

Identity and Recognition versus Racial Discrimination

Monika Mintwal

Indraprastha, College for Women, University of Delhi, Delhi

ABSTRACT

Various fundamental causes of differences between identity and recognition are compiled together in this paper. The reason of discrimination on the bases of morphological features among different races is discussed i.e. how the colour of skins or geographical varied morphological features has become the ground for social hierarchy. It is not only intercommunity but also the intracommunity discriminating that has deeply imbedded in the society of almost every culture. Paper centralises the concept of African discrimination in the light of other cultures worldwide. Further Pablo Neruda and Derek Walcott's observation in context with Africans' intra and inter community discrimination is also discussed. Paper explores how various subdivisions has created in discrimination studies, one of them is racism. Later, it views different writers and philosophers who researched on the root causes of identity politics and racial discrimination. references are given to specify the same.

INTRODUCTION

How Society Perceive Racism or Identity Politics

Before proceeding further I would like to describe the origin of race and discrimination because of which the world is suffering so many problems from past so many years. Pick a newspaper or switch on the television or radio and this fact will become quite clear. The very reason behind different races is changes in the genetic structure of human being that can be because of climatic changes, isolation, adaptation, selection, etc. all these are responsible in the changes in the structure of an individual morphologically. Now the question arises even after knowing the logical reason why one race feels superior to another races? In my opinion the concept of superiority is embedded in the minds of some particular races and it is very difficult to eradicate this concept easily, it will take a lot of time to come out from this perception of superiority. (Races And Peoples: Contemporary ethnic And Racial Problems).

As it is already stated that the formation of a race is natural and it is the result of climatic changes. No one is responsible for their race as it is by birth but there is always a concept of superiority and inferiority among different races in the world because of some particular races or we can called socially superior races are privileged and inferior races are condemned to suffer the low esteem. An analogous point has been made in relation to blacks. The white society is oppressing them because of their physical appearance that includes wide nose, different texture of hair, skin colour etc. It is basically because of social hierarchical order which used to be the bases of honour that will further result to inequality.

The root of ethnic contradiction cannot be detected without knowing the history of African people. Because without knowing the peculiarities of their culture and the role of surviving traditional institutions it is very difficult to know about any particular culture. It is very obvious that in order to understand the nature of ethnic prejudice it is very important to analyse social and economic structures and ethnic processes. Only a close study of every country through examination of ethnic situation, ethnic history and the forms and methods of colonial rules can help in analysing social significance of ethnic contradictions and tensions that means to understand a countries ethnicity it is very important to go deep into its history. The danger of ethnic prejudice is not only that it separates people between ethnic groups but also that it actually helps to perpetuate the isolation of national minorities and an exaggerated emotional attachment to one's language and culture.

The problem of seeking identity of an individual or community has always been uppermost in the literature. Identity and recognition is an evergreen concept. What are we? Who are we? Where are we from? What is our place in the world? These are some questions that literature of the world always ready to discuss especially the last one that is where

are we from? It is vast question here to answer this question I'm referring to some famous writers namely Pablo Neruda (1904-1973) and Derek Walcott (1939). Pablo Neruda and Derek Walcott share common feeling arising from the recollection of past and this is what helps them forge hybrid identity of themselves. The colonial experience of both the poets helps them to form an important and logical background to their work. These are the bases that they have been making a conscious and real attempt to discover an identity for themselves in this world.

Racism and discrimination are two words even if they can be used interchangeably yet their meaning differ in action. There is fundamental need to understand each word in order to have a firm grasp on these issues as these can be considered as one of the vulnerable issues ; only then racism and discrimination will be discussed in depth so that if any social problem associated with them will be sorted out . There are so many definitions on racism, one of them is "the prejudice that members of one race are intrinsically superior to the members of other races or discriminatory or abusive behaviour towards member of another race, notice that the former definition involves belief while latter involves an action. Racism on one hand is a noun while discrimination on other hand is a verb in this way both are different from one another. Discrimination involves an action. Therefore a person could be a racist but chose to not act upon those ideas on other hand a person cannot be having racist thought but commit a racist act; the best example is an institutional racism.

In this way the definition of discrimination is broader than racism. Discrimination in a way can be considered as a subdivision of racism. Discrimination has not entirely a negative meaning at all. Making fine distinction between one categories to another is discrimination. In case of race discrimination it is merely n ability to discern what race the individual is. On one hand this task seems verydifficult. While the colour of one's skin is quite obvious upon first side. Appearance merely is not enough to differentiate one race from another. According to D.P Botha "The colour of a person's skin would emerge as the criterion for classification was due to the vast difference of the level of civilisation between the whites and the coloured. To discriminate on the bases of class in respect of social life and privileges was not foreign to the Europeans because Europeans did likewise; the initial colour feeling in no way differed from the class feeling on the bases of birth and origin or wealth and possession. But like in Europe this the class consciousness did not lead to a rejection of the lower class." (David Johnson, Mind Your Colour).

Writers and philosophers on Identity politics and Racial Discrimination

Fanon recognised the crucial importance for subordinated people of asserting their indigenous cultural tradition and retrieving their compressed history but he is too aware of the danger of fixity and fetishism of identities within the calcification of colonial cultures to recommend the roots be struck in the celebratory romance of the past or homogenising the history of present . The negative is indeed the intervention of the beyond that establishes a boundary or bridge wherepresentingbegins because it captures something of the estranging sense of the recollection of the home and the world the unhomeliness that is the condition of extra territorial and cross –culturalinitiations .To beunhemmed is not to be homeless , not can the unhomely be easily accommodated in the familiar division of social life into private and public spheres . The unhomely relates the ambivalences of a personal and psychic history to the wider junctions of political existence .

If we are seeking a wording of literature then perhaps it lies in the critical act that attempts to grasp the sleight of hand with which literature conjures with historical specificity using the medium of psychic uncertainty, aestheticdistancing, or the obscure signs of spirit world the sublime and the subliminal.As literary creatures and political animals we ought to concern ourselves with the understanding of human action with the social world as a moment when something is beyond control but it is not beyond accommodation. This act of writing the world, of taking the measures of its dwelling is magically caught in the Morrison's description of her house of fiction, art as the fully realised presence of haunting of history.

Each of the Gordimer's My Son's Story is invented with the specific secret or conspiracy, an unhomely stirring. The house in the ghetto is the house of the collusiveness coloureds in their antagonistic relation with the blacks, the lying house is the house of Sonny's adultery then there is a silent house of Ayla's revolutionary camouflage, there is also a nocturnal house of Will. Each unhomely house makes a deeper historicaldisplacement. And that is the condition of being coloured in Africa, or as Will describes it. 'Halfway between . . . being not defined – and it was this lack of definition in itself that was never being questioned , but observed like a taboo , something which no one while following could ever admit to .'

This halfway house of cultural and racial origins bridges the in between diasporic origin of the coloured South Africa and turn it into the symbol of disjunctive, displaced everyday life of the liberation struggle. like so many others of this kind whose family's are fragmented in the diaspora of exile , code names, underground activities , people for whom a real state and attachments are something for others who will come after .'

Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy. It is an intimacy that questions binary division through which such spheres of social experience are often spatially opposed. These spheres of

life are linked through an I between temporality the takes the measures of dwelling at home while. While producing an image of the world of history. This is the moment of aesthetic distance that provides the narrative with a double edge, which like coloured South African subject presents a hybridity.

Words will not speak and the silence freezes into the image of Apartheid: identity cards. Police frame ups, prison mug shots. The grainy press pictures of terrorist of course Aila is not judged. Nor is she judgemental. Her revenge is much wider and more complete, in her silence she becomes the unspoken totem of the taboo of the coloured South African. She displays the unhomely world 'the halfway between . . . not defined world of the coloured as the 'Distorted place and time in which all of them – Sonny , Aila , Hannah lived ' , The silence that doggedly follows Aila's dwelling now turns into an image of the 'interences' the in between hybridity of the history of sexuality and race .

Aila's inner face the outer edge of each hand, these small gestures through which she speaks describe another dimension of 'dwelling' in the social world Aila as coloured woman defines aboundary that is at ones inside and outside , the insiders outsiders. The stillness that surrounds her, the gaps in her story, the hesitation and passion that speak between the self and its acts these are moments where the private and public touch in contingency. They do not simply transform the content of political ideas; the very place from which the political is spoken – the public sphere itself , becomes an experience of liminality which questions in Sonny's words what it means to speaks 'from the centre of life .' The central political preoccupation of the novel – till Aila's emergence – focuses on the ' loss of absolutes ' , the melt down of the cold war , the fear that if we can't offer the socialist paradise in the exchange for the capitalist hell here , we will have turn traitor to our brothers .

The lesson Aila teaches requires a movement away from a world conceived in binary terms, away from a world conceived in binary terms, away from a notion of people's aspirations sketched in simple black and whites. It's also requires a shift of attention from the political as a pedagogical, ideological practice to political as a stressed necessity of everyday life –politics as a performativity. Aila leads us to the unhomely world where Gordimer writes, the banalities are enacted – the fuss over births, marriages, family affairs with their survival rituals of food and clothing but it is precisely in these banalities that the unhomely stirs, as the violence of a racialized society falls most enduring on the details of life: where you can list: or not., how you can live or not. Between the banal act of freedom and its historical denials rises the silence; Aila emanated a stilling atmosphere the parting jabber stopped ; it was as if everyone found he had entered a strange house , and it was hers ; she stood there' .

In Aila's stillness, its obscure necessity, we glimpse what Emmanuel Levinas has magically described as the twilight existence of the aesthetic image – art's image as the very event of obscuring, a descent into night, an invasion of the shadow. The completion of the aesthetic the distancing of the image in the world is precisely not a transcendental activity. the image or the metaphorical fictional activity of discourse - makes visible 'an interruption of time by a movement going on the hither side of time, in its interstices ' the complexity of this statement will become clearer when I remind you of the stillness of time through which Aila surreptitiously and subversively interrupts the ongoing of political activity, using her interstitial role, her domestic world to both obscure her political role and to articulate it in better. or, as beloved the continuous eruption of undecipherable languages of slave memory obscure the historical narrative of infanticide only to articulate the unspoken: that ghostly discourse that enters the world of 124 from the outside in order to reveal the transitional world of the aftermath of slavery, in the 1870s, its private and public faces, its historical past and its narrative present.

CONCLUSION

Achebe's novels go a step forward to conceptually recapture not only the older form of existence but also locate the problems of contemporary Nigeria. The anxiety that is reflected in the novels of Achebe underlying the human condition has its specific history. The search for meanings , values and ideals suited to the needs of the emerging context creates an alterity that helps defines the process of identity formation in terms of the axis of resistance against homogenisation threatening to stifle indigenous growth and development .The literary trends that are continually unfolding , map the emotional registers of communities undergoing the dynamics of transition . The impulse to cultural homogenisation and modernisation has to be met with not by merely chalking a return to the past but addressing the present in terms of the past. Achebe's novels attempt to explore both the possibilities and limits that emerge in the very process of acculturation and reflects the alternative language that writers must find by an active engagement with the contexts that they are trying to critically define.

REFERENCES

- [1] I.R Grigulevich and S.Y Kozlov. Races and peoples, contemporary ethnic and racial problems, 2016.
- [2] Gordimer Nadine, The Black Interpreters, Johannesburg spruces publication , 1973,.
- [3] La Guma Alex, Apartheid, A collection of writings on South African Racism, 1972.
- [4] Gordimer Nadine, My Son's Story, Unhomely lives: The literature of recognition, 1990.



- [5] David Johnson, Mind Your Colour. The 'Coloured' Stereotype in South African Literature, African Affairs, Volume 91, Issue 363, 1 April 1992.
- [6] Achebe Chinua, Things Fall Apart, Anchor Books Anchor Books Edition, New York, 1994
- [7] Achebe Chinua, An anthology on Recent Criticism, The Notion of identity Formation and Paradigm Of Cultural Resistance in the Novels of Chinua Achebe , edited by :Mala Pandurang ,2006 .
- [8] Taylor Charles, Multiculturalism and "The Politics of Recognition": An Essay with Commentary, Hardcover, September 28, 1992.