



UNDERSTANDING THE THIRD WORLD LITERATURE BY USING FREUD'S THEORY OF OEDIPUS COMPLEX

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ABSTRACT:

Oedipus complex like all other complexes belongs to unconscious part of the mind, which is beyond the consciousness. The unconscious in spite of its pushed away existence plays a major role in human lives and actions. This concept is based on the theory of identification, which is the earliest expression, an emotional tie with another person. A little boy will exhibit a special interest in his father; he would like to grow like him and be like him, and take his place everywhere. This behavior has nothing to do with a passive or feminine attitude towards his father; it is on the contrary typically masculine. This paper tries to understand the notion of ideological parenting, where pen functions like phallus, whoever has the right to use symbolical phallus i.e. pen, becomes father and whoever receives the words that flow from pen, which are equivalent to discharge from phallus behave like mothers. The pleasure experienced by an intellectual, who inseminates his ideology is equal to sexual pleasure or jouissance. The hybridized intellectual born out of this ideological insemination exhibits a special interest in the dominant ideology and tries to be its carrier. During the colonial era, colonizer's ideology was positioned as fathering ideology and colonized people were converted into receivers of that ideology. This paper shows that third world intellectuals are Oedipal sons (ideologically) therefore they want to replace their ideological fathers, which is evident from the fact that almost all Third World writers are located in the First World, get published there and try to take the place of First World literature.

KEYWORDS: *Oedipus complex, feminine attitude, neuroses, infantile sexuality, psycho-analytic, phallus, jouissance, hybridization.*

INTRODUCTION:

Oedipus complex like all other complexes belongs to unconscious part of the mind, which is beyond the consciousness. The unconscious in spite of its pushed away existence plays a major role in human lives and actions. The un-admitted and inexpressible desires, unresolved conflicts, traumatic pasts, inarticulate fears, and all other elements that cannot be expressed in a civilized society are stored in the unconscious. Freud uses the term repression for the forgetting or ignoring of these fundamental fantasies and fears. Therefore, he argues that civilization is built upon a repressive mechanism that converts these elements into socially acceptable forms, such as art and literature in which artist's repressed fantasies are given an outlet through the expressed fantasies of the artifact. In this way, sublimation is the disguised escape-mechanism, an alternative to the madness.

The concept of Oedipus complex is based on the theory of identification, which is the earliest expression, an emotional tie with another person. A little boy will exhibit a special interest in his father; he would like to grow like him and be like him, and take his place everywhere. This behavior has nothing to do

with a passive or feminine attitude towards his father; it is on the contrary typically masculine. It fits in very well with the Oedipus complex. According to Freud:

The boy begins to develop a true object-cathexis towards his mother according to the attachment (analytic) type. He then exhibits two psychologically distinct ties: a straightforward sexual object-cathexis towards his mother and identification with his father, which takes him as his model. The two subsist side by side for a time without any mutual influence or interference. In consequence of the irresistible advance towards a unification of mental life, they come together at last; and the normal Oedipus Complex originates from their confluence (Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan: 175).

The little boy notices that his father stands in his way with his mother. His identification with his father then takes on a hostile coloring and becomes identical with the wish to replace his father in regard to his mother as well. Modern research in the field of psychology also supports Freud's idea of a stage of male development in which the boy feels rivalry with the father; but it also shows that at later stage, as Fisher and Greenberg puts it:

It would appear that he (the boy) gives up his acute competitive stance vis-à-vis father because father transmits friendly positive messages inviting him to join up rather than fight... He invites his son to draw close, to form an alliance, to adopt his identity, and to accept his values (Fisher: 222).

In this way Oedipus complex, which is an integral part of human personality shows that child is the father to man, emotionally and sexually, as well as in other ways, that is why Freud announced,

Oedipus complex is the nuclear complex of the neuroses, and constitutes the essential part of their content. It represents the peak of infantile sexuality, which, through its after-effects, exercises a decisive influence on the sexuality of adults. Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipus complex; anyone who fails to do so falls a victim to neurosis. With the progress of psycho-analytic studies the importance of the Oedipus complex has become more and more clearly evident (Gay: 290).

This statement of Freud is well supported by Harold Bloom in his *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) when he absorbed the Oedipal struggle into literary theory, to argue that all literary activity was, in effect, the scene of a struggle between a "beginning poet", or ephebe, and the crippling influence of powerful literary forefathers. The "ephebe circumvents this influence, not through an abrogation, but rather through a deliberate and creative misreading or misprision of literary predecessors" (Gandhi: 149).

Analogy between the Birth of a Child and the Birth of an Intellectual:

Freud starts from what he calls the anatomical difference between the sexes i.e. the difference between having/not having the phallus. When it comes to the birth of intellectual self, the analogy of birth of child with certain modifications can serve the purpose. Union between father, the inseminator and mother, the receiver leads to the birth of an offspring. If this offspring identifies with the inseminator, it tries to replace the inseminating parent, on the other hand if it identifies with the receiver it develops into a receiver. Similarly, the birth of intellect takes place as a result of interaction among various ideologies: dominant i.e. inseminating ideologies and dominated i.e. receiving ideologies. In the field of biological procreation womb is the place that receives the dominant parent i.e. father, becomes hybridized and gives birth to a hybrid offspring, similarly in the field of intellectual procreation human brain is the place that receives dominant ideologies, becomes hybridized and leads to the birth of hybrid offspring (intellectual). T.S. Eliot's concept supports this idea when he says that human brain "is in fact a receptacle for seizing and

storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain their until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present." (Eliot: 298) Ideological parents unlike biological parents are not fixed entities. Whether an ideology is dominant or dominated depends upon external factors such as socio-economic conditions, political circumstances, cultural traditions, scientific progress etc.

When it comes to ideological parenting, pen functions like phallus, whoever has the right to use symbolical phallus i.e. pen, becomes father and whoever receives the words that flow from pen, which are equivalent to discharge from phallus behave like mothers. The pleasure experienced by an intellectual, who inseminates his ideology is equal to sexual pleasure or *jouissance*. The hybridized intellectual born out of this ideological insemination exhibits a special interest in the dominant ideology and tries to be its carrier.

Now the question arises why the postcolonial intellectuals are Oedipal sons. During the colonial era, colonizer's ideology was positioned as fathering ideology and colonized people were converted into receivers of that ideology. As hybridization occurs only in receiving parent and the offspring is born; so hybridization occurs mainly in colonized people and the offspring (intellectuals) born out of this relationship are hybrid offspring. As in case of biological analogy offspring with the traces of dominant parent, i.e. XY chromosomes and phallus try to replace the dominant parent so the ideological offspring i.e. the individuals who carry the trace of dominant ideology try to replace their ideological fathers. It shows that third world intellectuals are Oedipal sons (ideologically) therefore they want to replace their ideological fathers, which is evident from the fact that almost all Third World writers are located in the First World, get published there and try to take the place of First World literature.

Ngugi in his *Decolonising the Mind* shows how the intellectually hybrid offsprings, many of whom later on turned into Oedipal sons, were born as a result of insemination of dominant ideology. During colonization and even now missionaries and colonial administrators controlled publishing houses and the educational context of novels. Colonial subjects were controlled by forcing them to speak colonizer's language. They attempted to teach children that speaking English is good and that native languages are bad by using negative reinforcement. Frantz Fanon also recognizes this aspect and concludes language was twisted into a mechanism that separated children from their own history because their own heritage was shared only at home. At school, they are told that the only way to advance is to memorize the textbook history in the colonizer's language. By removing their native language, they are separated from their history, which is replaced by European history in European languages. In this way language, which is equivalent to the inseminating genetic material, becomes a means of spiritual subjugation because it alters the linguistic genes as T. Deacon puts it:

...the ability to use language symbolically has phylogenetically affected the human brain, not in a direct cause and effect manner, but indirectly through its effects on human behaviour and on the changes that human behaviour brings about in the environment. Even though the ability to use language as a symbolic system doesn't bring about genetic changes in the nature of the human brain, the changes in environmental conditions brought about by human symbolic responses to that environment can, in the long run, bias natural selection and alter the selection of cognitive predispositions that will be favoured in the future (Claire Kramsch: 241).

Third World Intellectual as Oedipal Sons:

Ania Loomba's study of Spanish colonialism in Latin America supports this theory of insemination of dominant ideology through linguistic genes. She reveals how these colonies in Latin America became mixed societies in which local born whites (or creoles) and mestizos, or hybrids dominated the native working population. Hybridity here includes a complex internal hierarchy within various mixed peoples. As J. Jorge Klor de Alva explains, one's experience of colonial exploitation depended on one's position within this hierarchy:

In most places, the original inhabitants, who logically grouped themselves into separate cultural units (i.e. ethnicities), all but disappeared after contact, wiped out physically by disease and abuse, and later, genetically and socially by miscegenation, and lastly culturally, by the religious and political practices of the Europeans and their mixed progeny. Even in the regions where native peoples survived as corporate groups in their own greatly transferred communities, especially in the 'core' areas of Mesoamerica and the Andes, within two or three generations they were greatly reduced in number and politically and socially marginalized from the new centers of power. (Prakash:243)

The process of capturing natives by colonizers and their mixed progeny can be understood if the whole world were taken as a global family in which all cultures are related to each other as per power positions. When the mixed progeny becomes powerful, there is a competition between the colonizers and their mixed progeny that is always tilted towards the colonial powers, which is known to oedipal sons. The psychological problems and the tension faced by postcolonial writers can be understood with the help of Freudian theory that is based on Darwinian supposition that primitive man lived in small groups or hords dominated by a single, powerful male, who not only kept all the females for himself, but also expelled his younger male rivals, who were Oedipal sons desiring for their mothers i.e. the wives of their father, the Oedipal complex thus played an important role in the organization of human civilization, as Freud suggests :

One day the brothers who had been driven out come together, killed and devoured their father and so made an end of the patriarchal horde... The totem meal, which is perhaps man's earliest festival, would thus be a repetition of this memorable and criminal deed, which was the beginning of so many things – of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion(Freud: 164-65).

Third World Writers, as they are gaining popularity, seem to indicate an end of patriarchal horde, headed by colonial forces but in reality as they are carrying the traces of dominant ideology, they are serving the ends of colonial powers, because they undermine and marginalize the native literature as Rushdie does when he says:

...the writing, particularly the prose writing, produced in the last fifty years by Indian authors is not only a stronger and more important body of work than most of what has been produced in the 16 "official languages" of India," but represents the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books' (Rushdie and West:x)

These comments of Rushdie are actually the comments of an Oedipal son who has started supposing himself as a colonial father and that is why his statement echoes Macauley's statement that a single shelf of British literature is richer than the whole of Indian Literature – Aijaz Ahmad in his study of post colonial writers follows the analogy of Oedipal sons and shows that: "everyone gets the privilege, sooner or later, of being colonizer, colonizer and postcolonial-sometimes all at one" (Ahmad 1995:31).Mahasweta Devi also hints at the marginalization of natives by Oedipal sons of Colonial culture. In her story, "Shishu"(Childrent) she describes how tribal peoples have been literally and figuratively crippled in post independence India. National 'development' has no space for tribal cultures or beliefs, and the attitude of even the well-meaning government officer, Mr. Singh, towards the tribal people replicates colonialist views of non-Western peoples-to him, they are mysterious, superstitious, uncivilized, backward. In other words, they are like children who need to be brought into line with the rest of the country. The rebellious among them have literally been pushed into the forests and have been starving there for years. At the hilling climax of the tale, we are brought face to face with these 'children' who thrust their starved bodies towards Mr. Singh, forcing the officer to recognize that they are not children at all but adult citizens of free India, and stunted by free India:

Fear-stark, unreasoning, naked fear-gripped him. Why this silent creeping forward? Why didn't they utter one word?... Why were they naked? And why such long hair? Children, he had always heard of children, but how come that one had white hair? Why did the women- no, no, girls-have dangling, withered breasts?... We are not children. We are Agarias of the Village of Kuva... There are only fourteen of us left. Our bodies have shrunk without food. Our men are important, our women barren. That's why we steal the relief [the food Singh brings from the Government to distribute to the more docile among the tribal people]. Don't you see we need food to grow to a human size again?...

They crackled with savage and revengeful glee. Cackling, they ran around him. They rubbed their organs against him and told him they were adult citizens of India. ...

Singh's shadow covered their bodies. And the shadow brought the realization home to him.

They hated his height of five feet and nine inches.

They hated the normal growth of his body.

His normalcy was a crime they could not forgive.

Singh's cerebral cells tried to register the logical explanation but he failed to utter a single word. Why, why this revenge? He was just an ordinary Indian. He didn't have the stature of a healthy Russian, Canadian or American. He did not eat food that supplied enough calories for a human body. The World Health Organization said that it was a crime to deny the human body of the right number of calories (Loomba: 15)

The colonial powers or rather neo-colonial powers that "are fabricating its allies by proposing a share of the centre in a seemingly new way (not a rupture but a displacement): disciplinary support for the conviction of authentic marginality by the (aspiring) elite (Spivak: 57) with the help of Oedipal sons are pushing away the native writers and literatures that contain the authentic voices. The fundamental stake in these literary struggles is,

... the monopoly of literary legitimacy, i.e., inter alia, the monopoly of the power to say with authority who are authorized to call themselves writers; or, to put it another way, it is the monopoly of the power to consecrate producers or products (we are dealing with a world of belief and the consecrated writer is the one who has the power to consecrate and to win assent when he or she consecrates an author or a work-with a preface, a favourable review, a prize, etc. (Bourdieu: 42).

To conclude though at one level it gives an impression that Third World is getting ample attention when published through first world but as these writers like Mr. Singh of Mahasweta Devi's story "Shishu" (Children) carry the traces of First World Ideology in reality they are marginalizing the Third World experiences. Like their colonial fathers they also want to inseminate their ideology, (which is in reality the ideology of First World), into the minds of Third World people.

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