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Author as Activist

Understanding the D&G's Writing in Literary Theory

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Abstract: This study has been undertaken to investigate etiologies of D&G's writings. D&G's writing contains complex ideas about human and socio-political behaviors. The paper attempts to identify the reasons behind his complex writing and its effects on contemporary society.

Index Terms – Literary Theory and Criticism, Deleuze & Guattari, Assemblage, Deconstruction, Culture Studies

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature and literary theory after 1960, philosophers and linguists started taking more interest in interpreting literary texts than literary readers or critics themselves. Many literary critics of human social sciences think that the post-modernism is the result of constant acceleration of modernism, but we should not completely agree with them. We can also move ahead to see that Postmodernism has its own utility of peculiar ideas and way of thinking. The major cause of such a change is the influence of Phenomenology and Existentialism. The mainstream of contemporary criticism came from both schools of thinkers. Derrida's concept of literature is not for a poet critic but for a philosopher who keeps his aesthetic sense alive. D&G's writing needs more than this. Their writings need the power of connectivity that a reader have with society and thus reading becomes an activist approach to bring a change in society for human welfare. In the paper, the author presents cognitive study of D&G's writings.

II. METHODOLOGY

The paper follows the principals of literary theory. Literary theory is itself a methodology for understanding the literary genres. Comparison, formalism, historicism, deconstruction and structuralism are methodologies to look at things/subjects/writings/silences/signs.

III. Hypothesis: Author as Activist

To reply to these questions, the author had to go through the biography of D&G and keenly observed how their creativity-critical creativity mindset came into being. I could observe in what circumstances, an individual was born and how he maintained that soul, that spirit of writing throughout his life career where he fought for individual's freedom from a powerful desire to encroach an individuality. He was born and brought up in the middle family, he spent his juvenile period at the time of Nazis attack and lost his brother in one of the Nazi's camps. It was a period of transition, it was a period of demand to change the social structure, the national political structures, structural or hierarchical thought processes through which the entire country had to pass. It was a period when freedom of an individual was locked with keys of frenzied power and desire to demolish humanitarian fraternity and global sense of humanitarian unity. At such time, at the very such time you can witness a situation when a sensitive individual turn into an author. So, an author sitting in a private chamber, or a closet write about the problems of global and international human and non-human societies. For example, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Edward W. Said, Jacques Derrida and so on. When you name any of these authors you recall a wave of thinking, a particular way of thinking about shaping a society and giving a kind of system making it away say far away to an established system of the world. I used established system of the world meaning to the system which has started torturing the individuals of the society by the time, which has started to exterminate the humanity once. If you name any of them, you start thinking about a principle, you start thinking about philosophy and an automatic thought or wisdom is created in the corner of your mind to read them, to interpret them, to explain them, and to disseminate their ideas and thus you explore their philosophies and by doing so you start visualizing a change in the society. Deleuze and Guattari's writing results into a force of change. Their writing inspects possibility of a change and witness the same near future. If this aim is missed by a reader, he, or she perhaps Misses possibilities to get the motives of Deleuze and Guattari's writing.

IV. DISCUSSIONS: WHY SHOULD WE KNOW AETIOLOGY OF WRITING?

Vernon W. Cisney's idea of difference in terms of "constructionist" and "deconstructionist" practices in works of both Derrida and Deleuze seems irrelevant to when we work in aetiology of writing: the reason of/for writing, the rationalising factors of writing, environmentalizing factors of writing. Reading without knowing aetiology of writing is an erroneous reading. English version or

translation writing of the Bible, Karl Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and its series versions in three volumes *Das Kapital* volumes 1-3 (1867, 1885, 1894 labour movement, analysis of political economy and criticism of the capitalist mode of production), M K Gandhi's *My Experiments with Truth*, Rabindranath Tagore's *Nationalism* and *The Post Office*, Edward Wadie Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism*, Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principles* (1920), Foucault's *History of Sexuality* (1-3 volumes) and *Order of Things* (episteme concept, history of changes in history of knowledge and human society), Derrida's deconstruction projects (from his first academic dissertation to publications *Of Grammatology* (1967), *Writing and Difference* (1967) to *Rogues* (2003), and Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1967) are caused by and ensued from strong a sense of feeling "alterity", socio-political rejection, mass polarisation, politico-religious encroachments, mob lynching, national, regional, colour, racial and religious extremism.

Freud lived and worked in Vienna, having set up his clinical practice there in 1886. In 1938, Freud left Austria to escape the Nazis. He died in exile in the United Kingdom in 1939. He whom W. H. Auden, in 1940 composed poetic tributes as creator of "a whole climate of opinion / under whom we conduct our different lives" on paper. Before the First World War, Freud spoke and wrote much about Eros and Libido, but in 1920 he explored "death drives" (borrowing the concept from Sabina Spielrein's article "Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being" presented at Psychoanalysis Society in 1912), ensuing from war and developing imperialism of the time he reconceptualized "death instincts" (later termed as Thanatos by Paul Federn) publishing *Beyond the Pleasure Principles* (1920). Derrida's deconstruction project is an act of balancing the system of equalities ensued from his socio-political sufferings lodged by Vichy Laws and Antisemitism. He was kicked out of primary and secondary classes, humiliated, was insulted out of dominant system of conservative and non-conservative societies. (Derrida 2001) Result is his writings referring to a world that exists beyond the horizon of the "same" and "other". Edward W Said is ensued from experiencing exile and quest of belongingness and colonial set ups in the world society. One of the results of the exile experience is his non-fiction work *Between Worlds, Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* where he reports: "English is the language of the school; students caught speaking any other language will be punished." Yet, there were no native speakers of English among the students. (2002 pp. 556-57).

Further he clarifies linguistic and racial discriminatory policies:

Whereas the masters were all British, we were a motley crew of Arabs of various kinds, Armenians, Greeks, Italians, Jews, and Turks, each of whom had a native language that the school had explicitly outlawed. Yet all, or nearly all, of us spoke Arabic—many spoke Arabic and French—and so we were able to take refuge in a common language, in defiance of what we perceived as an unjust colonial structure (2002 pp. 556-57).

He expresses his belongingness with question to survive:

With an unexceptionally Arab family name like "Saïd", connected to an improbably British first name (my mother much admired Edward VIII the Prince of Wales in 1935, the year of my birth) I was an uncomfortably anomalous student all through my early years: a Palestinian going to school in Egypt, with an English first name, an American passport, and no certain identity, at all. To make matters worse, Arabic, my native language, and English, my school language, were inextricably mixed: I have never known which was my first language, and have felt fully at home in neither, although I dream in both. Every time I speak an English, I find myself echoing it in Arabic, and vice versa. (Ibid 556-57)

MK Gandhi's *Satyagraha* philosophy was ensued from where he was insulted and humiliated as he recalls and writes: "It was winter, and winter in the higher regions of South Africa is severely cold. Maritzburg being at a high altitude, the cold was extremely bitter. My overcoat was in my luggage, but I did not dare to ask for it lest I should be insulted again, so I sat and shivered. I began to think of my duty. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial, only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice" (June 7, 1893). A small play *The Post Office* by Rabindranath Tagore was translated into numerous languages and staged in the war affected areas during the Second World War because the author was ensued from experiencing national problems of boundaries and extremism. Deleuze and Guattari writing represents the powerful discourses spreading socio-political activism to witness positive changes in global society. (Rahaman 2020) In contemporary India, a few changes have changed the faces towards restlessness in society affected by insecurity, mass insensitivity, blind polarisation, and remind the fear of which people have gone once through 50 to 100 years ago.

V. SIMILARITIES OF THE UNRESTS: INDIA 2020 AND MAY68

Reading Deleuze and Guattari reminded me the current Indian socio-political scenario raising social unrest in India and May 68. It was a period of unrest due to dominant encroachment to the common human life, which is known as the period of unrest, May 68. It is an unforgettable event in the history of development in France. It is the transitional timeline in Parisian society, politics, their re-formation, and national growth. It was a period of protest of the marginal people of the country, led by students, factory workers, to see a parallel system to the mainstream of any kind; to see liberalization of lifestyle of the common; rights to think freely and live freely being far from Parisian sophistication and Victorian set of social values. It was period of eclectic environment pressing a demand to bring changes in society and national ordinances regarding renovations in the established social, political, and epistemological schools of thoughts like capitalism, consumerism, dominating imperialism of that time marginalizing a largely populated societies existed in various social institutions suffering from class discrimination in French society and the undemocratic bureaucracy. Witnessing worsening common lives due to socio-political rejection, mass polarisation, politico-religious encroachments, mob lynching, national, regional, colour, racial and religious extremism invokes a feeling to experience the days and nights of the May 68 which forced Deleuze and Guattari to write about minority and boycotted social individuals and institutions.

VI. Why to Read Deleuze and Guattari in India?

The research companionship of Deleuze and Guattari took place in the aftermath of this period at the end of 1969. They continued their scholarly companionship with writings about how to perceive the cognates of the prefixed words with “Anti-” to human society or human life. Guattari met Gilles Deleuze at the University of Vincennes and began to work together on a book *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) considered as “an introduction to the non-fascist life” (Foucault 1972). They deconstructed so-called philosophy prefixed with so called “antisocial” practices to the enjoyment of human life. In collaboration, they further wrote *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975), *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), *On the Line* (1983), *Nomadology: The War Machine* (1986), *What is Philosophy?* (1991), and *Capitalism: A Very Special Delirium* (1995). In collaboration they wrote, they established, struggled, suffered establishing new institutions and societies. In 1970, Deleuze created the Centre for the Study and Research of Institutional Formation which developed an approach to reach people in the form of *Recherches* the journal. In 1973, Guattari had to face trials and punishment as “an outrage to public decency” for publishing an issue of *Recherches* on the LGBT community. In 1977, he helped establish the “initiative committee for new spaces of freedom” (*Le Centre d’initiative pour de nouveaux espaces de liberté* known as CINEL). The mission behind these establishments was to advocate individuals’ rights to live in and outside of a society.

Posthumously, there are Deleuzian studies and anti-Deleuzian studies in the works of Deleuze and Guattari, but the aetiology of their writing is yet to be considered. This research paper thus explores the idea that the aetiology of a writer’s works is very much connected with an answer to the question: why the writing is read and disseminated across the world. In the above discussion, it is shown how the study of aetiology of writing reveals forces that work behind creation of writings; relate it to how to read the writers like Deleuze and Guattari, and how such reading of the writings is getting converted into applied philosophy for bringing forth a change in society. As we read Gandhi and recalls his signature philosophy called *Ahimsa* and its application, as we read Marx and recall Capitalism, Bourgeois and Proletariats distinctions, class struggle and social justices; as we read Edward W. Said and recalls Orientalism and its application; as we read Freud and recall Psychoanalysis and its processes and application; as we read Derrida and recall Deconstruction to recreate a new world of equality set beyond the binaries of established practices of equality and difference so we read Deleuze and Guattari and recall practices for writing as activism, writing as a kind of evocation, a calling forth people united against the injustices; writing ensued from strong sense of feeling “alterity”, rejection, mass polarisation, mob frenzy for extremism; writing as an act to establish a new parallel structure adjacent to the dominant discourses required for change in society, to bring cornered ideology of thought to the centre from its periphery eradicating epistemological and societal racism.

VII. ASSEMBLAGE, RHIZOME, AND NIETZSCHE’S STATE IN D&G’S WRITINGS

Assemblage and rhizome are often quoted terms with reference to the Deleuze and Guattari’s criticism of Nietzsche like thinkers who followed philosophical strategies of inclusion and exclusion, negation and acceptance, God and Man, Man and Oversoul etc. As German philosophy had implications of Indian philosophy Nietzsche remained no exception to the implications (Manjapra 2014), Nietzsche was affectionate towards *Manushmriti* which mostly criticised and condemned book of a community by Dalit and Feminist critics and writers in India. The book discusses categories of people in a society genealogically born of the organs of *Brahma*. The genesis of negation and categorization in Nietzsche’s work and its welcome in philosophous traditionality was question by Deleuze: “Nietzsche’s aphorisms shatter the linear unity of knowledge only to invoke the cyclic unity of the eternal return, present as the non-known in thought” (Plateaus 6) Most of the twentieth first century philosophers like Francois Lyotard, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Jacques Derrida, Sarah Kofman, Angele Kremer-Marietti, and Jean-Luc Nancy continued to quote Nietzsche into the tradition of intellectual discourse positively whereas Deleuze’s thought about “Nomad Thought” (Perry 1993) strikingly parenthesized all Nietzschean references and context and thus he gives a new turn to Nietzschean summaries. If one ponders why Deleuze attacks Nietzschean negation and Nietzsche’s “all becoming would long since have come to an end” (*Will to Power* 1968, 546], one comes to conclusion that Deleuze’s postulation about ‘becoming’ yields possibility of consistent improvisations in a society which has been left by the dominating mass. To this D&G calls ‘uncontrollable becomings’, *Manushmriti* talks about fixity of the origin of four *varnas* they are 1. Shudras (people of laborers class who provides service to all the *varnas*) 2. Vaishya (people of land, art of agriculture, business, and merchants) 3. Kshatriya (people who are rulers, warriors, landowners, keepers of *sudras* and administrators and 4. Brahmins (people of religion called priests, scholars, preachers, mentors and teachers of the *Kshatriya*) but also provides opportunity to bring changes due to *karma* in the lives of any people of the *varnas*. Nietzsche’s postulation of ‘will to power’ communicates somewhere with the power of *karma* of a person but contradicts to his own postulation saying, ‘all becoming would long since have come to an end’ (*Will to Power* 1968, 546] whereas all becomings are based on continuous change in the primary object which goes on through changing phases and at each station of becoming the object gets new threads and fibres of becomings, the rhizome of becomings. Each station of becoming is a “return”. He says thus “Return is the being of that which becomes. Return is the being of becoming”. Now this discourse is akin to socio-mythical so-called belief that a person of low caste or poor background or racial deficient people would never be civilized and the like assertions and Deleuze’s reading of ‘becoming’ challenges this socio-mythic structuralism. I mean to say here, to criticise Nietzsche is a practical rejection of any such structures available in society. LGBT rights, Animal rights, Woman rights, Minority rights, and Dalit rights are establishing institutions on the conditions of such a socio-mythic structuralism.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Hence, to temporarily conclude, knowledge of aetiology of writing leads a reader to apply a sensitive writer’s philosophy in life; and predict that works in many directions may further be done in direction to understanding the aetiology of the writings of Deleuze and Guattari may help establish some viewpoints for why they are required in academic and research discourses in contemporary India. At the time of reading Deleuze and Guattari we can enjoy applying Deleuze and Guattari philosophy keeping questions in mind if their writings and analyses help our society grow, develop new perspectives to experiments with new streams of practices in Science, Technology, and Medical Sciences. Guattari idea of ‘cross-fertilized that line of “nomad” thought with contemporary theory’ justifies the nomad thoughts to destine to the writings’ connectivity with developed society and the role of the intellectuals to help this connectivity through reading and writing practices. (Deleuze 2005)

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