

GOLDEN RESEARCH THOUGHTS

THE SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDER IN *THE MATKA KING* BY ANOSH IRANI



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ABSTRACT:

The present research paper deals with the changing scenario of typical Indian society. Since India has accepted the global economic policy, the society is segregating like an explosion of nuclear bomb. Beyond it, neither man nor woman is happy with his/her present condition. They always prefer to live in illusion and embrace the past. Top Rani, Chandni, and Satta are the major characters portrayed in the play. They see the ideal dreams of life declining their present situation. None of them is happy with their current condition. Nobody wants to lead the barren and monotonous life. They want change; either that be a productive or destructive. They deny the stable life and, the major thing I put up this research paper is every modern character wants to break the convention of marriage and establish new relationship which would not be based on any social or cultural values. They would be free and everybody would have freedom to live according to his/her whim. Actually the main concern of this research paper is to focus on the social and psychological disorder of the characters portrayed in this play.

KEY WORDS: order, disorder, love, insomnia, death, passion1

Anosh Irani was born in 1974. He is an Indian-Canadian novelist and playwright. He was born and raised in Mumbai. Although he has indicated that he prefers the city's traditional English name, Bombay. After working in broadcasting in India, he went to Vancouver in 1998 to study and attempt writing. He is the writer of the famous novels *The Cripple* and *His Talismans* and *The Song of Kahunsha*. *The Song of Kahunsha* was selected for CBC Radio's Canada Reads and the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize. It was issued in thirteen countries and became a bestseller in Canada and Italy. His play, *Bombay Black* was awarded a Dora Award as an Excellent New Play. Irani was specified for the Governor General's Award for Drama for his compilation *The Bombay Plays: The Matka King & Bombay Black*. It has been attempted below to focus the brief ideas of each literary work.

Psychological interpretation of any literary work includes the study of characters and their normal and abnormal behaviour, on the other hand, sociological or Marxist interpretation means again the character study but at social level. Though Sartre says, "Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever slave or he is not free at all," (Sartre:441), it is not true about Top Rani because he has been girdled by the mixed feelings of freedom and slavery which force him to be the victim of social and psychological disorder. In his first play, *The Matka King* the protagonist echoes of a new religion with race and gender raising questions best posed in a psychoanalytic register. Freud's skeptical questioning of religion is important for a consideration of gendered, raced, and specifically religious subjective, explored in the play, as is Lacan's paradigm of entry into the symbolic order. In recent years, scholars of African-American literature have reappraised the value of psychoanalytic theory, arguing that critically appropriated Freudian and Lacanian concepts may aid our understanding of the imbricated workings of race and sex in society and literature. Here, Top Rani is a protagonist who makes his religion and ideology of life and slowly, but steadily is buried in his self made religion and ideology. He is made up with the society around him. He boldly runs an illegal matka along with prostitution. These two occupations, he thinks, are his heart and brain. The occupation of prostitution belongs to his heart as whatever the repressed desires, can be fulfilled by this occupation and running matka is his brain which wants to take revenge upon that society who made him socially and psychologically crippled. His condition became like a man who has eyes but a blind, instead of having legs, cannot walk and having ability of listening, cannot listen; and though he has a mouth, he doesn't use to talk which might be regular and ordered talk. Though his behaviour is normal, he has been suffering from various social and psychological disorders. First of all, he is the victim of panic disorder, where some common symptoms include fear of dying or going crazy and fear of losing control. Like Marathi poet Namdev Dhasal, he doesn't believe in the concept of freedom. 'Freedom? No one is free. Look at me. I have money. I have long, strong muscles. But when I step into the street, even stray dog gets more love I do No one is free,' (7) is his inner voice which shows that he is suffering from the fear of dying or going crazy or losing control.

Next to it, he is the victim of agoraphobia that he doesn't go to any public places because of the fear of panic attacks. In a whole, we do not find his minimum will to get out of the house for the visit of any social place; even he doesn't allow his girls to get out due to the fear of society. When Chandni tries to go out for free breath, he alludes, 'Then what do you want Chandni? You have everything. You have nice breasts, a home, a family. You have me. Don't love me?' (34)

This dialogue doesn't indulge Chandni but just represses and restricts her from getting out of this place. Besides these two disorders, he is suffering from generalized

anxiety disorder. He worries excessively about many circumstances. The major worry is about him, and it is if he would achieve his manliness again or not. He is difficult to concentrate on one thing; there is a lump in his throat. He points out his fear by disclosing other's situation. 'If they guess the number correctly and bet their weekly pay on it, they will have an extra round of drinks. If they guessed wrong and bet their weekly pay on it.... they might hang themselves from a ceiling fan' (21).

This is a generalized anxiety disorder in Top Rani who thinks about the losers who will hang themselves to a fan, but the reality is that whether this calamity will fall on him. The symbols like a silver tray, steel container and red mixture obviously help to disclose the fear in his mind. We find little bit commodification in him. He has his phallus preserved in a glass jar, and he gives much value to this thing which, he thinks, might help him to be a full man. He tries to impress Gantaal showing him his phallus to prove that he is not a eunuch; he is a full man who can be united with any complete women. If we try to understand the material circumstances and historical situations of Top Rani to know how much he is socially a social.

The most important issue in the society is that someone exploits the other and the other either becomes the victim social disorder or reification. Here we have a challenging question about the exploitation. It is necessary to know the exploiter and exploited. We make a view about Top Rani that he is an exploiter, but there is a question why he became exploiter. I think, he became a exploiter due to his being exploited in the past when his father sends him to earn livelihood and the owner of him sells him to the eunuch without any permission of either his father or him. The eunuchs cut his phallus and train him to be a eunuch. His physical transformation from full man to eunuch makes him most cruel. Since then, he became a victim of social and psychological disorder. He was deskilled by cutting his physical organ and forced him to do the repetitive work by the society around him. In short, he is a victim of not his weaknesses, but society made him destructed and cruel.

There is another problem in him that he alienates himself from the shadow of the society or any social issue. He has made his world where nobody had any place or status. He is a Matka King his name is Top Rani; it means he carries the features of both male and female as a king and Rani (queen) remain side by side to him but actually he doesn't have any feature of either male or female. Even he is not eunuch. Then the question arises about the identity of Matka King. He is a man of no man, a woman of no woman and a eunuch of no eunuch. So his identity that he is a leafless, fruitless tree on a barren land. He can be compared with the concept of T. S. Eliot's 'hollow man'.

He is the victim of false consciousness as he makes his religion but occupation too. He is just a blind worshiper of this occupation. When Chandni expects to pluck the eyes of him, he thinks that Chandni would have another god.

There is an Electra complex relationship between Top Rani and his six daughters. He loves his girls from the heart. It is his excessive and eccentric love for them. Even the girls also love their father as he protects them, feeds them and gives a protective home to them. He can run any other business instead of prostitution, yet he doesn't try to do any other business. It is his immanent will to have sex with all these girls but is unable due to the lack of phallus. Anyhow he wanted to appease his physical desires so he becomes the victim of substitution as Karl Jung thinks about Hamlet that he wished to be a substitute of his own father and there was his will to kill his own father and be a bed partner of his own mother. Freud called it Oedipus complex. Here we have an Electra complex, and he substitutes his

customers and enjoys the physical union with his every daughter. The following dialogue gives us an idea how he was keenly attached with his own daughters.

Why Chandni so good at her work? She never stopped sucking. Prostitution is what we are meat to do. All these other things: doctors, lawyers, accountants, these are inventions that deviate is from our true destiny. (32)

As the same time, he envies her for being her completeness.

Chandni, you are one country. You take off all your clothes and tell me, "Look, look, I have this terrible nuclear bomb. It will destroy you. "And I am the country that laughs in your face. I simply lift my sari: "Look, look, I have this terrible nothing." And of the two countries, you will surrender. (33)

He is repressed by all his unreal desires and fails to sublime his unwanted and impossible desires; so he becomes the victim of psychological disorder. The dream that he sees exposes how he attempts to fulfil his socially unwanted desires. Whatever is hidden in his subconscious mind comes on the surface of his mind in the dream. He sees himself as a full man many times in his dream. It means he tries to fulfill his desires in dream.

The incident of 'Surya', a beautiful eunuch strikes him all over his life. Surya was most beautiful creature and the temptation point of all married and unmarried women. He was burnt by society due to his ability to chant the women. When he was undressed, people came to know that he was a eunuch; yet he wasn't excused by the society. Top Rani compares himself with Surya several times and thinks about his future that might resemble Surya. At the end of the play, he comes to know that he is impossible to achieve his previous physical ability. So he deliberately becomes the victim of the plan of Chandni and Gantaal as they manage a cobra in the Matka, that bites Top Rani and finishes his terrible and haunted life.

There is another character, Satta, who is also socially and psychologically disturbed. He sells his own living room and becomes homeless due to the fear of Khalilbhai as he has taken a loan from him and wants to pay back by winning the Matka. His madness about Matka not only destroys his own life but his daughter's too. He loses the Matka and gives his daughter to Matka King be a whore. After the death of his wife, he becomes alone and sees his wife in his daughter. He loves her so much but can't achieve any physical benefit from his daughter Aarti; so as he is unable to sublime his physical desires, he wanted to destroy that thing which he loves most; and that thing is nothing but his own daughter. When he comes to know that he has lost all his money on Matka, he tries to commit suicide.

We have one more individual who earns his livelihood by telling prophecy, and he is Gantaal, a well-know fortune teller. He becomes a victim of hallucination when his friend Satta dies. He sees the ghost of Satta again and again, who tells him to rescue his daughter from the clutch of Top Rani.

As Hamlet, his friend Laertes and other night watchmen experience the existence of ghost of Hamlet's father due to their excessive thinking on the same matter; Gantaal also becomes the victim of excessive thinking about his friend Satta and his daughter and what Satta expected from him. He thinks that Satta is again coming and just reminding him the duty of him. But a man, who dies, does not visualize again. His reflection can be visualized, as it already remains in the subconscious mind, through excessive thinking about the man who passed away. Gantaal experiences Satta's existence due to his picture already stuck in his mind. There are other female characters like Chandni, Aarti, Sudha and other four

daughters who are the victim of reification, alienation, repression and false consciousness which cause them to be socially and psychologically disordered.

The play *The Matka King* includes five characters from the almost same class who will be studied at social and psychological level. There are so many social and psychological causes which affect his mind and social behaviour and he becomes the victim of various disorders and at last when he is incapable to bear, he becomes the victim of the conspiracy of Chandni and Satta. Satta doesn't suicide due to a single cause. He is burdened by various social and psychological elements which drag him to either solitariness or death.

The prologue of the drama is a portrait of the humiliation of the human beings. Top Rani, the protagonist, has dressed in a sari. There is a rule in society about the clothes that man should wear manly attire, and woman should wear such a dress which is supposed to be worn by a woman. There is a social pattern about man's behaviour and lifestyle. He should be physically strong; his muscles should be powerful; he should have short hair; he should be active, bold and instead to concentrate on his physical beauty; he should be the lover of the knowledge, power and ability to protect not only himself but all those who depend on him.

The entry of Matka king demolishes the idea of man, because he is though a male, his attire and behaviour is like a woman. His entry on the dais is wearing blouse and sari, having long hair tied back, and bangles on the wrists astonish the readers as well as an audience, and they suppose that he might be a eunuch. Everybody thinks that he is eunuch. As the play develops, everybody comes to know that he is castrated, and his phallus is cut out from his body. If a phallus, which is a part of the body like other parts, lacks in man, he is called a eunuch. When many people lose their various body parts except a phallus in accidents or by other causes, they are just called crippled. It is really eccentric that if man loses any part of the body other than phallus, he is called crippled and if he loses only one part, phallus having all other parts safe and sound, he is called a eunuch. It shows that the social mind gives more importance to the sex organ and not other organs that can experience other important senses. If such a part lacks in anybody, he is not labeled as a man but just a eunuch, a futile creature which doesn't product anything valuable. So it can be said that the earth moves around the sun, and the creatures on the earth move around the sex. Though sex is most important phenomenon in human life due to its ability to fulfil the passion and hunger of body, other human activities are not less important, which prevent the life from becoming wild and cruel like beasts due to their ability to preserve human values like ethics and morality. To give prime importance to the sexual activity reduces the confidence and makes the inferior complexity in them who are unable to perform such activity.

The internal sufferings of the eunuchs due to lack of sexual organ and external sufferings in society due to little value in the society carry them to the matter of people's laugh and arguments. That is why they are automatically devalued and travel to the depression. They naturally become the victim of social and psychological disorder. These creatures of having human senses either prefer to live in solitariness or embrace the death because the human beings of sex organs do not try to understand the dark world of them.

The play takes place at two places in Bombay that are side by side. After the prologue, scene one of first Act opens on the Grant Road. The date is 30th December and time is 8.45 pm. Cantal and Satta expose their connection with their idea of life and Top

Rani's Brothel. In this scene, the audiences do not smell any brothel activity but just sense the touch of Matka. Gantaal, a father of teller, has sat on the footpath of Grant road. The vehicles, particularly cars, are passing him. The smoke from the car covers his face. He doesn't bear the smoke and cough violently. A large steal truck is in front of him. There is a cigarette behind his ear. The opening lines of the play, 'Cars cause smoking. Smoking causes cigarettes. It is a vicious cycle', (6) comment on the nature of Grant road. The life in the cars destroys the life on the roads as cars cause the problems in the life of downtrodden people like Gantaal. The high-class society, who uses the cars, sucks and breaks the life of low class or downtrodden people. As car is a prestigious point for high class, the smoking cigarette is prestigious point for downtrodden people because both car and cigarette create the smoke, and both kinds of smoke destroy the lungs of a whole society. That is why, Gantaal ironically calls it a vicious cycle.

CONCLUSION:

The Matka King is both more complex in theme and more subtle in treatment. The story itself is a new one, originating in a cosmopolitan city, Mumbai. Top Rani pretends to be a man in order to fool his surrounding people and all girls in his brothel. He is completely mindless, lunatic and not worth killing. This is the tragedy of moral sensitivity in a worked world, the tragedy of the idealist come suddenly face to face with reality the tragedy of an imagination betraying its owner. Matka King's madness is partly real hysteria, partly an attempt to fence off curiosity about his real state of mind and intensions. It can be injustice to call him a passions' slave though he can't control his passions. He may remain in part a mystery. But that mystery is bound up with the mystery of life. It is a poetic rendering of a character's complete mental and emotional state at a critical point in his development, drawing on all the resources of imagery and rhythmic movement, for its total expression. The play is however, not simply a series of portraits; the action is what gives it shape and primary meaning, and it's a mistake to remove the characters from the action and speculate about them as though they are characters in a psychologist's case book. While reading Hamlet, an intelligent reader asks a question to himself if a dagger through Claudius ribs would restore Hamlet's shattered universe. In the same sense, while reading Matka King the reader will ask a question to himself if the mental injury of cutting genital restores his shattered world. The action of the play is designed to exhibit the difficulties, the follies, the obsessions, the pretentions, and the absurdities of different characters.

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