



Appraising Binary Culture Identity in Sujata Bhatt's *Pure Lizard*

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Abstract:

Sujata Bhatt uses history-, society-, politics, religion, memory, relations, and multiple languages, to portray her constant struggle to harmonize multiple identities. These identities have not made her limited. It also shows that the kind of politics of identity- and place, we usually find in multicultural poets and writers -often termed, as poets/writers of Escape- is almost there in Bhatt. The act of writing itself is a creative engagement where subject does not matter. Her poems go far off any fixed definition of poetry. Energy to go far off, to cut across the barriers of languages, regions, and cultures as well as a sense of much allow her to moves between multiple cultures and identities. This paper looks into how Sujata Bhatt has trellis into binary identity of any person and how it has effects on any person's life.

Keywords: *Binary Culture, Identity, Memory, Relations*

1. Introduction

Bhatt's latest collection of poetry is titled *Pure Lizard*. The poem in this collection deal with different kinds of life and often contact crashing and design, death and birth, in the natural world. The best example of this is an image in which a field of organic sunflowers in Tennessee is set against sunflowers grown out of the toxic soil of tragedy. But the poems are also concerned with much more. 'Pure Lizard' also certificate creator exchange in its many forms: the second world war, and Jane Eyre haunts a laboratory in Baltimore. This deep survey of the poetry of Sujata Bhatt set up the width and range of poetic material to be found in her work. Her poems draw mainly upon her differing experience as a poast who has lived in three different fulfilled and is familiarize with multiple language. In Bhatt's poetry, observes that, 'Although she seems to have solved the problem of movement,...feelings of displace are also noticeable in her poetry.

Always Choose the Jack of Hearts

Always choose the jack of hearts, my friend,
The king is blind, the queen is cold,
and the ace is full of lies.
But the jack of hearts
knows the way.
The jack of hearts can speak
with worm-light
and crushed butterflies.
Does your soul have chromosomes
too?
And a few broken cells?
What colour? What colour?
You'll never know.

Can your soul really be (*Always Choose the Jack of Hearts*)

The poem is about making a wise choice when one is given a chance to make one. The reasons that the poet gives for choosing Jack of 'Hearts' is that the queen would be cold and king be blind while the ace would have lies. But the Jack of Hearts would be the one who would be the faithful and truthful by any means.

The Light that Unfettersthe Soul

Am I naive, Vanessa, to expect that in
this country, I will see, in a miraculous
'moment, the light that unfetters the soul
and gives it the wings to fly like a free
bird, unencumbered by feelings of guilt or
contrition? Will such a moment ever
come?

Aharon Megged

Will such a moment ever come?

And is this light available

only in one country, in one place?

Or could it be almost anywhere?

So, each soul must find its own light,
its own geography —

And where does one begin?

How does one choose a country,

a season, a form of light? (*The Light that Unfettersthe Soul*)

Here the poet asks a perfect moment a miracle that will give the soul the wings to fly like a free bird, without any guilt. The poet wonders whether such a moment would ever come. Is that light available at only one place or is it almost everywhere? But he says each soul has to find its own light, its own way, may be from a place season or country.

So Many Oaks

In this forest we stand among ancient
trees.

So many oaks. Holy. An evil witch
would kill them,

The windows of that house are so
bright, so clean -

Who lives there? A woman who lost
five sons in the war.

Birds have feathers but mammals have
A pity because I would really like to fly.

Human beings have eyes and ears
but some are born blind or deaf.

The flowers of a plum tree can be red
or white.

I have one of each in my garden.

My hat is brown. My gloves are brown.

A practical colour. (*So Many Oaks*)

The poet here expresses sadness. He sees many oak trees amidst a forest having ancient trees. And finds a house with large windows where lives a woman who lost her five sons in war. He laments that the hammers do not fly even if they want to as they do not have wings like birds. The human beings though one blessed with eyes and ears. Some still are born deaf and dumb. But the poet then admits that one should live their life practically.

Old Love Never Rusts

for Wojciech Bonowicz

Old love never rusts.

This is what they say in Poland,
in Germany. This is what we speak of
at Crear. Outside
there's the smell of rain and fox;
blackberries entangled with ferns.
The sheep cough like old men.

Across the water, Jura and Islay
change colour all day:
grey-green, grey-blue,
so many greys, light and dark,
seep into the greens and blues
of grass and sky and water.

The sun brings white gold:
white gold for old love that never rusts
What would you say, Robert Burns?
This is where we gather
to listen to your songs. This is where
we gather. (*Old Love Never Rusts*)

It is a poem based on a Polish belief. The Poet describes the smell of rain falling outside, black berries growing among the ferns. The sheep resembling the old men. The different colours of water throughout the day that keep changing due to light of sun that shine as bright as gold, here the poet emphasizes the light of the sun to be white gold that is like old love that never rusts.

A Word Spoken on Land

A word spoken on land
is worth nothing at sea ~

It's a meaningless, dangerous sound,
he's told.

So the sailor turns mute
as the ship sails south ~

Then, in a new land he has never seen,
he watches butterflies;
catches two of them to bring back
to his treeless island —
Little nymphs he won't set free.

“What shall I name you?”

he asks —

“What shall I name you?” (*A Word Spoken on Land*)

The poet expresses the worth of words spoken on land has no value at sea. It becomes meaningless and dangerous. So, the sailor becomes dumb and sails the ship towards the south. When he reaches an unknown a land he watches the beauty of the land. And memorised by the beautiful nature of the land he tries to catch the butterflies and wonders what he would call them.

You Never Know

I'll be a doctor. I'll find a cure
for the illness that killed my mother.
I'll find a tonic for the poor.
He has an umbrella
Is it stolen? In any case,
it won't help him against the wind,
against these storms from the sea.
How peacefully your child sleeps!
He makes no fuss. Is he alive?
Did the fever break?
Can he speak ~ will he ever
walk again?
His grandmother lived to be very old,
but he drowned before his tenth birth-
day.
You never know, I say, you never know
who'll die next.
As I was walking by the river,
I saw that boy beat his dog,
his beautiful, innocent dog - need I (*You Never Know*)

The poet in this poem wonders about his future. He wishes he could become a doctor and find out cure for the illness that killed his mother. He will find a potion for poor people that will keep them breathy. He observes the miseries around him. He sees a man with an umbrella he wonders if that would help him against the storm. He observes child in sound sleep. But wonders if he is still alive because he was having fever. He remorse over the un predictable as it is never sure who will die next.

Palitana

‘On the way back from Palitana
we sat in the shade of a holy tree.
It was one of the oldest trees
I have ever seen
worshipped for generations
by one family.
It's their tree, they say.
Oddly shaped leaves
and seed pods lay on the ground —
greyish green velvet
pods, the size of an infant's fist.
Above, light curled around the branches.
‘The tree was in a quiet grove
far from the noise of Palitana.
It was the sort of place
my mother would have called ‘home’ ~
‘home’ with all the deep emotion

you can imagine.
But she was born in Palitana. (*Palitana*)

The poet beautifully expresses emotions bound to being at home. The poet describes that their way back from Palitana they sit under an old holy tree that has been there since years. The tree was worshipped from generations. It has very odd shape of the leaves and seed poles laid there on the ground. The tree gave a peace as it was very quiet, as it was far from noise of Palitana. The place while the mother would have called home with all the deep emotion.

By the Railway Tracks, Ahmedabad

‘This time,
the day before I arrived
they had torn down the house
my mother had lived in as a girl! ~
the house my father visited
when he was courting her.
This time,
people were going through the rubble,
looking for what they could use.
So we walked towards the railway
tracks
where she had walked with my father
those days when she was a teenager ~
sixteen, seventeen ~ and he was just
twenty — and as always
they had so much to tell each other (*By the Railway Tracks, Ahmedabad*)

The poet expresses his grief. The poet says that they had already formed the house in which his mother had spent her childhood. The house that had many beautiful memories of his parents meeting during courtship. The people were trying to find out things they could use from the rubble that was lying. So, they started walking by the railway tracks where they had a long remembered memories.

2. Conclusion

Thus, the closed reading of her disclose that Sujata Bhatt uses history-, society-, politics, religion, memory, relations, and multiple languages, to portray her constant struggle to harmonize multiple identities. These identities have not made her limited. It also showed that the kind of politics of identity- and place, we usually find in multicultural poets and writers -often termed, as poets/writers of Escape- was almost there in Bhatt. The act of writing itself was a creative engagement where subject does not matter. Her poems go far off any fixed definition of poetry. Energy to go far off, to cut across the barriers of languages, regions, and cultures as well as a sense of much allow her to move between multiple cultures and identities. The way in which she connects memory, religion, history, womanhood with one another shows a new approach towards writing poetry which was perhaps seen for very first time in the Indian English poetry.

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