

ISSN: 0976-8165

Bi-Monthly, Refereed, and Indexed Open Access eJournal

THE CRITERION

An International Journal in English



Vol. 8, Issue- IV (August 2017)

UGC Approved Journal No 768

Editor-In-Chief: Dr. Vishwanath Bite

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ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

www.galaxyimrj.com

Resistance and Modes of Representation of Resistance in Omprakash Valmiki's Work *Amma and Other Stories*

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Article History: Submitted-15/06/2017, Revised-14/08/2017, Accepted-23/08/2017, Published-10/09/2017.

Abstract:

The intention of this article is to represent the voice of resistance through Omprakash Valmiki's work *Amma and other stories*. The article focuses on the "Dalit" character, who can be seen in the procedure of resistance to claim a life of honor in the society. These characters in the stories are represented as conscious characters, who do not obey anything blindly. They are very critical and try to unveil the strategies of domination, which are used for centuries in order to control their mind and body. The characters in the stories use different modes of resistance. The stories possess messages of awareness in the society which comes through the "Dalit" characters present in the stories.

Keywords: Resistance, Domination, Power, hegemonies, liberation.

Introduction:

We all are familiar with the word "resistance" which is not new for us. The attempt of fighting for resistance remains present in every person's behavior. A small child resists against her mother when she runs behind her child to force her to drink a glass of milk, and child resists by weeping or through the gestures of the body.

In our society, we can perceive people around us in the act of resistance for different reasons. This article makes an attempt to focus on the resistance which takes place against the caste structure prevalent in the society, by which some people are excluded from accessing the sources. They are also denied the right of living with dignity in the society. Thus, the fight of resistance in such situation comes as a response against the society of "difference" where some people in the society maintain hegemonies over other for their self- interest. Thus, resistance comes as a desire to deconstruct psychological division prevailing in the society which is projected by Du Bois in the model of "Double Consciousness".

The *Amma and other stories* by Omprakash Valmiki unveil how people in dominant position becomes successful to maintain the hegemonies. This preservation and continuation of hegemonies do not only take place with the help of force only.

Omprakash Valmiki in *Amma and other stories* raises questions and critiques the Institution, and the social order. The echo of resistance comes through Dalit Character. These

characters represent the voice of resistance and claim an equal space in the society.

The article focuses on selected stories from *Amma and other stories* like *Salaam*, *The hide of an ox*, *The killing of a Cow*, *Twenty Five Four are a Hundred and Fifty*, *Storm* and *The Beast*. These stories illustrate the division of Indian society on the basis of caste which has enlarged the gap between human being. The important elements in the stories are action and opposition but the opposition does not come in a violent manner, but through different modes. These stories do not only reverberate the tone of resistance, but they also divulge different modes by which "Dalit" character resists in the society. For example the story, *Salaam* exposes the strategies of domination by Ranghars an Upper-Class society. The story projects the act of *Salaam* which is a practice to salute to those who belong to upper class, to give them a Salute which is an act of deference. This practice could be understood as an act of obedience and surrender of one's self in front of powerful Ranghars, who represents the dominant body in the story. Ranghars expects from "Dalit" to pay them a mark of respect which in a way will be an acknowledgment of the superiority of Ranghars in front of the whole village. In a way, *Salaam* reveals the strategy behind this act of deference. Howard Newby Defines Deference as "*the form of social interaction which occurs in the situation involving the exercise of traditional authority.*"¹ Further, James Scott in *Domination And The Arts of Resistance* marks the real intention behind such activities. He articulates:

subordination appear deferential, they bow and scrapes, they seem amiable, they appear to know their place and to stay in it, thereby indicating that they also know and recognize the place of their superior.²

These cultural practices disclose the obscured reality behind such activities. In a manner, the character Harish in *Salaam* resists through the disavowal of this deferential act and challenges the power of Ranghars. He clearly refuses to go for *Salaam* before the departure of the marriage as Harish said pungently "*Think whatever you like....I look upon this practice to be a conspiracy to crush our self-confidence. This ceremony of salaam must be stopped.*"³ Harish makes an effort to question the custom made by Ranghars, who rules through these conventions to maintain their status through the act of performance of Dalit in front of the public . *Salaam* reveals the politics of these cultural strategies which can be understood as a method to snatch the confidence of "Dalit" and to maintain hegemonies in the society. The ideology of Adolf Hitler has also revealed the role of power politics in order to maintain its domination. He articulates:

one cannot rule by force alone. True, force is decisive, but it is equally important to have this psychological something which the animal trainer also needs to be master of his Beast. They must be convinced that we are the victors."⁴

The story *Salaam* also gives a picture of the psychological control of other Dalit characters, who are totally convinced with the practices of Ranghars. They do not observe any problem in following these practices. According to them, they believe there is no injury in such practice because they get gifts from Ranghars in return of that act of deference. Harish the protagonist resists such acts of deference and also reveals the reality and ugly side

of this cultural practice. So, resistance comes from Harish, who breaks and challenges this customary practice.

The story *The hide of the Ox* disclose to the reader the glimpses of the performance of Brahmin in public sphere by which dominant body as represented by Brahmin, in this case, maintain their status in the society. They execute service from “untouchable” without giving them any payment. The story portrays the character of Pandit, who wants from Kale and Bhoore, who belongs to an untouchable community to pick the body of dead Ox.

The story *The hide of the Ox* resonates the voice of resistance which comes in two modes. The first mode depicts the act of fantasization where Bhoore fantasizes the vision of empowerment through education by giving education to his child. The following dialogue will help us to understand the desire and state of mind of Bhoore.

at some day his own child chhutku would also stands amid those children learning multiplications tables. He just had to earn a little more money and he would send his chhutku to the school this year.⁵

The other mode of resistance comes by looking for a job as an alternative. The following dialogue between Kale and Bhoore helps us to understand this context.

‘we should give up this work, Bhoore.’

‘why....if we give it up, who will do this work? Will the dead animals keep rotting in the village?’

‘let them rot. This foul smell drowns us neck-deep.who cares/no one even lets us sit near them.’....he said: ‘come, Bhoore, let’s go somewhere else. I hear there are big factories in Delhi, Ghaziabad. We should be able to get a job somewhere.....’⁶

This story projects the effort of the negation of power through education and through jobs. Similarly, the Story *The killing of a Cow*, in a way reveals the consequences of disobeying the order of Mukhiya, who asks Sukka a “Dalit” character to send his wife to him to satiate his sexual desire. In this situation Sukka uses defiant as a mode to resist the order of Mukhiya. The following dialogue helps us to understand the psychological condition of Sukka:

The weak person sitting inside Sukka was turning over to the other side. Gathering his weakening self, he said: ‘it’s when I work, Mukhiyaji, that you give me two handfuls of rice. She will not come to the Haveli ‘saying this he went out of the Haveli.’⁷

Sukka’s sentence illustrates an expression of his determinant strong will power. His attitude of questioning could be understood as a forward movement towards resistance. The Mukhiya, who represents the dominant body, gives death to Sukka and preserve his domination. The story gives us the idea of the relationship between powerful agent represented by Mukhiya and powerless symbolized by the protagonist Sukka. The story

elucidates the expectation of the powerful person, who in a way expects certain role from the powerless. The people in power appreciate those who move according to their desires. The moment the powerless tries to interfere and question the powerful then they suffer consequences for this.

In the story, *The Beast*, mode of resistance comes by the side of Dalit protagonist Jagesar. He throws the stick which represents the power of Chaudhri and a symbol of proud for him as it is given to him by Chaudhri. He finds himself in light from darkness when the daughter in law of Chaudhri demythologizes the real character of Chaudhri to Jagesar. She explains to him how Chaudhri tries to violate her sexuality several times. This portrayal removes the veil from Jagesar's eyes, who always imagined Chaudhri as an excellent person and blindly follows his orders. Thus, resistance comes in the form of throwing the stick by Jagesar.

The story *Twenty Five Fours are a Hundred and Fifty* presents two voices of resistance in the story. The first modes of resistance work by the protagonist, who in a sense reveals the true face of the landlord to his father. The son discloses the character of the landlord, who has taken a large amount of money from his father in form of interest. The landlord, who signifies the figure of idealization and epitome for the father of the protagonist shatters. The mode of resistance comes from the protagonist in form by demythologizing the values represented by the landlord. Hence, exposes the shrewd character of the landlord. The other mode of resistance comes from the side of the father of the protagonist which comes in form of abusive language by his father. He conveys his anger by saying "may the chaudhri rot!....there would be none left to give him water even."⁸

The abusive word by the father of the protagonist could be categorized as an act of hidden transcript at individual level described by James Scott. The father uses verbal language as a medium to express his anger. It can be seen that the violent speech comes with the aim of total destruction of the enemy, who is a landlord. The thought of destruction comes through the knowledge imparted by his son who interprets the character of the landlord. In this case "hidden transcript" is a kind of weapon of the father of the protagonist by which he resists the figure of idealization as represented by the landlord. Describing "hidden transcript" James Scott describe them as a discourse explained as under.

"offstage," beyond direct observation by power holder. The hidden transcript is thus derivative in the sense that it consists of those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript.⁹

This mode of resistance by the father of the protagonist is used to express his anger which he cannot expose in public place. The speech made by the father of the protagonist in a way ruptures every kind of decency. It imbibes a vision to destroy the power of the landlord, who has befooled people like him for centuries. James Scott thus reveals the positive approach of such gestures. He explains:

.....that the first open statement of a hidden transcript, a declaration that breaches the

etiquette of power relations, that breaks an apparently calm surface of silence and consent, carries the force of a symbol of the declaration of war.¹⁰

The other story *Storm* presents in front of the reader the attempt of the protagonist Mr. Lal a “Dalit” character to resist a society where people like him are seen as uncultured. He hides his identity and lives a life of dignity. *Storm* in a way depicts reason to escape from the culture where the meaning of “Dalit” represents something impure entity. By, detaching and imitating the culture of Brahmin he boycotts the narrow-mindedness of society. He makes an attempt to liberate himself from the negative consequences which the act of concealment hides. Franz Anon in his book *Black Skin White Mask* in writing the same discourse articulates the reason of self-detachment of a person from one’s self. He writes:

when the black man comes into contact with the white world he goes through an experience of sensitization. His ego collapses. His self-esteem evaporates. He ceases to be a self-motivated person. The entire purpose of his behavior is to emulate the white man, to become like him and thus hope to be accepted as a man.¹¹

It can be concluded that the story portrays the technique by which people in Dominant position rules in the society. They dominate through Material, Status, and Ideological Performance by which they continue their supremacy in the society. These stories resonate the voice of resistance to desire a life of self-respect in the society. In a way, resistance comes by Dalit character to claim for equivalent opportunities in the society.

The characters can be seen in the process of self-discovery and their potentiality. They make an attempt to maneuver the social, cultural system of society in order to become a part of the society.

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