

संस्थायें ही आज के बैंको के तरह ही लोगों से थोड़े सूद पर धन प्राप्त कर अधिक सूद पर व्यापारियों को ऋण देती थी।

सहकारिता की भावना मनुष्य में एक सामाजिक स्वतः प्रवृत्ति है। संघ सामाजिक अभिरूचि का एक स्वभाविक प्रतिरूप है। परिणाम स्वरूप सामान्य उद्देश्य के लिए एक विशेष इकाई का निर्माण होता है। गुप्तकाल के आर्थिक जीवन में स्वतः इसका स्पष्टीकरण प्राप्त होता है।

निष्कर्षतः—गुप्त काल में व्यापारिक संगठन का प्रचलन था। संगठन के लिए नियम बने हुए थे। इन्हीं नियमों के तहत संघ अपना अपना व्यापारिक कार्य सम्पन्न करते थे। वास्तव में गुप्त काल भारत के इतिहास का स्वर्ण युग था।

संदर्भ—सूची

- 1 जातक—3 पृष्ठ 181
- 2 महाबग्गा — 811
- 3 प्राचीन भारत का इतिहास विद्याधर महाजन एस0 चन्द्र एण्ड कम्पनी राम नगर नई दिल्ली 110055 पृष्ठ सं0 560
- 4 जातक — 1 पृष्ठ 111
- 5 उत्तरापथ का अश्ववाञ्छि जातक — 2
- 6 याज्ञवल्क्य स्मृति 2(259)
- 7 बृहस्पति स्मृति — 13.3
- 8 विद्याधर महाजन पृष्ठ सं0 558
- 9 जातक पृष्ठ सं0 404
- 10 जातक पृष्ठ 405
- 11 सम इकोनामिक इंस्टीट्यूशन ऑफ एशियेन्ट इण्डिया यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ इलाहाबाद स्टडीज, 1942 पृष्ठ 303

Representation Of The African-American 'Other' In Harper Lee's 'To Kill A Mocking Bird'

Sharanya Thakur*

Consciousness is an awareness of what is happening around us. It is also an ability to think about matters related to our social, cultural and Political existence. An intentional effort required by every individual to know what social justice is and to maintain a moral a moral responsibility to defend it in all circumstances. In spite of such self-consciousness, certain sections of society, world over, find it a daunting task to defend their consciousness, to withstand pressure from those who exercise arbitrary power and their discriminating oppressive practices.

In order to retain and control such power the dominant groups devise different ways and methods to pressurize 'others' into complete subjugation. While successful resistance to oppression informs the literatures written by these historically marginalized people, it is imperative to be attentive to the simultaneous silencing that has not ended.

I aim to demonstrate power structures inherent in Language define and delimit the identity of In the African Americans.

In "Loose Canons", a compilation of critical essays on race, African American literature and multiculturalism, Henry Louis Gates expresses his concern and intellectual engagement with the other and their representation in the written or spoken form. He goes on to explain:

"What I mean by citing these two overworked terms is precisely this how blacks are figures in literature and also how blacks figure, as it were in literature of their own making" (Gates 57)

How African-Americans are figures in literature can be understood examining the actual shifts in language both conscious and subconscious, different linguistic tropes and manoeuvres, made by non-Black artists. Presumptions, patterns of misappropriation and erasure fall along familiar racial lines and quite often reveals the racial barriers

*Add: N/9, Patrakar Nagar, Kankarbgh, Patna

that still exist in people's psyche. Toni Morrison too, in her Nobel Lecture emphasizes on the misuse and abuse of language by the powerful in order to demean and control, She writes:

“whether it is the obscuring state language or the faux language of mindless media whether it is the proud but calcified language of the academy... whether it is the malign language of law-without ethics, or language designed for the estrangement of minorities, hiding its racist plunder in its literary cheek— it must be rejected, altered and exposed... Sexist language, racist language, theistic language - all are typical of the policing languages of mastery, and cannot, do not, permit new knowledge or encourage the mutual exchange of ideas” (Morrison, 16-17)

This non-exhaustive list of repressive systems enumerated by Morrison and the language they employ to talk about African Americans alienates them as the society's other and hinders rightful representation. The discourses on how Europe described differences between itself and others, uses European cultural categories, language and ideas to represent and subjugate these others. The knowledge produced by such discourses gets put into practice and then becomes a reality that fosters assumptions and preconceived notions.

Subaltern studies critics, Gayatri Spivak and bell hooks have questioned the academic engagement with the other. To be truly engaged with the subaltern, (in this case the African Americans) they argue that an academic would need to decentre himself or herself as the expert.

Traditionally the academic wants to know about the subalterns experience but not their explanation of those experiences. Many times unknowingly or deliberately the voice of the subaltern, their true experience gets appropriated and the original source of the very experience being spoken about gets lost. hooks argues that according to the received view in Western knowledge a true explanation can only come from the expertise of the academic. The subordinated subject gives up their knowledge for the use of the Western academic. Hooks description of the relationship between the academic and the subaltern subject lays bare the equation as it is:

“No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you.... In such a way that it has

become mine, my own. Rewriting you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority.” (hooks,241-243)

This difference between us and them is perpetrated through media and discourse. Stuart Hall also, argues how the power of discourse is used to create and reinforce Western dominance, like in legal knowledge, which as always, has underwritten the experience of the marginalized. The rules that ground legal decisions may be sound, but the determination of facts relies too much on white experiences and viewpoints and limit laws transformative potential.

Baldwin's 'The Evidence of Things Not Seen' (1985) and Morrison's 'Friday on The Potomac' (1992) and Dead Man

Golfing' (1997), critical essays on legal discourse deals with how perception tends to differ across racial lines. Both Baldwin and Morrison examine the continuing need for African - American narratives to supplement and write over legal discourse. They focus on the injustice of legal processes for eliciting testimony and recognizing the credibility of that testimony. This shift in emphasis distinguishes civil rights era tactics of “changing the substances of law” from post- civil rights era to concerns about “the faulty process of Law”. The move from legal substance to legal process also involves shifting from the realm of thinking and argumentation to the problem of seeing, speaking and hearing in a racialized world. Their essays tend to recast legalized racism as a sensory problem rather than one of rationality. The problem of race remains but neoliberal rhetoric and policies have changed its meaning and functioning. Their essays seek to recentre discussions on social justice. During the Civil Rights Movement, activists transformed the content of American legal doctrines because they trusted extant procedures to protect and promote the interest of historically marginalized people.

According to Baldwin the failure to realize the goal of the civil rights movement followed from law's myopic vision of life. Courts, judges and juries could see only what their life experiences had conditioned them to see. The rules for discovering presenting and evaluating evidence had not been rewritten because legal activists assumed that eradication of racist legal doctrines would be sufficient to

improve the life of African Americans. There was little effort to change how legal discourse 'viewed' African Americans only how it thought about them. Reading alongside these essays, the text of Lee's 'To Kill A MockingBird', reveals the undercurrents of prejudice that denies justice to the oppressed. This book has at its narrative centre oppressed individuals who cannot "speak" for themselves and are represented by intellectuals.

"To Kill A Mocking Bird' depicts 1930's attitudes to race and class in the Deep South town of Maycomb. We witness Atticus Finch's struggle for justice on behalf of Tom Robinson, a black man charged with the rape of a white girl. The story narrated through the young eyes of Scout and Jem Finch explores the life of a small town before desegregation. The novel is considered an unforgettable classic which exposes the violence, hypocrisy and 'lacunae in the judicial system. Still, the reason behind these judicial loopholes remain unexplained. The monologic narrative dexterously evades the issue of impartial judgment, Widely acclaimed, Lee's Pulitzer winning book is thought to impart lessons that emphasize tolerance and decry prejudice, yet despite its claims it has been challenged for its use of racial epithets. The story of Tom Robinson is taken and presented from the viewpoint of Scout, a white girl child instead of Robinson himself. This distancing from the source of the narrative presents an exact parallel to the manner in which the subaltern voice gets appropriated to suit the needs of the academic. Dianne Baecker asserts that the use of Scout's narration serves as a convenient mechanism for readers to be innocent and detached from the racial conflict. Scout's voice "functions as the *not-me* which allows the rest of us- black and white , male and female to find our relative position in society" (Baecker,5) Lee combines the narrator's voice of a child observing her surroundings with a grown woman's reflections on her childhood. She uses the ambiguity of this voice combined with the narrative technique of flashback to play intricately with perspectives. This narrative method allows Lee to tell a "delightfully deceptive" story that mixes the simplicity of childhood observation with adult situations complicated by hidden motivations and unquestioned tradition. However, at times the blending causes reviewers to question Scout's preternatural vocabulary and depth of understanding. Both Harding Lemay and the novelist and literary critic Granville Hicks express doubt that children as sheltered as Scout and Jem could

understand the complexities and horrors involved in the trial for Tom Robinson's life. Scholar Patrick Chura, suggests Emmet Till was a model for Tom Robinson. Emmett Till, was a black teenager who was murdered for flirting with a white woman in Mississippi in 1955. His death is credited as a catalyst for the Civil Rights Movement. Chura notes the icon of the black rapist causing harm to the representation of the "mythologized vulnerable and sacred southern womanhood". Infact this very false miscegenist fear is the topic of Aunt Alexandra's tea party. Also Scout's teacher Miss Gates, while coming out of the courtroom complains to Miss Stephanie Crawford :

'It's time somebody taught em a lesson, they were gettin' way above themselves, an' the next thing they think they can do is marry us'(Lee, 272)

It is a strategy employed to assert the categorical absolutism of civilization and savagery. Any transgression by black males that merely hinted at sexual contact with white females often resulted in a punishment of death for the accused. Most often many black men were sentenced to death despite overwhelming evidence of their innocence. Racial gaze constantly undercuts any humane concern or compassion.

Judge Taylor appoints Atticus Finch to defend Tom Robinson who has been accused of raping a young white woman, Mayella Ewell. Although many of Maycomb's citizens disapprove, Atticus has no other option but to represent and defend Tom Robinson, relaying the message that justice was for all, irrespective of race. Sadly, reality is far removed from truth. Whites of Maycomb county have already decided "this nigger" guilty and find it embarrassing, to use Aunt Alexandra's word, that one amongst them has decided to stand for Tom Robinson. The carnival atmosphere before the trial undermines the illusion or assumption of impartial legal judgment. Rather the justice is pre determined because it views an already structured spectacle. 'Look at all those folks, it's like a Roman Carnival'(Lee, 176) allusion to a Roman Carnival by Miss Maudie seems apt here citizens of Maycomb had turned up in large numbers to view the senseless slaughter of an innocent. Scout's narrative further elaborates the atmosphere outside the court room and brings out the stark contrast between the whites and the black folks: "It was a gala occasion... mules and wagons were parked under every available tree. The court house square was covered with picnic

parties sitting on newspapers....In a far corner of the square the Negroes sat quietly in the sun, dining on sardines, crackers.’(176)

The theme of passive silence of the black folks has been reemphasized time and again: “The negroes behind us whispered softly amongst themselves”.(186) Even their unanimous voices are toned down to soft whispers and their anger and outrage ‘muffled’ (191) and their patience is ‘Biblical’.(231) When Mr. Gilmer cross examines Tom Robinson his honest answer riles him:

“You felt sorry for her, you felt sorry for her? Mr. Gilmer seemed ready to rise to the ceiling.... Below us nobody liked Tom Robinson’s answer.”(218)

The very notion of a black man feeling pity for a white woman subjugates the idea of white supremacy. Discourse of pity is meant for African-Americans. They are supposed to be the helpless silenced victims not the other way round. Such subtle ways of knowing infects the perceptual faculties of legal decision makers and render null any attempts to impartibility. It is a foregone conclusion that Jem refuses to accept when Reverend Sykes tells him :

“Mr. Jem, I ain’t ever seen any jury decide in favor of a colored man over a white man”.(230)

Atticus establishes that the accusers- Mayella and her father Bob Ewell are lying. It also becomes clear that the friendless Mayella made sexual advances towards Tom, and that her father caught her and had beaten her. Furthermore Tom, is physically impaired which made him unable to commit the act he is accused of. Tom Robinson’s Trial is juried by ”White” Farmers who convict him despite all evidence put forth by Atticus. Even the more educated and moderate white townspeople support the jury’s decision. Hapless Tom is shot seventeen times and killed while trying to escape from prison. Roslyn Siegel includes Tom Robinson as an example of the recurring motif among white Southern writers of the black man as “stupid, pathetic, defenseless and dependent upon the fair dealing of the whites, rather than his own intelligence to save him.”(Siegel,) For people of Maycomb county, Tom’s death was typical

‘Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger’s mentality to have no plan...just run blind first chance he saw... you know how they are -Easy come, easy go.... They say he

kept himself clean, went to church and all that, but when it comes down to the line the veneer’s mighty thin. Nigger always comes out in em.’ (Lee,265)

Once again the blame falls on the victim. Determining what constitutes an appropriate analogy of prior strange behaviour hinges on law’s necessary racialized vision. Baldwin in his essay-The Evidence of Things Not Seen shows how blackness the signifier, carries with it certain meanings that can be mapped onto places (Atlanta, Maycomb county) people (Wayne Williams, Tom Robinson) and the government. Blackness is thus a description of physical reality a social structure of privilege and disadvantage that use biological markers to distribute the same.

Songbirds and their associated symbolism appear throughout the novel. The titular mockingbird is a key motif that is mentioned first when Atticus gives his children air-rifles for Christmas and allows Uncle Jack to teach them to shoot. Atticus warns them that they can shoot all the bluejays they want’, but they must remember that; “it’s a sin to kill a mocking bird’.(99). Later on Miss Maudie explains to Scout,that mockingbirds never harm other living creatures, they simply provide pleasure with their songs :” They don’t do one thing but sing their hearts out for us”.(According to Edwin Bruell, “To kill a mockingbird” is equivalent to kill that which is innocent and harmless like Tom Robinson. However, scholar Christopher Metress connects the symbol of the mockingbird to Boo Radley. Eventually Scout comes to see Boo Radley as a ‘mockingbird’ someone with an inner goodness that must be cherished. Scholars have noted that Lee uses the theme of mockingbirds when she tries to make a moral point. When Tom Robinson is shot to dead, Mr. Underwood “simply figured” it as a sin.: “He likened Tom’s death to the senseless slaughter of songbirds by hunters and children”(Lee, 265) But no moral can support the diabolical symbol of the mockingbird. Whereas Boo Radley escapes from the loopholes of law with the support of Mr., Tom Robinson is brutally killed. A prejudiced jury and society, denies him an impartial hearing. Once again the allegory, or symbol in this case, fails to confront the impenetrable wall of prejudice.

The novel represents, as Allen Barra notes, a “sugar coated myth” of Alabama history. A history that does not include the black population of Alabama, a fact that is reiterated by Isaac Saney in his essay “The Case Against To Kill a Mocking Bird’ . He states:

‘Perhaps the most egregious characteristic of the novel is the denial of the historical agency of Black people. They are robbed of their roles as subjects of the history reduced to mere objects who are passive hapless victim, mere spectators and bystanders in the struggle against their own oppression and exploitation.’ (Saney, 108)

In ‘The Devils Find Work’ Baldwin accuses those in power trying to appropriate the supposed impartiality of the law to maintain their power. He asserts that ‘the civilized have created the wretched, quite coldly and deliberately and do not intend to change the status quo; are responsible for their slaughter and enslavement Whenever and wherever they decide that their “vital interest “are minced, and think nothing of torturing man to death.’ (Baldwin, 16).

Tom Robinson is shot dead yet his death does not shock, it happens as a matter of fact, a foregone conclusion. Instead of representing and shielding him against oppression, the judiciary and police act as catalyst to preserve the system. For the legal system and police determination of facts relies too much on white experience, thus limiting the transformative potential of the legal, socio political system.

WORKS CITED

1. Lee, Harper: To Kill A Mocking Bird, London; Arrow Books; 2010. Print
2. hooks, bell: Out There: Marginality and Contemporary Culture (eds) R.Ferguson et al, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;1990.Print.
3. Morrison, Toni: Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination, New York; Vintage Books;1992. Print .
4. Saney, Isaac: The Case Against To Kill a Mocking Bird: Race and Class,45,(1), July-September 2003, 99-110
5. Baecker, Diane: Telling it in Black and White: The Importance of the Africanist Presence in To Kill a Mocking Bird, Southern Quarterly; Spring 1998;36(3); 124-32.
6. Baldwin, James: James Baldwin: Collected Essays (ed) Toni Morrison, Library of America;1998.Print
