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“Personal Impulse to Political Crisis: Meta-narratives and Colonized Identity in Things Fall Apart and Ice Candy Man”

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Abstract: *The paper attempts to establish the personal impulse which leads to a Nation’s confrontation. The instinct of a human, who claim to be in a power structure, demands socio political revolution in a particular community. This dominance questions the fundamental, cultural, psychological and ethnic awareness of a society. Metanarratives explain this appropriate hybridity, a new trans-cultural or cross cultural form that arises in terms of the oppressed. The study elucidates the hegemony, ambivalence and ideologies of the colonizer and the colonized in both texts, namely Things Fall Apart and Ice candy man. These texts disclose the personal augmentation in human that paves way to political crisis.*

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial Literature as a discipline evolved after the decolonisation of British Raj in its colonies. It expresses the anxiety, lost cultural legacy, socio economical and political exploitation of land and native people. However the colonialism and imperialism started back in 1800’s, it had much control over the colonies till the early Twentieth century. The colonial masters called it as “the extension of human civilization”. Though the primary motive of white masters is trade, import and export, slowly they start to claim political power over the country. They imposed their cultural discourses through language, law, Religion and reason etc. After the decolonization, the colonized countries those who lost their identity started writing back. This gave way to postcolonial literature and theory as a separate entity.

As Bill Ashcroft says

The development of national literatures and criticism is fundamental to the whole enterprise of post-colonial studies. Without such developments at the national level, and without the comparative studies between national traditions to which these lead, no discourse of the post-colonial could have emerged... It is the beginning of what Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka has characterized as the ‘process of self-apprehension’ (Soyinka 1976: xi). (16).

Colonialism resulted in marginalization, Diaspora, racism, complexities, otherness, gender discrimination and identity issues. The postcolonial writers asserted their nation’s space and place, reclaimed cultural integrity and revised history. They used colonizer’s language with the native language to reinforce the richness of natives.

META-NARRATIVES AND CULTURAL CRINGE

Chinua Achebe is one of the prolific African writer, he used his native words (Igbo-African language) along with the English language in his book *Things Fall Apart* (1958). This is

otherwise called as meta- narratives (a large cultural story that seeks to explain within its border, local narratives). The novel is seen as a strong voice echoing the richness of African land and native culture. It is written as a defence of African native bounty, which is misrepresented in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). Achebe portrays the pre-colonial African society with particular reference to Igbo community and the distortion of European civilization in Africa. The story revolves around Okonkwo, the valiant warrior of Umofia village. He is a well respected man of Umofia, he is honoured for being a perfect man and he follows the Igbo tribal beliefs and customs. He gets agitated with the entry of white man. He tries to fight back but fails miserably. He apprehends that his own clansmen are accepting the alien religion; he grows desperate for the changes and commits suicide.

As Achebe states

The white missionary was very proud of him and he was one of the first men in Umofia to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, or Holy Feast as it was called in Ibo...The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart (127-29).

These lines illustrate the personal and political command over the natives. The novel enlightens tribal social integration, greatness of tribal culture, tradition and practise, their gods and goddesses, beliefs and justice etc. Achebe uses meta-narratives to describe these factors of native culture. *Things Fall Apart* also shows double oppression of female characters - colonial masters are dominating the tribal men and women. The tribal men are suppressing tribal women. These problems evolved among the tribes, it is because of the European master's personal impulse to capture more countries in order to civilise them in their own style. Achebe as a reliable narrator uses meta-narratives to state his thoughts. He further emphasizes on European personal impulse which led to the political and cultural integrity. This is the paper's first argument.

As Datta G Sawant says, "Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) depicts the Imbalance between the West and East by showing the superiority of the West over the East, West always dominates the East. Said applied terms and concepts as "orient, the other" and "accident" to show the relation between two cultures" (2).

Achebe characterizes this divergence, discrimination and othering in his novel. His characters undergo several contradictions in terms of identity. They were colonized and deprived of their own identity.

SIDHWA'S *ICE CANDY MAN*

In Indian context, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice Candy Man* (1988) shares the same concepts of *Things Fall Apart* in a different sphere and locality. Sidhwa's characters pictures this personal impulse which leads to political complications. The novel deals with the bloody partition of India. The narrative and meta-narrative is traced from the eyes of a girl called Lenny who grows up in a Parsee family. Lenny as a child narrator observes the calamity and untold history in Indian freedom struggle. She witnesses the conspiracy among the national leaders, the

controversies regarding religion and partition, patriarchal domination, gender issues, subjugation, exploitation and suppression of women as inferior sex.

The novel gives an insight to brutal murders and bloodsheds that took place during the Indian independence struggle. Usually the mainstream history is dominated by the popular power structured people, while the untold reality comes out in a fictionalized manner through few authors. This historical fiction has meta-narratives, focusing the India and Pakistan battle in Lahore. The author uses localised language to deliver the power of local narration and realism in the novel. *Ice Candy Man* conveys the personal prejudice in the characters, which turns them to be violent and animalistic. The novel is about the partition, but it focuses on the common man and woman, their view of Indian nationalism and political turmoil. The main characters in the novel are Ice candy man, Ayah and Lenny. As Sidhwa says

Ice-candy-man's versatile face transformed into a saviour's in our hour of need. Ice-candy-man is crouched before me. 'Don't be scared, Lenny baby,' he says. 'I'm here.' And putting his arms around me he whispers, so that only I can hear: I'll protect Ayah with my life! You know I will. . . I know she's here. Where is she?... I say 'On the roof – or in one of the godowns . . .' Ice-candy-man's face undergoes a subtle change before my eyes, and as he slowly uncoils his lank frame into an upright position, I know I have betrayed Ayah (182).

HINDU-MUSLIM RIOT (PERSONAL VENGEANCE)

Ice candy man is a Muslim but he loved Ayah (Hindu), caretaker of Lenny. The novel's main plot focuses on the Hindu-Muslim riot, which resulted in brutalities. Before the partition, Hindus and Muslims lived with fraternity. After seeing Muslims massacred in a large number, Ice candy man's attitude changes, he turns to be vehement. He loved Ayah but Ayah loved the Masseur. Ice candy man becomes violent after seeing Ayah and masseur's copulation. Ice candy man changes into a satanic figure because of his personal revenge and prejudice over Ayah and Hindus. He manipulates Lenny and finds out the hiding place of Ayah. He turned out to be a predator, who is waiting to kill Hindus. Immediately he became the villain of the story. This is how the personal evil motive of Ice-candy-man destroys a woman's life and in larger level, it shakes the religion based violence. During the lime light of partition, both the land and women suffered endless degradation. Like the land is split into two pieces, many women were molested and thrown into prostitution. PERSONAL AND POLITICAL SPHERE

Sidhwa describes the men's feeling of superiority over fellow human ' I beg you in the name of all you hold sacred, don't kill the little ones,' Ranna heard his father plead.

' make them Sikhs... let them live.. they are so little'(201). Men were involved in destroying the Hindu, Muslim and other minority communities, massacred men and children in vice-versa. But their personal impulse for lust turned them lascivious and they molested women brutally before killing them. Men took superiority over this calamity and used this situation to full fill their personal desire towards women. Sidhwa includes Ranna's story, "stop whimpering you bitch, or I'll bugger you again! A man said irritably. Other men laughed. There was much movements. Stifled exclamations and moans. A woman screamed, and swore in Punjabi(203).

Sidhwa exposes the tragic brutalities faced by women but she reinforces the power that a woman has. The Godmother proves that majesty of woman. They find out Ayah changed into a Muslim and living as Ice candy man's wife. Godmother shouts at Ice candy man for letting his wife to be molested and tormented by others. But Ice candy man feels that it is his revenge, his personal choice that he wanted Ayah to suffer that pain to be a subordinate to him. Godmother at this point shows her personal impulse and voices out for women rights. She says to Ice candy man "You have permitted your wife to be disgraced! Destroyed her modesty! Lived off her womanhood! And you talk of princes and poets! You're the son of pigs and pimps!". This denotes a strong voice for suppressed women.

CONCLUSION

The texts *Things Fall Apart* and *Ice candy Man*, proves that an individual's personal impulse and desire to dominate drives him/her to violate the rules and go against nature. In European context, they colonise other countries and make the colonized feel inferior. In the sphere of humans, as Sidhwa points out the constraints and love to be powerful or superior, makes a human an animal, which leads to a nation's cultural and geographical disintegration. This dislocation mainly happens because, the personal impulse in any human gets violent to when it claims a political or power structure.

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