

Industrialization, a State Regulated Apparatus to Bio-Diversity: An Eco-Marxist Approach to Anita Desai's *The Village by The Sea*

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Abstract

Since the late 20th century, ecocriticism has become one of the most significant critical narratives in academic, as a subset of environmental humanism, which addresses the concept of integrated relationship of human being with environment. Ecocriticism analyzes texts to uncover the ways in which they contribute or challenge the prevailing attitudes towards nature. Both ecocriticism and environmental humanism address the correlation between humans and the environment as they are often critiqued as interdisciplinary approaches to literary texts. Ecocriticism tends to focus specifically on literary and cultural representation, while the prior one takes a wider perspective and combines social and political consideration. Ecocriticism within Marxist framework addresses industrialization as a state regulated ideology which works as a major threat for the ecological balance. *The Village by The Sea* (1982) by Anita Desai is one of the least recognized but major works which portrays the interdependence and co-relation of humans and other species in a picturesque manner of a village. However, the novel subtly explores the concerns for environmental degradation because of the industrialization and modernization plans adopted by the state. Governmental plan to set up new industries in the village leads the villagers to new economic challenges along with environmental impacts on villagers' life and other species in Thul. This paper critically explores the tension of Hari, Biju, Sayyid Ali and other villagers with their eventual subordination, subjugation and interpellation to the state governed industrialization policy for the benefit of the capitalist class.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Industrialization, Modernization, Ideology, Apparatus, Subordination, Interpellation, Capitalist Class

1. Introduction

Industrialization in a postcolonial society clutches modernization and urbanization, exacerbating social inequalities and causing environmental degradation. In postcolonial societies like India, state regulated industrialization is prioritized for economic growth over environmental protection. Thus, modernization policies largely impact organic bio-diversity by spawning economic vulnerability for the local communities. In *The Village by The Sea*, Anita Desai (1937-Present) portrays a powerful critique of the environmental degradation caused by upper class human intervention. The novel is set in the fishing village, Thul, located on the west coast of India. Thul belongs to the Hindu community and the village women are seen to begin their days by offering flowers to *Kum Kum*, some sacred rocks nearby sea beach. They pray to the gods and goddess for the protection of their bread earners who go for fishing in the sea few miles away from the shore. Since fishing is the main source

to maintain the livelihood of the villagers, they worship the natural elements as their gods and goddess. Although the sea behaves in an uncertain manner during the storms, submerging the nearby houses and other small infrastructure of the village, the residuals consider themselves as part of those natural forces. Desai's portrayal of the natural landscape also includes the coconut trees that grow along the sea shore providing shade and a kind financial security for the villagers as they can sell those in the nearby market. The village is also seen surrounded by the rice fields and mangroves which provide a home for many animals, birds and other species. This novel is often critiqued as a 'juvenile novel' classified into three developmental stages. Firstly, the 12-year-old boy, Hari's struggle for existence in Thul. Secondly, rebellious Hari's departure for Bombay with other villagers to resist the governmental plan of industrial estate. Finally, Hari's return to village with a small amount of deposited money and some technical expertise for a start-up business in an unassuming atmosphere of village, where the infrastructure of industrialization has already begun. With the progression of the narrative, Desai gradually dichotomizes the internal conflicts of environmental concerns of Hari with the external pressure of economic necessity. The stages of the plot also create a mood of uncertainty to the villagers' livelihood and impending danger of pollution because of the governmental decision of modernization. In the beginning of the novel, it is seen that a newly tin shack with a straw thatch for a roof and the yellow lorry with a load of steel pipes standing outside it. Hari notices these on his way to sister's school. This view leads him to talk with his friend, Ramu who informs him about the great factory complex to be built by the government. Initially, Hari is seen dissatisfied and shocked as he gets to know the authority is going to blow and explode the hill and the temple there and make it a flat and build a new factory on the top. However, the concerns for environmental degradation cannot move Hari for a longer period of time as he dreams of having a new life being employed in the factory. The poverty-stricken life of the protagonist does not allow him to think of the destruction of the ecosystem and he is not moved by the impending disappearance of natural "Crystal-clear" waters and the "gleaming fish" of the sea. Hari along with other villagers, being the integrated part of this sound ecosystem, unconsciously allows industrialization which will cause environmental depletion both for human and other species of the village. This paper argues that Desai critiques the state governed industrialization project in Thul through Marxist ecocritical lens, inspecting how poverty compels characters like Hari not to resist against the political authority and regulatory body in pursuit of economic survival. Moreover, the concept of modernization is critiqued as threats to the seamless correspondences of human with other aquatic animals analyzed through eco-Marxist theoretical framework.

2. Theoretical Framework: Ecocriticism and Eco-Marxist Approach

Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) states that ecocriticism is a multidisciplinary approach that draws from various fields such as ecology, environmentalism, and literary theory (p. xix). As Glotfelty (1996) notes that eco-critics examine the representation of nature in literature and question the role of the characters in the texts examining the critical responses, attitudes and changing behaviors with the course of time (p. xx). Ecocriticism studies relationships between things, in this case, between human culture and the physical world" defining the study of the relation between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of the environmentalist praxis (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xx).

Lois Tyson (2023) positioned ecocriticism within Marxist framework for the further investigation of capitalism's venture for environmental degradation. According to Tyson (2023), Marxists indict capitalism for the decadence of natural landscape and critique industrialization as a profit-making venture for the capitalists (p. 418). Tyson (2023) also states that eco-Marxists, in fact, oppose and condemn capitalism and its intervention for the apocalypse of environment (p. 419). He maintains that capitalism can be replaced with an economically egalitarian society to conserve the environment. It is believed that in eco-Marxism, environment cannot be protected within a capitalist economic system since capitalists have done so much of damage by building industrial estate (p. 419).

Tyson (2023) explains that eco-Marxists critique capitalism as an ideology and investigate capitalist activity as the root cause of depleting natural resources by polluting the air, soil, and water. Tyson (2023) notes that overconsumption of natural resources has been promoted by the multinational corporations and industrial hubs by manufacturing colorful products for consumers (p. 420). Free-market economy and consumer culture create further space for competitive production cycle by which the earth loses its ability to regenerate natural resources (Tyson, 2023, p. 420). Therefore, it can be said that the degeneration of bio-diversity of a certain territory starts to decay with the establishment of industrial estate and, eventually, it reaches to the apocalypse with the expansion process of enterprise.

Lance Newman (2002) writes "nature writing is not a stable form of reaction to a stable problem (the ideologically driven human domination of nature). According to Newman (2002), it is a dynamic tradition of response to the economic growth and development of a capitalistic class which is regulated by the state to establish the social order on an ecology (p. 18-19). He also insists to recognize ecocriticism as a "historical consciousness" (p. 21) that explains the "coevolution of material, social and natural system that has produced the present crisis" (p. 21) of environmental derangement. Therefore, this ecological crisis can be defined as the result of disconnections and disharmony between human being and the jeopardized natural world, which is created by a capitalist social order by subverting the existing order. Such growing environmental concerns and crises are observed in Desai's *The Village by The Sea*. Ramu said Hari, "The government is going to build a great factory here. Many factories. Hundreds of them" (Desai, 1982, p. 11). This statement shows governmental plan of industrialization in Thul, which will subvert the existing ecological order of the village and create a new eco-social order.

Newman's concept of economic growth and development of the state can be analyzed through the conversation between Hari and a man from Bombay as a representative of the capitalist class. Hari meets a man in his village and asks, "Then you

must be- you must be- the new factory” (Desai, 1982, p. 61). His innocently satiric question is scornfully addressed by the man and replies- “I’m not the factory”. “It’s not going to be just one factory anyway- it is going to be a whole city of factories. Factories, housing, colonies, shopping centers, bus depots, railway heads, engineers and workers- a whole city is going to be built here”. (Desai, 1982, p. 61). These statements of the man lead to the fact that the whole set of economic, social and cultural structures of the village are going to be altered by the establishment of a modern city. This tension was further escalated with the clarification of manure’s definition of the man. He states, “Here the factories will produce tons of chemicals to be sent all over the country and sold to farmers. *Rich farmers*”. (Desai, 1982, p. 62). Desai critiques this as an orchestrated policy of the capitalist class to upset the existing ecology of the village. Since “Industrial estate” (Desai, 1982, p. 63) is the ultimate fate of Thul, the novel critiques the economic shift as a regulated capitalist domination over natural landscape of the village.

3. Gramsci’s Hegemony and the Theory of Subordination

The term ‘Hegemony’ was coined by Antonio Gramsci in *Prison Notebooks* (1971). Nadia Urbinati (1998) elaborated and defined Gramsci’s theory of Subordination and Hegemony by stating that subordination presupposes a relation of control over the subjects who are marginalized and underprivileged of their basic human rights (p. 370). This power subordination denotes the powerlessness of the subjects while representing as the impotent hostage in the hands of uncertainty (Urbinati, 1998, p. 370). Gramsci’s hegemony can be contextualized in Desai’s *The Village by The Sea* through the representation of the man from Bombay city, who belongs to the educated ‘urban’ class with the upper ladder of power dynamics and possesses the knowledge on modernization and industrialization, while Biju and the villagers represent the ‘rural’ and powerless class on the same topic. This can be examined through the conversation between the man and the villagers as he says “You villagers- you’re all the same. Pumpkin-heads” (Desai, 1982, p. 64). This abhorrent tone and attitude of the city man echoes the comparison of the villagers with a non-animate being, which is a way of dehumanizing and subordinating the villagers. This portrayal of rural life as natural, peaceful, innocent, virtuous, ignorant, and underprivileged powerlessness and subordinate subjects is observed in Raymond Williams’ *The Country and the City* (Williams, 1973, p. 47). Hence, Desai critiques such hegemonic representation of the villagers through the lens of city life.

3.1. Hegemony and Marx’s Bourgeoisie and Proletariat Classes

According to Lois Tyson (2023) economic power in Marxist theory encompasses both the political and social power, while the economic condition is determined by material circumstances (p. 43). The socioeconomic class divides people between the “haves” and the “have-nots,” or simply the *bourgeoisie* and *proletariat* (Tyson, 2023, p.43). He defined the *bourgeoisie* as business owners, who control the world’s resources, while the *proletariat* are the majority of the world population who work for wages and perform the manual labors in different sectors. The villagers of Thul can here be categorized as the *proletariat*, who will be employed for the manual factory work, while the *bourgeoisie* are the owner class who own the planned industrial estate in the village. Therefore, the relationship between these two classes becomes complex and hegemonic.

Such hegemonizing attitude of the man, a representative of *bourgeoisie* class, can be explained through his abhorrent tones towards Hari’s economic survival. Hari says, “I need a job” (Desai, 1982, p.64). This expresses his feeble and destitute economic condition. While the man reacts saying “you need a job, eh? No food in the house? Sick mother, drunken father, sisters to be married off and no dowries, eh” (Desai, 1982, p. 64). Instead of being compassionate towards the economic need of Hari, the man bullies and belittles him, which also manifests his capitalist and city centered mindset.

Desai further critiques Hari and other villagers as the subjects of double hegemony. Firstly, they are dehumanized and stripped of their rights as citizens by the state. Secondly, they are subordinated by Biju who is a wealthy man of the village, a local *bourgeoisie*. Biju reacts to the man when he faces the industrial aggression of the capitalist class. Meanwhile, he bullies, curses and upbraids his workers, lashing out with abusive words during his boat building. Biju says, “Should have brought my men from Alibagh to do it- you pumpkin from the fields, what do you know about boats” (Desai, 1982, p. 104). This substantiates Biju’s mistreatment towards the illiterate and incompetent villagers to build his new ‘mega boat’. Biju’s dependence on Alibagh workers shows his economic superiority over less efficient villagers. This is how, Biju is a victim of the city man but he becomes an agent of local hegemonic class by subjugating Hari and other villagers. Biju’s *bourgeoisie* attitude can be further explained through his reluctance to appoint Hari in his ‘mega boat’. Therefore, Hari is represented as a member of *proletariat* class, a victim of both local and national subordination and marginalization.

3.2. Hegemony and Ideological Legitimation of Dominance over Its Subjects

According to Valeriano Ramos, Jr. (1982), hegemony (“Predominance by consent”) is a condition in which a fundamental class exercises a political, intellectual, economic and moral role of leadership within a hegemonic system secured by a common world view or “Organic ideology”. Hegemony can be defined as a system of class in which a “hegemonic class” which exert political leadership over the “subaltern” by “winning them over” (Ramos, 1982). Therefore, the dominance on Hari and other villagers through the ideology of industrialization and modernization project shows the hegemonic attitude of the legitimized body. Desai shows that an organized body comes from Bombay and exerts their political and leadership power over the villagers, who are Gramsci’s “subaltern class” and finally “win over them”. The man, being the representative of Gramsci’s “hegemonic class” supervises the progress of the manufacturing industry and encounters Hari. He tries to explain the effectiveness of the natural fertilizers, while the man from Bombay, being the archetypal of “bourgeois class” bullies Hari calling him “Pumpkin-head” and rebukes other villagers as the “god-forsaken place” “human pumpkins”, while he ridicules Hari’s poverty (Desai, 1982, p. 62). Desai critiques the dominance of ideology by representing the ‘slamming of the door’ of

the newly built shack, which signifies the sigma form of dominance with abhorrence on Hari and other boys. By rejecting, humiliating and driving out Hari, the man shows the intellectual, economic and *burgeoning* attitudes over Hari's agrarian knowledge and his position in the society. The man says, "Here the factories will produce tons and tons of chemicals to be sent all over the country sold to farmers. *Rich* farmers with *much* land" (Desai, 1982, p. 62). Mentioning about the rich farmers, the man shows his elated social position in a capitalist society, who can vehemently reject and denounce the farmer, worker and manual labor. Hence, the capitalists exert and exact their dominance over the worker and peasantry classes through ideological legitimacy of intellect and city centered cognizance.

4. The City Model of Economy in Village: Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City*

Raymond Williams (1973) explained the "means of agricultural production" as attractive and effectively contrasted this with "exchanges and counting houses" of mercantilism or with "the mines, quarries, mills and factories of industrial production" (p. 47). This change of production happens through particular and spectacular corrupting ways by drawing co-relations but ratifying the rural order (Williams, 1973, p. 47). He states that this shift of the rural order is an "ideological transition" (p. 48). Williams emphasizes that "social and economic reasons" are the underlying motifs of the growth of towns, while the town planners take control of rural economy and social order (p. 48). Hence, this expansion mode of industrial economy is administered in a postcolonial society by the capitalist classes to reap shared mercantile profit both in public and private spheres. Such commercial industrialization is evidently found in Desai's *The Village by The Sea*, when the man from Bombay says, "All the land will be bought and up and, factories will be built on it. Your rice will go" (Desai, 1982, p. 91). The trepidation of such imminent crisis is seen in Biju's face, when he asks "And what about us who live already live here?" (Desai, 1982, p. 93). Therefore, the state power takes over Thul ignoring their consent and without resettling the residuals of the village. Desai critiques this expansion of the mercantile and industrial mode of production which takes over the agrarian land of country life threatening the subsistence of the villagers. Consequently, this city centered industrial production endangers the whole structure of bio-diversity of the village. In addition, the normative city centered *bourgeois* class threatens the co-relation and reciprocity of human and other species of the village by materializing their modernizing mission.

5. Industrialization and Althusser's Ideology as Materiality

5.1. Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and State Regulated Enterprise

The concept of ideology has been coined, used and popularized by Louis Althusser, a French Marxist philosopher. In *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays* (1971), Althusser defined "Ideology" as essentially practical (p. 142). Similarly, Andrew Ryder (2015) in a review of Althusser's ideology, stated that ideology does not exist in the 'world of ideas' conceived as a 'spiritual world'. According to Ryder (2015), the material existence of ideology happens through institutions and the practices of those institutions *specific to them*. Moreover, it can be interpreted that the sustenance of ideology depends on the *apparatuses* and the right uses of those apparatuses with a defined goal achievement (Ryder, 2015). This defined ideological clash is evidently seen in Desai's novel when Hari, Biju and other villagers encounter the man from Bombay. The ideology of industrialization and modernization functions as a materiality of *bourgeois* class and its enterprises.

Among different constituents of ideological state apparatus, legal ISA (Althusser, 1971, p. 143) is one of the most powerful organs of the state, where a nexus of power game is noticed between the political body and their control over court and legal system. Such state-controlled court trial and verdict can be contextualized in Desai's *The Village by The Sea*. Sayyid Ali, one of the protestors in Bombay, who lectured about the dreadful chemical impacts of industrial estate is, again, seen at the end of the novel. In a conversation with Hari, he says, "You've lost the fight, you know- we lost the case in court. The politicians won- so they can make plenty of money from the sale of land and licenses of the same name progress. Thul is lost" (Desai, 1982, p. 254). Ali's statement shows the despair of the protestors and the triumph of the political body and their mutualism with the constituent of ISA and the beneficiary group of this whole nexus. The orchestrated powerful project that works against the villagers' consent and will. The city model of production is going to be imposed on Thul. Thus, the mission of modernization does not only belong to a certain class rather mutually benefit the state and its corrupt apparatuses.

5.2. Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) and State Governed Physical Suppression

According to Althusser, ideology exists in *apparatuses* and the practices *specific to them* (Ryder, 2015). Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) is one of its classification of *apparatuses* (Althusser, 1970, p. 145). RSA is operated through threats of punishment or explicit demonstration of power. This apparatus includes the army, police, prisons, or any outright threat of violence. Althusser (1971) said that ideological and repressive state apparatuses 'functions' both by ideology and violence (p. 145). Althusser's RSA is observed in Desai's *The Village by The Sea* when the solid demand of the mass people from the village is being dominated, dismantled and demolished by the repressive force of the state. The demand to protect and conserve the existing ecosystem has been taken as a threat to the state's ideology of modernization. Hari along with his villagers comes to Bombay city to meet the Chief Minister and they encounter Bombay police. Desai critiqued the role of as she states, "the famed Bombay police who, with a wave of their batons and a blast on their whistles, could bring the traffic to a halt or send it up one road and down another, and were capable even of controlling processions and herding marchers through the crowded city such as this one of fishermen from Alibagh" (Desai, 1982, p. 116). The roaring greetings of Bombay police to Hari and his village mates represent the repressive hegemonic nature of repressive state apparatus. This conflict surges up when the villagers

appealed to meet the Chief Minister of Mantranalya and get threatened by the police force. The repressive tone is augmented by a roaring sound of policeman and dismantled the untied peaceful procession of the villagers. Desai states, "The roar spread through the whole crowd like a wave surging through it and breaking on the rocks" (Desai, 1982, p. 125). This howling of the policeman creates an apprehension among the gathered people echoing the dominance of the powerful body by stripping off their freedom of expression in a democratic society. Therefore, Desai critiqued the role of the state as a repressive dominant force on its own peaceful people.

5.3. Ideology Interpellates the Villagers as Subjects

The concept of "Interpellation" is found in Louis Althusser's "Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays". The last section of the essay sub-headed as 'Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects' explains the way in which ideas get into our heads and have an effect on our lives, so much as that cultural ideas have such a hold on us that we believe they are our own (Althusser, 1971, p. 174). According to Althusser (1971), ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (p. 174). This functioning process can be seen as an unconscious subjugation and subordination of individuals to a certain ideology operated by a dominant and powerful class of the society. Desai's *The Village by The Sea* critiques individuals like Hari, Biju and Sayyid Ali's interpellation as subjects towards the mercantile ideology of the state. The initial conflict between Hari and the man from Bombay can be seen as a clash of ideology but later he is discovered as the interpellated subject. This survival struggle in the modern city taught him to transform from "Hari the fisherman" to "Hari the poultry farmer" and the "watchmender" (Desai, 1982, p. 211). Instead of advancing the clash against the "hegemonic body" of the state, he resonated himself with the ideology of industrialization that works naturally, invisibly and subconsciously.

Moreover, the dream of prosperity and solvency in life made Hari accept the new mode of life, which compromised his initial resistive self. Hari's interpellation is more visible when his metamorphosed self now can see a different Alibagh. He sees "the highway was being widened, a railway bridge under construction, old large trees cut down and bulldozers and steamrollers at work" (Desai, 1982, p. 220). This visual imagery gives Hari an altered self both inside and outside his life. Reverberated Hari now reunites with his family and expresses his desire to run a shop of watchmending and poultry farm. His return to the village on the occasion of "*rangoli*, a festival in Hinduism, symbolizes the blessings of the goddess. This can be further be explained through the conversation of Bela and Hari. "Lakshmi who is the goddess of the wealth so that she will visit our house too" (Desai, 1982, p. 248). Desai critiqued the presence of "Lakshmi", the goddess of wealth, during the industrialization process of the village. It can be critiqued that even "Lakshmi" is happy with the expansion of capitalistic production mode in Thul and she now is ready to visit the village with her blessings for the industrialists.

Like other characters in the novel, Sayyid Ali can also be discerned as an interpellated subject. He initially participates the protest against the decision of the state but gradually, he adapts and adjusts with the changing modality of new economic system. Sayyid Ali is finally seen in Thul, often, looking around the environment and doing his research on "nest building habits of baya birds" (Desai, 1982, p. 251). In a whimpering conversation with Hari, he says, "Adapt- that is what you are going to do. Just as birds and animals must do if they are going to survive. Just like the sparrows and pigeons that have adapted themselves to city and live on food leftovers and rubbish thrown to them in the streets instead of searching for grain and insects in the fields. So you will have to adapt to your new environment" (Desai, 1982, p. 257). This adaptability will consciously lead them and subconsciously make them a subject of the new capitalistic economic system in Thul. The initial resistance of the villagers slowly evaporates with the mechanisms of state regulated apparatus of industrialization. Consequently, the conscious and unconscious process of their interpellation make sure the mutual triumph of the capitalists and the govt. of postcolonial society.

6. Michel Foucault's Power/ Knowledge and the Politics of Truth

6.1. Power/ Knowledge and the Defining Regime of Truth

According to French Marxist Michel Foucault (1980), every society has its own 'regime of truth' and its 'overall politics' of truth. The society recognizes and considers its own discourse as valid and it has its mechanisms to differentiate between truth and false statements (p. 131). 'Political economy' of truth is defined by five characteristics (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Among five, the second and fifth characteristics can be outlined for substantiating Desai's critique of power.

Stating the second feature of truth, Foucault (1980) explains that truth is influenced by continuous economic and political pressures. Here, the demand is served for both political authority and economic production (p. 131). In Desai's *The Village by The Sea*, the establishment of industrial estate is a demand of the political authority which will serve the need of the economic production of the capitalist class. To ensure the establishment, the villagers were physically tortured by the repressive apparatus in Bombay. These manifest that the discourse of truth is defined both by political authority and economic production.

Michel Foucault (1980) defined the fifth feature of truth as the 'ideological struggle' (p. 131). According to Foucault (1980), truth is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation (p. 131). This social confrontation is evident in Desai's novel when Hari, Biju and other villagers meet the man from Bombay. Desai shows how the environmental concerns and knowledge of Hari and Biju are rejected and censored when the man scornfully addresses them as "Pumpkin-head" and "human pumpkins" (Desai, 1982, p. 64). The conversation between Biju and the man demonstrates Foucault's social confrontation of truth. Biju says, "Why should we sell our good farmland for factories?" "You will have to sell-it is the place the government has chosen". "How can the government choose without asking us?" "Who will ask you, old man?" (Desai, 1982, p. 92). This

resistance of Biju is also subverted by the discourse of power and ‘politics of truth’. The imposition of capitalist truth is seen to be categorized as the ‘ultimate truth’ to be accepted by the villagers. He carries the emblem of truth operated by the political authority and differentiating mechanisms of truth and false statements. The subversion of the initial uneasiness and resistance can be seen through the conversation between Hari and Ramu. Hari says, “I thought the fishermen and farmers of Alibagh were going to stop it from coming up” (Desai, 1982, p. 240). Being silent for a while Hari replies “How can a few villagers stop the government from building it? How can a few villagers stop the government?” (Desai, 1982, p. 240). This conversation can be interpreted as the manifestation of the state regulated coercion of power which “wins over” the villagers’ subaltern position both through discourse of power/knowledge and the regulated institutions. Such coercion plunges the initial resistance of Biju and other helpless villagers, who used to have an interdependence and shared ecology.

6.2. *Disciplinary Power and the Normalization of Authoritarianism*

Michel Foucault (1977) classified 3 types of power in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. He defined disciplinary power as a normalized activity of the authoritative bodies which is a part of detailed political investment of power (Raine, 2023). Sophie Raine (2023) elaborated this concept stating that in disciplinary power, body can be seen as a machine as a means of gauging for financial benefits of a certain class. Foucault (1977), states that in disciplinary power, every minor action of the subjects is monitored and all occurrences are documented. Disciplinary power is operated through a stratified surveillance system while the subjects get unconsciously habituated with this disciplinary power of the state (p. 197). Materialization of this disciplinary power creates a culture of apprehension and consternation among the subjects. They are intimidated as the private spheres of movement are closely monitored and supervised (Foucault, 1977, p. 198). An authoritative state superimposes its political autonomy and economic production over its subjects by normalizing such tyrannical approach to natural human rights. Desai also critiques disciplinary power through the representation of Hari and the villagers. Initially, they proudly and spontaneously participate the procession against the industrialization policy of the state. Later, they were monitored by the Bombay police and were stopped by the police forces and other state regulated interventions. Such intimidation to private affairs through state regulatory bodies largely covers the Marxist approaches towards life and bios, which Desai critiques in *The Village by The Sea*.

7. Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* and Objectification of Life and ‘Bios’

Fredric Jameson, a Marxist theorist, proposed the “absent cause” of history which can be interpreted as a biopolitical unconscious. Biopolitical unconscious and biopolitics are contextualized and popularized by Michel Foucault in his historical analysis of the rise of “biopolitics” (Medovoi, 2010, p. 122). Medovoi demonstrates that life becomes the object of politics in case of both human and nonhuman. During the industrial revolution in 19th century, life becomes an explicit instrument of a regulatory body for profiting a certain regulatory or governmental organ (p. 122). Desai critiques that in a post-colonial society like India, industrialization is governed by political power by the name of modernity and improvement of lifestyle. The modernization project is designed by targeting ‘life’ or ‘bios’ as a center of capitalists’ mode of production. Such dehumanizing mode of capitalism is observed in Desai’s *The Village by The Sea*. She explicitly depicts how ‘life’ and ‘bios’ are going to be poisoned by state regulated “industrial estate” project as an objective win of the capitalists. The industrial effluent plants and their toxic chemicals will destroy the bio-diversity of the village and the sea, while the whole structure of interdependence will be disrupted.

Jameson’s concept of ecocriticism depends on the sustainability of “environment” or “ecology”. He focuses on the “sustainable” relation of planetary life which is integrated to each other and the threat to such reciprocal human and nonhumans relationship needs to be investigated through the biopolitical history of capitalism (Medovoi, 2010, p. 122). Desai’s critical lens can be observed here through the conversation between Sayyid Ali and Hari. Ali says, “Everything is doomed. The fish in the sea will die from the effluents that will be pumped into the water. The paddy fields will be built over by factories and streets. My little baya birds will find no more paddy leaves for their nests. Or grain or food for their young. They will have to fly away. I may not see them another year” (Desai, 1982, p. 254-255). Therefore, the ecological disruption in both human and non-human species of the village is evident from the conversation showing the triumph of the industrialists. Henceforth, the imminent environmental crisis of the village and the sea can be examined through Marx’s critique of classical political economy.

8. Conclusion

In the growing rage of capitalist democratic country like India, modernization and industrial estate function symbiotically to benefit particular stakeholders, which disorder a certain ordered ecology. Anita Desai’s *The Village by The Sea* critiques such developmental projects through the portrayal of Thul. The initial picturesque description of the village, residuals, the sea and the other species, even the non-living substances show an integrated system of environment. Their physical and abstract correspondences, dependence and reciprocity manifest a microcosm of ideal ecology. This bionomics is portrayed to be endangered and destroyed by the establishment of a rising industrial “bourgeois”/ owner class and a “Proletariat” worker class perpetuating an everlasting complex hegemonic relationship. The transformation of the villagers from the residual farmers to factory and shop workers will lead them to the uncertain and brutal realities of industry work. The landowners are now going to be landless and the market driven society will subjugate them with a complex relationship of survival, demand and desire. The organic natural society is going to shift towards the chaotic, disordered and machinal society. The euphony of natural

species is going to be replaced with all form of industrial pollution. The fertilizer factory will pollute the air miles around while Sulphur dioxide, ammonia and dust will be scattered far and wide. Therefore, all the elements of environment will be polluted, which will ultimately affect the other species. This whole culture of intervention, oppression, imposition and subjugation with the surge of industrialization has been the core research of Marxist ecocritical approach, which Desai has aptly depicted in her novel.

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