

S III Literature

Paper IV

Decolonizing The Mind . Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Ngugi's "Decolonizing The Mind" is an essay on language and how it communicates the culture of its users. Ngugi begins his essay by telling the reader about his life growing up in Kenya. He states they all spoke "Gikuyu", and all told many stories about animals or humans. The overarching theme of these stories were about the "apparent" weak outwitting the strong, or how a disaster forces co-operation (1998). He continues to describe what makes a good story-teller. A good story teller, according to Ngugi, is one that is able to use language to make the same story seem interesting, and make stories told by others more exciting (1998). Ngugi then goes on to describe the intruding colonization that occurred. Rapidly, everything he knew about his life was suppressed, and replacing it was the English language. English became to dominate language to learn, and anyone caught speaking Gikuyu was lashed. The only way to continue in education was to earn a credit in English, no matter how well you did elsewhere.

Ngugi describes language as the carrier of culture. Written, spoken, and "real life" or body-language is all used in harmony to define different cultures. Language conveys a culture's standards and values, something that can't be picked up by someone who doesn't understand the language. When English was imposed into Ngugi's culture, textbooks and teachings made his culture look inferior. The use of language can be used to convey complex messages, as in with the stories told, or used to control, as seen with colonization. Language is an extremely powerful tool that defines the human race, and its use can create amazing literature/media, or can be used to manipulate and control.

SILENCE! THE COURT IS IN SESSION by Vijay Tendulkar

Vijay Tendulkar's Silence! The Court is in Session theorizes the subdued condition of women-folk in the post-independence Indian scenario. Benare, the school-teacher who is trying to come out as an independent woman falls a victim to the patriarchal mouse-trap. She only hopes to get a social recognition of her unborn baby. But the members of the so-called guardians of moral values create obstruction in her attempt. However, Benare herself continues her protest and

struggle against the hypocrisy, sham and amorality of the middle class men folk. Thus she attempts to pave a way for the women to regain their due rights.

The play opens with protagonist Miss Leela Benare entering to a village hall along with a local man, Samant. The play gradually reveals that The Sonar Moti Tenement (Bombay) Progressive Association, an amateur theatre group, has come to a village to present a play about a mock trial. To pass the time of the drowsy afternoon and also to show Samant, who is going to enact the role of the fourth witness, the proceedings of the court, the group decides to act a new mock-trial other than the one to be staged. The first act includes the entrance of the other characters on the stage and their preparations for the mock-trial. The Second Act reveals the mystery of Ms. Benare's illicit relationship with Prof. Damle through her mock-trial where Sukhatme plays the role of both the accused and the opponent lawyer. The Third Act discloses the inner evils in the characters of those who attack Benare that lead to her destruction. Tendulkar presents this mock-trial concept to represent the subjugation of the women that is always present in our society. Ms. Benare is attacked for no fault of her own and as it hints to her personal tragedy, she collapses; but the impact of her free self-declaration haunts the readers throughout.

All the characters in the play other than Ms. Benare, like Ponkshe –the science student, Sukhatme –the lawyer, Karnik –the theatre actor, Balu Rokde and Mr. and Mrs, Kashikar seem to be presenting the patriarchal forces of society that cut the wax-wings of Ms. Benare and pathetically subjugates her. Though Samant seems to be quite a non-chauvinistic character at the initial stage eventually he is also transformed into a male chauvinist. The characters of the play, who supposedly come from a cross-section of middle-class society are pathetically handicapped with their own limitations. Moreover, they attack Benare more severely because she attains a greater level of self-confidence and mental clarity that they wish to have but cannot attain. The relationship between Balu Rokde and Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar also indicates a master-slave relationship in a hegemonic power –bound society

Such a Long Journey by Rohinton Mistry.

Such a Long Journey examines the life of a handful of Parsi Indians in the turbulent early 1970's. When Britain withdraws from the subcontinent in 1948, two states are created. Muslims form one state, Pakistan. Pakistan's two parts are widely separated by its massive southern neighbor, India. In India, Hindus predominate, although society is officially secular. Parsis are a tiny, secretive religious minority.

The inhabitants of Khodadad Building north of Bombay are all Parsis. The most pious of them is Gustad Noble, the novel's protagonist. He works in a Parsi dominated bank downtown. Gustad

intends that his eldest son, Sohrab, who excelled in secondary and college studies, attend the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and find a career more lucrative and prestigious than his own. Gustad bears many grudges from the past, which have limited his possibilities.

Sohrab, an artist at heart, rejects the plan. The hardheaded father and son clash and turn their backs on each other. Gustad's middle child, a son named Darius, causes only minor problems. Gustad's 9-year-old daughter, Roshan, is chronically ill, though. The illness brings Gustad into contact with a politically active doctor. Gustad's superstitious wife, Dilnavaz, falls under the sway of an upstairs neighbor who practices both black and white magic.

A Parsi mystic advises Gustad's sworn enemy. Another eccentric old Parsi rages out his window at the unfairness of the Almighty. A tragic and mentally deficient young man wanders about, delivering messages and playing. His mind was destroyed after falling from the neem tree at the center of the compound.

Although Gustad's war hero best friend, Major Jimmy "Bili Boy" Bilimoria, has vanished from the apartment complex, he writes to Gustad to ask a favor. Gustad follows his friend's instructions and receives a very large amount of cash. Gustad is forced into depositing it gradually into a false bank account. Then he is compelled to withdraw it even more rapidly. It is clear Gustad is dealing with terrorists. Gustad is forced to involve another friend, the cancer-riddled, lecherous Dinshawji. Dinshawji's hospitalization, death, and funeral force Gustad to contemplate anew the mysteries of life.

Jimmy Bilimoria reveals the sordid political story behind the money laundering, during a heartbreaking visit Gustad makes to his friend's prison hospital bedside. The shadowy lieutenant who serves as intermediary between Jimmy and Gustad makes clear Major Bilimoria's natural death in prison was a murder.

The novel's climax comes when the denizens of an especially depressed neighborhood, march to the municipal buildings to demand essential services. On the way, they pause at the wall outside Gustad's business, which a street artist has covered with depictions of the gods and holy people of all the religions of India. The municipality has decreed it will be demolished to widen the road. In a violent street fight, Tehmul, the tragic cripple into whom Dilnavaz drew her son's evil demons, dies while trying to catch a brick. Gustad's lifetime of frustrations and anger melts as he prays over the victim's body. Sohrab and Gustad embrace. Although the sacred wall is demolished, so too is the limiting, bleak past.

‘The Hunt’ Mahasweta Devi

‘The Hunt’ is a story of a rural tribal woman from India. Her name is Mary. She is harassed and stalked by a male logging contractor named Tehsildar who earlier came to her village to buy logging rights. He grows lustful of her. She resists his sexual advances. In an act of self-preservation later on, she turns predator and murders him.

In the beginning, Mary is a woman of strong physical abilities. She is also an astute businesswoman. Even the owner's wife hails Mary as she says, "you have to take words from a girl who works like an animal, carries a forty-pound bag on her back, and boards the train, cleans the whole house in half an hour." Mary also gets praises at the marketplace: "Mary has countless admirers at Tohri market. She gets down at the station like a queen.

She sits at her own rightful place at the market." Mary is easy to like. She is able-bodied, empowered with strength, intelligent, humorous, generous, outspoken, and respected. She is also formidable with her words and machete, two weapons she clearly has.

One persistent admirer she has is the logging contractor Tehsildar. Towards the end of the story, Mary's virginity is threatened in a potential rape. Mary rebukes the sexual advances with the first weapon she has: verbal threats. He still continues to follow her around. One day when she was returning from the market, "Tehsildar caught her hand. He says I won't let go today." Fortunately for her, she was able to escape Tehsildar's more violent amorous advances. She hatches a plan that day. She decides to finally put an end to the man's sexual aggression.

She sets up a rendezvous with Tehsildar in the forest during the annual spring festival. According to tribal custom, gender roles are reversed once every twelve years. The women become the hunters while the men dress up like clowns. The men also drink and sing in a festive merrymaking. This year is the twelfth year. Mary will become a hunter in this year's ritual hunt. She expectedly meets up with Tehsildar who is more than eager to tryst with her. She proceeds to hack him to death with her second weapon: machete.

'The Hunt' is a straightforward narrative of a woman who is a victim of male sexual aggression and avenges her oppressive plight by killing her oppressor.