

A STUDY OF POWER AND KNOWLEDGE IN JOHN MASTERS' NOVEL BHOWANI JUNCTION

1Mr. A. Thiruthurai, 2Dr.M.Amutha,
1Research Scholar, 2Assistant Professor
PG & Research Department of English,
St. Joseph's College (Autonomous)
Tiruchirappalli -620002.

Abstract:

American critic Stephen Greenblatt coined the term 'New Historicism'. It is the reading of both literary and non-literary texts in the same historical period. The writers can perceive the facts of the past and depicts these facts from their own concepts to create history. John Masters also wrote with historical perspectives. Knowledge is an implementation of power. Power and knowledge is a productive and constraining of victors' ideology. This article examines A study of power and knowledge in John Masters' novel "*Bhowani Junction*". It also examines the victors' knowledge upon the victims.

Key words:

New Historicism, The Ideology of Victors and the Victims, The Power and the Knowledge, The Marginalized Voices, and Cultural Materialism.

New historicism is a method of interpretation of literary and non-literary texts. The interpretation gives the study of society, culture and the victors' knowledge. The term New Historicism was coined by Stephen Greenblatt in 1982. New historicism called as companioned texts of history and literature. New historicist focuses the term power and knowledge in the historical interpretation of the text. The French philosopher Michael Foucault coined the term 'Power and Knowledge'. According to Foucault, power is constructed on knowledge and made use of knowledge. Power reproduces knowledge by shaping it. Power created its own structure through knowledge. John Masters also shaped his novels according to historical perspective. He interpreted the power and knowledge of victors and victims in the text.

Lieutenant Colonel John Masters (1914-1933) was an English officer in the Indian army and a novelist. John Masters is known for his historical novels set in India. His works are associated with British Empire in India. John Masters' family had a long tradition of service in Indian army. John Masters subsequently worked in Iraq, Syria and Persia with the battalion. He wrote eight historical novels and two autobiographical novels. He wrote his real experiences in the army.

In the novel *Bhowani Junction* John Masters touches on the identity crisis and racial discrimination faced by the Anglo-Indian community during the independence struggle. Many Anglo-Indian left India in 1947 to make a new life in elsewhere or in the Commonwealth of Nations such as Australia or Canada. In this novel John Masters presented through historical sense with conflicting pressures upon the mixed race Anglo-Indian community.

Victoria Jones was an Anglo-Indian girl, daughter of Thomas Jones who was the driver of Delhi Deccan Railway. Victoria Jones loved Patrick Taylor who was also an Anglo-Indian. Lieutenant Macaulay was a British officer who was attempting to rape Victoria. But Victoria unintentionally killed him. Ranjit Singh was a Sikh who helped Victoria to avoid discovery of the murder. Ranjit loved her and hoped to marry her. Victoria had decided to escape the oppressive atmosphere of the Anglo-Indian community. She is challenged with the problems of her identify all over again.

Victoria wanted to engage to Ranjit. But she realized that the marriage with Ranjit would involve her to give up her identity. Then she loved lieutenant Colonel Savage who was the British officer and commander of a 1st battalion, 13th Gurkhas Rifles in Indian Army. Rodney Savage wanted to marry Victoria but she realized that she can't escape her heritages or ancestries. So she rejected both the Indian man, Ranjit and British man, Rodney Savage. She chose Patrick, an Anglo-Indian who belongs to her community. Rodney Savage identified that he was losing out of his social inferior, later he realized that he was powerless to stop it. Patrick realized end of this novel that his children might have a chance of becoming anyone they want to, not to stick to the Anglo-Indian traditional role of working on the railways.

This novel has the backdrop of the Indian racial society during British-India where many different parties wanted to fight for power when the British withdraw from India. Communism was beginning to spread everywhere, it had reached India also. But British were trying to have Indian National Congress or the Muslim League take over the country. But British don't like communist parties take over Indian Masters represented this conflict in this novel through a character called K.P.Roy a 'terrorist' with communist, who doesn't present throughout the narrative except once or twice in disguise. Each characters is different from each other. Their problems their identity crises all differ from each other, as well as their wishes, hopes, destine and dreams. John Masters gives his own emotional and autobiographical narratives in this novel. He deliberately shapes the factual and the fictional accounts of India. He loved Indian when he had been in the Indian Army.

In this novel *Bhowani junction* John Masters presented in the historical way to understand the historical events to the readers, a new historicist looks the text with historical senses, which means, new historicist look up the historical events by looking with non-literary text to understand the historical events, culture, myth language, religion, customs, influence, and moral values on the particular historical time the events are happened.

A New historicist find out how the novelist masque the historical events with his own imagination, John Masters presented this novel *Bhowani Junction* with an eye of racial discrimination through imaginary characters and also presented some historical events which are happened during British India, such historical event of portion of India, Indian mutiny, hinders Muslims conflicts, British and Indian racial discrimination etc.

This article examines "A study of power and knowledge in John Masters' novel "*Bhowani Junction*". It also examines the victors' knowledge upon the victims.

The ruling classes have set up social systems in society. The social organization is the creation of the ruling class' knowledge in order to make others as slaves. The rulers of the ruling classes, by all means, have put their dominant ideals on religion, language and subjugated the people. John Masters said this strong social dominating organization of the victors in these lines.

She said, 'We think God fixed everything in India so it can't alter. The English despise us but need us. We despise the Indians, but we need them. So it's all been fixed—the English say where the trains are to go to, we take them there and the Indians pay for them and travel in them (*Bhowani Junction*, 25-26).

The selfishness of the ruling class leads to the foundation of structures among other people. When man puts another man into slavery, the divisions of the class arise. Thus the discrimination of the victors and the victims is formed in the society. John Masters uses these lines just to say this knowledge through imaginary character, Victoria Jones in this novel.

I noticed them most particularly because they made me feel funny. Victoria stared at them too. Apart from the lips, which were frightening on a man, I'd seen plenty like him. He was hot and tired, and he was acting superior because I'm an Anglo-Indian (40).

The ruling classes are multiplying the economy by their dominant policies and become more powerful man in the society. The ruling class has a lot of money, strength and political influence and is rising in society as a whole. Thus, other people are doing as slaves to the ruling class in order to survive. John Masters employs the British as a ruling class John Masters employs the British as a ruling class

Ranjit said, "We Indians have learned now to bend a little with the wind. Savage is a big wind." He told me Savage would certainly take you into every village within ten miles. He told me Savage's nickname among the officers was "the Sahib."(65)

As far as the ruling class can afford to slave their jobs, they will get the works as much as possible from the slaves. The ruling class took care of slavery and practiced some of the norms to get more works. But they would pay less. The novel appears in the tricks of the ruling class from these lines. "I whispered, you are a cruel bully...The path of Duty is the way to Glory...I couldn't bear to be near him another minute" (118). They will never leave the slaves who act against the ruling class. If the ruling classes are getting works heavily from slaves, the slave class will oppose the ruling class. But the ruling class will destroy them by their dominant forces. They have different forms of dominance, such as the political and economy, which cannot resist the ruling class. John Masters has portrayed these lines to express this idea.

The Collector said, 'Please instruct them to go back to work. Otherwise I shall arrest you, and then use my best efforts to see that they do go back to work. I have authority.' Kartar Singh shouted to the crowd, 'He says he has authority from government. What answer am I to give him?' To the Collector he added, 'I am their servant, not their master.'(123)

People in the ruling class of society purchased other people in order to favor for ruling class. The ruling class placed the people in power on their side and put others into slavery. In this novel, the British used Anglo- Indians as a toy to enslave the Indian people. John Masters has clearly stated about those systems of British people.

I said slowly, 'Does Mr Surabhai know all this?' Though he was the local Congress boss, I hoped he didn't. If he didn't, Ranjit certainly didn't. As long as they were not in the know my sympathies were entirely with them. If they were puppets I could understand them and feel with them and be one of them. (128)

People in power are helping the ruling class to maintain the dominating ideology in the society. People in power do not serve others. People in power think that for them there is no use to helping the ordinary people in the society. Thus People in power are for ruling class people in the society. John Masters described the political diplomacy as follows in this novel.

The Collector held out his hand, but Mr Surabhai ignored it. He said, 'I have come, Mr Govindaswami, to lodge a complaint. These gentlemen are my two witnesses.' The Collector dropped his hand and said, 'But shouldn't you come to the Kutcherry during the proper hours, Mr Surabhai?' 'I have only just this very minute thought of my idea,' Mr Surabhai said excitedly. 'Besides, you have no right to order the hours when the people may come and lay their complaints in front of you. You are a servant of the people.'(129)

In today's period the ruling class has put the economy under control so that other people cannot fight against the ruling class because they are controlling the whole economy of the society. Thus all people are forced to stand up to the ruling class as slaves. In the historical perspective, John Masters has given the power and knowledge of capitalists in the novel.

He said, 'It will be wonderful. I will go into politics. There is need of a new outlook. Congress has been very good in many ways, but it is too much controlled by the Bombay capitalists and the steel millionaires. I want to work on the educational programmes.'(187)

John Masters mentioned these texts that various human beings have suffered because of the dominant power of the ruling class. There are feuds between the religions by the ruling force. There are battles between humans and religions. Various struggles appear in the worlds. As a whole, the cause of the difference is the power of the ruling class. John Masters makes commentary on the separations of power among the people.

Govindaswami said, 'Yes, but now we are just about positive that he's actually in Bhowani City. The looting of the ammunition train was certainly his work. We do not know what he intends to do with the explosives that he stole, except that he will certainly use them to increase dissension. He might arm the Moslems against the Hindus, or the peasants against the landlords, or the lawless against the police. Or he may blow up more bridges, wreck more trains. He doesn't care who's in the train. It might be me or Colonel Savage—but it might be Mr Surabhai, and it might be a thousand pilgrims. Who do you think engineered that fiasco when the two processions met the other day? (200).

If a man controls his economy, he will bring the world into his hands. He is investing in other industries to increase his economy. The ruling class believes that the labors of the working class people. The working classes are working hard in today's time, and the ruling class only inverse the money. But the working hands are working so that the ruling classes are getting more and more wealth. John Masters talks about employers and the capitalists of the society.

I never go to the cantonment cinema, as you know, and even here in the city I never see any film made in England or America. It is wrong to put money into the pockets of the capitalists. They use it to make guns and hire mercenaries like Govindaswami and your Colonel Savage and his Gurkhas to suppress freedom everywhere.'(221)

The ruling classes are still reaming as ruling classes by the politicians of the country. John Masters pointed out the brutal policies and the crafty acts of the British. The British were completely enslaving the Indian people by showing their powers and knowledge of religion, language, ethnicity and culture in India.

I knew enough of Indian politics and Indian-language newspapers, and of Mr Surabhai, to realize that all this was, for him, the core of the search. There might be explosives hidden in the house, there might be murderous revolutionaries in hiding nearby—but all that mattered was that he should get evidence of British brutality. He was of the old school of Indian politicians, who had developed this into a land of game, which the British were kind enough to play with them. (254)

John Masters portrayed in this novel that men and women are addicted to the ruling class. Women are addicted to men's dominant power. Women are suffered was presented during partition time because of the British's double dealing, doubtful eyes, racial discrimination, religion conflict and supremacy lead the people into bloodshed. Muslims were against Hindus. Hindu did not give up their conflicts.

The East India company magnates favored the thinks in every matter and looked upon the Muslims with a suspicious eye. It was quit natural because the British had good reasons to believe that the Muslims were not friendly to them. (90 years of India's struggle for Independence 60)

Women are suppressed during fights between Muslims and Hindus is presented in the novel as historical senses by John Masters.

Women's bodies were marked and branded with the slogans of freedom 'Pakistan Zindabad' and 'Jai Hind' inscribed on their faces and breasts (*The Great Partition*134). Nehru was shocked to see that the slogans Hindus beware of Muslims (*The Great Partition* 71)

How Women are grieved is presented during partition time exactly by John Masters in this novel.

The Moslems had risen and raped and murdered a little Hinds girl who had innocently thrown a cowpat at the mullah ...And then the Gurkhas came and killed twenty of them in revenge, because the Gurkhas are Hindus. (*Bhowani Junction*228)

The historical book gives exact account of the incident here.

An eye-witness account is in the words: Even small boys and girls were killed by mobs. In one place, a three year old child is stated to have been killed and nailed to the door, Fiendish mobs raiding residences are said to have thrown down children from second and third floor balconies in some places. Mobs armed with axes, daggers, lathies and other weapon raided houses and shops, battered the doors, looted, butchered or maimed the residents on whom they could lay hands, threw petrol and kerosene on the building, set fire to it and went on their way to carry out similar fiendish work elsewhere. (*90 years of India's Struggle for Independence* 246)

John Masters experienced those historical incidents in India. This passage will help the reader to go into the deep level history of those incidents. Most of the women were raped and caused to death. Women are treated inhuman way is presented by John Masters.

It is a history of broken bodies and broken lives. Rape was used as weapon, as a sport and as a punishment... It sparked the deepest feelings of revenge, dishonor and shame. Many women were silent about what had happened to them. 'in most households the woman said no, no, I was hiding in the jungle or I was hiding in the pond or I was in a hiding the neighbor's house...Because it will be a confession of shame, and once confessed there will be quit a possibility that they will not be taken back in their own homes. (*Bhowani Junction*133)

John Masters gives the same feeling to the reader in which he undergone in India while he was working in India. The historical events are presented in true perspective in the novel. *The Great Partition*

Hindu girl had been killed- no one knew how or when. So it was true after all. They'd found her body in a dry well in the city, with Arabic letters written in ink on her forehead that said 'There is one God.'(234)

Religion, language, and race are the tools created by the ruling classes to live with their prosperity in the society. Thus the ruling classes spread various dominating social structures into society and subjugated the masses. The ruling classes used language, religion, ethnicity, culture, education, customs, civilization, and culture as a tool to spread dominating ideas. In this novel John Masters depicted entirely the dominant power and knowledge of the ruling class.

WORK CITED

1. Barry, Petter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary Theory*, Manchester University Press, 2002. Print.
2. Chandra, Shilesh. *90 Years of India's Struggle for Independence*, New Delhi: Alja

Publications, 2008.Print.

3. Harold, Veaser. *The New Historicism*, London: Roulledge, 1989.Print.
4. Khan, Yasmin. *The Great Partition*, United Kingdom, Yale University press,2007.Print.
5. Masters, John. *Bhowani Junction*, Souvenir Press Ltd , 2001. Print.

