

RESISTING THE IRRESISTIBLE: SUSPENDED SELF-IDENTITY IN PAKISTANI ENGLISH NARRATIVES ON TRIBAL SOCIOPOLITICAL DYNAMICS

Usama Javed Iqbal¹ and Sabeen Nadeem²

ABSTRACT

This research explores the formula that power corridors employ to instill self-dehumanization in subjects by exploiting their consented loss of self-identity as portrayed in Jamil Ahmed's The Wandering Falcon. Principally, the state of humanness refers to the distinct nature and the particular characteristics that distinguish humans from nonhumans. Moreover, it is only the realization of a positive self-concept that provides individuals with an impetus to strive for fundamental rights and resist against hegemonic exploitations. In this paper, I will argue that the subjects in the novel are not merely overtly dehumanized and publicly coerced rather they willingly resign to foster, what Carl Roger terms as, positive self-concept. Moreover, employing the lens of Althusserian RSAs, I discuss how the rules and regulations shaped by jirga and armed forces and designed identity fashioned in cultural institutes silently and swiftly seize all human agency and experiences in the capacity of reasoning, self-discipline, morality, feelings, consciousness of surrounding & psychological states of existence in order to develop an enforced dehumanization in the tribal people in the given novel. The study maintains that the common masses are often tactfully exploited by making them believe that they lack apposite human identity and, therefore, they deserve no voice against the so-called regulations commissioned by the brokers of civilization and prosperity.

Keywords: consciousness, hegemonic exploitation, self-discipline, humanness, Suspended Self-identity

1. INTRODUCTION

This research intends to delve into the pathetic condition of downtrodden people who are living their lives in the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan, facing coercion by the tribal hierarchies. It sheds light on the role of the state to suppress the local communities through the non-state forces and also reveals that how the state takes no practical initiative to make

¹PhD Scholar, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan.
Email: usamachaudhry23@gmail.com

²Lecturer, Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan.
Email: sabeen886@gmail.com

the oppressed people free from the compulsion through the legislations. This research also tends to focus on the ways in which dominant classes including the state treat the marginalized people by showing their dominance or authority over them and use them as a subject to attain their material benefits. Those who try to exercise their free will and resist the dominance of the oppressive forces are victimized by aggression. Althusser's idea of Repressive State Apparatuses is used to examine state and non-state oppression

Althusser's theory of Repressive state apparatuses is used as a critical framework to examine dehumanization, suspended self-identity, and positive self-concept in Jamil Ahmed's *The Wandering Falcon* to explore the condition of the poor people who are deprived of their fundamental rights in the society. He is a Marxist philosopher who explains the suffering of powerless people at the hands of the ruling class. Althusser in his essay *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, explains that the state is dominant over the residents of a country and operates as a tool to oppress the poor in the society.

Humanness refers to a state or quality of being human. According to Haslam, humans can be defined on the basis of distinctively human characteristics that distinguish him/ her from other animals and also in terms of essential human nature which separates him/ her from inanimate objects. The capacity of language, complex reasoning, sophisticated sensations (Leyens et al. 67) and 'uniquely human' emotions e.g., appreciation, disapproval, love, remorse, hope, etc. to which humans respond quickly (Demoulin 20) and attribute them to their own group (Gaunt et al.; Leyens, 01) lie in the category of Human Characteristics. Alternately, the traits of emotionality, relational warmth, agency and suppleness are included in inherent and culturally innocent Human Nature (Haslam, Bain, Douge, Lee, & Bastian, 5; Haslam, Bastian, & Bissett, 4).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rested on humanness, individuals construct their diverse personalities: distinctive adjustment to life, together with key traits, drives, interests, morals, abilities and patterns of emotions (17). Likewise, self-concept is a key constituent of personality that is the idea one keeps about who one is in terms of physical, emotional, social and spiritual existence along with other features that make up who one is (Neill 17). Carl Rogers maintains that self-concept is a principal construct (McLeod, 8) and it is the organized, consistent set of perceptions and beliefs about oneself. Further, in Roger's theory, self-concept is a tripartite concept: a combination of self-image (how one sees oneself), self-esteem (how one values oneself) and self-ideal (how one wants to be). The higher one holds oneself, the higher one expects and accepts from the society

and vice versa. Therefore, a positive self-concept enlightens one with one's rights and provides with an impetus to strive for equal fundamental human rights. Contrarily, a loss of positive self-concept results in passivity for the attainment of human rights and causes, resultantly, interpellation of all kind. It is, principally, the active status of being human being that ensures equitable enjoyment of fundamental rights by all individuals in a society (Bastian, Laham, Wilson, Haslam, & Koval, 11). Ideally speaking, the need for just co-existence sprouts out of *Ubuntu*: 'I am what I am because of who we all are' (Bastian and Crimston, 14) but, practically considering, human history offers a bleak picture of the ideal of equality being exercised holistically. Thereof, the privileged ones view the 'others' as less-human: dehumanized.

Dehumanization refers to the attitude and behavior that deny other individuals' humanity and refute their essential human characteristics in the capacity of being civil souls bestowed with a sense of ethics, emotive response, relational friendliness, and rational candidness (Haslam, 2006). This has been a lethal tool to cover the atrocities committed in wars (Kelman, 73; Kteily et al.,) and extrajudicial killings, to justify injustice done to slaves, opponents, and to explain day- to-day exploitation of common masses (Leyens et al.,1) Bastian & Haslam, 10). Gray and his colleagues (37), in Mind Perception Theory, proposes that people perceive others on two dimensions: agency and experience. Agency is exercised in the capacity for designing and performance, including self-control, morals, memory, and communication, thought, and reasoning. While experience indicates the capacity for desires and feelings, including emotions, awareness of the surrounding environment, and basic psychological states such as hunger, thirst, and pain. They also maintain that humans have considerably more agency compared to non-human animals (but less compared to God), and more experience as compared to non-living objects (e.g., dead man, robot, God).

The worst shade of dehumanization appears when an individual internalizes it: self- dehumanization. Bastian & Crimston assert that "dehumanization seeps into the self- perception of the victims". Consequently, the sufferer expects and accepts less than a human status and denies human characteristics on his/ her own. Theoretically worse than meta-dehumanism, it can cause bitter outcomes, especially for the individual' own self: loss of self-concept, willing suspension of human identity, docile interpellation by the power sectors; resultantly, individual develops a reduced sense of self-control, belonging, self-esteem, meanings of life, etc. (Zadro, Williams, & Richardson, 14).

Carl Roger's term, positive self-concept. Moreover, employing the lens of Mind Perception Theory so it analyzes how the fabricated images of media,

fantasies shaped by clerics and designed identity fashioned in educational institutes silently and swiftly seize all human agency and experiences in the capacity of reasoning, self-discipline, morality, feelings, consciousness of surrounding & psychological states of existence in order to develop a self-enforced dehumanization in the tribal people in the given novel. The study maintains that the common masses are often tactfully exploited by making them believe that they lack apposite human identity and, therefore, they deserve no voice against the so-called regulations commissioned by the brokers of civilization and prosperity.

RSAs and ISAs are the two terminologies of Althusser's theory. He says that the poor and common people are the victims of the state. Sometimes they are forced cohesively and sometimes they are convinced mentally to accept their marginalization which is imposed on them by the ruling class. People are helpless before these apparatuses so they have no choice left except to follow the rules and regulations designed by the ruling class. "No class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and, in the State, Ideological Apparatuses" (Althusser 146). Repressive state apparatuses work by punishing the people who have a rebellious attitude towards the ideology of the state. It supports and works in favor of the rich in society. Even the ruling class, itself uses the repressive state apparatuses in the state to control the rebellious voices. Then these people follow those rules which devoid them of their own choices and freedom in society. Althusser's ideas are an extension of Karl Marx's ideas. Marx believes that the state facilitates the bourgeoisie class and the proletariat class is kept in the darkness having no resources to fulfill their basic necessities. (Marx 77).

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Honor Killing

The novel begins with the story of a ruthless honor killing of a couple who are Siahpads from Killa Kurd tribe and run away from their tribe to save their lives from the tribal Sardars who are chasing them to give them capital punishment for breaking the values of their tribe by getting married according to their own will. They move towards an army check post and request for refuge but instead of helping the sufferers, the army officials refuse to give them any kind of help by saying, "Refuge," interrupted the subedar brusquely, "I cannot offer. I know your laws well, and neither I nor any man of mine shall come between a man and the laws of his tribe." He repeated, "Refuge we cannot give you" (Ahmed 4).

This response of subedar portrays that in some way or the other, the state has a mutual consensus with the oppressors therefore, it seems least

interested in solving the problems of the masses rather it operates like a puppet in the hands of the bourgeoisie and facilitates those non-state forces who impose their ideology on the poor class. Henceforth, the subedar is helpless in front of the powerful tribal rulers and refuses for any kind of interventions in the tribal law likewise the tribes in itself are working as an independent state in those areas and flourish their own laws which the people belonging to those areas are supposed to follow and even the state institutions are not permitted to do any interference in the cultural values of tribal areas. The state legitimizes the coercion on the people of tribal areas and leaves the downtrodden people at the mercy of feudalists to free itself from the responsibility of the masses.

The couple manages to get a shelter near the check post and start living a peaceful life free of any misery and give birth to a child, name him Tor Baz (The Wandering Falcon). After three or four years, a Siahpad from their tribe finds them and informs the Sardar and the girl's ex-husband about them therefore, Siahpads start chasing them to punish them for the violation of tribal values and committing adultery. The couple runs for three days to escape from punishment but soon the man realizes that they cannot run from their conviction anymore therefore according to their plan about this expected situation he murders his wife on the spot and promises to meet her in the life after death, surrenders himself to the Sardar and other tribal Masters and requests them to leave his son alive because the son has no contribution in his parent's sin. They consider his request, stone him to death and move from that place by leaving his son alive.

In the book titled *A Concise Companion to Postcolonial Literature*, Chew and Richard discuss marginality as a creation of the colonial subordination based on religion, class and race. According to them, marginality is the result of oppression by the ruling class to dominate the poor people to sustain their high position in society. In this way, the marginalization of poor and oppressed people by the ruling class through ISAs and RSAs is an effort of the ruling class to prolong their rule therefore every rebellious voice is treated as a threat to their rule and they waste no time to suppress that rebellious voice either through ISA or RSA.

The couple gets punishment for the revolt against the ideology which is imposed upon them by the tribe. They have lost their lives as a punishment for exercising free will and the man has been stoned to death because of his crime of getting married to a girl who is the daughter of the Sardar of his tribe and wife of his master. Therefore the punishment which that poor slave gets is not of any criminal act but of being emerged as a threat for bourgeoisie's honor furthermore the strongest state institution doesn't take any practical action to

protect the man from his tribe so the tribe in itself is acting as a state in this scenario and works as an autonomous body to take its own decisions and when the couple tries to violate the ideology of their tribe their violation leads them towards their death because every individual is the subject of the state and are supposed to follow the rules and regulations which are imposed upon them in case of violation punishment is also inevitable which can be considered as an example of repressive state apparatus.

Strong people always control the common or poor ones according to their wills and the poor lead their lives in the society at the signals of the rich or elite class. The ruling class is considered models for the poor likewise the poor have left with no choice except to follow the rules and regulations which are imposed on them by the ruling class moreover all the rules, regulations and ethics are formed to oppress the poor people as the couple is killed ruthlessly because of violating tribal norms. The interests of the elite class are always prioritized while forming the rules and regulations in the society and there is no law to control the atrocities on the poor people because the powerful sardars have their share in the political sphere and they play their role in the formation of any legislation henceforth RSA is used as a tool to oppress those poor who try to go against the ideology of the state.

3.2 Capitalistic State Policies

The fourth chapter of *The Wandering Falcon* explores the disastrous upshots of state policies on the poor masses. Dawa Khan, his wife, his camels and the people who belong to his tribe lose their lives just because of a change in travel policy by the state. A subedar named Ghuncha Gul takes custody of Tor Baz and asks him to come with him to a new place where he is transferred. Tor Baz acknowledges this suggestion and starts following him towards a new destination for starting a new journey of his life and soon he arrives at a border of Pakistan and Afghanistan border where he witnesses a new story of oppression. Tor Baz is introduced to Dawa Khan who belongs to The Kharot tribe which population is about one million, whose only livelihood is to migrate from one place to another for grazing their animals but this time they face a disastrous situation due to the change in policies of the government.

They have no proper residence or shelter moreover they use to migrate from Pakistan to Afghanistan when weather is unsuitable for their animals in Pakistan but this time government introduces a new policy for travelers and banishes every kind of migration or travel without travel documents which increases the suffering of those poor people who use to travel just for grazing the flocks of sheep and camels and migration is the only source of their livelihood, therefore, the people of Kharot tribe are unable to

get travel documents because they are neither from Pakistani nor Afghanistan o they have no identity card of any particular country because they use to change the place according to the suitability of weather for their animals and because of this reason no country shows its interest to get ownership of those people. They highlight this issue in front of the borders administrator as well but he refuses to do anything practical except to show his sympathy for the tribe and states:

It is correct, Karim Khan, the government has indeed decided that there should be no movement between the countries without travel documents. And this affects you directly. A part of me is unhappy and sad at this decision, Karim Khan, but time passes, and events and men have to change with it. You and I cannot prevent this change even if we wish to (41).

This response of the border administrator shows the impact of the government policies on the poor. While changing the travel policy state completely negates the poor who are direct sufferer as a result of the policy which portrays one-sidedness of the state which on one hand facilitates the elite class in every mean and designs the policies according to their own will because the rulers themselves are beneficiaries of those policies but on the other hand the lives of poor people have become more difficult as a result of the policies of the state henceforth the border administrator consoles with Kharot tribe due to the sudden change in travel policy because he knows that their animal will be died due to the intensity of weather in that area if they remain unsuccessful to migrate with their animals before the change of weather.

Dawa Khan requests border forces to let them go towards the other side of the border because their camels are thirsty for two days and promise them that he will come back after their drinking water but the border forces consider it an excuse and warn him about the consequences if he dares to cross the border, therefore, he has no choice left except to oppose the orders of state officials and crosses the border with his wife and children for the survival of their animals but this daring effort by Dawa Khan and his family results in the tragic death of their whole family, many tribal people and camels: Dawa Khan, I am going forward. The camels must not die. I am going with a Koran on my head. Nothing can happen to me." She separated about two scores of camels and, with Dawa Khan walking beside her, started herding the animals forward. They had hardly gone fifty yards when two machine guns opened up from either side and mowed down the camels. The firing was indiscriminate. Men, women, and children died. Gul Jana's belief that the Koran would prevent tragedy died, too. Dawa Khan fell dead in the raking fire (45).

Dawa Khan's wife holds a Quran on her head as a gesture of peace and she has an assumption that she will be safe and sound in the presence of Quran on her head but her firm belief also shatters with her death henceforth the travel policy of state becomes the reason of number of casualties at the border which highlights that how the poor tribal people are humiliated in Pakistani society as state-backed killings of the people belong to Kharot tribe is an instance of this practice furthermore people who belong to the elite class in the country are prejudiced against the 'others' like tribal people because they have a mindset that only those who have prestigious status in the society has right to live in the society while those who have limited means should not be the part of the society moreover the elites are greeted in public offices with respect and dignity but poor people are ignored and degraded same as Karim Khan has faced the inflexible behavior of border administrator when he visits him for reviewing the travel policy.

The State emerges as a threat to the existence of poor tribal people and instead of facilitating them and helping them to overcome their poverty it imposes new laws and policies on them to make their lives even worse as a result they take a stand against the state and its policies through violent and non-violent resistance but state considers it as a threat for its writ and suppresses the resistance through its repressive state apparatus which often causes the death of many people like the above casualties as a result of firing from machine guns are the example of state oppression on the poor through RSA to implement its policies. Class discrimination is still considered a terrible issue in the state because the poor class is kept in a limited circle. The signs of prejudice against the poor class are observed in every field of life and even the state is prejudiced towards them and introduces those policies which are devastating for their existence as the travel policy of the state leads to the death of several Kharots and their thousands of camels.

In every capitalist society, there is a concept of "Might is right". Those who have authority and wealth are considered as right no matter how much wrong they are as Marx in his essay *Power of money in the bourgeois society* states that the one who has money isn't dull or incompetent because he has money to hire the most competent people (Marx 24) The people with enough money come into power and design the policies which are in favor of their capitalist agendas but on the other hand, poor people are putting a lot of efforts and struggles to earn and to fulfill the basic needs but they are the most deprived ones in a way that they are the direct sufferers of the state policies as in the case of Dawa Khan's conflict with the army, it's revealed that how the poor individuals living in the deserts suffer because of the policies made in the air-conditioned rooms. The opinion of downtrodden people in legislations is

not considered worthy enough while the rich people by the means of bribery and corruption can hold the positions of their choices that's why they manage to get a position in the political sphere and make those policies which are protecting the benefits of the rich class and oppress the poor through ISA and RSA.

3.3 The Duplicity of the State

The duplicity of the state while dealing with the poor and the rich can easily be seen in *The Wandering Falcon* as in every section of the novel, the state has different mechanisms to deal with the people belong to rich and poor social class. The state becomes so flexible when it has to deal with those who have money and power and it chooses to handle those powerful people with negotiations but contrary to it, when it has to deal with powerless people, it prefers to oppress them by using RSA instead of addressing genuine concerns of those people through negotiation. The fifth chapter of the novel explores the story of *The Kidnapping* which is a true illustration of the state's duplicity in dealing with the powerful and powerless social groups.

The chapter is about the Mehsud tribe which is one of the most influential tribes of North Waziristan and the major source of their livelihood is to kidnap the people from far-fledged areas for getting ransom money and release them after fulfillment of their demands. Three Friends belong to the Mehsud tribe kidnap six teachers from a school and ask for a handsome ransom from the state for their safe release but after continuous pressure from the tribal people, the government takes action and hand over this case of kidnapping to a young assistant commissioner to investigate the case and negotiate with the kidnappers for the sake of a safe release of those school teachers and during the investigation, it's revealed that the Kidnappers of The Mehsud tribe use the roads of The Bhattani tribe to make the kidnapping successful therefore the young assistant commissioner calls an immediate Jirga at Bhattani tribe and addresses the elder tribal people to recall their agreement with the state in which it's decided that Bhattani tribe will neither support any activity against the state nor be used against the state.

The Sardar of Bhattani tribe listens to the speech of the assistant commissioner silently and tells him a story of the couple who run away from their house and some ruffians surround them dishonor and rape both of them and go away after it similarly after their disappearance the couple calm themselves down and wear their clothes and the boy start accusing the girl of being faithless having no sense of modesty or shame as she has let the rascals to abuse her and the girl replies:

My love,' she said, 'you are right. My body has been violated, but think of one thing. My body has been fashioned by nature for this very purpose. What was done to me was indeed wrong, but truly speaking, it is, as it were, only what nature has intended for me when it created me. Now look at yourself, you are a man. You were not made to be used the way these rascals used you. Yet you did not resist them. You allowed yourself to be violated just as I did. What reason do you offer? (Ahmed 69).

This dialogue of the old man metaphorically shows how powerless are always oppressed and blamed for every happening by the powerful as in this case the boy instead of expressing his anger on the ruffians start accusing the girl of letting the ruffians rape her similarly the state takes no time in oppressing the poor Kharoots and the Baloch insurgents through capital punishment because they are not powerful enough to retaliate against the state but when it has to counter the kidnappers of the Mehsud tribe who are powerful enough to respond against aggression, it prefers to blame Bhattani tribe for the kidnapping instead of searching and punishing the real culprits same as the boy who starts blaming her girlfriend for getting abused.

Marx in the first chapter of *The Communist Manifesto* views the state as an institution to protect bourgeois economic interest as he says "The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx 14). This reveals that the state tries its best to facilitate those who have money and power and oppresses those who even don't have money to fulfill their necessities likewise in this novel state also pressurizes and oppresses the poor and weak people through ISA and RSA but when it has to counter the powerful people it becomes so flexible. The old man of Bhattani tribe further says:

"So, officer sahib, that is what we say to you. We, the Bhattanis, are a weak tribe as compared to the Mahsuds. Yet nature has placed us on their borders. Because of this, the Mahsuds have to use our land when they go out of theirs or cross back into it. We do not like it but cannot stop them. We do not have the force that they command. "But what about you? What about all your police and your people in the districts who allow themselves to be kidnapped? You are like the man in the story. What the Mahsuds do to you, and the impunity with which they do it was not intended by nature. Your nature should compel you to see that such things do not happen. Yet you let them do it, and when the deed is done, you rush out and vent your fury on others. (69)".

This sarcastic reply of the old man illustrates that the state has different policies for different social classes when it has to deal with the powerful or rich class it becomes so flexible as while dealing with The Mehsud tribe it prefers negotiations instead of using any violent mean. The state representatives are well aware of the fact that any mess with the Mehsud tribe is not less than a threat to the sovereignty of the state because the people of that tribe are so united to face any aggression from the state moreover instead of going to The Mehsud tribe and accuse it of the kidnappings, the state prefers to pressurize a weaker Bhitani tribe. In the case of the poor Baloch insurgents, the state officials burn their houses and arrest their families for forcing them to surrender, trial them in a court and give them capital punishment and while dealing with the poor Kharoots, Army officials kill several innocent people just because of crossing the border without travel documents but in case of the powerful kidnappers of The Mehsud tribe, it prefers to negotiate with the kidnappers and paying the ransom instead of any strict action against the kidnappers which reveals that RSA of the state is not for those who challenge the writ of the state but for those who are weak and don't have the power to retaliate against state's aggression.

The Mehsud challenges the writ of the state by kidnapping six school teachers same as the Baloch Insurgents and the Kharoot. The nature of crime is the same in all three cases because all of them challenge the writ of the state but the state's policies in dealing with all cases are different as in the case of the Kharoot and the Baloch people, it enforces its writ through the use of ISA and RSA but in case of The Mehsud kidnappers it becomes so flexible, surrenders in front of the kidnappers and pays the full ransom for the release of hostages which shows the duplicity of the state while dealing with the rich and the poor. Secondly, the duplicity of the state can also be seen at the beginning of the kidnapping where it's revealed that the twin kidnappers want to get ransom money for bribing a government clerk to get their file accepted by the government

"The twins had been offered a chance to start new lives. A senior officer of the nearest district had agreed to their unconditional surrender, and in return had promised to pardon their past offenses. However, the file had been sent to the government, where a clerk had sent word that their case would go through only on payment of a two-thousand-rupee bribe (61").

This explores that state, on one hand, is offering the twin a pardon on their past offenses if they surrender unconditionally but on the other hand, state officials ask for a bribe to the twin for sending their case to the authorities which explore the moral degradation of the people working in public institutions who put the lives of innocent people on stake for just a few

thousand rupees henceforth the twin plan a kidnapping of six school teachers for getting money to pay a ransom because they have no choice left except to choose a wrong mean to get money for giving a bribe in this way the bribe culture in government institutions endangered the lives of the poor school teachers and state in itself is solely responsible for that kidnapping.

4. CONCLUSION

The plight of people who belong to the lower middle class in third-world society in general and downtrodden tribal society in particular is somehow, unsatisfactory for humanity. The cultural hegemony of tribal society does not provide equal rights to the poor people who are living their lives below the line of poverty. Some bigoted feudalists have prejudiced minds against poor people and they use state and non-state institutions including Jirga to make them victimized of their oppression. Every year some tribal people migrate to different areas of Pakistan to save their life. The state seems completely involved in this oppression against the poor people through RSAs because sustained oppression is not possible without the support of the state. Althusser believes that the apparatuses of oppression are only used to suppress masses and their purpose is to project the benefits of the ruling class. As *The Wandering Falcon* reflects the state's proclivity towards the ruling class and its support to oppress the poor through multiple state apparatuses.

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