the time for him to study, eat and have some fun... You drove him out every day to learn drill, handle the lathi and God knows what else" (113). But Lalaji defends himself by retorting, "What's wrong if he has joined the Youth squad? One must serve one's country and the community" (113).

Meanwhile, Master Devbrat manages to send word to Lakshmi Narain that the boy was safe with him. After the riots subsided and normalcy returned, we find Lakshmi Narain trying to buy herbal medicine for his son Ranvir from a Muslim healer Hayat Baksh, who is also the local leader of the Muslim League. Ranvir had hurt himself when he stumbled over a drain and sprained his foot. Hayat Baksh tells Lakshmi Narain that there were rumours of Ranvir having joined some fundamentalist organisation and advises him to send him away before he fell foul with the police. Although Lakshmi Narain denies it, he secretly approved Hayat Baksh's suggestion and decides to send his son away for some time. In Tamas, there is a horrific scene of how Ranvir's follower, Inder, whom he had singled out from his squad, kills an innocent man who was a Muslim. Ranvir faithfully repeats to Inder whatever he had learnt from his mentor, Master Devbrat regarding how to kill their enemy using a long-handled knife. On that fatal day, hiding behind the door and watching the street the Ranvir's squad wait for their kill.

When a portly old Muslim hawker who deals in perfumes comes along Inder walks down the street beside him. This stranger carried a heavy bag and hence could neither flee nor protect himself. And he looked so tired. Ranvir's eyes met Inder and he signalled his decision. Inder leapt out of the house (141). The man talks politely to Inder and is much concerned about his safety. The street is empty because of the fear of a riot. He tells the boy that he should go home because the times are bad and that his parents would be worried. Yet the boy himself seems to be living in a world of murderous fantasies. Inder was very composed and waited calmly for the right moment to attack, his hands firmly gripping the knife in his pocket. The boy is clearly excited and his action is clearly pathological. He is not fighting a war. But he thinks he is performing a deed which is

heroic and patriotic. He plunges the knife into the man's belly swiftly and deeply as he had been taught (143) and runs away leaving the man to die. The reader is left to ponder whether the boys-Ranvir and Inder, themselves should not be viewed as victims.

Conclusion

It is easy to be communal but difficult to be secular. India is set to be the world's youngest country, with almost 44 percent of its population under the age of 25. A large number of these young people are unemployed or underemployed. Many are influenced by the hate rhetoric unleashed by unscrupulous politicians for their political gain. In India, religion plays a decisive role in Indian politics, where fear and intolerance are two powerful weapons used to terrorise people who are seen as the 'other'. Under the right conditions, most of us can become susceptible to fanatical ideologies. The fanatic is not always somebody else; he or she lives potentially, in all of us. That is why, in a democracy, it is so important to not only tolerate, but also welcome dissent and debate. To prevent fanaticism the way forward is through democracy, education, and dissemination of right information, with an understanding that all societies are pluralistic. Living in a multi-cultural, multi-religious nation, we must learn to respect others.

If children don't learn from their parents, they will learn from someone else. The 'educational training' as depicted in the novel, is highly dangerous for society at large especially in the volatile times in which we live when secular values are threatened and debunked on a daily basis by divisive power politics. As educators, and parents, we can choose between teaching tolerance, acceptance, and understanding, or promoting intolerance and hate toward those different from ourselves. The novel *Tamas* is more than a work of a literature. It is a grim reminder of the immense tragedy, that awaits us whenever the religious sentiments of communities are manipulated to achieve political objectives. It is a prophetic warning against the use of religion as a weapon to gain and perpetuate political power. We must learn from history. Bhisham Sahni nudges his readers towards reflection. He knows that only an education in reflection is a guarantee against violence. That is what he strived for through this novel.

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Self Reflections: Dynamics of Self and Aesthetics in Consumerist Turn

Abstract

The paper is an attempt to trace the paradigm of self as a cultural construct and how it is related to the concept of aesthetics in various contexts. Changes in ethical values and moral concerns influence definitions of cultural self and its connection to aesthetics. The paper attempts to comment on how the consumerist turn of culture subverts traditional ethical values, and by saturating the space for aesthetic choices with significations creates schizophrenic tendencies in cultural self.

Keywords: Self, Culture, Cultural self, Consumerism, Schizophrenia

The term self appears in day to day transactions with a philosophical aura, claiming its kinship with soul, and thereby retreats into a transcendental plane, sending all forms of everyday life back to their ephemerality. In psychology, the term points to a humanistic turn in the middle of the twentieth century that brought back the flexibility of human relationships to the discourse ruined by behaviourism. Approaching the term 'self' as a part of the psychological understanding will not be useful to probe its interactive environment and will be limited to ontological questions regarding the mind. So, it is to be dealt within philosophy relocating it in day to day transactional environment to avoid the debilitating effect of attributed sanctity. Now the term 'self' is found surfacing in the exceedingly materialistic circumstances, with traces of the wear and tear of everyday life. The long history of the evolution of the term 'self' from theological to commercial is complex.

The self of an individual in its social role is expressed through choices. There is enforcement of choices through religious and moral principles to be expressively capable for belonging to an established pattern of the society. The individual is compelled to choose what is morally good. One of the categories is his appreciation of beauty with an accepted equation – 'what is beautiful is good'. Due to this correlation between beauty and morality, aesthetic choice is invariably a moral one and no more individualistic. Self is, thus, distanced from the individual and just another abstract principle embedded in the pattern of modernity. According to Anthony Giddens, "On the level of the self, a fundamental component of day to day activity is simply that of choice" (80). What is named 'self' here is far away from the romantic embodiment of inexpressive angst or the philosophical term used to indicate the theistic 'soul' or the unique spirit of an individual. The self, here, is fully exposed to all material sides of life and moulded by the very

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essence of it.

The aesthetic choices made by an individual are invariably bound by social preferences. In the introduction to *On Beauty* Umberto Eco says:

'Beautiful'- together with 'graceful' and 'pretty' or 'sublime', 'marvellous', 'superb' and similar expressions- is an adjective that we often employ to indicate something that we like. In this sense, it seems that what is beautiful is the same as what is good and in fact in various historical periods there was a close link between the Beautiful and the Good.(8)

The 'beautiful' is also thus bound by morality network which means aesthetic choices become moral choices too. "For a society's culture constitute a system, such that there is an inevitable connection between ideas concerning the nature and content of ideas and the everyday conduct of individuals, especially between the ideas of the good and actors' belief that their conduct is justifiable"(Campbell13). So it is a moral obligation of an individual to show the community that he is fit for being accepted as morally right by making choices in line with aesthetic principles. The problem lies in the 'acceptance of a certain set of rules' measuring the degree of aesthetic acceptance of an object, idea or concept in society. In a highly religious society like that of Puritan England or Islamic Arabia morality lies evidently under, written rules, of religion. In such a society every choice made by an individual in social life-even economic transactions-are bound by these rules. Weber explains how Puritanism interprets ascetic life in a way to protect economic profit made by its members:

Christian asceticism, at first fleeing from the world into solitude, had already ruled the world which it had renounced from the monastery and through the Church. But it had, on the whole, left the naturally spontaneous character of daily life in the world untouched. Now it strode into the market-place of life, slammed the door of the monastery behind it, and undertook to penetrate just that daily routine of life with its methodicalness, to fashion it into a life in the world, but neither of nor for this world. (101)

Wealth is bad only if the intention of its acquisition is morally bad (Weber108). According to Charles Taylor, "Selfhood and the good, or in another way selfhood and morality, turn out to be inextricably intertwined themes"(3). Taylor's statement is to be read with theological apprehensions of soul and 'higher civilizations' in the west. But this connection between morality, good, beautiful and self is carried on to the present hedonism of the market. In other words, it is the same theological notions that helped to form the roots of ethical discourse remain as a forceful factor in choices of life. The play of cultural values like good and bad or beauty and ugliness influence the choices of the

individual and thereby intimate the pattern of social interaction. The known 'expressed self' may not be authentic and voluntary decisions since the freedom of choice does not always mean the exercise of that freedom. What happens here is an unwilling suspension of control of one's self by the individual and ensuing transformation of self as a social experience. This transformed self floats in the cultural heaven of free choices to shower back to the realm of individual experience of the culture to strengthen apprehensions of the individual about his choices of good or that of beautiful. An objective view of self - considering it as a projection through choices made by the individual in day to day life - brings the term ultimately to the play of choices in a cultural environment. The ontological principle that governs his/her choices is manipulated by an invisible power network. The vague poetic interpretation of self, which made a disinterested and enlightening engagement with the term, also thus comes under secular scrutiny by imagining it in a network of power and interpellation. Therefore, the self is not limited to an individual's purview of interpretations of the world. It is invariably a cultural construct and to a great extent moulded by aesthetics.

The cultural dynamics has been altered by the consumerist paradigm in 20th century. Consequently, underlying values of cultural choices of the individual also underwent great changes in their structure. New patterns of ethical and aesthetic bonds emerged from the chaotic social structure ensued by economic changes. A global consumer culture normalised hedonistic lifestyle despite cultural variations. In a culture of consumption, artificial needs are created to control the choices of the individual and create a lifestyle. According to Giddens, "A lifestyle can be defined as a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity"(81). He elaborates on lifestyle:

The backdrop here is the existential terrain of late modern life. In a post-traditional social universe, reflexively organised, permeated by abstract systems, and in which the reordering of time and space realigns the local with the global, the self undergoes massive change. Therapy, including self-therapy, both expresses that change and provides programmes of realising it in the form of self-actualisation. On the level of the self, a fundamental component of day-to-day activity is simply that of choice. No culture eliminates choice altogether in day-to-day affairs, and all traditions are effectively choices among an indefinite range of possible behaviour patterns. Yet, by definition, tradition or established habit orders life within relatively set channels. Modernity confronts the individual with a complex diversity of choices and, because it is non-foundational, at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected.(81)

Consumer culture questions essentialist interpretations of self by bringing life into the hedonistic tangents of the market deleting the ethical dilemmas of moralistic tradition. "It is the use of goods to express one's social identity and to distinguish oneself from others, in a world in which traditional social bonds and class boundaries are weakening, which has been the proper field of sociological consumption studies" (Gronow5). In this setting of consumerist culture, the self is experienced only as a reflection of activities chosen from a list of what is offered by the market. Here the choice is not a result of agency and will. What is altered is the pattern of surveillance in which the ethical- beautiful bond is replaced by an industrial aesthetics dissociated from morality and closely associated with the principle of money.

In the present world where economic life is foregrounded the individual feels isolated and antagonistic (Eagleton23):

In economic life, individuals are structurally isolated and antagonistic; at the political level, there would seem nothing but abstract rights to link one subject to the other. This is one reason why the 'aesthetic' realm of sentiments, affections and spontaneous bodily habits, comes to assume the significance it does. Custom, piety, intuition and opinion must now cohere an otherwise abstract, atomised social order.(23)

The aesthetic thus evolves into a canon and an integral element that forms the self of the consumer. In this way, the moral and aesthetic apprehensions are formative factors that create a web of mutual interactions and attract all the members of that social unit to choose to be in the same spot to experience that same shower where the self is expressed in all its nudity.

Aesthetic experience is a well-known fact and well acknowledged by everyone as a common phenomenon that recurrently endows the life of a person despite his age or perspective. Philosophical explorations of this experience resulted in several theoretical views. The Kantian discourse of aesthetics primarily addresses the experience, as that of pleasure resulting from feeling and imagination about an object:

If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the object by means of the understanding with a view to cognition, but by means of the imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with the understanding) we refer the representation to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgment of taste, therefore, is not a cognitive judgment, and so not logical, but is aesthetic—which means that it is one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective. (Kant 203)

Aesthetic experience is, therefore, a matter of taste, and by distancing itself from the rational, creating a transcendental divide from the ordinary and comprehensible. Terry Eagleton in his *Ideology of Aesthetics* says:

The emergence of aesthetics as a theoretical category is closely bound up with the material process by which cultural production at an early stage of bourgeoisie society, becomes 'autonomous'-autonomous, that is, of various social functions which it has traditionally served. Once artefacts become commodity in the marketplace, they exist for nothing and nobody in particular, and can consequently be rationalized, ideologically speaking, as existing entirely and gloriously for themselves. (8-9)

There are two ways in which the aesthetic encounters may be viewed. One is a conscious choice made to be in the presence of artistic objects. The connection between artistic and aesthetic is a complex channel of discourses on beauty. As far as the categorization is concerned it can be found that tradition, culture and morality have a kind of theological adamancy in separating art from non-art formulations. In recent times such separations have become vague and abnormal since a new form of 'fun ethics' (Gronow³) has developed new paradigms of evaluating the moral content in society. Despite the changed circumstances, for the connoisseur and to a certain extent, to the general public, such a distinction-with cultural and ethnological variations- persists. However, in the presence of a recognized art object, aesthetic experience is not outside the purview of consumerist/ market pattern but the object has been produced with a soul aim of transferring the experience. It has been created and is displayed for the sheer experience of pleasing others. On the other hand, there exists an aesthetic encounter that happens in the everyday life of an individual. In this case, it is an added value to the main function of the object. Choice of such an object by an individual is more than a utilitarian selection but a lifestyle statement too. The concept of style is against the individualistic nature of art because a piece of art produced in a particular style shares a common idea:

By virtue of style, the particularity of the individual work is subjugated to a general law of form that also applies to other works; it is, so to speak, relieved of its absolute autonomy. Because it shares its nature or a part of its design with others it thus points to a common root that lies beyond the individual work- in contrast to the works that grow purely out of themselves, that is, from the mysterious, absolute unity of artistic personality and its uniqueness. (Simmel 64)

What happens in the modernist stylization of life is a flattening of the curve of individuality to serve the socially induced pattern of the market. A style is a form of reproduction by industrial or other means that questions the authority of the original:

One might subsume the eliminated element in the term “aura” and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying: the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. (Benjamin 221)

Here the stylization performs two acts. Firstly it removes the work of art from the path of tradition and secondly questions the originality. The first act rejects historical elitism and thereby makes the work susceptible to the wear and tear of the everyday market. Its connection with morality and ethics is spoiled and a new understanding of the 'beautiful' or 'aesthetically appealing' is generated. Liberating art from its connection with originality establishes a new discourse on creativity and question the disinterested aesthetic without cognition. Ultimately the moral connection of 'the beautiful' is and 'the aesthetic' is either terminated or redefined according to the new consumer ethics of the market.

From the preceding discussions, two significant relationships can be deduced. One is the connection between the self and cultural choices and the other is between those choices and aesthetic experience as a whole. From another angle self and aesthetic experience are connected to cultural choices. Acknowledging the historicity of the cultural choices one can trace its various forms in various stages of economic development. That means patterns of economy necessarily influenced the choices of the individual acting in a cultural environment. However, at least in the west, aesthetic choices gained preference over functionality with the emergence of the bourgeois class in the eighteenth century. Eagleton finds "predominance to individual sensibility", "free circulation of enlightened opinion" and "abstractly equalized status of its socially diverse participants" (32) as the characteristics of the emerging bourgeois society of eighteenth-century Europe:

Aesthetic offers the middle class a superbly versatile model of their political aspirations, exemplifying new forms of autonomy and self-determination, transforming the relations between law and desire, morality and knowledge, recasting the links between individual and totality, and revising social relations on the basis of custom, affection and sympathy. (28)

Law cannot contain the movements of desire within its rigid system. Here aesthetics offers added flexibility and possibility of interpretation. When the space of ethical practices insisted by tradition is being replaced by law (for example care and respect by human rights) the possibility of interpretation is provided by a sense of aesthetics. Thus the aesthetics of bourgeois social structure does not sever its evolutionary connection with morality but reforms it to suit political interpretation of the system for the benefit of

the middle class. The transcendental notion of self as a discourse in the moral plane where pure individual soul engages in secret communication with a divine realm loses its aloofness and gets illuminated by thousands of terrestrial reference lights. The self has to come down to the social plane where beauty is experienced as a shared notion. Though it is a cultural notion, the concept of subjective autonomy still exists protecting it from too much grounding. The idea of good and bad persists to enlighten the discourses of beauty. So the autonomous individual feels a moral compulsion-not theological, but ethical- to move in the direction of good in the name of which beauty is preferred by most of his tribe. This is the moment in which expressed self of an individual get acknowledged by the collusions of moral standards and aesthetic choices. This secret never dies, until aesthetics go under drastic transformations in a capricious economy of the market playing the game of consumerism, to release self from the purview of aesthetics in a situation of cultural choice.

Until the celebration of the consumer begins with postmodernity and consumerism in the late twentieth-century autonomy of the self, formed in connection with aesthetic choices, existed at least as an idea. In the backdrop of consumerism and the market, the quotidian reduction of culture erased the last remaining traces of elitism and sanctity from cultural practices. The self is more of a sort of enforced burden than a choice or selection because there is an uncontrollable inflow of all sorts of aestheticised signs and images into the domain of everyday life. A cascade of choices that claim global style and reach is not at all addressing the individual self, but a cosmopolitan erasure of local and individual marks of modern identity:

One of the first to discuss postmodern social reality in terms of aestheticization, Featherstone (1992;268-70) proposes there are three senses in which we can speak of the aestheticization of everyday life; firstly, it refers to artistic subcultures such as Dada and surrealism which sought to efface the boundary between art and life; secondly, it can refer to the 'project of turning life into work of art' a project which has captivated artists and intellectuals from Baudelaire, Wilde and Bloomsbury group through to Foucault with his notion of an 'aesthetics of existence'; and , thirdly, refer to the 'flow of signs and images which saturate the fabric of everyday life in contemporary societies'. Featherstone therefore sees the first two type of aestheticization – the aestheticization of everyday life amongst the cultural specialists of aesthetic modernism-as part of the 'genealogy of postmodernity'. (Fuente 239)

The first two are phenomenological categorization of sociological tendencies and the third- 'flow of signs and images that saturate'-is a cultural situation. Here, the self, anchored in ethical notions of beauty is erased by thronging significations which results a

vacuum, where possibilities of expression of self through accepting or rejecting the choice of aesthetic experience grounded on moral being, are eliminated. This does not mean that the implied freedom of 'sans choice' is absolute because the instructions are embedded in the very nature of hedonism chosen by the actor itself. According to Campbell, "Voluntarism implies that the actor can choose; that is to say, that the possibility of choice exists. It does not imply that actors will exercise that choice in any particular manner or that they will be free from any powerful constraints or limitations of their choice"(17). Therefore, in this vacuum too, the self is constrained by the threat of getting ousted from the hedonistic tribe informed by rules of the market. Interpellation by the market makes the consumer a subject of hedonism that creates delusion of choice. In the domain of consumerism, every cultural choice is thus is an unconscious act of self-imposed subjectification and liberation is a fantasy. There are numerous factors by which the consumer remains tied to this world of fantasy of liberation and eternal pleasure. Among them, two factors engender a discussion here. One is the threat of getting expelled from the tribe and another one is an awareness of probable, instant satisfaction of desires offered by the system. The system reinvents parallel discourses of epistemology in terms of the ephemerality of life to intensify this fantasy. Suddenly the experience of this fantasy becomes existential in nature and braces the self to direct choices and in turn fed by them. This merry go round never ends.

Vekitesh and Meamber in their study of the consumer as an aesthetic subject say, "Our study shows that aesthetic experiences serve to foster the constitution of consumer identities. The relation of aesthetic experiences to the self was apparent in the stories consumers shared about themselves and the construction of meaning in their lives" (63). In other words, the loneliness of the consumer is a delusional experience. His self is also a result of his embedded nature in the social pattern. The functioning of this pattern may vary from the former centuries because of the inevitable changes in the economic patterns. In the present, as Maffesoli argues, what happens is not elimination but a refashioning of the pattern of social integrity. Due to our persistent chase of dehumanization, the existence of this network has been forgotten(72). But the principle of operation of these ties has changed and is better understood in terms of aesthetics:

But although it continues to function, its steamroller effect no longer has the same impact it once did. Thus, in order to seize the *shared sentiments and experiences* at work in various social situations and attitudes of today, it is a good idea to take a different tack: the aesthetic angle seems to me to be the least bad. By aesthetics, I mean the etymological sense of the word, as the common faculty of feeling, of experiencing. (75)

Therefore self remains as a shared attitude expressed in situations through various cultural choices. The vector that connects these choices is now aesthetics which results in

a preference for style over functionality. Preference of style is also reflective of a desire for belonging to a group and a declaration of solidarity. Here the individual sense of self is in continuous conflict with the sense of belongingness because belongingness reminds oneself about tradition and predefined modes of behaviour that deployed in ethics. But the conventional ethics is just a dysfunctional legendary practice retold in representations. One of the main characteristics of consumerism is the replacement of work ethics by “fun ethics” (Gronow 2). The gravity of self that tries to anchor the individual in the premeditated cultural pattern of tradition and solidarity of social pattern has to fight against the floating sense of 'fun ethics' which releases the individual into the outer space of hedonism. Aesthetics as a principle that connects these distrustful ends creates a sense of schism in its experience which in turn is expressed in the self :

In terms of contraction of aesthetic subject, our findings show that consumers locate themselves somewhere within the instrumental and inherent value spectrum and try to balance these two objectives based on the product and the context. That is, instead of stating that consumers are seekers of either inherent value or instrument value, we recognize that they combine both elements. (Venkitesh 65)

Thus in a schizophrenic universe of consumerist culture, aesthetics and self are linked by saturations of significations always marked by an imminent sense of meaning that just floats in the star spangled heaven of hedonism.

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(D)Ripping Oil: Petrocapitalism in Mei Mei Evans's *Oil and Water*

Abstract

The current century is determined by fossil fuel capitalism which is driven by the petromodern culture. As Frederick Buell opines the oil culture is an amalgamation of exuberance and catastrophe. The paper is an analysis of Mei Mei Evans's Oil in Water (2013) which is set in the background of Exxon Valdez Oil spill. The research attempts to understand the plight of the people who as Stephanie LeMenager remarks is enveloped in the oil culture suspended between trauma and desire. The study endeavors to trace the toxic petrophilia that dominates the current world and the petrocapiatlist conflicts which a community and nation confronts.

Keywords: Oil Spill, Petrophilia, Oil capitalism, Slow Violence

And when oil spills
who do we have to blame?
The company that drills
the earth
to suck out the oil?
Or,
ourselves
for our our insatiable
greed and consumption
of natural resources
that can't be replenished.

(Tony Ogunlowo, "When Oil Spills")

On the midnight of 24th March 1989, a crude oil supertanker in possession of Exxon Mobil Corporation, a transnational oil conglomerate, struck the Bligh Island Reef in Valdez and slicked thirty-seven tonnes of crude oil into an inlet in the Gulf of Alaska. It was the biggest oil spill and environmental disaster in the then history of America, which led to the casualty of sea otters, seals and sea birds along with macroalgae and benthic invertebrates. The other members in the ecosystem who functioned in the food chain were consequently affected. Thus eagles who ate the oil-tainted fish, the rodents who ate the poisonous plants and the minks that ate the oil-coated sea birds expired in the great oil disaster. The destruction of the lives and livelihood of the coastal community suspended

them in a state of trauma. Thirty years since the disaster, many environmentalists and marine biologists consider oil addiction or 'petrophilia' as the fundamental reason for such a catastrophe.

Stephanie LeMenager coined the term 'petrophilia' in her seminal work, *Living Oil: Petroleum Culture in the American Century*, to describe the "destructive attachment" and the toxic ties the present crude oil generation encompasses(11). According to her, the petromodern people in the twenty-first century live pendant in an ambivalent cosmos through "injury and pleasure" (LeMenager 17). Mei Mei Evans attempted to portray such a coastal community in her novel *Oil and Water* (2013), wherein she endeavours to narrate the story of the Exxon Valdez Oil spill based on her first-hand experiences in living through the distress. The general population of Selby, where the novel is set, is caught in the battle between environmental and economic existence in a world ruled by oil capitalism.

"Oil capitalism" is a term introduced into the petrocultural discourse by Imre Szeman in "System Failure: Oil, Futurity, and the Anticipation of Disaster". According to him this discovery "enabled powerful and forceful new modalities of capitalist reproduction and expansion" (2). Another term used synonymously with 'oil capitalism' is 'petrocapitalism'. *The Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography* describes it as "a form of capital accumulation founded on the extraction, distribution, and consumption of petroleum" (Rogers 527). The term refers to the globalised economy whose energy needs, industrial production and profit generation depend on oil and other fossil fuels

Prior to the oil spill, the village of Selby is reigned by the narrative of oil exuberance promoted by the discourse of petrocapitalism. Frederick Buell had described "oil exuberance" as a capitalist triumph made possible by dominating over the environment. This exuberance or oil optimism can be witnessed in the narration through the novelist's description of the massive oil infrastructure. Trans-Alaska pipeline which stretched to eight hundred miles and is "visible from space" (OW 7). Even the "gargantuan supertanker" is described as an "astonishing feat of human engineering" (OW 7). According to Graeme Macdonald, this obsession is a symbol of petromodern culture which offer "humans (and narrators) unprecedented power and capacity to transform landscape, population and environment" (14). Even when the natives, the government and the capitalist oil companies are aware of the machinery's power to damage, the promised reverie of crude oil tends to make the potential catastrophe invisible.

The colossal oil pipeline transports oil from Alaska's NorthSlope oil terrains to Valdez Harbor. Even though the design, proposal and plan to erect the pipeline were finalised in 1977, it faced fierce opposition. "Local residents, environmentalists, and politicians fought for years over the safety of such a project and the effect it would have on the pristine landscape of the region" (Leacock ix). Evans, in her novel, represents the discordance and dissensions from the natives, especially from fishermen like Gregg,

whose lives depended on sea. Gregg "loathes the oil industry as only a fisherman can" (OW 7). They had expected the possibility of an oil spill and had argued with the federal officials and lawmakers. Nevertheless, the pipeline was approved, and the appeal by the group of Alaskans was disregarded.

Commoners in the region genuinely believed that the "[n]orth Slope crude" greased "the wheels of the state's economy" (OW 8). This optimism is closely connected to this particular mineral resource. As Frederick Buell observes in "A Short History of Oil Cultures: Or, the Marriage of Catastrophe and Exuberance", oil appeared to the masses as having the ability to modernise "social life - sending out tentacles into people's private lifeworlds to change them in what seemed, to many (but not all), exuberantly positive ways" (283). Thus the construction works brought many job opportunities. Infact, the "petroleum-related jobs doubled the population of the state in the seventies" (OW 89). The oil company provided the community with "good pay, excellent benefits, generous bonuses and time off" (OW89). The oil-money also initiated leisure activities, which led to the construction of "performance halls, libraries, and no-expenses-spared schools" (OW 90).

However, "oil exuberance was wedded all too clearly to oil catastrophe in a high-profile marriage of absolute opposites" which materialised when "oil fuelled destructive machinery" like Mammoth Petroleum Corporation's oil tanker hit the Montague Reed in Alaska (Buell 289). Thus crude oil which had lubricated the economy transformed the deep blue ocean into a "boundless sewer", an ecological catastrophe (OW 27). A "plastic lifelessness" embraces the sea leaving it "inanimate and limp, as if dead" (OW 14).

This catastrophe is what Rob Nixon describes as "biological violence" which is the violence committed against the biophysical world. Thus through the eyes of Lee, the deckhand, the author sketches the anthropogenic violence of crude oil transportation on nature. The puffin who lies "open eyed but sightless" in its "toxic sarcophagus" and the oil drenched cormorant drive Lee agitated. According to her, it is "better to shoot it with .22 and end its suffering" that rescue them(OW 28). It was also the "time of year salmon eggs hatch" (46). The oil had soaked the eggs and made it lifeless. She witnesses the "dense, stinking ooze filling once-crystalline tidepools, suffocating delicately tendriled anemones and so many other forms of intricate sea life" (OW 39).

The native community in the Pogibshi island was also "oiled" at night and the marine biologists had cautioned them from consuming anything from the sea. The newspapers pictured "a man standing on a beach, thigh-deep in crude petroleum" (OW 42). The native Chugachmiut villages on the Barrier islands were also affected. This island was the nesting habitat of countless murre, which lost its ecosystem in the petrocapiatist world system. However, "Fishermen stand to lose the most from the oil spill" (OW 87).

Even when the spill spattered to the shore, the government and the company seemed to

have done nothing to contain the escaped petroleum. Infact it was the "[r]esidents of the communities lying closest to the groundwater tanker have but to sea in their boats in ...attempts to prevent the oil from washing ashore" (OW 18). Most of the population participated as volunteers to save themselves and the community: "safeguarding the salmon streams, rescuing oiled birds and otters, or preparing food for those who are" (OW 45). Most of the protection done on the ocean was the "hard work of local citizens using their own money, their own boats, and their own equipments" (OW 102).

In the meantime, the capitalist oil conglomerate was nonchalant and undaunted by the oil tragedy. In fact, they were not even ready for such a crisis about which the news media and the locales often counselled and cautioned about. Even when there was official information about, "[a] handful of islands...completely inundated by crude oil washing ashore at depths of three feet", the company's emergency machines stayed "buried under fourteen feet of frozen snow at the Pipeline terminal" (OW 18). The only 'retired' worker who knew to operate the front-end loader and the forklift material was hospitalised after nine hours of continuous labour. This makes sceptical fishermen like Gregg wonder "if the state and the feds had ever been even halfway serious about holding Big Oil accountable for the risks posed by the ocean transport of unprocessed crude" (OW 20). He points out that even two days after the incident, the company did not appear to have a plan.

According to the Oil Spill Contingency Agreement between Mammoth Petroleum and the State of Alaska, twelve miles of boom should be permanently stored at the Pipeline terminal. However, the oil company had set just two miles of boom for oil recovery in case of a spill. As a result, the industry's Spill Response Vessels (SRV) recovered only two gallons of spilled oil. As Billy Read opines, "Only eleven million, nine hundred ninety-nine thousand, eight hundred more to go" (OW 81).

In the meantime, "the unnamed captain of Mammoth *Kuparuk* has gone missing" (OW 44) and the public believes that "the petroleum industry ...[has] spirited the man away so as to prep him for his evening reappearance before the press" (OW 56). Two possibilities were put forward as the cause of this oil accident. While the coast guard informs the media that the captain's blood test proved the presence of "twice the amount of illegal alcohol" (OW 44), commoners like Daniel "dismisses the idea as absurd" (OW 57). According to Daniel, it was "the failure of the supertanker's state-of-the-art navigational systems" (OW 57). The company was also under scrutiny. The company itself had "pruned its supertanker crew worldwide", pointing out that the electronic capabilities could replace human labour. This downsizing of the employees resulted in them working double shifts, which was illegal.

This disturbs Lee, who protests: "How dare Big Business and government collude in jeopardising the safety and sanctity of all the astonishing creatures who depend on the ocean for life" (OW 100). Infact the state in association with the industry, attempts to buy the villagers with what they term as "disaster assistance". Thus "[e]mergency loans, food

vouchers, health care, counselling, whatever you need" is offered by the government on a priority basis (OW 108). However, the community was agitated and informs the government authorities that they want the old ocean that existed prior to the spill.

Even the media, who venerated the spectacular violence, kept silent about the industry. The industry attempted to greenwash the tragedy by expending the oil-money. As Keith Tomashaw point out, the company had "done little more than package an environmental and economic disaster into some kind of three-ring circus" (OW 109). For Mammoth Petroleum, the oil spill is nothing more than a means to tax deduction. With this monetary benefit in mind, they gave the coastal community whose livelihood was destroyed the responsibility of cleaning up oil. Thus the multinational oil giant offered "hundreds of dollars a day in leasing fees" for charter boats and smaller vessels (OW 92). People like Matt Jones who took up the contract apologetically remarks that this was his only option to feed his kids. Gregg presents the capitalist schema raucously, "First you destroy the place we live and wipe out our livelihood, then you offer to pay us so much you hope we won't notice" (OW 92). However, many people in the community believe that they have the "prospect of becoming spillionaires" (OW 149). According to them, "Mammoth's rich enough to take away some of the sting" (OW 130). Thus the "oil spill technicians" who were unskilled labourers, were paid "big bucks" for their services (OW 149). It was an "environmental holocaust turned growth industry" (OW 155).

The capitalist agendas of the company prevail even during the immense tragedy. The State of Alaska till date did not allow dispersants to be used in the water bodies "because of their "known deleterious effects" on marine life" (OW 30). However environmentalists argue for its use as it is "preferable to the toxicity of an uncontained oil spill" (OW 30). As pointed out by the professor the Mammoth Petroleum, the perpetrator itself, "manufactures the lion's share of world's dispersants"(OW 30). Thus the "same company that owns the grounded tanker, the same outfit responsible for this unholy mess, stands to reap a fortune from the sale of its own solvents to clean it up" (OW 30).

Though the oil spill is spectacularly represented in the fiction, the oil spill has extended repercussions. In his work, *Slow Violence and Environmentalism of the Poor*, Rob Nixon explores this notion of violence and establishes the concept of slow violence. According to Nixon, slow violence is a "violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically viewed as violence at all" (2). Violence is customarily envisaged as an incident or act that is instantaneous and spectacular and produces cataclysmic impacts. Slow violence, in contrast, is not spectacular and therefore invisible and not newsworthy. It can create long-term problems in which "casualties are postponed, often for generations" (2). These causalities can be emotional, environmental, or physical.

The cataclysmic slow violence on the environment can be witnessed when the newly hatched salmon fry is destined to "either die outright from toxicity or else starve to death"

(OW 107). Also the “opportunistic feeders” like ravens, foxes, seals and ospreys who eat the toxic oil birds will extend the toxicity into the food chain. As Gregg exclaims, nobody is sure about the point wherein the “oil stop being poisonous” (OW 93). “Brooding eagles- and other birds- are tracking oil into the nests, onto their eggs. The eggshells absorb toxicity, which kills the embryos” (OW 139). The violence invades even the livelihood of the fishermen too as “there's growing perception outside that all Alaska seafood is tainted” (OW 106). The toxic chemicals and their cancerous effect on the community who took part in the oil spill cleaning are still under scrutiny.

However, the petrophilia along with the petrocapiatist hegemonic worldview erases the trauma of oil spill by providing the land with more reveries to dream of. Here, Mei Mei Evans portrays a typical oil spill story which “swarm with agents, human and nonhuman, organic and machinic. [It] involve corporations, workers, remediating actors like the Coast Guard and chemical surfactants and polyurethane booms, human and nonhuman victims, activists, and the competing scales of a local site of injury and the vast global infrastructures of energy derived from fossil fuel” (LeMenager 23). Every oil spill is a discourse between oil and water, and it is the discretion of the petromodern citizens to choose “either oil and modernity, or water and a speculative world known vaguely under the sign of ecology” (LeMenager 21).

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Construction of Subversive Black Motherhood : Ruptured Motherline in *God Help the Child*

Abstract

Motherhood has been sanctimoniously identified with the practices of nurturance and welfare of the family. However, the conceptualization of motherhood which centers on its sacrificial nature fails to address the echoes of the hardships which the mothers have to live through. The situation becomes even more troublesome when attempts are made to theorize black motherhood. While critics like O'Reilly and Collins have theorized black motherhood as the real force for the empowerment, Toni Morrison's writings essentially portray the vividness of the black experience in all its reality in a racist society. Her last novel God Help the Child delves deep into a narrative which offers the space to unearth the ambiguous nature of the mother-daughter relationship. The present paper attempts to read Morrison's God Help the Child as a narrative which showcases the rupture which the black mother experiences in her motherhood which eventually leads to the construction of a subversive black motherhood.

Keywords: Black Motherhood, Empowerment, Racist, Rupture, Subversive

Toni Morrison's novel *God Help the Child*, chronicles the complexities involved in the mother-daughter relationship during the Civil Rights era. The narrative is from the point of view of a light-skinned African-American mother, who shares her experience of mothering a dark-skinned daughter- Lula Ann. It throws light on the complexities of African-American motherhood. Drawing upon the two important aspects of black motherhood i.e, nurturance and motherline, we attempt to read the novel from the perspective of the mother rather than the daughter. We argue that Morrison's vision of black motherhood would not fit into the clear cut compartmentalisation of black motherhood vs. white motherhood. She captures the complexities of black motherhood in a racist culture by problematising the hierarchy among the blacks on the basis of the shades of color (black) which obviously is about their comparatively better survival in a racist culture. *The motherhood in God Help the Child is read as creating a subversive and alternative discourse of black motherhood.*

“Motherhood is a constitutive, complex aspect of identity and a polyvalent discursive form; scholars assert that motherhood is inextricably linked to heterosexuality, womanhood, femininity, whiteness, and notions of citizenship” (“Subversive Maternities” 35). The sanctimonious identification of motherhood with the nurturance and the welfare of the family attain huge symbolical manifestation in the patriarchal

construct. The sacrificing nature of motherhood becomes all the more significant when we discuss the process of identity construction of the African-Americans, who have been subjected to cultural and social ostracization due to the racist approach of the white society.

Black women have been, historically and culturally, characterized on account of their maternity roles and have been stereotyped and mythologised. Toni Morrison, who views black motherhood as empowering and essential, does not confine the roles of the black mothers to performances associated with the traditional concept of mothering in terms of biological aspects alone. By portraying atypical mothers and their subversive motherhood, Morrison “questions the social construction of matriarchy and maternity which often fails to perceive the identity and the individuality of a mother apart from her child” (“Demystifying” 477).

Collins in her work *Black Feminist Thought* notes that the black mothers are aware of the fundamental contradictions associated with their motherhood, “Black motherhood can be rewarding, but it can also extract high personal cost. The range of Black women's reactions to motherhood and the ambivalence that many Black women feel about mothering reflect motherhood's contradictory nature” (133). It would not be wrong to say that while one valorizes the sacrificial nature of motherhood of any society on the one hand, there has been an attempt, if not deliberate, to ignore the complexities of motherhood in terms of the ambivalence and the contradictoriness which certain mothers would identify in their maternal identity. Not all mothers can be the angel in the house, nor can every mother remain ignorant of the hardships that she had to experience due to reasons pertaining to the social or cultural or racial identities detailed by the society. Black mothers, specifically, who had been stereotyped as the mammies and the matriarchs, at times do find their maternal subjectivity entering into the realm of subversion, wherein they travel along the paths of non-convergence with the established and expected norms of the society; they create alternate or subversive motherhood.

According to O' Reilly, the maternal standpoint and the theory of motherwork as envisioned by Morrison identifies nurturance as a social and political act that enables the children to love their subjectivity in a culture that denies it. She notes:

In a racist culture that deems black children inferior, unworthy, and unlovable, maternal love of black children is an act of resistance; in loving her children the mother instills in them a loved sense of self and high self-esteem, enabling them to defy and subvert racist discourses that naturalize racial inferiority and commodify blacks as other and object (11).

Contrary to this, we see the mother in *God Help the Child* not being compassionate towards her girl child. Although the mother repents for being tough on her daughter, she

finds her mothering as empowering her child. By guarding her daughter Lula from the hardships of the white world, Sweetness in *God Help the Child* strongly articulates subversive/alternative black motherhood.

In *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart*, O' Reilly points out that Morrison's articulation of motherhood in her fictions and otherwise develop a concrete theory of African-American motherhood which is central to her political and philosophical position on black womanhood. Morrison showcases how black motherhood is radically different from dominant culture. O' Reilly notes that Morrison considers maternal identity as an important site of power for black women that leads to the black children's empowerment. She defines Morrison's theory of motherhood as "A Politics of Heart". O' Reilly by citing Collins's standpoint theory argues that the practices and the traditions of black mothering give rise to an alternative perspective on black motherhood. Ruddick's model of maternal practice has been used to explore the ways in which Morrison theorizes black motherhood.

Morrison's concept of motherwork points out the important role played by the black mothers in rearing their children in a racist and sexist world that ensures their safety while challenging racism. She also emphasises how it empowers the black daughters by challenging sexism which harm them. Collins points that "the dominant ideology of the slave era fostered the creation of four interrelated, socially constructed controlling images of Black womanhood, each reflecting the dominant group's interest in maintaining Black women's subordination" (71). According to Collins, the creation of a distinct black female standpoint that arises out of their own experiences and meanings of womanhood resist the derogatory stereotypes otherwise attached to the black womanhood. Furthering Collins' argument, O' Reilly notes that along with the construction of the black female standpoint that provides a distinct perspective on the black self, community and society, it aids black women to interrupt and counter the dominant discourse on black womanhood.

As noted so far, Morrison seems to deviate from the theorization on black motherhood by O'Reilly and Collins. While theorizing black motherhood and its importance in the life of black children in their works, they fail to address the complexities attached to black motherhood. Unlike the over emphasis which has been laid on the notion of black motherline, Morrison attempts to theorise rupture in the black motherline. Our reading of motherhood in *God Help the Child* thus addresses the complexities of black motherhood in connection with a focus on colour (shade) differences within black womanhood.

The act of nurturing children is considered and experienced as resistance among black mothers and this sets it apart from the dominant model of motherhood. It has been observed that the black daughters have strong bonding with their mothers and they achieve empowerment through motherline as it is valued as central to the black culture. Through motherline, the black daughters are empowered and imbibe the images of black

womanhood. But here we see rupture in the mother line.

You should've seen my grandmother; she passed for white, married a white man, and never said another word to any one of her children. Any letter she got from my mother or my aunts she sent right back, unopened. Finally, they got the message of no message and let her be. (11)

Sweetness's mother, "Lula Mae could have passed easy but she chose not to. She told her the the price she paid for that decision. When she and my father went to the courthouse to get married, there were two Bibles, and they had to put their hands on the one reserved for Negroes" (*God* 11). Thus we see the rupture in the motherline in the story which might have led to the tension in Sweetness. But she has also learned from the motherline that racism forces some to break the motherline and be more lenient towards white identity. As she notes it was quite common among the mulattos during the time.

In an interview (Ross 1992), Morrison commented: "Women sabotage them- selves. . . . They locate the true beloved out of themselves." These women, Morrison goes on to say, "have girl children . . . [they] bring them up to be broken in half . . . to loath themselves." Mothers must, Morrison emphasizes, "take their daughters in their arms and hold them and say, you are just fine the way you are" (C1). But here, the mother could not make the child feel that she is fine the way she is. The very act of giving birth to her is seen as an unfortunate incident. She says:

It's not my fault. So you can't blame me. I didn't do it and have no idea how it appened. It didn't take more than an hour after they pulled her out from between my legs for me to realize something was wrong. Really wrong. She was so black she scared me. Midnight black, Sudanese black. Ain't nobody in my family anywhere near that color. Tar is the closest I can think of, yet her hair don't go with the skin. It's different—straight but curly, like the hair on those naked tribes in Australia. (11)

From the very beginning Sweetness says in the maternity ward the baby, Lula Ann, embarrassed her. She goes onto defend her feeling by saying:

Some of you probably think it's a bad thing to group ourselves according to skin color—the lighter the better—in social clubs, neighborhoods, churches, sororities, even colored schools. But how else can we hold on to a little dignity? (11-12)

Here the question is of dignity and even in the slightest difference in the color makes huge difference in a racist society.

Like the mother Sethe in *Beloved*, mother in *God Help the Child* attempts to kill her

daughter. But she says:

I know I went crazy for a minute, because—just for a few seconds—I held a blanket over her face and pressed. But I couldn't do that, no matter how much I wished she hadn't been born with that terrible color. I even thought of giving her away to an orphanage some place. But I was scared to be one of those mothers who leave their babies on church steps. (12)

Here the predicament of a colored woman/mother—even a high-yellow one is described vividly. She was abandoned by her husband for the same reason but she chooses to mother her child. And she asked her daughter to call her “Sweetness” instead of “Mother” or “Mama” to escape from the embarrassment. Sweetness says:

Her being that black and having what I think are too thick lips and calling me “Mama” would've confused people. Besides, she has funny-colored eyes, crow black with a blue tint—something witchy about them, too. (13)

However, she claims that she was cautious in raising her. She had been strict, very strict. She says:

Lula Ann needed to learn how to behave, how to keep her head down and not to make trouble. I don't care how many times she changes her name. Her color is a cross she will always carry. But it's not my fault. It's not my fault. It's not. (14)

Although she feels bad sometimes about how she treated Lula Ann when she was little, she says it was to train her in defending mechanism and she has done it to protect her. She says:

She didn't know the world. With that skin, there was no point in being tough or sassy, even when you were right. Not in a world where you could be sent to a juvenile lockup for talking back or fighting in school, a world where you'd be the last one hired and the first one fired. (37)

She also adds, “See, if I hadn't trained Lula Ann properly she wouldn't have known to always cross the street and avoid white boys. But the lessons I taught her paid off, and in the end she made me proud as a peacock” (37).

Society demands the mother to produce an adult who is acceptable to the society's expectations. However, atleast half of the mothers fail in fulfilling the expectations of the society. The mothers are also governed by the societal expectations. The factors of acceptance and appreciability of a child is sometimes suffocating for the mother since what the society considers as acceptable may not be what the child stands for. This gains

relevance when it comes to the black mothers and the black children. The white society establishes the demand of acceptance and appreciability of the black mothers and the black children in terms of its racist and gender constructs, which posits a higher demand on the black motherhood, creating “an urgency – sometimes exhilarating, sometimes anguishing – maternal practice” (Ruddick 'Maternal Thinking'103). Sweetness, who undergoes the lived experience of having been treated as a fair Black woman too oscillates between the parameters of acceptance and rejection at different levels. On the one hand, Sweetness as a daughter did not experience the havocs of racist treatment in the same degree as a black woman would. She was able to easily pass off as a light skinned African-American woman which shows her being accepted by the society. On the other hand, with childbirth, she enters in to the state of being rejected when her husband leaves her because of the pitch black daughter she gave birth to. With motherhood, Sweetness experiences a sense of rupture in her existence, “We had three good years together but when she was born he blamed me and treated Lula Ann like she was a stranger – more than that an enemy” (12).

Morrison does not encumber Sweetness by positioning Sweetness as a mother fully dedicated to Lula. The awkwardness which Sweetness felt after giving birth to Lula as well as the miserable condition which she had to face when her husband left her with Lula reminds the readers of the suffocating nature of motherhood which Sweetness had to bear. She feels like she has been trapped in being the mother of a black girl. The maternal identity of Sweetness undergoes a transition when she decides Lula to be brought up in the racist society without sacrificing the acceptability factor which she has been experiencing in the society, “I knew enough not to take her with me when I applied to landlords so I left her with a teenage cousin to babysit” (13). She maintains a self-proclaimed distance from her daughter as a means of asserting her alternative or subversive motherhood. Lula, who was never allowed to touch Sweetness and never breastfed, recalls how she yearned to be touched by her mother even if it meant getting beaten by Sweetness, “I used to pray she would slap my face or spank me just to feel her touch. I made little mistakes deliberately, but she had ways to punish me without touching the skin she hated – bed without supper, lock me in my room...” (30-31). Through her actions, Sweetness “does not romanticize motherhood but normalizes the ambivalent experience of mothering” ('The Influence', 147).

She believes, she was not a bad mother, and whatever she had done to her was because of skin privileges. She believes that she did the best for her under the circumstances. And when she learns that Bride (Lula Ann) is pregnant she hopes her daughter would find out what it takes, how the world is, how it works, and how it changes when one is a parent. The story ends with the remarks: “Good luck, and God help the child” (133).

As we see in the story there is a rupture in the motherline and the nurturance is not done in the way as theorised by O' Reilly. Morrison here theorises the shades in black

motherhood by portraying the predicament of a light skinned black nurturing the dark skinned daughter. This does not seem to fit into O' Reilly's theorisation of black motherhood. Sweetness' motherhood is, thus, alternative and subversive since her "motherhood is not represented as an identity but as a version of experience unique to women; how women prefer to experience motherhood is up to them" ("The Influence", 148). We consider this as an alternative, subversive, discourse of motherhood within the black motherhood.

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Loving from the Borders : Restructuring the M/Other Revolutionary Praxis in Select Motherhood Manuals

Abstract

This article reflects and documents the ancient and living legacy of practicing and defining motherhood beyond the constraints of the biological in Motherhood Manuals. The intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality and activism through the lens of mothering feels like a shared collective chant/cancion of affirmation, reclamation, and transformation. Mothering happens in a context of generations, a context of racial history, and in a spiritual context. It takes place from the shoreline to the front line, in times of scarcity and abundance. Revolution, love, and mothering are an inseparable unity. The 'unconventional mothers'- queer, black, immigrant, activist, feminist, disabled, poor women - insist on having their children in a society that does not welcome them, in a world that is rapidly falling apart. Their dream for their children, based on their love of them, encompasses the sorrow and the joy that mothers everywhere. For these women, the art of mothering has been framed by the most virulent systems, historically: enslavement, colonialism, capitalism, imperialism. They have had few opportunities to define mothering not only as an aspect of individual lives and choices, but as the processes of love and as a way of structuring community. Their shared experiences in manuals are documentations of love offering from diverse strata of society from around the globe as discrediting the motherhood of these unconventional mothers, society turns maternal virtue on its head, as these 'bad' mothers are held responsible for all the ills of society from petty crimes to environmental degradation caused by climate change.

Keywords: Motherhood, Love, Revolution, Marginalization

The radical potential of the word “mother” comes after the 'm'. It is the space that the “other” occupies in the temporal and spatial void that is often interpreted as something else. The word evokes such profound vibes that stirs up our unconscious and we know it from how fearfully institutions wield social norms and try to shut them down. Mothers who unlearn domination by refusing and refuting this pragmatic stance dominate their children, extended family and friends, community caregivers, radical childcare collectives and break the cycle of abuse by deciding what they want to replicate from the past and what they need urgently to transform by m/othering themselves. In 1973, Toni Morrison wrote *Sula*, a novel about a dangerous, undomesticated woman, an “artist without an art form” who spurned her own mother's advice to settle down, insisting, “I don't want to make someone else. I want to make myself. I want to be a mother”. *Sula*, the

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novel that inspired Black feminist literary critics like Barbara Smith and Mae Gwendolyn Henderson to invent Black feminist literary criticism, is a beautiful and revolutionary text about two girls who “having long ago realized they were neither white nor male . . . went about creating something else to be.” Sula herself is not a mother-type, except for how she creates herself, except for how she creates a context for other people to grow past the norms they knew, except for how in her name contemporary Black feminist literary theory was born.

Sherri Taylor , in her work *Acts of Remembering: Relationship in Feminist Therapy* state that radical concept of “mothering is creating, nurturing, affirming, and supporting life. Women are socialized and conditioned to care for others and to expect others to care for them. Mothering, radically defined, is the selfless gifting of one's talents, ideas, intellect, and creativity to the universe without recompense. “Radical mothering is the imperative to build bridges that allow us to relate across . . . barriers, the myth of the undeserving mother of colour (or poor, or immigrant, or Black, or queer) used by the one percent and their puppet politicians who rationalizes the austerity justifications for destroying the social safety net and the transference of industrial production to other countries as part of the neoliberal reorganization of capitalism”. (Taylor, pp23–34)

Audre Lorde defines radical motherhood as an essence that seeks to “give name to the nameless, so it can be thought like an emotion that has been sanctified yet considered base for the 'unworthy'. As they become known to and accepted by us, our feelings and the exploration of them become sanctuaries and spawning grounds for the most radical and daring ideas”. Radical mothering does not seek to deny the critical role biological mothers play in sustaining humanity. Alexis Pauline Gumbs says, “Not just when people who do not identify as heterosexual give birth to or adopt children and parent them, but all day long and everywhere when we acknowledge the creative power of transforming ourselves, and the ways we relate to each other. Because we were never meant to survive and here we are creating a world full of love.”

The radical claim of mothering as a human right was not the province of biologically defined women, and that mothering—like gender—is not biologically determined but socially constructed. Ma'ia Williams in the introduction to the book *Revolutionary Mothering: Love from the Frontlines* says:

“Even before I was a mama, it was mamas on the margins who shaped my vision of the amazing and heartbreaking possibilities of being a mama. The punk mamas who lived across the street from me in the valleys; they breast-fed in ripped T-shirts, leather cuffs and purple/blue/green hair. The Palestinian mothers I visited in the West Bank who told stories of their toddlers hiding on the far wall of the house as they listened quietly to the Israeli military bombing the neighbors' home. The Congolese mothers who sung praise songs with their babes on their laps and shared their stories of being rape survivors. Some of the babies grew in their bodies from the militias' violations. Teenage Black mamas who

lived in the mostly forgotten parts of Minnesota and fought against the medical professionals for the right to give birth as they chose. Sudanese refugee mamas in the crumbling buildings and ghettos of Cairo, waiting for years for an EU visa and a new life. The Egyptian mama, on January 28, 2011, the “Day of Rage,” who had one child on her shoulder, another by the hand, she waved an Egyptian flag and faced down the police's tear gas and water cannons. No matter where I go, in this life of exile, revolution and mamas, front lines and daughters, are what feed my life. This book came from a vision I had of mamas who believe in themselves and their children, in the future and the ancestors so fiercely they will face down the ugly violence of the present time and time again...”(Williams, Page 21)

June Jordan's 1992 essay “A New Politics of Sexuality,” expounds bisexuality as an intervention against predictive sexuality in order to create a space for freedom. This critical use of bisexuality prefigures the use of the word 'queer' to describe a politics of sexuality that is not based on a specific sexual practice, but rather a critical relationship to existing sexual and social norms. Jordan uses a proclamation of her bisexuality as a hinge to articulate her own contradictory multiplicity: “I am Black and I am female and I am a mother and I am bisexual and I am a nationalist and I am an antinationalist.”(Jordan, p 15). We often assume that mothering, especially the mothering of children in oppressed groups, and especially mothering to end war, to end capitalism, to end homophobia and to end patriarchy is a queer thing. But even if it is a good thing and a necessary thing, it is a crucial and dangerous thing too. Those of us who nurture the lives of those children who are not supposed to exist, who are not supposed to grow up, who are revolutionary in their very beings are doing some of the most subversive work in the world. The heterosexist society has set the norms for these dictates of mothering that every woman is expected to follow.

Revolutionary mothers are frontline warriors without an articulated visual depiction of their nascent understandings of their ambiguous and interwoven positions. One requires a modern-day word to represent the inherent need for intersectionalised radical feminist theory. Toni Cade's work *Brilliant Black Woman* in 1970 included Francis Beal's trendsetting essay “Double Jeopardy” that articulates vehemently on the twin demons of racism and sexism. Audre Lorde and Angela Davis mercilessly attacked the underlying racism within feminism, describing it as reinforcing the patriarchal white supremacist system. Social activists like Dolores Huerta organized farmworkers in the 1960s in California; Geraldine Miller organized domestic workers in New York City in the 1970s; and Sandra Camacho also organized violence survivors in the 1970s. The condition was reinstated in 1981 when two groundbreaking books, *This Bridge Called My Back* by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, and *Ain't I a Woman* by bell hooks overstate their cataclysmic impact. Feeling marginalised from the white feminist movement, women of color—especially Black women— were anguished that they were constantly throwing the realities of maternal experiences up against their disbelief. It was as if they were

personally commissioning the writing of these particular books to affirm their lives and politics. These writers addressed the denial, fear, and self-delusion of some white women seeking power who saw feminism as an equal opportunity to oppress. In *This Bridge Called My Back*, Moraga and Anzaldúa creates a stunning visual of a bridge that connects from one place to the “other” in the literal and metaphorical sense of the word. The choice to be a bridge is a dangerous, often trod-upon, and frequently destabilising decision. People seldom pay attention to the bridges they walk across because destinations, not means, are their priority. Yet without these bridges, they can't go anywhere new.

Hortense Spillers wrote *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: A New American Grammar Book* in 1987 where she expounds that motherhood is a status granted by patriarchy to white middle-class women, those women whose legal rights to their children are never questioned, regardless of who does the labor of keeping them alive. Mothering is another matter, the name for that nurturing work, that survival dance, worked by enslaved women who were forced to breastfeed the children of the status mothers while having no control over whether their birth or children who were sold away. It reframes mothering as a collective project that foregrounds the practical and intangible needs of those whose survival is most threatened in their community. Toward this end, they refuse the pathologizing language placed on female-headed families. She insists that families nurtured by women are “not fatherless . . . how about motherful?” By shifting the terms, they make a poetic move that highlights the abundance of mothering, the power of mothers and the collaboration between mothers that makes the families least affirmed by the state dangerous, powerful and necessary. One can see the continuation of this process that centers poor and disenfranchised mothers in the work of Young Women United in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Mamas Rising in Austin, Texas, which both support mothers of color, the underprivileged and the marginalized and in particular mothers who qualify for public assistance in accessing and affirming support while giving birth and at every moment in the mothering process with an analysis that connects the revolutionary work of mothering 'poor' children to a collaborative embodiment of the future. Part of the role of this process is to make clear the connections between a queer feminist of colour practice and theory around mothering, intergenerationally and the future and what one sees as the most crucial and challenging work of the time, the practice of mothering as an alternative building practice of valuing each other and creating the world they deserve.

In the chapter titled 'Mothering as Revolutionary Praxis' by Cynthia Dewi Oka in the book *Revolutionary Mothers: Loving from the Frontiers*, she states that “...those who dominate and oppress the 'underprivileged' benefit most when we have nothing to give our own, when they have so taken from us our dignity, our humanness that we have nothing left, no “homeplace” where we can recover ourselves”(Oka, p 87). Echoing bell hooks' statement that Motherhood is an act of defiance in the midst of colonization, Dana Erekat confounds that revolutionary struggle against a colonial, racist, hetero-patriarchal

reproductive capitalism has for centuries separated them and arranged them in structured oppositions to each other. The institution has reduced their bodies to raw resources for abuse, exploitation and manipulation; and, in the words of Frantz Fanon, "occupied our breathing", in the struggle for a world—no, many worlds—where we might exist and thrive as each other's beloved. It is the struggle not only for a social universe that is meaningful and just, but lives that are inherently precious. It is the struggle against our elimination, our disappearance from each other. Mothering is a primary front in this struggle, not as a biological function, but as a social practice. As a system of organization premised on the private accumulation of profit, rather than the assurance of collective survival and wellbeing, capitalism requires that human needs be met while simultaneously being rendered irrelevant. This is why mothering, as a social practice, exists in a state of paradox—culturally idealized in a white supremacist way yet lacking in any social or economic value.

The ethos of mothering involves valuing in and of itself a commitment to the survival and thriving of other bodies. Women of color and from the underprivileged section of the societies have been violently punished and stigmatized for mothering. Black women were not legally allowed to marry as slaves. They had to give up their children to their masters, were forced to care for white women's homes and children instead of their own, lost their young to mass criminalization, incarceration, and poverty-driven violence. Indigenous women have endured the genocide of their communities and forcible sterilization by the state, been expelled from their communities by marriage laws regulating inferior status, or had their children taken from them and placed in residential schools and white foster homes. Today innumerable women in the Third World leave children behind as they go abroad in search of work. Nor has women of color produced equally valued members of the labor force under the global capitalist regime where white children are celebrated as increased human capital. Black, indigenous, and Third World children are stigmatized as drains on state resources, prospective criminals and more recently with the (racist) overpopulation discourse, as perpetrators of environmental degradation.

There is a vast store of experience, knowledge, and resilience in the lives of oppressed mothers who have made motherhood as a continuum possible for their communities even as white supremacist, hetero-patriarchal capitalism has intensified its efforts to deprive them from the means of mothering themselves and their displacement in communities. Under neoliberalism, the poor mother's individual responsibilities to earn formal and informal wages while posing as bread winner and care taker for family and community members cut off from state support, continue to multiply and deepen.

Asserting that the labor of mothering is always in collaboration with a reproductive narrative, always reproducing heteronormativity, ignores the fact that there has been a universal consensus for centuries that the underprivileged and the subordinate need not

reproduce or mother. Every force, from coercive sterilization, to the dismantling of welfare has been mobilized to try to keep them from doing it. Where has dominant white queer theory been while 'beneficent' beasts of prey and 'greedy' good doers have been ranting and raving about how 'welfare queens', the code name for poor and racialized mothers, are going to destroy civilization as one knows it not only by creating underprivileged surplus children, but by influencing these children with their deviant and risky and scary behavior? And isn't this the organizing desire of queer theory . . . to destroy civilization as one knows it?

The “tyranny of motherhood” as described by Barrett and McIntosh does not leave room for those other deployments of “mother” and “hood” in the American vernacular of culture of poverty discourse. There is no reason that the act of mothering would reproduce patriarchy, or even take place within the confines of patriarchy along normative lines because the practice of American slavery has so fundamentally ripped the work of mothering from the bodies of Black mothers, forcing them to do the labor of mothering for white and Black children while fully denying them any of the authority of motherhood by killing and selling away and raping and mutilating their biological children and their chosen kin. The complexity of the term “mother” (next to “Black”) requires a queer theory that de-universalizes race and highlights the function of racism in reproducing the heteropatriarchal status quo. Cathy Cohen, Roderick Ferguson, and José Muñoz does this work of reminding us that Third World Feminism and the Third World Gay Liberation movement are an alternative sign posts for bringing about this dichotomy.

All mothers have the potential to be revolutionary. Some mothers stand on the shoreline, are born and reborn here, inside the flux of time and space, overcoming the traumatic repetition of oppression. Their very existence is disobedience to the powers that be. At times, they, as mothers, choose to stand in a zone of claimed risk and fierce transformation, on the Front Lines. In infinite ways, both practiced and yet to be imagined, they put their bodies between the violent repetition of the norm and the future they deserve because they children deserve it too. They make this choice for many reasons and in different contexts, but they all have one thing in common: they refuse to obey. They refuse to give into fear. They insist on joy no matter what and by every means necessary and possible. Mothers, especially radical women of color, working-class, marginalized, low-income, and no-income radical mothers, have sought for decades, if not centuries, to create relationships with each other, transformative relationships to feminism and a transnational anti-imperialist literary, cultural, and everyday practice. Sometimes for radical mamas, mothering in radical community makes visible the huge gulfs between communities, between parents and nonparents, in class and other privileges and most importantly, the wide gulf between what they say in activist communities and what they actually do. Radical mothering is the imperative to build bridges that allow them to relate across these very solid barriers.

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Inculcating Love of Learning : Theoretical Explorations

Abstract

Children today inhabit a new digital landscape where digital wonders define their realities which makes old teaching philosophies, methodologies and traditions challenging, demanding change in instructional practices. Despite all the massive changes that have happened to the world and to the problems the complex world faces every day, certain basic requirements and understandings of the nature of human mind seem to stay universal, applying which love for learning can be nurtured in learners irrespective of age, space or time. Enhancing human capabilities to make choices remaining one of the objectives of education and one of the factors deciding Human Development Index. This paper is an attempt to explore the theoretical tenets postulated by scholars from various disciplines that can be applied in the teaching learning realm.

Keywords: Human Development Index, motivation, authentic learning, cognitive flexibility theory, Health Quotient.

The annual Human Development Report produced by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is considered the most authoritative international statement on issues surrounding human development. The UNDP emphasizes the need for solidarity in the wake of new threats to human security in the Anthropocene which is solidly stated in their definition: "Human development is about expanding the richness of human life rather than simply the richness of the economy in which human beings live. It is an approach that is focused on people and their opportunities and choices". Their Human Development Index (HDI) emphasizes that 'people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country'. Economic growth alone does not assess the development, on the contrary, this composite index considers life expectancy at birth, the adult literacy rate, wealth per capita and the combined enrolment rates for primary, secondary and tertiary levels of formal education as the four key indicators of human development. Currently ranked 131, India has a long way to go considering certain grave observations that came up as a part of studies like 'it is developmentally healthier for children not to be in them', (Harber10) analyzing the quality of certain local schools. Love for learning acquires significance in the fact that it has key impact on people, their capabilities and their choices which in turn shapes richness of life. This paper explores the diverse theoretical postulates on nurturing the learning experience with a passion for the same along with an overview on the inhibiting factors.

Challenges to Learning

Cynthia Ulrich observes how the nurturing element of teaching and learning can be lost when the adult focus is on keeping the circumstances and outcomes convenient for them, and medicate them to a state of conformity. Ironically, the very system turns out to be irrelevant when it ends as higher education demands learners with high energy levels, who are good at social interaction and independent thinking. Analyzing the physical factors that inhibit learning, the author elucidates with real life examples from various sectors of life that the fixed morning time given for school in itself can be a reason for losing the love of learning. (Tobias 11)

Tom Sherrington, in the book *The Learning Rainforest: Great Teaching in Real Classrooms* sharing his teaching journey, refers to the deliberate efforts taken to set work expectations for students' work ethics and study habits, challenges in teaching students who were smarter than him, and in correcting students without losing their self-esteem, lest they lose hope. Such factors, an integral part of every class room irrespective of spatiotemporal variations, are but quite often overlooked, especially in large classrooms with teachers who are not sufficiently trained or coached. The magic of success which comes in by balancing rigor with enthusiasm and lots of human warmth and kindness as observed by these writers may remain unknown to many such learning spaces, deleting the love for learning from young minds, eventually pushing them out of schooling, or from all further learning thereafter. The overall loss in all these cases is its impact on Human Development Index. Above all these, the Z generation- the current learners, with all their characteristics, interests, styles, and preferred learning environments are in many ways different from their predecessors. This gap can also be a factor as students get to feel bored and disconnected from the traditional class room practices. As observed by Ian Jukes, Ted McCain, and Lee Watanabe-Crockett:

But many teachers haven't had those experiences and only feel comfortable processing information at the conventional speed they have experienced most of their lives. As a result, after spending hours of their lives playing video games, talking on cell phones, using digital devices, surfing the Web, and wandering around in virtual worlds, many digital learners run into a wall when they come to school and are forced to slow it down or dumb it down in order to function. (p 35).

Love of Learning: influential factors

Nillsen (2004) stated that the love of learning is a concept that can be used by people in many different ways. He believes that it can be liberating as learners feel a power and capacity to understand, discover and grasp truth. Love of learning basically refers to enjoying learning for its own sake, which unfortunately gets more and more related with

external rewards as we grow older. Discussing the question whether we can develop a love of learning, David Didau uses the analogy of Health Quotient(HQ). He explains that our health as children depends in large part, on the environment our parents create for us and the way we are groomed with their interventions. The genetically influenced predisposition for healthiness significantly contributes to the nurturing element. However, as time advances, the parental influence is replaced by that of peers, choice of leisure time activities, jobs etc. which tends to have its impact on our HQ. When the factor of caring for parental concerns no more rules our choices, only conscious efforts for self-improvement can help maintain our HQ. Expanding on this he states that “children with the advantage of a genetic endowment that helps them perform well academically will tend to seek out and be given opportunities where they can shine even more brightly.” He adds that what so begins as a fairly small genetic advantage will eventually get multiplied by other environmental factors and becomes a significant advantage. This is because better academic qualifications with correlate with more “cognitively demanding jobs and therefore increase the likelihood that they will have brighter colleagues.” (Didau)

The contrast to this is, those students who do not have a genetic advantage nor the love of learning, tend to get bored, lacks curiosity and eventually drops out of the academia at an early age. It is rather unrealistic to expect all those who enter the leaning space to have a genetic predisposition to learning. Moreover, modern world with its focus on skill development and industry links is not much in favour of enjoying learning for its own sake. Can the love of learning be inculcated and sustained at all levels of learning? How should faculty be trained to empower and motivate them to target learners' interest?

Encountering roadblocks in the path to learning is quite natural to most of the learners. A successful learning environment or an inspiring faculty succeeds in making the learners believe that they can learn and grow which ultimately takes us to the concept of developing the right mindset. Carol Dweck, the Stanford motivational psychologist following her observations stated that kids who professed excitement at the thought of learning something were not deterred by the challenges in the task nor by the lack of instantaneous success. Following this initial understanding, it is now accepted that students/people with 'fixed mindset' set limits to their achievements and avoid being disappointed or getting embarrassed in front of others whereas those with the 'growth mindset' believe that qualities like intelligence and talents are 'plastic', and that they get smarter by the investment of time and energy in the areas they wish to improve. In the learner centred classrooms, teachers may hence look into the ways to develop growth mindset.

Daniel Willingham, the author of *Why Don't Students Like School* strongly claims that beyond all what science tells us to do, to bring the best out of the learners, there is the emotional bond between the teacher and the learner that adds a great deal to the students'

learning love. Rapport is hence considered a 'catalyst' which helps learners explore their curiosities and passions. Drawing parallels to a therapist client relationship, psychologist David J Cain states that “a solid therapeutic relationship serves as the foundation upon which constructive learning takes place” (qtd. in Benware&Deci 760) This emotional bond is nothing but the opportunity to experience us as the kind of person who 'understands and accepts them for their authentic selves”. (Klipfel& Cook 94) Carl Roger's humanistic psychology and his model of empathetic understanding supports this where true rapport requires not only understanding the nature and extent of a learner's information but also understanding something about the learner's needs as a person. Psychological research demonstrates that where such rapport prevails, learners feel understood for who they are, which in turn makes them free to pursue their 'authentic selves in an autonomous way'. (Klipfel&Cook 95)

David Didau, the UK based educationist proposes a few principles that can be made habitual for teachers and students that can help students, while asserting the reality that there's no certainty about how to support students to acquire an internalised love of learning.

1. Open children's intellectual vistas by exposing them to the most powerful and culturally rich knowledge available, and then encouraging them to critique this information to arrive at new ways of thinking. Never devalue knowing things and always encourage thoughtful questions.
2. Encourage children to stay in academic education for as long as possible by exciting their curiosity and providing an environment where intellectual pursuits are supported and rewarded. The longer children stay in education the wider the choice of possible careers they will have access to.
3. Make what efforts we can to shape the peer culture in schools so that children come to believe it's cool to be cleverer and that hard work is its own reward. Although most of these relationships might not survive into adulthood, everyone can acquire more of a taste for thinking more about the world and therefore be more disposed to others who think similarly. (Didau)

The European Parliament and Council had recommended eight key competences for lifelong learning in the year 2006. These include: cultural awareness and expression, communication in mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competence, and sense of initiative and entrepreneurship. Planning creatively integrating these elements would not only develop

lifelong learners, but also allow multiple intelligences to work allowing free expression of individual selves. Edward Deci, a renowned educational psychologist, states that there is a fundamental human desire for authenticity, and when human beings are given the freedom to express who they really are in their daily activities, their motivation to perform increases. The importance of authenticity was identified long back by Aristotle, who took authenticity as the prime aim of life. Michael Connolly in his book *Teaching Kids to Love Learning, Not Just Endure It* makes an interesting observation that love and wonder the of learning can be passed on as a benign infection from a teacher to his students. Defining wonder as the capacity to be curious about things and to marvel at them, he adds that there would be little learning without wonder, and he ironically observes that many schools do a good job of snuffing wonder and curiosity out of learners' and teachers' mind, owing to multiple factors ranging from policies to individual attitudes and aptitudes. The book asserts the idea that regardless of their age, students learn best in supportive rather than coercive environments and the supportive environment 'is one in which those who teach establish quality personal relationships with their pupils, and make it possible for their pupils to develop quality personal relationships with them'. (Connolly 23) Moreover, in a supportive learning environment, he says, students are not afraid to take risks and they feel free to express what they think. This fearless approach generates from the bedrock of trust that the teacher creates where mutual respect is the law. Such supportive learning environment does not simply happen, it requires commitment, sustained effort, investing time for students to know the teacher and vice-versa, lacking which many children will be left behind, with no love for learning. Retaining the environment blending it with rigour and active participation into the learning process demands skill and knowledge of the teacher which connects professional development of faculty to students' love of learning.

Bringing the outside world to the classroom

The understanding that active learners are engaged learners is not new but keeping the z-generation engaged is a herculean task which but needs to be achieved to nurture the spirit and love of learning. Constructivists opine that a meaningful context that brings the real world into the classroom learning environment is key to promoting learning. The pedagogical approach of authentic learning that allows students to explore, discuss and meaningfully construct concepts and relationships in contexts that involve real-world problems is one of the ways by which engaged learners can be created. Fostering adaptively flexible use of knowledge in real- world settings is one of the main goals of Cognitive Flexibility Theory (CFT). It helps people to learn important and difficult subject matter and also changes underlying world views. To function efficiently living in times of complexity and accelerating change, one must be able to independently assemble elements of prior knowledge into 'a scheme of the moment' that fits a new situation. (Spiro & Collins 10) CFL looks at the possibility of capitalising of the affordances of digital

media promoting new kinds of learning that were not accessible to the traditional teachers and learners. Keeping the necessity of becoming a society of individuals who can master the complexities of the modern world with creative, adaptive and independent thought, classrooms must go way beyond preparing pupils for standardised assessments and industry needs to spaces where learning is loved along with the processes that become part of it.

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Judith Wright : Springs and Roots of Eco-poetics

Abstract

Judith Wright is a rare - if not the only - instance of a poet fighting for the rights of the aboriginals. The word 'ecopoetics' becomes a self-defining neologism in the context of her poetry since that is its most important determinant. Her belief in humanism and biocentrism do not conflict with each other. She at once criticises the human race for indiscriminately exploiting nature and natural resources on the one hand and apologises for the brutal deeds of her European ancestors on the other. This paper probes into the springs and roots of Judith Wright's eco-poetics, which even preceded the idea of ecocriticism.

Keywords: Judith Wright, Australia, Eco-poetics, Aboriginal, Biocentrism, Landscape.

The distinguished Australian poet and critic Judith Arundell Wright (1915-2000) was born at Armidale, New South Wales. Besides being a literary genius, Judith Wright was active as a conservationist and had involved in the Aboriginal land right movement. Ancestors of Judith Wright were cattle-raising pioneers of the Dawson Valley in Queensland's hinterland. After university study in Sydney, she returned to help her father's station where she became deeply involved with the land and its flora and fauna. The poetry of Judith Wright chiefly reflects her close affinity to nature and the burning social issues such as the rights of aboriginal people and environmental degradation. Wright's deep personal identification with the motherland gave her poetry a spiritual as well as a political dimension.

Judith Wright's ecological consciousness has been found sublime and indefatigable in several of its manifestations. This study seeks to examine the springs and roots of her eco-poetics; her ecological concerns in and out her poetry. Eco-poetics is an ecocritical coinage referring to the incorporation of an ecological or environmental perspective into the study of poetics, and into the reading and writing of literary works. As a conservationist and an activist for aboriginal land rights, she has been able to extend her convictions to poetry and other literary endeavors. She was thoroughly convinced of her mission as a poet. In the collection of essays and lectures on conservation named, *Because I was Invited* (1975), she writes, "If it were possible to overcome our biological inheritance and become machines, poetry would lose its relevance and power to move us and we could indeed do away with verse. But then we would not be human" (*Because* 13). As a conservationist, her ideas were organic and rational based on her belief that human

being needs variety, beauty and other species of living beings for him to lead a true human life here.

Judith Wright believes that poets should engage with national and social issues. It was in the 1950s a new period in Wright's life started. She writes, “The two threads of my life, the love of the land itself and the deep unease over the fate of its original people, were beginning to twine together and the rest of my life would be influenced by that connection.” (*Half Lifetime* 284) Judith Wright closes her autobiography by offering an apology to indigenous Australians for the inequities and bloodshed of colonization. Wright finds herself a trespasser in the land of Australia and she begs for forgiveness for the wrongs that her people inflicted upon the innocent natives.

While evaluating Judith Wright's prime influences and roots of environmentalism, one is sure to arrive at her pastoral background. Her father Philip Arundel Wright was a pastoralist and mother, Ethel Mabel Bigg, was bedridden, and she died when Judith was twelve. Young Judith spent much of her time outdoors. The land became for her a maternal presence; that land also became the prime source of her poetry. In 1945, she met Jack Philip Mc Kinney, a historian and a writer on philosophy who became her partner and then her husband in 1962. There were serious philosophical discussions between the husband and wife. This relationship and the philosophical discussions between them have given much enlightenment to Judith Wright in metaphysics. This must be the reason for the presence of metaphysical philosophy in many of her poems.

Judith Wright is a typical ecopoet with sublime ecological consciousness and empathetic vision. Wright's poetry celebrates nature and natural objects. To her, nature is not just a background for presenting other subjects, but it is foregrounded as the main point of discussion. Many of Judith Wright's poems discuss how the natural world is endangered by the indiscriminate exploitation of selfish human beings. Quite before the very idea of ecocriticism was coined Wright had established her ecological vision through her nature-centered poems. In one of her early poems titled “Northern River”, she writes:

“When summer days grow harsh/ my thoughts return to my river, /fed by white mountain springs,/beloved of the shy bird, the bellbird,/ whose cry is like falling water./ O nighted with the green vine / lit with the rock-lilies,/ the river speaks in the silence,/ and my heart will also be quiet.” (*The Moving Image* 6)

Wright is not only an admirer of the beautiful natural world but also a staunch critic of human beings who find natural resources as the means of their selfish pleasures. In Judith Wright we can always see the conflict between the harmonious world of nature and the corrupt world of man. Her uncompromising attitude and sincere outlook are very much evident in her ecocritical poems.

Judith Wright knew the importance of trees in maintaining ecological balance as they endure the weather, erosion, and drought. But man with his anthropocentric attitude is

cruising ahead seeking pleasure and his selfish ends. In the poem, "Camphor Laurel" the poet examines the nature-human relationship. The immoral and unethical human life is brought parallel with the simple and harmonious life of the camphor laurel. The poet begins the poem like this:

"Here in the slack of night/ the tree breathes honey and moonlight. / here in the blackened yard / smoke and time and use have marred,/ leaning from that fantan gloom/ the bent tree is heavy in bloom. /the dark house creaks and sways"(Five Senses 32)

Judith Wright's eco-poetics is chiefly based on the idea of biocentrism, an ideology that holds the view that all life deserves equal moral standing. To define the term biocentrism is "the conviction that humans are neither better nor worse than other creatures but simply equal to everything else in the natural world" (Ramazani and Bazregarzadeh 7). This ethical perspective observes that all species are integral elements in a system of interdependence. Man exploits nature in the name of progress in numerous ways. His anthropocentric attitude makes him a bitter enemy of other species which are also having an equal right to live on this planet. Wright's much quoted eco-poem "Eroded Hills" is worth mentioning at this juncture. This is a different type of regional landscape poem in which the poet shares her concerns over the degradation of the environment. The grief-stricken poet writes:

Their eyelids clenched to keep out fear. /when the last leaf and bird go / let me dream of hills bandaged by snow,/ thought stand like trees here. (*A Human Pattern; selected Poems 1*)

Progress often plays the role of an enemy of the environment. Poet makes the readers empathize with the pain of the suffering hills. The human atrocities have made the hills servile and out of mind. Wright sings:

"The hills my father's father stripped / and beggars to the winter wind/ they crouch like shoulders naked and whipped/ humble, abandoned, out of mind."(*A Human Pattern; selected Poems 1*)

Her poem "The Wattle Tree" is replete with images of hope and inspiration. The florets on the wattle tree are golden and reminiscent of the sun. They radiate life and energy. The wattle tree is a symbol of immortality as it regenerates new life. By bringing the national tree of Australia in to focus, Judith Wright is trying to highlight the Australian consciousness. The tree is composed of four prime elements: earth, water, air, and fire. Here, the poet is trying to identify herself with the tree and thereby immortalize and purify herself. The poet's irresistible longing for immortality brings about a philosophical undertone to the poem. Besides, this elevates the poem to an eco-spiritual realm. Wright writes:

"Now from the world's four elements I make / my immortality; it shapes within the bud. /yes, now I bud, and at last, I break / in to the truth I have no voice to speak/ in to a

million images of the sun, my God.”(*Collected Poems 142*)

Judith Wright's bird poems are worth mentioning here. In these poems, the poet confesses the cruel nature of human beings. The inhuman acts of human beings are the main reason for environmental degradation. According to the poet, everything in nature has its character and it is always true to its nature. Everything in nature should try to find harmony with fellow beings in nature. Poet has a very lofty opinion about the bird species; birds never betray birds. In his “Salvation Imagined in Nature's Amazing Directionality” critic Greg Smith (2007) rightly observes, “The wisdom of nature is that it lives within its limits; it is what it is and seeks no more than that. This principle has even greater relevance today when society debates stem cell research, organ donation, gene technology, In Vitro fertilization, cloning, and genetic manipulations of human gametes. Unlike humans, nature does not despoil itself by excess.” (P.2)

Human beings are ruining this nature a thousand ways in their attempt to satisfy their unending selfish desires. They do not have any mutual respect for their fellow human and nonhuman beings. In Judith Wright's opinion, birds are truly sincere to their fellow birds. They do justice to other birds in their every movement. She illustrates this idea in her poem, “Birds”:

Whatever the bird is perfect in the bird. / weapon kestrel hard as a blade's curve, / thrush round as a mother or a full drop of water, / fruit-green parrot wise in his shrieking swerve / all are what bird is and do not reach beyond bird. (*Collected Poems 86*)

Birds are happy and contented with what they are and what they have. They never try to be super birds like foolish human beings. Over-ambitious humans do not have any limit in the consumption of natural resources. The poet herself feels guilty for being a part of the invaded white settlers who are notorious for torturing the natural world. Critic Subrata Chandra Mozumder's observation on Wright's poetry is quite relevant in this context when he says that “Judith Wright connects the nonhuman world with the human world manifesting one's integral relationship with the other and thus describes how the human world tortures the natural world.” (Mozumder 2018)

Judith Wright's well-quoted poem “Australia 1970” is a fusion of lyrical intensity and ecological consciousness. Wright is sad about the present condition of her country. She expresses her deep grief and guilt for the black history of her country under the rule of her European ancestors. The wonderful fertile land of Australia was poisoned by those early white settlers. The ignorant human beings do not realize that every action against nature will be backfired in greater intensity and destructive power multiple times. Out of uncontrollable rage the speaker is asking the country to fight back bringing out all the hatred from its pain like a tigersnake. Wright writes: “Die, wild country, like the eagle-hawk, / dangerous till the last breath's gone, / clawing and striking. Die / cursing your captor through a raging eye. (*The Double Tree. 126*). In the end stanzas, we see the speaker taking

the stance of a divine destroyer who sees things happening as he/she desired. The speaker praises the drought, the flying dust, the dying creek, and the angry animal. The poem ends with the morbid statement, “..we are ruined by the thing we kill.”

“At Cooloola” is also a relevant work to be discussed here. In this poem, Wright makes her stand clearer. Her concern for the natural world, its fauna and flora, and the guilt for the deeds of her ancestors are all obvious in the poem all along. She is sure that the crane is the true heir of the lake. The poet and her people are all invaders who settled in the land conquering the real owners of the land, the black aboriginals. The word 'crane' used at the outset of the poem bears two meanings; in one sense it is a bird species and in another sense, it is a fishing rod. The fishing done with fishing rod by men is unethical and unauthentic. The crane and the aboriginal people are the true children of nature, hence the real heirs of the land. Wright marvelously presents this idea in the following lines:

“The blue cranes fishing in Cooloola's twilight/ has fished there longer than our centuries. / he is the certain heir of the lake and evening. / and he will wear their colour till he dies, /but I'm a stranger, come of a conquering people.”(*The Double Tree* 65)

The poet does not doubt the fact that the land truly belongs to the indigenous people. When she says, “Those dark-skinned people who once named Cooloola knew that no land is lost or won by wars...” the readers get the poet's ideology revealed. Wright ends the poem by asking human beings to love and be humble.

Wright's poem “A Document” (1965) is a bit different in setting from her other ecocentric poems. The poem develops out of her decision to dispose of the trees of a forest on her property to build bombers during World War II. The poet is the legal heir of the property and she can dispose it of legally. But she faces a serious dilemma in taking a cut-and-dry decision. She feels a close connection with the trees of the forest. She writes:

“Sign here. I signed, but still uneasy. / I sold the coach wood forest in my name. /Both had been given me, but all the same/Remember that I signed uneasily.” (*The Double Tree* 114)

There is a conflict in the poet's mind to cope with the decision that she has taken. Though the forest is under her ownership her intimate connection with the trees disturbs her mind. They were so dear to her and she still cherishes a very clear memory about their name and structure. She recalls: “Those pale red calyces like sunset light/ burned in my mind. A flesh-pink pliant wood.”(*The Double Tree* 114). The observation of Robert Zeller (2000) is relevant to be quoted here: “The conflict seems to be between reason and emotion: she signs the document to “help the nation”, but she knows the “bark smells sweet When you wound the tree.” However there is also a struggle with her past: her ancestors have bequeathed her name as well as her title to the forest, and the land is, like it or not, part of her heritage. And in being true to the nation, which has, as she says, waged a relentless war on trees, she feels she is betraying the land itself.” Poet's attitude creates a

sense of loss in the readers. Human beings are promoting war and even the trees, which are the real protectors of human life, are being used for making weapons.

To Judith Wright, nature is not away from her being. It is an indispensable part of her Self. Every dimension of her personality, like that of a poet, a social activist for the aboriginals, metaphysical thinker, eco-political activist, etc. all have a common link to her ecosophy. Wright in her poem “Prayer” writes:

“While every flower swings open its eternal door/ and every fruit encloses its timeless seed/ let me not watch in spite, caring no more, / but let my heart's old pain tear me until I bleed.” (Collected Poems 229)

The philosophy latent in these lines is a fusion of ecological wisdom and metaphysics. The prayer of the poet actually can be considered as a visionary's prophecy, and these are her anxiety about nature and future human life. From her poetry and activism, we are all convinced that she is not a mere textbook activist; instead, she has had first-hand nature experiences and sublime ecological vision. Wright's honest sincerity to own up and apologize for the inhuman approaches of the European ancestors places her in a lofty place in the entire literary scenario. Her pastoral background and intimate affinity with her philosopher husband are the chief influences that moulded the ecopoet, Judith Wright. Her springs and roots have been extensive and possessing many ramifications, and one cannot ponder over her ecopoetry without awe and amazement.

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Toward an Understanding of Animal Studies

Abstract

It is interesting to observe that the cultural ethos of the modern man is still resplendent with conventional practices and traditional symbols. The recurrent use of animals in our daily mores is indicative of this fact. In spite of the unhindered access humans have to the resources on the planet, the use of animals is not replaced with more sustainable means in the food, fashion or medical industries. It is the goal of this research paper to trace the basic premises of Animal Studies as a postmillennial discipline and its role in bringing about an inter-species justice, inclusive of the rights of the non-human beings. Animal Studies is a relatively novel field that abounds in interdisciplinary studies in humanities and natural sciences which deduce the past and present relations between animals and man. The critical thrust of Animal Studies is apparent in the context of the increasing understanding of the delicate yet abstruse interdependence shared by the two. The scope of the theoretical background of Animal Studies is analysed to understand the changing approaches in ethical, judicial as well as religious practices. The paper concludes that as long as cult beliefs occupy a prominent space in the human psyche, the Jungian archetype of man's hegemony over the non-human species will persist. It is in this context that as an academic discipline, Animal Studies has a wide purview in realising a harmonious interspecies coexistence.

Keywords: Animal Studies, Popular Culture, Speciesism, Interspecies

Introduction

What did the torturers of the inquisition want? ...confession restored a reassuring causality... Otherwise, the least heresy would have rendered all of divine creation suspect. In the same way, when we use and abuse animals in laboratories, in rockets with experimental ferocity in the name of science, what confession are we seeking to extort from them, from beneath the scalpel and the electrodes? (Baudrillard, 129)

It is interesting to observe that the cultural ethos of the modern man is still resplendent with conventional practices and traditional symbols. The recurrent use of animals in our daily mores is indicative of this fact. In spite of the unhindered access humans have to the resources on the planet, the use of animals is not replaced with more sustainable means in the food, fashion or medical industries. In addition to this, animals are used for lifestyle enhancement and religious practices which follow unfriendly or violent modus operandi while dealing with them. It is the goal of this research paper to trace the applicability of

Animal Studies in contemporary times when nature is going through a high degree of biodiversity loss.

An inherent notion is found prevalent in the collective unconscious that the personhood of humans surpasses that of the animals and the moral significance of the first is unsurmountable by the latter. An effective subversion of this conviction can be seen in the postulations of Animal Studies which is a relatively novel field that abounds in interdisciplinary studies in humanities and natural sciences to deduce the past and present relations between animals and man. The critical thrust of animal studies is apparent in the context of the increasing understanding of the delicate yet abstruse interdependence shared by the two. The Human-Animal studies begins at the critical evaluation of the categorical division between the two and what differentiates one from the other. This paper tries to analyse the basic premises of Animal Studies and its potential in rendering a more inclusive space for animals in contemporary social ethos.

Animal Studies

Animal Studies is a recently founded branch of knowledge with interdisciplinary implications. It emerged as an offshoot of the Animal Liberation Movement. Critics who are involved in Animal Studies try to define the binaries of animality and being human, with particular emphasis to ethical studies. Australian philosopher Peter Singer's work *Animal Liberation* (1975) is traced as the groundbreaking treatise from which the theory originated.

Animal Studies offer a trenchant objection to the anthropocentric assumptions of human exceptionalism endorsed by humanism. The understanding of the reality of the nonhuman beings on the planet comes as an integral part of contemporary studies as it is impossible to conceive the human world without the animal counterpart and the crisis faced by the latter. Different forms of analysis have emerged in this field, developed from ancient times. Animals are found featured in all cultures from cave paintings, folklore and religious customs to postmodern art forms as animals take up a huge space in popular imagination. The cohabitation between the two has benefited the human 'masters' to such an extent that it cannot be expressed in simple terms. In the present post-globalised world, animal husbandry is concentrated mostly on the food industry. The production and preparation of meat products from fowles and mammals constitute a hefty part of animal related business. Animals also appear in other cultural products like movies which also fall into the category of money-making enterprises. Animals are further used in 'Animal Assisted Therapy', making a capital out of the emotional side of the beings, which is unaccounted for in most of the human-animal relations.

Perhaps the study of the more-than-human world is invariably challenging for the fact that humans attempt to understand the other beings by using a uniquely human skill, namely language. Paul Waldau opines that “the existence of multiple languages and

dialects has, from time immemorial, complicated humans' sharing and transmission of views of other living beings; moreover, peculiarly modern forms of this problem today continue to create challenges for all forms of Animal Studies".(Waldau, ix) It must also be taken into consideration that it is humanly impossible to fathom the different sets of skills and needs certain animals have (elephants, dolphins) and that the scope of a linguistic or cultural study cannot encompass the aforementioned. Another premise of Animal Studies is problematising the human authority over animals and the lack of choice among animals other than human domination. Charlotte E. Blattner observes that "studies of animal agency consistently suggest that we grossly underestimate the capacity of animals to make decisions, determine and take action, and to organize themselves individually and as groups". (Blattner, 65) The human actions of deprivation of agency and ignorance of the critical thinking abilities of animals, in spite of the evidence offered by advanced researches in the field, accounts for either collective nescience or conscious callousness.

The human animal interactions are seen to be exceedingly violent in the process of domestication of animals. In the domestication of animals, which David Alan Nibert renamed "domesecration," we can see a misinterpretation of human values, employing violence systematically, and catastrophic acts of thoughtless exploitation. The exploitation of the non-human beings has been a consistent and pervasive strategy in all schemes of profit-making mechanisms devised by man since the beginning of civilisations. The unchecked manipulation of animals today breaks any pretence of ethical values. A familiar example can be seen in the taming of wild elephants for the purpose of circus, forced labour or religious practices. The parading of elephants during ceremonial processions indicates the intrinsic faith sewn into the cultural fabric of Hinduism. It takes rigorous training for the animal to be presentable in such a form. The treatment of the animal here can be ascertained as the masquerading of authority as pious admiration of the sentient being. Another instance is that of the domestication of dolphins. Unscientific methods of dog-training also involve violence.

A remarkable transformation can be seen in the way animals are considered in scholarly as well as social practices in recent times. The earlier notions such as 'justice for all of humanity' are being replaced by 'justice for all species'.

The 103-page Supreme Court judgment on jallikattu goes even further down the animal rights path. Responding to a number of petitions arising from a 2011 notification under the PCA 1972 banning the use of bulls as performing animals, the judgment upholds the ban by disallowing the use of bulls for jallikattu or bullock cart racing in any part of the country. In order to do this, the judgment examines in ethnographic detail the experiences and vulnerabilities of the bulls—in relation to their physiological and behavioral characteristics—during jallikattu events. (Srinivasan, 246)

The reformatory dialogue in the case of a number of other species has to be read parallelly. The revisionist thought that animals are active agents in their relationship with humans opens up space for the exploration of relational ethics. Generally, such ethical debates are accommodative of the vulnerability of the animal species, contextual differences in their treatment, sustainability of species, and a revised understanding of animal ontology.

Animals in Popular Culture

Animal images are widely used in popular cultural spaces such as movies, advertisements and television programmes. In fact, anthropomorphising of animals is so widespread that in popular culture, they have a seemingly friendly relation with humans. This in effect hinders one from realising the violent and exploitative relationship shared by the two. This also limits one from seeing the real picture of extinction and vulnerability of certain species. The ever expanding factory farming is discussed in the context of its environmental impact, thereby relegating to the background the more pressing issue of the rights of animals. The absolute domination and authority humans possess over the animals are more often than not unquestioned as a result of which the majority of humans do not realise the repercussions of explicit violations of rights of the animals.

Post-colonialism exposed the Western propaganda of the uncivilised East and the 'need' to bring light to the humans living in darkness. An intriguing parallel can be seen in the way animals are treated by humans since time immemorial. The unpleasant features in humans are often associated with animals which can be found reflected in the use of certain words in human languages, indicating that a derogatory position is assigned to animals in the human psyche. It must be noted that profanity is frequently articulated using foul language involving comparison between human qualities and animals. Contemporary communities are rife with domesticated dogs on whom humans make a considerable emotional investment. It comes across as a paradox that the same animal features in quotidian vilifications.

Peter Singer defines Speciesism as “a prejudice or bias in favour of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species” (Singer, 124). Speciesism as a moral component is naturally imbibed at an early age by members of the human community, by which they develop a belief that humans have the power and authority to rule over and make use of members of other species. An understanding of Animal Studies is incomplete without tracing the fundamental concept of speciesism, which is as old as religious beliefs. In the discourses on Animal Studies, it has been argued that speciesism is as amoral as racism or sexism and that it has to be vehemently opposed as we do with the latter two.

One of the primary objectives of Animal Studies is to challenge the age-old human supremacy over the other species. Critical Animal Studies can achieve this with its thrust

on trans-species approach, environmental justice and a new ethical outlook. The integration of research scholarship and activism has immense scope in the coming decades in engendering a safer space for the non-human species.

Tracing the Space of Animals in Religions

A critical approach is important while engaging with Animal Studies as it is a new discipline in the academic world which tries to foreground a comprehensive understanding of the space of animals in the human world. It is in this context that one has to locate the role assigned to animals in different religious contexts.

The Christian community offers a number of different claims about whether nonhuman animals have souls....Islam, the world's next most populous religious tradition, asserts that nonhumans do indeed have souls, as do the traditions that originated in the Indian subcontinent. Indigenous peoples, too, characteristically assume that nonhuman animals have souls. The simple fact is that, across time and place, the vast majority of humans have readily affirmed that soul-like ideas apply as fully to nonhuman animals as they do to humans. Frankness about this salient fact is one of the contributions that Animal Studies can make to the general understanding of how humans as a group have thought about other-than-human animals. (Waldau, 159)

While most religions consider non-human beings to have a soul, it does not in any way reflect in the treatment of the animals by humans, especially in religious practices.

As it is in the case of most of the cultural practices, the human-animal relations are also determined to a great extent by religion. There are similarities between most of the prominent religions in incorporating ritual sacrifice as a part of the many customs in practice. The Hindu mythological space is populated with as many anthropomorphic gods as with human-animal chimaeras. One of the reasons for the wide worship of animals across the subcontinent is the popular myths on anthropomorphised gods. Animals such as elephants, dogs, roosters, cows among many are common in Hindu communities.

Conclusion

It is universally accepted that human sensibility is shaped mostly by the collective faith of communities and the exploitative approach towards animals stem from this. The collective unconscious in turn is greatly influenced by religious ideologies.

If we ask ourselves why the question of animals and their welfare should have risen so prominently to consciousness in recent times, we must surely identify the decline in religious belief as a vital factor. So

long as people were sure of their status as the highest order of creation, made in God's image, blessed with an immortal soul and destined for judgement and eternity, they had no difficulty in rationalising the difference between themselves and other animals or in justifying standards of treatment for the latter which, if applied to the former, would have been criminal or worse. (Scruton, 10)

As long as cult believes occupy a prominent space in the human psyche, the Jungian archetype of man's hegemony over the non-human species will persist. The intensity of exploitation surged unprecedentedly in the post-capitalist societies, resulting in unfavourable living conditions and species loss.

Animal Studies redefines the man-animal interconnections by rewriting the humanist ethical constructs. Through the lens of Animal Studies, it is possible to conceive a world where the harm done to animals is stopped. It envisages a better future for the living beings outside our species wherein humans actively reduce their exploitative impact on the multispecies planet. It can hold people answerable for unethical actions which were hitherto unaccountable. As an academic discipline, it has a wide purview in realising a harmonious interspecies coexistence.

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Kashmir: A Nation or Territory in *The Collaborator*

Abstract

Resistance and power politics in Kashmir have been an interminable crisis in Indian history from the India-Pakistan partition onwards. This paper tries to analyse the control of Army in Kashmir in the novel. The Collaborator by Mirza Waheed through the concepts of nation and territory by Anderson and Deleuze respectively. The nomadic becomings operate in the novel like a resistance against Indian State and its codes at Kashmir. By analyzing the novel, we come across how a "state" (a system, or an organization) becomes a power apparatus of capture which suppresses the insurgencies in a brutal manner. The article also studies how the novel depicts different spaces in Kashmir.

Keywords: Kashmir, Nation, Nomad, State, Becoming,

The conflicts between state/nation and anti-state/ national movements are certainly a part of literature and philosophy even though there are different perspectives to evaluate pros and cons of these concepts and movements. In this paper the novel *The Collaborator* is analysed from the background of Kashmir conflict by using Anderson's concept of nationalism and Deleuze's concept of territory. Here Kashmir becomes a territory of becomings when nationalism fails to act as a code of state. One of the hair-splitting arguments pertaining to state is that it is seen as a powerful apparatus which captures resistances into its structure. As a matter of fact, Kashmir here is seen as a territory which resists the territorializations of Indian state. The paper tries to find out the differences between smooth and striated spaces in Kashmir and it also studies how it controls the lives of the characters and the future of insurgency in the novel.

Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator* describes the resistance of the people against the Indian rule in Kashmir. The novel portrays the early Kashmir as a land without restrictions and boundaries. The uprising of the common people triggers insecurity in the land and affects people's lives and the continuous conflicts bring insurgencies and revolution. The novel explores the tensions of revolt and war against Indian army by the natives in Kashmir. Kashmir becomes a state of resistance which "deterritorialize the enemy by shattering his territory from within" (*Thousand Plateaus* 375). The nomadic resistances of the natives are a collaborative attempt against the sovereignty of Indian state. The revolutionaries in Kashmir act as a pack, which attacks extrinsically with the help of Pakistan arms training centers.

Mirza Waheed says that the people in Kashmir always have two versions for everything: one is Indian and other is Pakistani. Both the nations detain army in their

borders to protect their supreme power over the place. He finds that the line of control, which separates the territories, triggered insurrection against the Indian state. Apart from an Indian and Pakistani versions, Mirza Waheed tries to portray the story in a Kashmir point of view which is purely native. According to Indian Army, the resistance and revolutionary movements in Kashmir are terrorism but the novelist depicts those uprisings as strive against Indian rule to achieve freedom and independence. The young boys, who fed up with the brutality of Indian Army in Kashmir, cross over the Pakistan borders for arms training. They are called freedom fighters or the martyrs in the novel.

According to Anderson, nation is an imagined political community that is limited and sovereign (*Imagined Communities* 22). Here Kashmir is an imagined and limited territory because the people cannot all know each other and they do not encompass all of mankind. Even though Kashmir is a state in India, it exists independently within the system. But Kashmir is not a complete nation because of the absolutism of Indian state installed there. The mob acts as a religious community in the novel with the arrival of a Moulavi. He, through his usual sermon, asks the villagers to pray to god so that the god may help them to improve their miserable conditions. The sermon is so dramatic that it arouses the anti-state feelings and violence in the villagers. The motivated boys especially teenagers start moving to arms training in Pakistan and nobody gets any information about many of them after their departure.

The paper uses both Anderson's nationalism and Deleuzian terminology to explain the situation in Kashmir. Anderson's concept of nation is entirely different from Deleuze's notion of territory. In Mirza Waheed's novel, Kashmir exists like a Deleuzian territory which is active with ethnic, religious, and anti-statepersuasions. More than that it continuously slips away from the grips of Indian constitutional codes which enabled them to prevail as a different entity within the state with special rights. The insurrection in Kashmir can be explained as an attempt to get an order and meaning as a nation. A nation is a product of a strong territorialization. In order to keep the sovereignty, state represses the establishment of new codes over the old. The novelist picturizes a chaotic Kashmir, which continuously tries to deterritorialize and decode. But Indian state tries to maintain its codes and laws when the revolution takes place through nomadic becomings in Kashmir.

As Deleuze says nomad has territory, he follows customary path, goes from one point to another (*Thousand Plateaus* 380). But a nomad's territory does not have line of control and borders. Unlike the sedentary territory, nomads form a territory which is indefinite and noncommunicating. The Azhad Kashmir is an open space where animals and people are distributed. As Deleuze says about nomads, they live without borders, enclosures, laws, and politics (*Thousan Plateaus*381). The army attacks and the whole tussles in the novel and attempts to imply a sedentary life in Kashmir. Captain Kadian is an Indian Army Officer who represents the power of state and oppresses the resistances in Kashmir.

Indian Army has killed many people. The men in Kashmir helplessly find their sisters, mothers and, wives are raped. Many people have disappeared day by day and no one gets their dead body in the novel. Kashmir is treated as an inevitable part to Indian state by the officers but the people resists this compelled nationalism like nomads. War is a constitutive element of nomads which collides with the state and cities to annihilate the striation of space.

State comprises the sedentary life with striated spaces. It has strict rules and regulations for everything. Captain Kadiyan has restrained the narrator in a sedentary life by giving him the job of a collaborator: the person who collects ID cards from the corps for the Army. Eventhough he has an urge to cross over the border, the narrator never overcomes the barriers. He thinks that it is all due to his extra reading of books other than in the syllabus (*The Collaborator* 17). Here Mirza Waheed points out that how education is part of the sedentary life which makes people civilized, coward, and rigid. Narrator's father, the village headman says that "These jumpy young fools, they will bring nothing but disaster... You just cannot fight the might of the Indian Army with a few borrowed pieces of wood, they will crush you to pieces in no time" (*The Collaborator* 27). The narrator and his family lead a sedentary life there without making an attempt to elope from the scrimmage around. A rebellious nomad can only cross over the border of a state without required documents because he lives in a smooth space. A smooth space is always beyond striated space without borders and laws of state.

Kashmir is a nonmetric, acentered nomadic space where India, Pakistan and the natives strive to establish their rules. Unlike the state, nomads have a smooth space. A smooth space is an abstraction without rigid laws. It is rhizomatic nonmetric acentered multiplicity (484) which constitutes fluxes. Mirza Waheed says that Gujjar castes in Kashmiris were nomads before they settled in Kashmir near Pakistan border and they started the revolt against Indian Army at first. Like their rhizomatic tradition, the rebellion also spread all over Kashmir. The line of control separates Kashmir from Kashmir and the people are engaged in guerilla warfare near the line of control. In the novel, every single child in Kashmir dreams and wants to go *sarhadpaar*; to cross over and become a freedom fighter. The protagonist's friends, Hussain, Ashfaq, Gul, Mohammed also cross the border with unfulfilled wishes and childhood dreams. By crossing the borders, they aspire the freedom of their native land through war. The war has multiple dimensions like emotional, religious, and ethnic; here the war is taking place between state and nomad.

The story of the novel develops through the tensions of the nomadic becomings of lives in Kashmir. From the beginning to the end, the theme of the novel is the desire for freedom, independence, and peace. The nomadic life exists only in becoming and it is an evolution from state and nation. The young boys run away from their family to join the arms training to become the freedom fighters and martyrs. The eponymous writer describes how he is attached to his friends Hussain, Ashfaq, Gul, Mohammed. Their

childhood days are memorable with the adventures in valley and songs of Muhammad Rafi, and infatuations to girls. They become warriors to fight for their homeland and the Indian Army murdered many of them and put their dead bodies in the valley in order to make a show off before the Pakistan soldiers in their pickets. Being the part of nomadic life, these boys fight against the state and tries to annihilate its form (*Thousand Plateaus* 417).

Indian Army officer, the brutal captain Kadian gives him the job of a collaborator. He is asked to collect the identity cards and the weapons of the corpses in the valley. The dead bodies without identity cards are not reported to the authorities. A man exists only if he has an identity card before the state. He saw bones, contaminated dead bodies and their belongingness in the valley. There are crows, dogs, mongooses, hyenas, birds, and wolves eating human flesh. The sight of his fellow being's dead body makes him cry. He always thinks about to run off and joins in the rebellion. But he finds it difficult as he is working for the state in Kashmir.

Unfortunately the revolt brings only turmoil in Kashmir when the area is declared under curfew, day and night. No one is allowed to come out of their house. Many revolutionaries are killed and the becomings are suddenly stopped in Kashmir. The narrator describes how he is unable to think about killing Captain Kadian at one time (*The Collaborator* 288). After paying homage to the hundreds of unknown dead, to the unsung, unrecorded martyrs, and disappeared sons, the narrator leaves like a coward (304). The novel does not conclude with a solution to the problems, but it clearly portrays the confusions, insecurities in the mind of a nomad through the collaborator.

To sum up the paper, Kashmir is a persisting controversial issue between India and Pakistan from the partition onwards. In the novel, Kashmir is portrayed as a smooth space with nomadic attributes which fights against the Indian Army. Deleuze says that nomad precedes the sedentary and its existence is in becomings. Being in resistance, Kashmir acts as a nomadic territory fighting against the Indian Army. The unending tussle in Kashmir is a nomadic movement or becoming that affects sedentaries (*Thousand Plateaus* 430). The natives fight against the brutality of the soldiers in Kashmir, but the revolt is oppressed by the government's curfew and military attacks. In a nutshell, Kashmir is not a nation, but a territory which continuously deterritorialize the codes of Indian State.

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