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POSTHUMANISM AS AN EXTENSION OF FOURTH WORLD IDENTITY, LITERATURE AND CULTURE

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Abstract

The Fourth World refers to the sub-populations socially excluded from global society, hunter-gatherer, nomadic, pastoral, and some subsistence farming peoples living beyond the modern industrial norm and sub-populations existing in a First World country, but with the living standards of those of a Third World, or developing country. We can find out plethora of such tribes in South Asian region- Dalits (India), Jarawa (Andaman Nicobar Islands), Veddas (Sri Lanka), Pashtuns (Afghanistan and NW Pakistan, Tibetans etc. All these categories are again divided and subdivided into more than 300 tribal indigenous communities. Posthumanist theories put forward some specific notions and rethink of the dominance of humanism. It goes to primitive human culture, land, space and other perspectives in the construction of subjectivity and identity formation. The paper tries to bring out the elements of affiliation to Posthumanism in connection with Fourth World Literature.

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As an inevitable by-product of post-World War II upheavals, the core of the world power system split into two large geopolitical blocs of associated interests. A Euro American bloc of the states with political and economic ties came to be called the First World to which Japan joined the bandwagon later. The Second World, the other geopolitical bloc comprised the communist-socialist states including the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, North Vietnam and until recently, Eastern Europe. However, few newly decolonized states that were characterized by economic dependency and debt burden, preferred to sit on a fence by not aligning with either bloc of the geopolitical power were christened the "Third World." The people of ancient nations that lived beyond modern industrial

norm and abounded in hunter gatherers, nomadic, pastoral and farmers constitute the Fourth World.

The inhabitants of the Fourth World reside both in urban and rural areas but they are structurally irrelevant in the society as they neither produce nor consume what is considered important in a globalized and technologically connected world. The Fourth World includes a whole range of the tribal and peasant societies that share a number of attributes, including a low level of political and economic integration in the state system, an inferior political status, and an underprivileged economic position. The dwellers of the Fourth World may virtually stay in the First World but cannot afford the access to the First World standards of living. Such nations are also ironically called 'hidden nations' pointing a needle of reproach to the states cultural blindness or its insulation against reality. The laws set up by the colonizing culture assimilate these groups into the dominant culture in such a manner that their cultural existence is completely obliterated.

The concept of fourth world relates the sociology, anthropology, folkloristic, political science and several other disciplines though; the discussion is incomplete without the expedition on literature. As literature has the scope to articulate human life in such a way that it enliven the phenomena appetizingly with a subconscious credible way as the readers feel it whereas other discipline going through the theoretical way and thus keep the readers unsatisfied. Literature has always a better chance to voicing the untold, suppressed, economically marginal group. As the discussion indicates such people considered fourth world citizen with the literature about the fourth world people, the endeavour was to find out not only that literature portrays the fourth world people but also resembles with the traits of fourth world which allows the insight of their life and mind, desire and feelings, laughter and weep, ethics and ideology, bread and butter, work and leisure, conversation and argument and the life as a whole.

Every revolution or a new discourse in its strides takes people. But when the discourse or revolution is not properly directed, there comes

another discourse or revolution from the neglected people and from the marginalized communities. When the mainstream literature of First and Second world neglected the native writing, the natives started their own literary discourse. When post-colonial and Third world literature failed to acknowledge the literature of Dalits or Tribals or Adivasis, they deconstructed their identity through their writing. Now the arena of Fourth World literature is broadening, the neglected writings of women, sexual minorities and subaltern groups find affiliation to Fourth World literature. There would be a possibility of Fifth World too, if the Fourth World literature fails to take into its stride the marginalised sections of literature properly. The Fourth World covers all ethnic, racial, caste, linguistic, gender, even socio-political and economic marginal.

Fourth World Literature possesses certain specific features that can be easily connected to the notions of subjectivity, identity and the configuration of self in Fourth World literature and life. Fourth World people were the authentic owners of their specific land, culture, orality etc. With the process of colonization and mainstream intervention, Fourth World people had been expelled from their land and had been gone through series of catastrophes. Their entire life was closely associated with the notions of spatio-temporal aspects. Though they believe in the humanist conceptual framework, they had a staunch believe in the intervention of non-human elements in the construction of self and subjectivity.

Posthumanism marks a careful, ongoing, overdue rethinking of the dominant humanist (or anthropocentric) account of who "we" are as human beings. In the light of posthumanist theory and culture, "we" are not who "we" once believed ourselves to be. And neither are "our" others. According to humanism – a clear and influential example of which can be found in René Descartes's Discourse on the Method (1637) – the human being occupies a natural and eternal place at the very center of things, where it is distinguished absolutely from machines, animals, and other inhuman entities; where it shares with all other human beings a unique essence; where it is the origin of meaning and the sovereign subject of history; and where it

behaves and believes according to something called “human nature.” In the humanist account, human beings are exceptional, autonomous, and set above the world that lies at their feet. “Man,” to use the profoundly problematic signifier conventionally found in descriptions of “the human condition,” is the hegemonic measure of all things. Posthumanism, by way of contrast, emerges from a recognition that “Man” is not the privileged and protected center, because humans are no longer – and perhaps never were – utterly distinct from animals, machines, and other forms of the “inhuman”; are the products of historical and cultural differences that invalidate any appeal to a universal, trans-historical human essence; are constituted as subjects by a linguistic system that pre-exists and transcends them; and are unable to direct the course of world history towards a uniquely human goal. In short, posthumanism arises from the theoretical and practical inadequacy – or even impossibility – of humanism, from the relativization of the human that follows from its “coupling ... to some other order of being” (Clarke 3).

Posthumanism as a literary theory brings out some specific notions – it is a rethinking of the dominance of humanism / anthropocentrism and it promotes anti humanist and anti-essentialist views. It negates sovereign and superior entity of human beings. Firstly, the concept of Fluidity of identity in both Posthumanism and Fourth World Literature is correlated in my dimensions. There is no fixity or abstractness in the concept of identity in both theoretical notions. Hybridity of identity and multiplicity of subjectivity enunciate the constantly changing nature due to intervention of external elements of spatiality. There is no stability of address and fixity of identity possible; it is open to transformations and revolutions that possess the capacity alter their lives and subjectivities. The readiness to welcome the natures, matters and cultural agents those have the endless capacity to inculcate elements of human subjectivity. Native identity as a subjective figure constantly adhered to change and transformations.

A Native self goes through different set of external experiences such as his Native historicity, culture and orality and then he had been undergone

through colonial aggression, spatial dislocation and decolonization process. Non-human elements of all spaces have pertinent roles in configuring identity. Second point of comparison is that there is a close link between animal world and human world in both posthumanism and Fourth World concepts. Along with the extensive use of animal imagery in the literary works of Fourth World Literature, their traditions, ceremonies and rituals are closely associated with animal world.

Thirdly, both the theoretical frameworks replace centrality and show the tendency to move to peripheries. According to both theories, human is no longer the center of action, but is itself the result of intersecting agencies and meaning. Human is relocated in a wider web of connections – land, space, tissues, microorganisms etc. Both cross the boundaries between man/ land/ animal/ technology; since they promote the oscillating momentum of life, there is no spatial boundary between human and non-human elements.

Both promotes a sense of collectivity and view human as a bi product of collective entity – including the land, space and other non-human elements. The isolated sense of human entity is completely thwarted in both the projects. Posthumanism also claimed as material Eco criticism. Animal, machines and all other entities of materiality contrast to the image of human mind. It is a material mesh of meanings, properties and processes in which human and non-human players interlocked in networks that produces undeniable signifying forces.

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