

INDIGENOUS REMINISCENCE: THE EXPLOITATION AND RESISTANCE IN BAMA'S "KARUKKU" & MUDROOROO'S "WILDCAT FALLING"

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Abstract

Reading Indigenous works will turn upon to understand and explore about natives exploitation and marginalisation as well as their inability to cope with the traditional ways. The selected works Karukku and Wild Cat Falling are concerned about the displacement of Dalits in India and resistance of Aborigines in Australia. This is my humble attempt to explore the past events of Casteism and colonialism repercussion on Indigenous cultures as well as authors an inspiring resistance, representation and contestation through these fictions. They used literature as a means to modify society or re-establish social harmony, which will set all to work bravely for the new world instead of their repeated emphasis on the fact that Dalits and Aborigines are demanding for changed identity. Both novels have thought provoking similarity. The intensive reading of the novels reveals the authors passion and insight. The use of language signifies that their involvement to explore their historical attempts to stand by with their own cultures. Both writers show more clearly the displacement of Dalits how violently suppressed, humiliated and ill-treated under Indian caste system; as well as how Aborigines are alienated and marginalised under colonialism without hopeful tomorrow.

Keywords: *Dalits, Aborigines, Harmony, displacement, suppressed, humiliation, Ill-treatment, alienation, marginalization, catse, and colonisation.*



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The society of its times can be reflected in the mirror of literature. Richard Hoggart reveals that "the felt quality of life of a society and only art could recreate life in all its rich complexity and diversity" (*Cultural Studies*, 27). Before going to study the testimonial literary texts; it is necessary to understand the historical predicament of Dalits in India and the Aborigines in Australia down the ages.

Actually before the classification of Varna's (castes) in ancient India and the arrival of whites in Australia; the structure and problems of societies were simple. Indigenous people in India and in Australia did not struggle hard to adjust themselves to the social environment. It was an easy affair for them. But after arrival of these two 'ism's; into societies, they gradually have become more and more complex. In order to understand various problems were faced by Dalits and Aborigines and how these 'ism's' even effecting on future citizens of contemporary India and Australia as well. Hence both novels are a must study.

The republic of India is the seventh-largest country. It has several religions, communities, languages, different life styles in various regions. Such healthy harmony among diversities in India was disturbed. The serious cause for the disturbance and constant problems in Indian community is Manu's 'Manusmriti' (Hindu Law). He divided Indian community into four varnas. This classification developed the deep rooted nature of humiliation, discrimination in the name of casteism in Indian community. The victimised and lockdown community in Indian society by this classification is 'Dalits'.

The glorious heritage of Indian society and the Indian culture has brought down by classifying the human race. Raymond Williams says that "Culture includes the organisation of production, the structure of the family, and the structure of institutions, which express or govern social relationship, the characteristics forms through which members of the society communicated" (Cultural Studies 4-5). This classification broke the relations among the human community in India and developed the suppression of fourth Varna's and their basic human rights were denied for centuries.

The well structured and the glorious culture has come to an end in Australia Society with the arrival of British in 1788. It leads the large destruction of cultural knowledge, which has been passing together from one to another generation. Especially the richest 'Oral Tradition' is also disappeared even in the most traditional parts of Australia. The wide scope for the Aboriginal Ancestral future vision has lost its chronological sense and also the successor's generation lost their opportunity to represent ancestral power from traditional way. All these thematic issues show that 'loneliness', 'ignorance' caused them to suffer. Cornel west calls the "problematic of invisibility and namelessness" (West 27, 1990).

The natures of 'casteism' in India and colonialism in Australia have developed the egoistic attitude. As a result discrimination, victimization, humiliation Resistance and marginalisation etc. such wickedness qualities emerged into glorious and peaceful societies are putdown and treated Indigenous people mercilessly without hopeful tomorrow for them.

As writers of *Fourth World Literature's* both have analogous significant characteristics. These fictions are fascinating and challenging. Both writers are from oppressed and marginalized in their societies by non- Dalits and non- Aborigines. In the literary history of India and Australia engaged towards creating the liberty for self-determined representation on behalf of Dalits and Aborigines. The protagonist role in their novels is well wrought to express the pain of alienation and exploitation that they have experienced in their own landscape.

The novels narration begins from traumatic childhood and troubled teenage years experiences. The astringent experiences are dislocated them physically and psychologically. Their experience of dislocation made them to lost potentially balanced image. In *Wild Cat Falling* the unnamed protagonist released from Fremantle prison after serving an eighteen-month sentence and experienced two days of freedom. Those two days "He feels that it is better to be a prisoner instead of leading abortive life in city where he was alienated and marginalized" (*An Endeavour for Identity in Mudrooroo's 'Wild Cat Falling'- A Critical Study*). In *Karukku* the headmaster intensively scolds and treated protagonist badly in front of all schoolmates in the name of caste for stolen coconut. Actually she was not the guilt. He didn't care her remonstrance and said "You have shown us your true nature as Paraya" (*Karukku*, 16). Both characters have come to conclusion that life has offered them nothing, in addition to it, got despair and resentment from neighbours. The textual lines from both fictions denote that, they were able to escape from oppression and marginalisation to certain extent by exhibiting brightness in education. The unnamed protagonist says "I went to an ordinary school for a couple of years. There I learnt the art of survival against mob rule." (*Wildcat falling*, 4). Bama also Quotes that "I studied hard and got the best marks in my class. Because of this all the children would speak to me and were friendly" (*Karukku*18) "even though I am a Papaichi" (*Karukku*, 15). The series of context reveals that both at childhood wouldn't enjoy freedom in its original sense.

The unnamed protagonist after release from prison, he had been to beach, where he saw a white student June and had a long enthusiastic conversation with her. It gave him a great joy ever before in his life and says "she is a nice doll" (*Wildcat falling*, 88). Bama also expresses her happiness when teachers and sisters who were taught her often encouraged and friendly towards her. She proudly says that "because of my education alone I managed to survive among those who spoke the language of caste-difference and discrimination" (*Karukku*, 19). The long conversation between June and protagonist and friendly attitude of

teachers with Bama helped them to overcome individual worries, internal conflicts, deep seated psychological traumas and isolation.

Another similarity between in both writers is Identity crisis. Both, after meeting their people, the Determine feelings of hopelessness turned into positively and they realized that all solutions for their problems are within them. Bama has seen treating their people as untouchables in the street and her personal experience of ill-treating at school have given pain. She shared inner agony with her brother Raj Gauthaman. The way he narrated believes and practises of society helped her to understand the deep seated casteism in the society. She was determined and deeply impression by her brother counsel and “studied hard and got the best marks” (18) and settled as successful teacher. The unnamed protagonist often feels as he haven’t got a country or “I say don’t belong to any where” (*Wild Cat Falling*, 126). But he is also realising with old man call as “Jessie Duggan’s boy” (*Wild Cat Falling*, 121).It gives him a clue for his roots of the family that he belongs.

Both protagonists in the novel often quickly falls back by retrospection of childhood memories. These two writers mind fully loaded with problems and bitter experiences since their childhood. The protagonist start sharing his ideas with schoolmates about his future aspiration “I say “get a job I’s’pose”,(*Wild Cat Falling*, 12) the entire school mates turned towards me and “they look at me with dark and doubtful eyes” (*Wild Cat Falling*, 12). Bama also has such bitter experience at her childhood. When head master was thrown a guilt, shamed and insulted in front of all the children; later “ when I entered the classroom, the entire class turned round to look at me” (*Karukku*, 17).

Every movement in their life have the hegemonic structure of the society encoded the mode of resistance that constructed them in opposition. Both of them have been often encountered by social indignities since their childhood. Where ever they go, there is a painful remainder of his and her social community. The unnamed protagonist feels “my mum was half caste” (42) and “no one notices a coloured woman and boy. Nobody knows” (*Wildcat falling*, 51). Bama also expresses such painful remainders have in her childhood at school where “our class teacher or the PT teacher would ask all the Harijan children to stand up” (*Karukku*,18) and in other context “ one day a lecturer announced, Will Harijan students please stand” (*Karukku*,19).

In broad-spectrum, another indispensable quality between them is selecting characters in their stories. Aboriginal Writer Mudrooroo is very particular regarding creating roles in his novels. He creates each character with an intension; it should represent the agony of the Aboriginals. For paradigm in ‘*Doin Wildcat*’ he is searching for artist to act as a Koori

woman role. The novel *Doin Wildcat* is about making of a film based on *Wildcat Falling*. The protagonist of the '*Wild Cat Falling*' appears in *Doin Wildcat* as script writer of the film with the name Yank. So he has seen Jinda Coles, thought she would be pertinent character to perform June role which is in *Wild Cat Falling* and requested her to act in the Film. Naturally she is like June; very beautiful girl, intelligent, thoughtful, as well as a good dancer. Yank as script writer has shown lot of interest to get her into the character. All her qualities are including her soft voice apt for the role representing culture of the Koori woman. The same resemblance could be seen in way Dalit woman writer Bama's meticulous attitude while creating character in her writings. She chooses only a Dalit woman protagonist. For instance in *Sangati* a child protagonist question the unequal treatment in the family. Regarding serving quality and quantity of food for boys and girls and eating food is also after every male member completion. The share of households duties like cleaning, cooking, and laundry etc. done by girls. But boys are absolutely free from them and enjoy with friends. The major inequality for a girl in the village is underprivileged in good education. So this novel conveys that a girl life is critical from childhood both outside as well as within the family.

The chief aim of my article is to expose Dalits and Aboriginal unprogressive life due to these two 'ism'. These two fictions are fascinating and challenging. Each work is independent and a representation of collective life of their social community. These two novels acknowledged the miseries and hardships in two societies. Both are shaken and try to find some way to tide over the problems of life. To overcome it Mudrooroo and Bama are speaking to the world by narrating personal history to the world in form of writing as representative of subaltern community and Aboriginal community in order to create path for social harmony to solve the problem not only for them but for entire landscape. The events take place during various stages in their life are the driving forces to write these testimonies which represent not only their life but also life of Dalits in India and Aboriginals in Australia. Adam Shoemaker writes *Wildcat Falling* "publication in 1965 marked a unique literary event, for this was the first novel by any writer of Aboriginal blood to be published in Australia" (*Mudrooroo: A critical study*, 17). Bama's *Karukku* is the first Autobiography of its kind to appear in Tamil literature. It conveys "strong commitment against the ugly manifestation of caste system, the torture of marginalisation, pride, provincial and religious separations in India.

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