CHAPTER-3

CHILD’S EYE VIEW OF THE WORLD
REFLECTION ON CULTURE, POLITICS AND MORALITY.
Child's Eye view of the world - Reflections on culture politics and morality.
The complex interaction between self, world and symbol is done by a child how he sees; think and feel are his own experiences. The investigation of the nature of child has contributed enormously to our understanding of the relationship between the literature and life. The power of knowing, experiencing and expressing, the expressing creativity is child’s eye view of the world.

Morality, manner, character, proper behaviour is the differentiation among intentions, decisions and actions between those that are good and bad. A moral code is a system of morality to a particular religion, culture, politics etc. and a moral is any one practice or teaching within a moral code. It is synonymous with 'good' or 'right'. Morality refers to personal or cultural values, codes of conduct or social mores. Morality refers to whatever is actually right or wrong which may be independent of the values or mores held by any particular peoples or cultures.
The development of modern morality is a process closely tied to the Socio-cultural evolution of different people of humanity. The set of behaviors that constitute morality evolved largely because they provided possible survival and reproductive benefits.Humans consequently evolved "pro-social" emotions, such as feelings of empathy or guilt, in response to these moral behaviors. Morality is not absolute but relative and constitutes any set of behaviors that encourage human cooperation based on their ideology to get ideological unity.

The ability to recognize and vicariously experience what another individual is undergoing was a key step forward in the evolution of social behaviour and ultimately morality. Morality is considered to change through personal development. If morality is the answer to the question 'how ought we to live' at the individual level, politics can be seen as addressing the same question at the social level. It is therefore unsurprising that evidence has been found of a relationship between attitudes in morality and politics.

Group morality develops from shared concepts and beliefs and is often codified to regulate behaviour within a culture or
community. In Cities, where the cultural mix is greater, thus requiring more liberalism. Within nationalist movements, there has been some tendency to feel that a nation will not survive or prosper without acknowledging one common morality, regardless of its content. Political Morality is also relevant to the behaviour internationally of national governments, and to the support they receive from their host population.

Morality is generally distinguished from custom, another way for a community to define appropriate activity, by the former's derivation from natural or universal principles. Morality can also be seen as the collection of beliefs as to what constitutes a good life. An individual’s conception of the good life, are often discussed in terms of "morality".

Morality include the Golden Rule, The five Precepts, The Noble Eight fold Path of Buddhism, The ancient Egyptian Code of Ma' at, the Ten Commandments of Judaism and Christianity, the Quran of Islam, Judiasm'sNoahide Law and the Yamans and niyana of the Hindu Scriptures. Culture politics and morality are related to each other culture is a way of transcending the class system.
Culture is a modern concept based on a term first used in classical antiquity. The term first appeared in its current sense in Europe in 18th and 19th centuries. He term developed to refer to the betterment or refinement of the individual; especially through education some refer the term culture to a universal human capacity. In 20th century culture had two meanings (1) the evolved human capacity to classify and represent experiences with symbols and to act imaginatively and creatively and (2) the distinct ways that people living in different parts of the world classified and represented their experiences and acted creatively. The intangibles such as language, customs etc. are the main referent of the term culture. Originally culture meant the cultivation of the soul or mind. Then came the idea of high culture and low culture which reflected inequalities within societies. Then culture was redefined as a diverse set of activities characteristic of all human societies. This is the modern understanding of word culture. Culture is considered to be a group-specific behavior that is acquired, at least in part, from social influences. Thus culture is
both a dynamic of our inner resources-enabling us to be ‘alone’ in separation; and yet belongs to ‘union’-uniting us with all other who share it. So a child in finding his own true voice understand better how to respond to each special ‘voice’ in writers in literature. Culture is a powerful tool for survival, but it is a fragile phenomenon. Our written languages, government buildings and other man made things are merely product of culture. Culture is a part of learned behavior patterns and perceptions. Culture describes the many ways in which human beings express themselves for the purpose of uniting with others, forming a group defining an identity, and even for distinguishing themselves as unique. Cultural expression is highly sensual in that human beings often creates activities, practices, symbols and so on that can be easily consumed by our senses. For example, culturally specific foods seek to activate our sense of taste and smell. Although ‘culture’ is not necessary for survival of human species, notions of culture and cultural identities are present in almost every human society on earth. Historically culture has been used to justify and legitimize
certain behaviors, practices, traditions and overall ways of living. Some people have a great concern for the preservation of culture and they fear that their cultural values and traditions are at risk of getting lost among the mix of new and different ideas. Culture is often used as a starting point when expressing our identity to others. Yet culture like identity, is complex and it includes characteristic beyond ethnicity and religion.

The culture of India refers to the religions, beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, ceremonies, arts, values and the way of life in India and its people. Kerala has mixture of different faiths, most significantly Hinduism, Islam and Christianity and have a culture commonly regarded as the Malayalam culture of Kerala since 1960s only few Jews mostly white remained in Kerala. Kerala has a reputation of being communally one of the least sensitive states in India. There 56% of Kerala residents are Hindus, 24% Muslims, 19% are Christians and remaining follow other religions including Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Judaism. Various tribal people in Kerala have retained various
religious beliefs of their ancestors despite influences of mainstream religion.

Novel The God of Small Things talks about Syrian Christians in Kerala who remained as an independent group, and they got their bishops from Assyrian church of the east. The novel depicts the life of Keralite society and its rites, customs traditions and patriarchal domination, caste apartheid, caste hegemony and caste discrimination. Arundhati depicted in her novel the significant social, political and cultural movements including struggles for eradication of untouchability and other social problems. The problem of socio cultural, political and status of women prevailed in the society of kerala in 1960s. How dalits were treated in the society is shown in the novel. Dalits were the people who were not allowed to walk on the public roads, they were not allowed to cover their upper bodies and not allowed to carry umbrellas.

South American culture is depicted by Nell Harper Lee in her novel To Kill a Mockingbird. South America had distinct culture and history, having developed its own customs,
musical style and varied cuisines due to variety of sources including Native Americans, European settlements of Spanish, English, Germans, French, Scotch-Irish and Scottish and importation of thousands of enslaved Africans. The south had lower percentages of high school graduates, lower housing values, lower household incomes and lower cost of living than rest of the United States. This resulted to maintain strong loyalty to family ties. There Southerners were English, Irish and Afro Americans as reported by the census.

The deep South of America including Alabama had a very different culture. The south operated the policy of segregation which did not end until the 1960s. Maycomb the setting of vast majority of To Kill a Mockingbird culture as reflected in the novel is- the place in a small hot sleepy town where the residents are privy to the details of each other lives. The atmosphere of Maycomb is relaxed and inward- looking “there was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb county.” Maycomb is portrayed as a
safe place where everyone left their houses unlocked, this peace is undercut by a deeply felt violent racism which divides its white and African American population. In 1930s America suffered the prolonged economic disaster known as the Great Depression. Unemployment was widespread especially in southern and rural communities such as the one portrayed in the novel To Kill a Mockingbird. The depression led by Temperance movement to ban alcohol in the United States.

The Deep South of America including Alabama had very different culture to the north. It retained strong memories of defeat in American Civil war; and it is to this day a considerably more Christian society, with religion playing an important part in everyday life. The legacy of the civil war, combined with the severe economic pressure, also heightened racial tension in south. The south operated a policy of segregation which did not end until 1960s. Alabama lies in the southeastern United States. A strongly Christian state, Alabama is nick named “The heart of Dixie” the Dixie states are those that wanted to secede from the Union to form the Confederate States of America.
during the civil war. The war was largely fought over the issue of slavery, which had been banned although the economy of the south relied upon slave labour. Farmers settled in Alabama in the 1820s and 30s to take advantage of fertile soil, brought slaves with them expanding the cotton plantation. According to the census, enslaved African comprised 45% of the state population. There was also a population of poor white subsistence farmers. After the Southern confederates lost the civil war, they were required to free their African-Americans slaves. But much of the south was still dependent on a rural economy centered on cotton. Plantation owners sought to re-establish control over African American. They instituted Jim Crow Laws to separate White and African American economic, educational and social institutions and ensured that those used by the black population were far inferior to those of White Americans; they also instituted segregation to reduce the freedoms of African-Americans and restore their own dominance. There were no laws to protect against racism, and hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan- founded by veterans of
the Confederate Army attacked and killed African Americans.
In 1901, legislation effectively disfranchised African American through voting restrictions. By 1941 a total of 520,000 black people had lost their rights and privileges. This disfranchisement was reversed by the civil right movement led by Martin Luther King in the 1960s; Federal legislation was passed to protect African-American voting and civil rights.

As the soil, however rich it may be, cannot be productive without cultivation, so the mind without culture can never produce good fruits-(Seneca quotes) Thus both the novels are the good fruits of the mind of the novelists. There reflections on culture politics and morality are very clearly seen through the child's eye view of the world in both novels "The God of Small Thing," and "To Kill a Mocking birds."

The God of Small Things is the novel a patch work of flash backs and lengthy side tracks that weave together to tell the story of family. The main events of the novels are traced back through the complex history of their causes, and memories are revealed as they relate to each other thematically and as they might appear in Rahel's mind.
The narrative voice is omniscient, or all knowing, it is loosely grounded in Rahel's perspective, and all of the episodes of the novel progress towards the key moments in Rahel's life.

The novel is narrated in the third person; the reader sees everything through Rahel's eyes. This gives the reader a very special insight into the happenings and characters. There are various moments which cross each other all through the book. One moment is in 1969 when Rahel is a seven-year-old child. At these moments everything is seen through a child's eye with a child's feeling and rationale. Facts, objects and people are seen in a complete different light. The child's view gives the book a very special charm and poignancy. It also brings in moments of light comic scenes. The impartial view, which purely relates the facts, brings the story together, making it real and believable. This creates an exquisite atmosphere and a beautiful but very sad story. Roy imbues the plot with a mixture of innocence, love and malicious manipulation.

The main part of the plot takes place in 1969 when the novelist was a child and has experience through child's eye the time when the caste system in India was still very strongly imbedded. It is also the
time of increased awareness around the world and a peak of Communist ideology and influence.

India is very complex society with various cultural and religious habits and beliefs. Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims share the same space. Society is divided not only by the very strict caste system but also by class consciousness. There are a number of languages spoken in India, but the higher classes make a point of speaking English, sending their sons to study in England and adopting certain English habits. Kerala, where the story is set itself has a complex social setup with Hindus, Muslims and Christians having lifestyle and tradition different from each other. It also has a considerably larger number of Christian populations compared to other parts of India, predominantly Saint Thomas Christians.

The God of Small things is a book about India's culture, politics and morality as seen through the Indian child and not India as seen by the western world or by western standards. It is the story about real India beautifully written by its own nationals. The book is an inextricable mix of experience and imagination. Two children and their impressions of the world represent the viewpoint and their
innocence. The children restate things that the adult say in a new phonetic way, disjoining and recombinining words. This echoes the children’s way of looking at the world differently from the grown-ups that surround them. They place significance on words and ideas differently from the adults, thereby creating a new way of viewing the world around them. They pick up on certain feelings and ideas that the adults around them either fail or refuse to recognize, and give new significance to things that the adults may or may not ignore for their own purposes. The children use and repeat these phrases throughout the story so that phrases them gain independence and new representational meaning in subsequent uses.

ARUNDHATI herself said “ever since as a child I knew that people had to do things when they grew up, I knew that I wanted to be a writer”

To me the god of small things is the inversion of god. God’s a big thing and God’s in control. The god of small things... whether it’s the way the children see things or whether it’s the insect life in the book, or the fish or the stars—there is a not accepting of what we think of as adult boundaries. This
small activity that goes on is the under life of the book. All sorts of boundaries are transgressed upon.

“My fiction is an inextricable mix of experience and imagination.”( interview of Arundhati Roy)

Roy employs a disjointed, non-sequential narrative that echoes the process of memory, especially the resurfacing of a previously suppressed, painful memory. Complexity of the culture from which the story originates, all of the multifarious elements come together to construct a diverse look at one instance of Indian culture and the effect of the caste system on life and love during a time post colonialism. The children attempt to form their own identities, naming and renaming them in the process, Roy places in parallel the effect of the process, by inter-wining the past and the present. This process echoes the progression of the Indian people like all other cultures that attempt to find ways to maintain their traditions with in a time of increasing globalization.

The book addresses universal themes ranging from religion to biology. Throughout the novel great and small themes are interconnected, and that historical events and seemingly unrelated
details have far reaching consequences throughout a community and country. Novel is able to comment simultaneously. On universal, abstract themes and a wide variety of ideas relating to the personal and family history of the members of the Kochamma family as well as the wider concerns of the Kerala region of India. The themes forbidden love, Indian history, politics all is a part of culture politics and morality of time experienced by Roy in her childhood days. The image of culture, politics and morality through child’s eye view of world is narrated through the character of Scout by Harperlee in the novel To Kill a Mockingbird. The novel encounters with poverty, racism, disrespect and protest. Analyze effectiveness of different forms of cultural protest. The novel is a racist morality tale it teach us that racism is skin deep.

The civil right era and the deep-South depression era epic is the novel To Kill a Mocking bird. This novel is narrated by the novelist from the understanding and experiences she has seen since her childhood the events and incidence she saw is described from the point of view of a young Girl Scout, the daughter of Atticus Finch.
The images and words seen on television and read in the newspaper during the civil right era began to change the people's understanding. Calling their attention to what was happening. This was shame of American nation. Parker says -

I remember in 1959 a boy in my cabin at National Music Camp in Interlochen from Jackson, Massissipi, and another from Alexandrial Louisiana. We challenged them, trying to understand how they could be part of a system John, from Mississippi, sidestepped the question - he and his family simply offered us reproductions of Confederate money, not to bribe us per se, but in the hopes of having us accept John as simply coming from a different culture. Eddie, the young man from Louisiana, was far blunter - he told us to get real, that we didn't treat our Niggers in the North all that much differently than they did in the South. In the almost all white environment of Interlochen in the 1950s, his words cut us in a way we did not expect.

As the powerful impact Lee's novel had, precisely because she did not make Atticus Finch a person in total conflict with the society in which he lived. Call his actions insufficient by our standards today,
but recognize that for the culture in which he was living he demonstrated - to his family and to those who read the book - a quiet courage that in some ways challenged us even more deeply than a more forceful and oppositional character might have done.

After all the change that was taking place in the South - and there was change occurring was as much the result of the quiet resolve of some whites, who taught their children what was wrong, who did what they could to ameliorate the worst of segregation while remaining in loving contact with their neighbours.

The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. Atticus Finch defended Tom Robinson in court. Thinks of all those despised and hated throughout our history that did not have someone willing to step up and defend them. He taught Scout and Jem what right and wrong. He tried to remain in contact with neighbours he viewed as misguided, because, as Parker writes, sometimes truth is better received through a reflex of recognition than by a blow to the head.

Era epic, recount the life of middle Aged Lawyer Atticus Finch, who is appointed to defend a black man accused of assaulting a
white women. This encounters with poverty, racism, disrespect and protest. Analyze the effectiveness of different forms of cultural protest. The novel is a racist morality tale it teach us that racism is skin deep, what it ultimately teaches us is that we will never fully understand the truth about race in the country. The civil rights era, is the setting of the deep-South depression.

Harperlee's magnificent novel appeared half a century ago after that summer in Interlochan, which when read a person is drawn into her world, her perceptions, her attempting to make sense of the things she was encountering. Good literature has that effect. Great literature places one within the motions she experiences, and one begins to see as she does.

Parker says that Atticus Finch is trying to teach his children, his daughter in particular, that the people in their town with the racism that is part of their environment are not bad, merely misguided. She places this in the context of the deeply felt religion which includes the lesson of hating the sin while loving the sinner. Perhaps one might be like Gladwell and wish for a more forceful statement - of action - by
the novel's protagonist. Parker writes Sometimes truth is better received through a reflex of recognition than by a blow to the head.

Literature enables us to recognize. It, like other forms of art, both draws us in and challenges our understanding. In so doing it meets us where we are and demands we travel further. Which is why the greatness of art is its ability to speak to people at different points on that journey, even if the creator of the art could not at the time of its creation know who those people would be or where on that journey they might find themselves.

Parker again recollects:-

My own recollection of the book, which I first read as a child, was that it was full of hard and ugly truths. The story, because it was revealed through the eyes of another child, caused me to understand injustice as no textbook or lecture ever could. Such is the power and mystery of literature.

I read the book as an early adolescent. It drew me in. It helped me understand more fully my revulsion towards racism. That was a process that for me began on a winter trip to Miami Beach in December 1956, when at the airport in Miami I first saw the signs
that indicated the Jim Crow nature of the South. It would continue through the events of subsequent years, first by watching television and reading newspapers. In the summer of 1963 I became active in Civil Rights demonstrations, including coming to Washington on August 28 of that year. That was after reading the book, and seeing the movie.

I think Parker is right on her assessment of Harper Lee as a mocking bird singing her heart out. Her song affected the nation deeply.

The great creators of art, of literature are mocking birds. Harper Lee is a mocking bird, who offered one great song and left it to resound through our memories, our lives, and our society.

Both novel, "The God of Small Things" and "To Kill a Mocking bird" reflects the culture, politics and morality of the society and nation of the time when both of them where child. The two novels are the views of the child's eye they have gone through in their own environment.
Work cited


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