

ANALYSIS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY SAW SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The twentieth century saw significant political, social, and spiritual developments. Virginia Woolf noted in her essay "Modern Fiction" that "on or about December, 1910, human character changed" (320), which was the cause of corresponding changes in literature. These had a profound effect on human character. There was a great deal of doubt and uncertainty at the beginning of this century. It questioned all accepted standards and created an atmosphere of inquiry. The twentieth century brought with it the emergence of adversarial behavior and the literary revelation of a new, inventive period. It suggested a mocking rejection of the established and accepted values. Men felt that because of a meaningless culture, they were situated in an inconsequential predicament. Dramatic literature, and the Theater of the Absurd in particular, has shown to be comforting in exposing the existential concerns that man is obliged to deal with as a result of the difficult postmodern era. As the greatest obsessions of modern man, the individuals, along with intellectuals and philosophers, were bewildered by fundamental questions about their identity and thus explored a stabilized sense of self and identity amidst the maximum communicative entropy based on the butterfly effect principle that one's chaos can result in order in the other.

KEYWORD: Political, Social, Spiritual Developments, Dramatic Literature

INTRODUCTION

The term „modern“ can be antiquated with more ancient history; however, Habermas refers to this advancement as his emphasis amidst the eighteenth century. This task added up to a phenomenal scholarly exertion with respect to Enlightenment masterminds “to develop objective science, universal morality and Law, and autonomous art according to its inner logic” (Harvey 12). The concept was to utilize the compiled knowledge produced as a result of numerous people working uninhibitedly and inventively for the quest for human liberation and the improvement of day by day life. The technological control of nature guaranteed an opportunity to overcome the challenges of scarcity and the unpredictable catastrophes of nature. The improvement of reasonable methods of thought, guaranteed emancipation from the irrationalities posed by legends and myths, superstition and religion, and rational forms of social organization and discharge from the subjective utilization of intensity and also from the clouded side of our own human instincts. Such a venture can only have the capabilities to unmask the immutable, universal and unceasing features of mankind.

Modernity has been hailed as a sign of progress and cultural refinement, but its anthropocentric vision, dictated by its complete faith in scientific thinking, has led it toward establishing a faceless technocratic society. The instrumental rationality of modernity gave rise to an impulse, characteristic of the West, to “civilise” the world that smacks of a kind of egoistical hubris waiting for its fateful *telos*.

Although the origin of the term “modern” (from the Latin *modernus*) is traced back to the fifth century AD in connection with valorization of Christianity, that connection became thinner over the years under the increasing impact of the process of secularization of thought brought about by the political transformation of Europe into an emergent democracy. The easy slippage of the term from the religious to the secular is indicative of the way ideological conflation created a saturated space for modernity as the new European ideal to operate equivocally. With the occurrence of the two world wars modernity came face to face with its doppelganger, confronting a crisis of its own.

It is possible to think that this crisis gave modernity an opportunity to turn back and turn inward and develop an analeptic vision and a form that could accommodate its inner contradictions within its enclosed space. Its emphasis on the “aesthetics of culture” and its so called “classical turn” are the twin strategies employed to “contain” its desperate impulses within its rigorous formalism. But the debate about its exhaustion still continues, despite the fact that modernity has in the meantime transformed itself into its new incarnations by successfully appropriating some of its adversaries. Fredric Jameson’s extension of modernity into the ethnic rationality of lately approached capitalism and the marketplace is a corroboration of the Habermasian thesis that modernity is an “incomplete project” that sustains itself through a constant inclusion of its “other.” This inclusiveness of the project of modernity also involves its reclamation of the past in its vestigial pastness as a necessary detour to move forward in time.

The modern British literature has its beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe and America. A number of events contributed to the concept of „modern“, to illustrate a few important –Charles Darwin and his book *Origin of Species* published in 1829 which brought out a new world outlook especially among religious communities, emergence of socialism and later communism by the advent of Karl Marx by his book *Das Capital*, appearance of Sigmund Freud and the psycho analysis theory, Albert Einstein’s Theory of Relativity combine with Quantum theory and more importantly World War I. The drastic influence of these events gave rise to modernism. Modern inclinations were evident in all disciplines, if one considers painting, music arts, science and literature. Traditional tools and techniques and notions were rejected, and new approaches and ideas emerged.

Forster’s symbolism, Joyce’s epiphany, Woolf’s psychological teaching, Lawrence’s Oedipus complex, Orwell’s dystopia, Golding’s vision of a golden age and Greene’s moral and religious allegories are the ingredients which have freshened up and have widened the scope of English function today. The purpose here is to highlight the influence of the pioneering work of the writer and enumerate to examine the impact of their theories of art to re-establish the modern elements in the short stories of Mulk Raj Anand. The entire European society underwent a tremendous upheaval in the Era of the two World Wars resulting in quest for values and identity, which marked a crucial change in the intellectual atmosphere of scientific discoveries such as relativity and quantum theory which had shattered the suspicions and had revealed the reality explored by Albert Einstein (1879-1955) and extends a major support to modern physics. He secured the 1921 Nobel Prize for the discovery of photoelectric effect which served as the essential building block of the hypothesis of Quantum theory that explicated on the code of conduct of subatomic and atomic fragments.

Interpretation of Dreams (1901), a commendable work by Freud, altered individual's perspective of human personality and psyche. The therapeutic techniques in which patients reported their thoughts without reservations and displayed their analysis of feelings derived from their childhood attachments was developed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1929), an Austrian neurologist and the founding father of psychoanalysis. Oedipus complex was thus formulated as the focal tenet of psychoanalytical hypothesis to incorporate sexuality to further include its infantile forum. A self-analysis and a study of the dreams and fantasies of his patients, as a satisfaction of one's wishes gave him the models for the clinical investigation of mechanics of repression and symptom formation. Further, the theory of unconsciousness as an agency disruptive of conscious states of mind was elaborated upon. The briny line of advancement of the twentieth century literature evidences a rift with the school of naturalism and realism, marking a development inwards a complex vision of man and his humanity. The close of nineteenth century witnessed a shift in focus, portraying individuals and the world from outside. The pioneer modernist scholars employed psychoanalytic hypothesis the art with an aim of exploring the inner psyche of a being, playing as essential as the outside world. Thus the innovative modernist literature thrived in the twentieth century initiated by Henry James (1843-1916), Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930), James Joyce (1882-1941) and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941).

In the modern age people experienced disenchantment with material truth and tended to search for abstract truth. Yet, turning to the abstract truth served nothing but increased their loneliness. Even language lost its function of providing communication. Certainties like religion started to be even more questioned. Human relationships lost its meaning as people did not feel secure in any kind of relationship. Man started to question his own place in the universe.

CONCLUSION

Storytelling, with all its lucidity, simplicity and solicitude with a sharply defined theme is an absolute progenitor of the modern short story. The earliest of *Jataka* tales date, on the evidence of the cravings on the Bharhutstupa, from the third century B.C., which deal with *Boddhisattva* as a prince or gardener, teacher or trader, as elephant or bird, who brought peace and understanding to men. Besides being didactic, they combined humor, ambience and purpose with utmost simplicity. The *Panchatantra* stories of the fourth century A.D. have offered practical wisdom for centuries. The secret of their popularity lies in the use of wit and resourcefulness, along with the fable tale element where animals behaved like human beings. The long, complicated and digressive narratives of *Katha-sarit-sagara*, twice as long as *The Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together, was set down in the tenth and eleventh century, showcasing the men and women playing a wide variety of roles in the drama of life, a drama in which the magical, the supernatural and the normal intermingled. However, the modern concept of short story was credited to a group of writers of four different countries evinced in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The growth of the modern short story was not only parallel, in terms of space, but also constantly evolving. The influence of a particular writer was not only felt in his own country, but also in others, which helped the form to refine and evolve over a period of time. The Indian short story writers in English had consciously accepted this form. The traditional forms of story telling were too redundant for purposes of exploring and expressing the experience of routine

Indian life. Right from the days of the Jataka tales to *Katha-sarit-sagara*, the story teller's practice was to complicate the theme, not merely by combining a number of fables to form a book but to interweave the fables so that the whole tale would appear as an organic unity. The metaphor of a wheel revolving within a wheel revolving within another aptly conveys the involved nature of this form of storytelling. This chain format was inadequate for a twentieth century writer as it is shapeless, digressive and diffuses both for the writer and reader. It is also too inflexible for psychological probing as it does not allow the characters to develop. The chain tale dealt with kings and princes, Brahmins and *sadhus*, fairies and heavenly beings. The concern of the modern short story is a common man of clay —mitti ka madhol. The chain tale often invested its exalted authors' of times with a reflection in their works.

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