

Significant Resistance to Social and Global Domination in the Selected Texts of Ben Okri and Salman Rushdie.

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Abstract:

History and Literature played a vital role in the survival and flourishing of cultures, languages, traditions, ethnicity and nativity in many forms viz. Oral literature and Documented Texts. Colonial Emperors also used this tactic to dominate the aborigines as Lord Macaulay asserts in the text *Minutes*. Though natives opposed their power-centric access vehemently; but lack of regional integrity made their domination more barbaric. Therefore Geographic Annexation and Cultural subjugation remains a dominant theme in the texts of Africa and India. Their text advocated for the justice, equality, humanity and sovereignty under the mask of literary genres and devices. They unravel socio-political, and geo-political issues with a mass opposition to imposed identities like-Masculinity in Wars, Tribal and Colonial Identity, Patriarchal and Spiritual beliefs, Regional and Global Language. Along with these issues this paper intends to analyze and discuss the memory culture, lingual assimilation and psychological trauma in the texts of Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*.

Keywords: Partition, Post-Colonialism, Identity-crisis, Motherhood and Nativism, Geo-political Annexation, and Diaspora.

Date of Submission: 19-11-2022

Date of Acceptance: 03-12-2022

American Sociolinguist, Charles Tilly's Book "*Coercion Capital and European States*" made a realistic statement i.e. "*War made the State, and State made the War*", and draw attention towards the historical and political movements that formed the boundaries of Regions, States and Nations. Colonial annexation assimilated and segregated the cultural, lingual, and social identities. Intellectuals produced a no. of reformative texts and theories after surveying the historical and political movements, to bridge the gape between ideologies and practices. They recommended certain parameters of comprehending the inter-textuality of the text meanwhile examining the human behaviour and governing force. Though Ronald Barth's *Death of the Author* prioritizes the reader centric approach. Whereas Derrida's Deconstruction talks about multiple dimensions and interpretations that decentralise the fixed and structured meaning.

India and Pakistan's Independence was the historic but horrific event in which people became rival of own national identities. A mass conversation of religion was marked as stigma of that period. Bapsi Shidwa's *Ice and Candy Man*, Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* sketched the trembled beings, migration and lose of belongingness. Along with documented texts, Indian cinema's account have a no. of partition based films on the themes of oppression, sexual exploitation, individual's resistance to partition, communal amity and fraternity, war and traumatic experiences. They glorified the India-Pak War's heroic figures and simultaneously painted the agony and brave hearts of the soldier's families. India's partition text narrated the patriotism, national unity, cultural integrity, ideological differences, sacrifices, and regional disputes for instance Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* sketched the Hindu-Muslim oppugn and collective misconceptions for the contemporary government. His fantasy of snake ladder game dominated the text and both the religion under satirical commentary for the national disturbances- "*Mary Pereira is about to discover that when you win a battle; even staircase operate in your favour, you can't avoid a snake.*"(pg.no. 121).

The Famished Road by Ben Okri, recapitulated an underlying struggle of race and community insecurities. Most of the marginal texts depicted the prostitution as a threat to women and society. Puberty, Adultery and Rape embodied as a it was the integral part of that era, it sometimes found as a culture of the texts that societies had adopted in a disdainful manner.

White's power centric approach and scrambling for natural resources evolved a new era in the world history and literature; i.e. full of retaliation, aggression and restoration. India and Africa are multilingual,

multicultural and multiracial; thereby lingual barrier was also faced by natives during the National freedom movements, civil wars and globalization. India's *Midnight's Children* lights upon the cultural and lingual diversity. Rajasthan's mirror work, Khajuraho's erotic art and north's geographical representation constituted the peculiar and omniscient plot of a text. While visiting Maharashtra, the protagonist encountered with a world of languages and their certain rhyming schemes; that draws attention towards the lingual boundaries and partition.

India has been divided a new, into fourteen states and six centrally administered territories. But the boundaries of these states were not formed by rivers, or mountains or any natural feature of the terrain; they were instead walls of words. Language divided us: Kerala was speakers of malyalam, the only palindromically named tounq on earth; in Karnataka you were supposed to speak Kanarese; and the amputated state of Madras - known as Tamil Nadu - enclosed the aficionados of Tamil.(pg.no. 157).

Colonial education system contributed in the development of English as pidgins, creoles and global languages that had positively used to interpret the vernacular languages. Comprehending each-others languages and symbolic meaning influenced the natives language that switched to code-mixing and ineflectional morphology in which we add up first language's terminology to target language's sentence construction to deliver the intended meaning. Salman Rushdie's termed this technique of language hybridization- "Chutneyfication of English" in his booker prize text '*Midnight's Children*'. Similar expression of this form is also traced in the Indian poems - viz. *Goodbye Party for Miss Pushpa T.S.* by Nissim Ezekiel.

Salman Rushdie fictionalised the assemblies and ideological differences based on the realistic events of that time viz. political and military terror, migration, amalgamation of races and religions, cultural integrity and national unity. *Midnight's Children* also signified the children(people) of two mothers (Pakistan and India) who migrated in the darkest hour of partition and suffered with the imposed identities due to political ambition of power and equality (rich-poor). Both the centric characters of this novel, doomed to fate with Aristotle's concept of poetic justice in which Saleem(Illegitimate child) who nourished by Shiva's Family, at the end of this text, Saleem took the responsibility of Shiva and Parvati's illegitimate child. Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* also delineates this phase of society wherein adultery condemned by moralists and supported by invisible faces. Ma'am Koto's white beads jewellery signifies the morality and humbleness in her character, like Chaucer characterizes the wife of bath with dignity. Ma'am Koto look after the protagonist as own son and used own spiritual forces to get Azaro back to home from the unknown roads. Though it is strange to Azaro and the reader to found a dog as a guiding spirit, or a commanded underworld supernatural machinery of Ma'am Koto that hovered there-

"I saw a two legged dog emerge from the forest. I was so amazed that a dog standing on only two legs that I forgot my hunger and pain. I carried on home. At the edge of the forest I saw Madam Koto with a plate of chicken and yam in her hands. "(Pg.no.95).

This text unravels a lot of riddle and underworld mythology's questions that come forth with each chapter. Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* weaved in a satirical manner, that introduced supernatural machinery(Fire- Salamanders, Water-Nymphs, Earth-Gnomms, Air-Sylphs), as a light being to its protagonist 'Belinda'. Similarly the spirits of Azaro's ancients kept him moving on the road of his destiny and home. If we analyse this text under the impression of Psychoanalytic study of Sigmund Freud, all the characters posses symptoms of hysteria, parkinsons, schizophrenia and hallucinations. Excessive fear of uncertainties and exile from own community and village unhinged their psychology and perceptions. Though suppression of heroic spirit couldn't restrain them being benevolent and generous to society. It remarked upon the genetic endowment that chases them throughout the life in the form of bliss and curse. As a priest of Village, Azaro's grandfather predicts the roads of destiny and helps people to chose the directions of their fate. Similarly Azaro's father revealed that he fought with demons of spiritual world and dead souls, Azaro's mother also suffered from the anxious dreams. While Azaro visualised the invisible faces, strange human beings without eyes, mouths, bald heads, six fingers etc at the Ma'am Koto's bar. All these narration conjures up a constructive silence and grief that the intensity of inhumane treatment was at that extent. Fear of instabilities, forced migration and encounter had been grilled in natives who were witnessing the construction of roads and arrival of alien languages. Azaro mislaided several times in the forest due to rapid change of land marks and construction; who confessed to Ma'am Koto that he had been taken away by aliens to the river. This indicates towards the abduction and black birdings. Okri himself explained the significance of its title multiple times that how newly constructed roads created a horrific environment to them; yet it is questionable that whether the road is the thing, that frightened or the forced labour, migration, encroaching on fields or the alien culture.

"The roads seemed to me then to have a cruel and infinite imagina. All the roads multiplied, reproducing themselves, subdividing themselves, turning in on themselves, like snakes, tails in their mouths, twisting themselves into labyrinths. The road was the worst hallucination of them all, leading towards home and then away from it, without end, with too many signs, and no directions. The road became my torment, my aimless pilgrimage, and I found myself merely walking to discover where all the roads lead to, where they end."(pg. no. 95)

This text centred around the myths, spirituality, superstitious practices, genetic inheritances and the impact of Colonialism. Unlike *Midnight's Children*, *The Famished Road* interpreted own significant meanings. Okri's considered this road famished through the people's tragic end on the road's other side of darkness where depth of rivers swallow the human beings. Portrayal of the geographical exploitation and underdeveloped states, signifies the imposition of slavery, migration, hybridity, abject poverty and extreme dependency upon the government. Africa contains a large amount of natural resources and minerals like - daimomd, gold, silver, cocoa, palm oil etc. but aborigines couldn't relish the richness of own continent as mentioned in the texts of African authors-Helon Habila, Chris Abani, Sefi Atta, Okey Ndibe, and Ben Okri. They fictionalised the underlying corruption, lack of technical and agricultural advancement, foreign debts and investments, complex interdependence and deployment of foreign military. Okri portrayed extreme hypocrisy for the wealth that people failed to elect the concerned political leader. Condemning Ma'am Koto for the prostitution and annihilation of Azaro's Father from the priesthood exposed the society's mental sickness. Both the characters had heroic spirit and courage to fight for the community, and a magnanimous heart to serve and share the path of enlightenment with fraternity. That we witnessed at the bar, feast, and in the darkness of horrible nights. Their bellicosity haunted the people when they thrashed out the creditors, invisible spirits, and drunkards. Salman Rushdie's Saleem, Shiva and Parvati also fictionalised the world of magic and telepathy.

"Telepathy, then: the inner monologues of all the so called teeming millions, of masses and classes alike, jostled for space with my head. In the beginning, when I was content to be an audience - before I began to act - there was a language problem. The voices babbled in everything from Malayalam to Naga dialects, from the purity to Luck-now Urdu to the Southern slurrings of Tamil." (pg.no. 140).

After analysing this above mentioned excerpt of text, It can be asserted that fairy tales, solitude, folk tales of snakes had manipulated the child's fragile psyche, that resulted in fragmentive memory and visualization - *Hatim Tai, Ali Baba, Superman, Batman* etc. *The Famished Road's* Azaro also had a isolation from parental figures and witnessed the changes of new world. Though it cannot be denied that their symbolic representation of eccentricpsyche can be accounted for the historical event of partition. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* suffered with ethical conflict of "to be or not be" throughout the drama, and Saleem suffered with the misconception of legitimacy and hatred for the Amina after witnessing her confession of affection to Nadir Khan and unknown phone calls. Saleem accused her mother of adultery and infidelity in a fit of rage who later fallen apart by knowing his own mother- "shameless mother! Revealers of duplicity, of emotions which have no place in family life; and more". pg.no. (134). It reflects the paleo conservative upbringing that confined a women's rights under the name of marriage, society, femininity, responsibility and purity. It remained a mystery till the end of the play for the legitimate child(Shiva) of Amina and Ahmad Sinai but the sense of motherhood of these character didn't fade. Saleem Sinai pointed out the motherly rivalries between Marie and Ameena on several occasions. It can be a contrasting depiction of the attachment to motherland and the spirit of nativity among the people who were facing harsh criticism because of their religion, land, migration, language etc. *The Famished Road's* Azaro also brought this aspect in light at the arrival of alien faces and languages in Ma'am Koto's bar.

The people in the bar were stranger than any I had seen before. The group that sat round the man with the bloated eye looked alike. Their eyes were swollen and their lips were big and bruised. At first I thought they were all boxers. Than I noted two of them had only hand each and the original man had only three fingers.

These are my friends, ' the original man with the bloated eye said.

Where do you all come from? Madam Koto asked.

'Here. This country, this city. Here we live, here we die. (pg.no. 87)

These character's physical appearance and deformities indicated towards the civil and military wars. Their repartees to the question of Ma'am also narrated their devotion to motherland Africa, and vehement passion to not migrate on alien land. Helon Habila also Sketched the local disputes over the construction and colonial annexation and Okri text also exhibits the similiar circumstances wherein roads were constructing and forest were getting narrowed day by day. Though Okri didn't mention any civil war over the modernization, but explicitly indicates the aftermaths of battles and heroic spirit of aborigines in the disguise of Azaro's hallucination. Freud and Breur in *Study of Hysteria* (1895) wrote that the event is not painful, but remembrance of it makes the psyche gradient and disruptive. India's partition also gave flame to communal difference and cultural segregation unlike African states. They also fictionalise the mundane duties, folk-culture and communal insecurities. Along with social reformations, these texts portrayed how decentralisation of power had fetched uncertainties in the physical and psychological state of people.

Ubiquitous use of allegory, symbolism, dramatic irony, in media res, vignette, flashbacks, foreshadowing, parallelism, soliloquy, interior monologues exposed the underlying authorial meaning of the text. Africa got independence in 1965, but still their economic development couldn't restrain the hunger, poverty, sexual exploitation, and migration for the fundamental needs. Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* questioned the government for making journalism mouth puppet of politics and military. *Half a Yellow Sun* by Adichi bring forth the communal differences and civil war that indicates how

cultural differences can play a role of impediment in the education and economic freedom. These texts unveiled the relentless struggle for livelihood and survival among the uncertainties (geographical, psychological, intellectual, emotional etc.); resulted in the neutrality of the exponential growth of Africa.

Francis Fukuyama's *End of History and Last Man* discussed the Megalothymia (Master mentality) and Isothymia (Slave Mentality) and the Last Man. Fukuyama's realistic approach to the society gave us the concept of "*Clash of Civilization*", that we found a dominating theme of post-modern texts. He asked for some amendments in policies to lead the states with more efficiency and effectiveness. Fukuyama proposed the concept of liberal democracy as a negotiating force to harmonize the power positions. Though Fukuyama disposes the Egalitarianism on the all spheres of life except political grounds, because in his views it will not serve the originality and creativity if mere equality will be the aim, it may discourage one's potential to arrive beyond the established parameter of individual. Transfeminists also emphasized upon the development of individual identities. Unlike decolonisation, feminism also attributed to the one's liberty and particularity. Post-colonial writers narrated own community and explored new forms of representation and rejection to stereotypes in the forms of Lipstick feminism, Girlie feminism, riot girl feminism, cyber girl feminism, transfeminism etc. Salman Rushdie's portrayal of Parvati, itself represents the centralisation of power and equality in mystic ways. Social dilemma of power and inferiority complex submerged in these texts, that depicted how society psychologically deals with the submissive and imperious virtues.

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Poonam Mehra. "Significant Resistance to Social and Global Domination in the Selected Texts of Ben Okri and Salman Rushdie." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 27(11), 2022, pp. 23-26.