

Traces of Split Personality and Alienation in Daya Pawar's Baluta

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**This country is broken in to a thousand pieces;
Its cities, its religion, its castes, its people,
and even the minds of the people
all are broken, fragmented.**

- Bapurao Jagtap

Abstract: The present paper titled “Traces of Split Personality and Alienation in Daya Pawar’s Baluta” discusses on the plights of Daya Pawar’s split personality and traumas of alienation he suffered due to caste system in our society. Daya Pawar’s Baluta’ is credited as the first Dalit autobiography in Marathi. Dalit autobiographies mirror the realities of untouchability. There is a common cry for self-assertion and it gains its momentum when solution is emerged by their experiences. It depicts the hardships of untouchables in the dire poverty and inhuman practices set against them. There is even the influence of Ambedkarite movements and his idealism. According to Nimbale, “Dalit autobiographies are used to narrate the Dalit experience. These narratives seek to capture the authentic Dalit experience through a minute chronicling of the smallest detail of daily life in a language that is crude, impure and uncivil. It is as if, by capturing each detail of daily life in a language that is the opposite of the language of upper caste literature, the Dalit writer will convey the essence of Dalitness.”

Key words: Dalit autobiography, split personality, alienation, Untouchability.

Baluta is a flawless confession of Daya Pawar’s mind and Mahar’s agony of starvation, ignorance, insults and injustices. He had a sense of alienation which tormented him all through his life. He compares himself to Jarasandha whose body was ripped into two and tossed them apart by Krishna. His life had split his psyche into two. He was divided between the village and the city. The childhood menace, the way he was tangled in the web of it is hard for him to forget till the end of his life he was jeopardized. Daya Pawar’s says “The poison of reading took the last few simple pleasures lift to me. At that time we lived like animals in the Maharwada, our lives based on an earthy philosophy. I was filled with revulsion against the life I was leading and wanted to get away. But those who seemed to be leading the kind of life I wanted for myself would have nothing to do with me. This is my conundrum.”
(xv)

Daya Pawar suffered split personality its very evident one is fearful Damya Pawar who drowned him completely and other is intellectual and creative Daya Pawar who voices against discrimination. A part of him so stone hearted, jealousy filled with low esteem that it spoilt his personal life. He had left his wife and daughter Bakula. He was suspicious about his wife’s character and denied to forgive and accept her. He remained imperfect throughout his life. Education had made him broad minded and gave equal respect and equality to women but he was poisoned by doubt. The intellectual self of Daya Pawar had made him to think rationally wrote poetry and many books and autobiography which won him many awards.

Daya Pawar who was sensible from his childhood was able to sense the inferiority and lack of respect in the names of his and his uncles were called. Daya was named Dagad or Donda and was called Dyaam but from the beginning he hated his name and his friends called him DM. The names of his uncles and cousins were Jaba, Rhaba, Naba, Shiva and Kaba. According to Daya Pawar “The Manusmriti has a list of names for Shudras; it requires that our names should reflect society’s contempt for us. Brahmin’s names signify learnedness- “Vidyadhar”, for instance, Kshatriyas’ names signify valour- like “Balaram”. Vaishyas can be named after the goddess of wealth, say “Laxmikant”. And Shudras? For us, names like Shudrak or Maatang, names that declare our low-caste status. That was the order of things for centuries.”(5) He had spent his childhood and part of his youth living at ‘Kawakhana.’ That was the place between thieves’ market and the red-light area. The Mahars lived in dingy homes which was smaller like hen house. Each henhouse had two to three subtenants for whom wooden boxes were held as partitions. The Mahar men worked as labourers and women worked harder than men. The Mahar women were doubly victimised because of their gender and caste. Pawar mentions about Taibai who was devoted to goddess Kahandoba in her childhood. Many girls suffered from this sort of practice which forced them to sex work. The Mahar women scavenged scraps of paper, rags, broken glass and iron from the streets, sorted them out and then sold them in the morning. They were very loyal to their drunkard husbands. When they worked and cooked for the prostitutes some sly customer had asked them instead of the prostitutes and the Mahar women would run for their lives guarding their fragile honour. It was his widowed grandma who had come to Bombay in search of work. She was forced to clear away dead cattle, roam announcing the announcement. She was made fun when she was doing her duty. It was difficult time for a Mahar woman to be a widow. She had escaped from there to Bombay with her little boys. As his parents were illiterate they could not remember his birth date. But he remembers his father as a stylistic personality and talented man who played Shehnai and dholki.

Daya Pawar was brought up in an atmosphere where his father was a drunkard and womanizer too. In his neighbourhood forgery was common. If he had grown up in that atmosphere there was a fair chance of getting influenced. His staying in Bombay was cheerful than his stay at village. Between the main village and the Maharwada, stands an invisible wall. Between village and Maharwada a road well-travelled: it acts as the border? (32) Mahars were kept away from the village so that they get clean water and fresh air so that they are not polluted. Mahars had built wooden houses with mud walls. Alok Mukherjee’s observations on Limbale’s *Towards an Aesthetic Of Dalit Literature* that “Limbale establishes the Dalits subalternity not in a colonial structure, but in the caste-base social, cultural and economic structure of Hindu society. Here, the village becomes the metropolis, and Dalits exist literally on the periphery. This physical segregation signifies other separations. Dalits are upper caste Hindu’s Other”. (2) The Mahars followed the ritual of Bhaat, Bhaats were also Mahars who performed naming ceremony, and marriage etc. and they were treated with much respect by others. His father used to play Kaanda for Satua Mama’s band. As a boy Daya Pawar was fascinated and attracted towards it. The band used to play at the weddings and it was a delightful experience as money and food would flow for at least four days. They did not have any scheduled time for playing and lacked respect. Water was slipped into glasses from a suitable height and food was given a distance from the other guests. Daya Pawar recalls his Thursday market where the villagers sat according to the caste under the trees of the market place. The restaurants had different cups for different castes like Mahar cups and Chambhar cups, Mang cups etc. Mahar cups were without handles and ant infested and sat behind the restaurant. In the school they used to spend day without drinking water as they were not allowed to drink at school. Eventhough chambharwada was near to the school they also denied to give them water. The work of plastering the school with cow dung had come to their community boys. Education had drifted him from Maharwada and Mahar boys. He had discovered the world of books and it tormented him many a times for the way of life they were treading. He says “At that time we lived like animals in the Maharwada, our lives based on an earthy philosophy. I was filled with the revulsion against the life I was leading and wanted to get away. But those who seemed to be leading the kind of life I wanted for myself would have nothing to do with me. This is my conundrum.” (47) He got isolated from his village and took pleasure only by reading books.

As a boy Pawar had witnessed many womanizers likes his father, uncle and masterji. Hanging around with loafers and dropouts he had peeked into the closed rooms to see the act between a man and woman. In the young age itself he had learnt the naked truth of the bodies. His father had turned out to be a good drunkard and as a result he had become ill and nobody took him to the hospital. Before dying he had

taken promise from his brother to look after his family. When his father died Daya Pawar didn't cry. It was the custom at kawakhana for the family to be photographed around the corpse. He remembers his mothers who had tough time with her husband. She was a strong lady. When she was born she had lost her father and even mother got married again. She didn't get mothers love also and was brought up in her grandparents home. She was married when she was in the cradle. She used to call her husband 'my accursed destiny' but after his death she had changed wept in his memory. His father was generous and did not have any forethought for future. He was the reason for their 'hand to mouth' existence. Daya Pawar throughout his life never became slave of the liquor as he had seen his father and uncle die from it. Even he had warned his cousins against its use but in vain. When Daya took refuge in books he drifted from his people more and from their customs and traditions also. He became studious in studies and was the first to answer in the class. There was only a problem with his mathematics and he was promoted to high school from the grace of his teacher.

When he passed there was a question in front of his mother whether she should allow him to study or make his life loafing around and eats scraps. Even people around them had suggested his mother not to send him school. She can earn some money by his animal grazing. But his mother decided to educate her son. She was influenced by Baba Saheb Ambedkar words that used to say "What dreams do the women of Maharwada have for their children? That their son should become peons or sepoy? A Brahmin mother's ambitions are different: My son should become a district collector. (61) His mother used to ask why do Mahar women not harbour such longings?" It was because of her rational thinking he continued his education walking six miles from his village. He remembers an instance when he doubted his mother's character. His father was dead and she had a miscarriage. He had gone straight to his mother posing a question how she could be pregnant when her husband is dead as he had seen babies in the gutter. There was a huge battle in his mind and had drifted from his mother. But she had cleared him by telling the truth that she was already pregnant when he was alive. He had promised his mother not to hurt her in future. She had taken promise from him to tell the whole truth to at least one person in his life.

The childhood menace, the way he was tangled in the web of it is hard for him to forget till the end of his life he was always jeopardized. Mahars never thought of Baluta as begging. "The Mahar did not see Baluta-his share of the produce of the land as charity. It was his right. (63) The traditional stories they had heard about their ancestors were about their loyalty to the upper castes and baluta was one of the fifty two rights Mahars had. The glorious traditions that gave rise to Maharki and all those stories have damaged the psyche of Daya Pawar as a child. He says "The history will not be erased. Perhaps it will only go when I die. This stain of helplessness on my face? It dates back to that time. However much I scour my face, even to the point of bleeding, it will not be wiped away. The Mahars toiled whole day as there was no timetable for their work. "It was slavery, for he was bound to whatever work had to be done for all twenty four hours of the day. This was called bigar labour." (65) For all the hard work they did they got was baluta, share of the village harvest. The tradition had it that as soon as the grain was harvested they should get their share but how much was not sure.

Each village wanted Mahars to be in their village clean their shed and villages. The quarrel for water was immense. The chambers did not drink water from Mahars well. They sat hours together to beg for a pot of water. The death of the cattle stirred the Maharwada with excitement. The animal was divided among the community wasting nothing. Daya Pawar remembers many of his friends from other community who liked to eat crunchiest made out of it. During the festival time Mahars were not allowed to participate in any games. The discrimination and the way Mahar boys behaved made Daya Pawar to become a book worm. He always felt alienated and suffered apathy and depression. When Daya Pawar was put up in taluka it was a better time for him. But caste based discrimination suffocated him a lot. It is in taluka he discovered his true identity. When his masters used to praise him for his performance, cleanliness and language he used to get elated. He was not only good at studies but also in kabaddi. He didn't have many clothes also he used to wash the same and wear it. He used a copper vessel as an iron box and kept under the pillow and sleep. He got aware of the revolutionary movements of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar at a very young age. He knew the revolution was not that easy among Mahars who had taken their share of Baluta for many years. So there was an act of Kerosene poured over dead animals to stop eating it.

There was a good impact of the social movements on their lives and some old traditions were erased. Once a Mahar converted to Christianity he could no longer be considered a pollutant. The Mahars and the Maharwada was undergoing change. The Mahars stopped doing the work that was theirs by tradition. Bridegrooms were no longer greeted on arrival. The Mahars did not play at the village festivals.(98)The mad cases of Sita and Shankar are very horrible and the way they were treated is painful. Daya Pawar had witnessed the transition period of Mahars. The concept of impure gradually changing, people started accepting them. Barbars gave them shave and haircut, who refused them earlier. Daya Pawar as a boy was very meek and never dared against the caste based humiliation. When he went to the hostel he was made to sit separately near the door. "Its different when you must live the challenge. That I lived without self-respect is still a matter of regret for me". (118) He was always troubled by his mute existence. It was in the hostel he ate well it was abundant for him as he did not have proper food in his life. He was hunted much for not daring enough to tackle his fellow students for their behaviour. He was more hurt for not speaking to his mother in front of others. He was constantly scared of being mocked by his classmates. When the cook of his hostel retired he had spoken to the director and got his mother the job. But it was difficult for him to be silent in certain situations. It broke him inside. There was an instance when his mother was wrongly blamed for the theft of flour. His mother suffered from old scrofula problem which had evolved and bothered her more. The boys would put fistful of salt into the curry and trouble her. He was so helpless that he would go to his mother at night and both cried together. During the time of monthly ladies problem when she used to cook forcibly without any choice the boys would greet him with chorus 'Shame, Shame'. He was even very upset when he had seen his nine year old sister dancing in front of the boys. He had even scolded the boys and cried hugging his sister.

There was an escape route from caste that was by getting converted to Christianity. Other district Mahars had converted but he never thought of it he never found comfort in that. The only solace was book reading, poetry. He had a good voice and sang them aloud. Due to Ambedkar's Mahad agitation many Mahars dared to fight and drink water from the wells. Ambedkar called the Mahad agitation the beginning of the untouchable liberation movement. The ten long years of struggle was finally fruitful in 1937 when court gave a verdict for general use of the water bodies. Many people inspired Daya Pawar even including his relatives, teachers and friends. It was Dada Saheb who influenced him a lot and he wanted to shine like him in public space. He had learnt to see the social problems in the light of Dr.Ambedkar's teachings. In the high school Pawar participated in extracurricular activities like speeches, essays, races, sports etc. When Daya Pawar had given his name for a public speaking competition he was made fun and called "Fancies himself another Ambedkar." (111)

"A Mahar community was like an island. Individuals did not move even in the industrial age, the island moved". (195) After passing SSLC he moved to Mumbai with his mother and sister. After getting failure in many interviews he was crushed inside. His mother was scavenging for their living. Finally when he got job it was a clerk cum laboratory assistant. In the laboratory he was to open the parcels of the shit of sick animals make a note of them in the register, remove the sediments and when the water ran clear transfer the remains into a glass phial. Later the doctors would write down their diagnosis. He knew very clearly why he got this job as no upper caste person would do it. Daya Pawar was fortunate to see Babasaheb Ambedkar when he was young. He had cycled many miles to hear his speech. But Ambedkar was ill and did not give a speech but his look gave them the spirit. Babasaheb would say always with tears in his eyes: "I may have managed to achieve something for the Mahars in the city but in the villages, my people are still living under brutal oppression." (255) when Ambedkar passed away Pawar had wept as he had lost someone of his family. There were many mourners who were beating their breasts and weeping as if they could not stop. With the influence of Babasaheb's conversion to Buddhism many followers converted into Buddhism. Daya Pawar's family also got converted to Buddhism promising not to worship any gods. Though Mahars got converted it was impossible for them to escape from thin caste. "In order to identify those who were once Mahars a new term was coined: neo Buddhists. When a Hindu converts to Islam or Christianity how come we don't hear terms like neo-Christian or neo-Muslim? (259).

Daya Pawar suffered split personality and alienation. As Daya Pawar endured alienation from his people due to education he detached himself and this led to dual character in him. This complex psychological condition is likely caused by the traumas in childhood and emotional abuse due to caste system in our society. The dual complexities in his character are very evident in Daya Pawar. One is fearful Damya Pawar who drowned him completely and other is intellectual and creative Daya Pawar who voices against discrimination. A part of him so stone hearted, jealousy filled with low esteem that it spoilt his personal life. He had left his wife and daughter Bakula. He was suspicious about his wife's character and denied to forgive and accept her. He remained imperfect throughout his life. Education had made him broad minded and gave equal respect and equality to women but he was poisoned by doubt. The intellectual self of Daya Pawar had made him to think rationally wrote poetry and many books and autobiography which won him many awards.

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