

PORTRAYL OF RUTH PRAWER'S NOVEL HEAT AND DUST AS AN ETHNOCENTRIC PRESENTATION OF EASTERN WORLD

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: August 25, 2024

Revised: September 22, 2024

Accepted: September 26, 2024

Available Online: September 29, 2024

Keywords:

Ethnocentrism

Biased and Prejudice Behavior

Expatriate Writers

Ruth Praver

East Asian Countries

Funding:

This research journal (PIIJSS) doesn't receive any specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

When the people from two different cultures and groups try to mingle together for any social, political or domestic needs, their differences develop the shape of biased and prejudice behavior towards the norms of the other. Without any discontinuity, these have been there between the western and Indian community. This research tends to explain and analyze Ruth Praver's novel Heat and Dust through the tendency of Ethnocentric attitude of West towards East. How the presentation of odds and norms of a society in fiction can shadow down the actual major realities of that region. This paper interrogates that to what extent the novel Heat and Dust shows the ethnocentric attitude in the writing of expatriate writer. The differences are not the surety of the superiority. Ruth Praver took the flight as a novelist after coming to India. This work aims to highlight the fact that the expatriate writers has been impairing the cultural norms and tradition of others that nurtures the detestation and execration.

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INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the twentieth century, sociologists tried to demystify the ethnocentric views of the West. They extended the thought that even the history, theories, and research instruments constructed by the West are embedded in the cultural background of social scientists. The same is the case with the writing style of Ruth Praver Jhabvala. Her constructions keep the attitude of embodiment, and she willingly or unwillingly played her part in literature as an ethnocentric mind. In 1951, she married an Indian architect and moved to India. She started her career as a novelist in 1955 by writing her first novel, *To Whom She Will* (Jhabvala, 1955), published then in 1957. She then wrote *Esmond in India* (Jhabvala, 1957), *The Householder* (Jhabvala, 1960), *A Backward Place* (Jhabvala, 1965), *An Experience of India* (Jhabvala, 1971), and *Heat and Dust* (Jhabvala, 1975). It is noticeable that how the titles signify a specific trend of writing on the setting of India. Although she was an immigrant who flee the Nazi Regime in 1939, and her father committed suicide at the loss of 40 family members during Holocaust. She had not spent the real peaceful and joyful childhood. Instead of that she had experienced Blitz. If the creative writing needed a push to flourish, why this troublesome childhood did not become the theme of her early works. In her early career she kept on putting the Indian life on

mainstream. Was to be in India became more tragic or mind pinching than surviving Holocaust and Blitz. In a way, it is not wrong to say that ethnocentrism plays its part more profoundly than anything else. Hatred itself is a poison which peeks through the window of mind more clearly. According to the Encyclopedia of Human Behavior (Second Edition, 2012). Such ethnocentrism is a mistake, culture theorists argue, as culture exerts a profound impact on the ways in which people conceptualize the world around them, the meaning they ascribe to common life events, and the way they react to those events.

Heat and Dust novel presents the multiple western and Indian characters. Douglas Rivers is a passionate and loyal assistant of chief administrator of a district. His loyalty towards his job is an unseen intention to get promoted, as he felt the glimpse of the charm of power. To rule over poor, helpless people of suburb is something that he can't not experience on his own place. The sense of imperialism has been rooted deep in everyone on a national and even on personal level. Story line goes around the character of Olivia, who went missing. Her step granddaughter comes to India to dig in the matter to find the real truth behind the elopement of Olivia. Who is also the narrator. The plot of the novel becomes symbolic when it spins around the life of Olivia, which was a precolonial Indian of 1920s and the life of narrator of 1970, who as a researcher enters to an indigenous place to know about her step grandmother about whom she kept on hearing a plethora of suspicious stories. With the depiction of two parallel time periods, Ruth Praver most commonly tried to highlight that even after Independence, the condition of country is sympathetic and pathetic. The unhygienic condition of Indian households, the bumpy streets, the dust and the lack of system became the real sceneries of Praver's narration. She gave the sign of her thought that West needs to rule the East as West is superior and have moral obligation to civilize the world. By the personality of Olivia Douglas, it can be oozed that she was not made for a place where she was bound to stay. She was alarmed to keep a difference between her and house help. She did not have anyone to spend her time, and at the same time she was befuddled by the clash and constraints of her surroundings. Her affair with Nawab Shri Puran Singh can be viewed as Nawab has trapped her. There is no depiction of any western male character who was involved with any Indian, or who has trapped any lady. Is it not an Ethnocentric attitude of writer that Western has been portrayed as civilized and honored who respects others, and on the other hand, a western lady was intoxicated by Nawab. The ethnocentric heart of readers beats in the sympathy of Olivia, and prejudice thought of insecurity of female arose to an extent. By looking it with the angle of ethnocentrism, the image takes a shape of an ethical and political subjugation of Indian Nawab. In 2014, Corinne H. Sherman voiced out a different angle of ethnocentrism, stating that it is the need of the time and the demand of colonized regions to develop a positive and productive intercultural communication (Sherman, 2014). Dr. Blau identifies in his book *Beyond Culture* that "The future depends on man's being able to transcend the limits of individual cultures" (Blau, 1975). Corinne H. Sherman further acknowledges with sincerity that "How unnatural and weird, I viewed other cultures as being. Poison filled my mind, deeming my White-American-Straight-Christian culture pure and superior" (Sherman, 2014). Inspired by the spirit of humility, Sherman wrote a final term paper titled "The Path to Humility" (Sherman, 2014). He open heartedly accepts in his paper that "I narrated my journey through recognizing my ethnocentric state, the need of continuous self-evaluation, the necessity for humility when approaching other cultures, and the vitality inherent in being open-minded when different or opposing viewpoints are presented."

Therefore, this paper discusses:

1. Ethnocentrism in Literature.
2. The issues of Ethnocentric attitude of Ruth Praver Jhabvala in her novel Heat and Dust.
3. The narrator, Anne and other characters who became the mouthpiece of novelist in exploiting the image of Indian life.
4. That the literature written by the local is more factual than the literature written by expatriates.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To interrogate the issue, this research will be focused on the events of novel which took place and the narration of the storyline that is narrated ethnocentrically. The research will rely on the theory of Ethnocentrism voiced by William Graham Sumner in 1906. To highlight the ethnocentric attitude, the researcher has selected Jhabvala's novel Heat and Dust published in 1975.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research will be based on the various aspects of ethnocentrism as presented in the selected novel "Heat and Dust". The study will be descriptive in nature. The research is dependent on textual analysis. To further explore the topic, the research will consult and review different helping material such as relevant books written on same topic, interviews, biographies and articles.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is significant as it highlights the issue of Ethnocentrism in the attitude of novelists. The life of the two main characters of the novel goes through ups and downs because they come across Indians, writer tries to mirror that Olivia's life could be smooth and calm if she had not met with Nawab of India. Anne, the narrator, her life could be far more different than her present life, if she had not decided to land in East for the inspection and research of the death of her step grandmother.

DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present research is delimited to only one novel of Ruth Praver, Heat and Dust.

ETHNOCENTRIC ANALYSIS OF HEAT AND DUST

The novel Heat and Dust is dominated by Ethnocentric attitude of Ruth Praver Jhabvala. In each sense she made her writer think that Indian culture is of no use, and she has given the glimpses of her ethnic behavior through her power of words. Anne, the granddaughter of Douglas Rivers, and the step granddaughter of Olivia Rivers, actually in the novel, the name of narrator is not mentioned, but in movie, (directed by James Ivory in 1983) which is based on this novel, Anne name is given to the narrator, came to India in suspicion of her grandmother, Olivia's missing case. She was intended to dig the matter to know the real matter of Olivia's case. But the events from which she had gone through are depicted in a way which make the reader to abhor the Indian's culture and traditions. Throughout the novel, the writer has dealt with the characters under the influence of ethnocentric attitude. In order to collect the information regarding the case of her grandmother, Olivia, Anne meets with Harry, who was a guest at Nawab's at the times of 1923. Harry was friend of Douglas and Olivia. He is an eyewitness of the life of Nawab, Olivia and Douglas. And when he came to India after the death of Olivia's sister Marica, he was keeping all those letters which were written from Olivia to her sister Marica. The novel opens with the meeting of Anne and Harry, discussing Olivia and India, and Anne records his chat with him to take notes latter as she was on a mission to get the truth about the issues and life of Olivia. In this discussion, Harry clearly states to Anne to beware of Indian people and culture. Straightforwardly he says to her "Listen, better be careful out there, I hope you had all those injection one has to have, I don't like to see you again to set a pole without them or the Khatm, and always remember ,every old Indian hand will tell you the same thing no water ever anywhere, that's golden rule number one, and no uncooked food, no fruit and no salads, golden rule number two," (Jhabvala, 1975). No matter, all tourists figure out the matter and environment, food and conditions before they move to any place, but how Ruth has presented the matter, flaps the other side of the story. How Olivia started to grope for her watch after reaching and how at each and every step the image is built for the reader that she, her belongings and even her thinking style is at stake in here. The beauty and scenery of India could also be the other option to start up a novel. The first lady to whom she meets at women dormitory at her first day, she guides her by saying that "I hate their food, I wouldn't touch it for anything" (Jhabvala, 1975). Isn't it arises question that India food is explored as a food of variety and taste. But at the times when this novel is written, the Indian food is also targeted in many ways. At one hand, Anne has been guided to stay vigilant, and on the other hand she has been presented as a friendly and passionate lady who even tried to be nice with Indians during her dwelling here. Inder Lal, is an Indian government officer, and guides her throughout her tour, and she stays at her place, where Anne gets the chance to closely look at the domestic life of Inder Lal, his mother and wife Ritu. The fact is when Indian characters, themselves are portrayed as degrading their circumstances and life, at the very first meeting of Inder and Anne, he says "the circumstances are such, that we have no choice" (Jhabvala, 1975). are they these much bounded has been shown! Furthermore, Inder's mother keeps on asking her about her wedding which seems quite

uncomfortable to Inder. His mother is shown as the unethical and ignorant, who has nothing to do with the development of anything. May be Ruth is trying to demonstrate an analphabetic trend of Indian or Eastern female around the globe. The series of events which happen with the characters of Inder's mother and wife, there they seem the transparent faces of Indian female. When Anne, came to know that Ritu was suffering through a trauma of psychological fidgets. She is depicted as the only one person, who realized the fact that the lady needed to visit a psychiatrist, and the Indian family of Inder Lal has shown ignorant of the fact, as they were dealing the fidgets by the help of charms and different religious traits. The wife countermands her all desires for the sake of her husband. If as a female she was unable to stay at peace, same was the case with Olivia too. She was also getting bored from her routine life, where the novel made the Nawab responsible for her disillusionment, why he was held responsible for her intentions, why she herself was not responsible for her spoiling her life in the name of boredom. There is shown a sense of pity towards Olivia and a sense of disgust and ignorance has shown in the character of Indar's wife Ritu. Inder's character and his sense of loathe towards his own country is a characteristic of Ruth Praver's writing style. How naturally she did the job of ethnocentric writer from the mouthpiece of natives. And the girl Olivia, even her memory is discussed in the novel as "something dark and terrible" her life discussion is forbidden in the family.

Anne accepts that Indian land has changed her way of thinking and her style of living and she says "I recorder all my impressions, but they are no longer the same because I myself am no longer the same. India always changes people, and I have been no exception". (Jhabvala, 1975). In the novel, the sketch of foreigners from the eye view of other Britisher is like something scary like "I saw a soul in hell" (Jhabvala, 1975). really is the India hell for foreigners? She is being called hijra, as the fact, this word used to be used very vigilantly, and it is inappropriate in Indian culture to call someone hijra, how it is so commonly used for Anne is also questionable. Isn't it sorrowful that how a grand palace of Nawab was turned into the dwelling of beggars after the partition. In European auction, all the items were sold and now the palace is devastated. How Inder Lal was worried about the ongoing jealousy and leg pulling of his fellow officers in his office, can also be looked in the mirror of ethnocentrism, that there is no discussion of any European official challenges instead of that there is narration of actual Europeans feelings that how enjoyed to rule, and Anne wanted to know how they felt to administrate the whole provinces, fought border battles and ruled over such people and advised rules. At the dining table they were amusing while discussing the devilish Hindu moneylender. Ethnocentrism sways quietly between every situation. The lifeline of Chide is humorous and critically can be viewed as Indian guru changes the life pattern of European for no use, how after adopting the Indian religion, how children tossed stones and missiles on him to make fun of him. Olivia being in a graveyard, and in India Ruth is writing again about Olivia's feelings towards graveyards, where she usually liked to wander. The description could be of Indian graveyard. Again, it's all about foreigners in India, its not about Indian in India. Graveyard scene is about how Britishers died in India while defending their own women and children. The fear of Olivia, who asks her husband that "If we stay here, we'll die."

Anne has made up her routine according to the family with whom she was renting a room. Anne had been depicted as a real flexible and sensitive character, while as Inder Lal's mother and wife has been depicted as the real uncivilized and unhygienic. Anne was trying to provide them comfort without disturbing them but what about the family, were they not accepted a foreigner as a guest, and were they not treating her in a best positive manner. The issue is that the novel is being written by an expatriate and is being narrated by the view of an expatriate and is being read by expatriate reader and being awarded the Nobel Prize from expatriate. Where is the involvement of India? As *The London Times* states it as "it is a jewel to be treasured." By looking through the lens of Ethnocentrism, it is clear that Ruth Praver Jhabvala, has applied her own culture and ethnicity as a frame of reference to judge the Indian culture, traditions, practices, behaviors, beliefs and people. And most of the times the perspective of judgement is negative, prejudice and biased. The writer has also regarded her own culture as superior and more correct or normal than the Indian one. It is not wrong to say that it is often a one sided and biased judgement. How is it possible that a foreigner can judge the situation, difficulties, trials and tribulations of a native, same is the case in this novel of Ruth Praver Jhabvala. She as an expatriate, felt according to her own ways. More how, whatever she heard, she has seen India according to

her bereavement. The general view of her own mind is being affected by her style of thinking which she adopted from her culture. Not only in this novel, in most of her works, we find her doing the same. The novel is a fine example of prejudice attitude of Westerner towards the Eastern. The life of Olivia was muddled because she was sensitive and not hard like Indian women or like her own mates. Does it mean that to one needs to be really hard to dwell in Indian land. *Nirmal Mukerji observes- "Olivia is destroyed because she is the most vulnerable. She who is sensitive, Passionate, human and aesthetic is destroyed, whereas the 'tough old hens' like Mrs. Crawford and Mrs. Minnie survive". (Mukerji, 1978, p. 122)*

Incompatibility of foreigners can't be seen the Indian life as unfavorable. In her other novel of *Esmond in India*, the western female Esmond finds India a charming place in beginning, but later this same life turns into the cycle of extreme loathe and desolation. It is not wrong to say that Ruth Prawer explores the selfness of characters and the society around.

BACKGROUND OF THEORY OF ETHNOCENTRISMS

Ethnocentrism is the name of a specific attitude which comprises the glorification of one's own group, and the defamation and discrimination of the other groups. The concept is adopted and popularized by William Graham Sumner in 1906. Our world had never been free from racism, discrimination and suppression. Sir William Graham Sumner brought the fact in front that all the worldly warfare is rooted deep in ethnocentric attitude. The belief of Puritan system is that God has chosen them to lead the other nations of the world. Puritan leader strongly disperses the idea that Puritan community is an exemplary community to whom other needs to follow them as they consider themselves superior. The Puritan leader John Winthrop, in his sermon, *A Modell of Christian Charity (1630)* he motivated his listeners to have the standards that shines out for others to notice. He declared it their religious obligation to travel and migrate in the world to develop a holy community. As an England born, he justified the whole colonialism through his ethnocentric sense. His speech has known as the forerunner of American Exceptionalism also. He depicted the thought that it's the holy duty of wealthy to look after the poor. European Imperialism paved the path to develop the thought that Europeans are superior, it started in 18th century and touched the height during 19th century. During the exploration of Africa and America, Europeans considered themselves superior as Americans and African were more in Farming and hunting. They felt themselves the one and only scientific developed nation who was held responsible for the scientific development of the civilization. But by 19th century, this superiority became the reason of colonization and furthermore of slavery around the world on many levels. This theory is considered as the basic thought of the advancement of European society which ruled over Americas, New Zealand and Australia where they induced their customs, education, and the ways of living with the sense of pride and superiority. On map, the northwestern part of Europe is marked as Great Britain, which colonized the half of the world at a time. The west and western has been seen the world from their own eye of ethnocentrism and racism, which has covered most of the positive impacts and factors of the nonwestern lands. Even the Western historians have been challenged by the local historians, who had seen entirely the other side of the coin. Aryan Invasion Theory is a fine example of this matter. The regions like subcontinent where West had shown his power rule, merely centered by western traditions and customs, more than their own local cultures. In response, there was rise of Indian Nationalism. The sense of pride one's own culture is quite fine and defendable, but the abhorrent attitude of any one towards any other. Ethnocentric tend to examine the economic, political, social and cultural events from their own point of view. They use their own scale to measure the development of other cultures and personalities from which they consider themselves far better and comprehensive than others. Even in exports, and in universal market, this phenomenon of ethnocentrism has a long-lasting impact the sale of product by keeping in view the country of origin.

ETHNOCENTRIC WRITING TREND OF RUTH PRAWER JHABVALA

There is found a controversy in putting Ruth Prawer under the list of Indian writers or not. Most of the world believed that she had written the insight realities of India where she lived as a wife. Mainly the late 20th century viewed her as she was an expatriate, and her works are in need to be seen as an expatriate, who was on a hard luck to feel at home while staying at a distinct place with distinct civilization. She has dealt with her own

experiences with a sense of prejudice. She won Booker Prize, about which Amit Ray calls it “literary colonization” and she views it as “The Booker Prize is named for the British brothers who, in the mid nineteenth-century, controlled 80 percent of the sugar business in the British colonial possession of Guyana. From 1969, when the first Booker Prize was announced, most of the writers who wrote about Anglo-Indian life were brought in light. In the following seven years, three of the winning novels were about the Anglo-Indian colonial experience (all authored by non-Indians): *The Siege of Krishnapur* by J.G. Farrell (1973), Ruth Praver Jhabvala’s *Heat and Dust* (1975), and Paul Scott’s *Staying On* (1978).” (Ray, A.12) Amit Ray further asserts that “The revisionist historical perspectives that inform these three novels by non-Indians can certainly be criticized for their hermetic views of Indian history.” She was more condemnatory in her novels which she wrote as *To Whom She Will* (1955) and then *The Nature of Passion* in (1956). DR. Vandana R. Singh asserts the view by calling Ruth Praver’s skill as “retractable claws”. He strongly discusses that her view is dominated by Western intellect and trend. John Updike expresses his views as “*When one writes about India as a European and in English (as I do), inevitable one writes for India but for Western readers.*” Singh, V. R.2001). Birendra Pandey writes that penning down about the middle-class issues, Ruth has similarities with Jane Austen, Ruth Praver herself speaks about it as “*perhaps my way of looking at the things may have been somewhat like hers- a sort of ironic detachment? Maybe.*” (Hunter, 2001)

The debate is quite extended in late twentieth century that how the female and Indian personalities are being draw in the intellectual ad social writings. At the settlement of East India Company, when Englishmen came in beginning, they had gone through the personal issues of loneliness and depression. There were seen the intercultural and interracial relationships between the Englishmen and native women. They used to amuse themselves in the company of prostitutes during the raj period. Even there were interracial marriages at that time between Englishmen and Indian ladies. It happened because of the isolation of foreigners there, so they developed the relationships around for the time being. And Ethnocentric attitude of Western writers did not bring this in their fiction.

COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Cultural differences mend the behaviors on collective and individual levels. All around the world the people have multiple tendencies towards others and other cultures. The norms and odds always depend on environment, religion, culture and traditions. And towards one specific set of norms and odds the response of others depends upon individualism and collectivism. Here in this paper the attitude of characters of Ruth Praver collectively is found biased, it’s not about a single character or about one situation where they preferred their style, their norms and their cultural tendencies, it happens often. Kim & Hubbard examined that collective factor, as the governing figures of a group, are vigorous in structuring a view about other groups. And the governing novelists of west marginalized the Indian and Eastern view much dominantly than the actuality.

An Indian reviewer Lawyeraau reviews by calling it “*a well written book that explores Anglo Indian relations*” according to him, this piece of writing is about “*two women from two different generations, who came under the spell of India.*” (Parmar, 2014) Whereas this paper looks it in a way that how India ruined and spoiled the lives of two European ladies. Through two ladies, and their lives in Indian surroundings, and their mingling with Indians, the novelist has presented the Anglo-Indian relations. At the time of their arrival, both ladies were alarmed to stay diverted and away from Indians, but both of them did not bother the point, they did opposite and in result they are devastated, and totally ruined. On a vast span, it can be perceived that if someone mingles with Eastern, they can lose their peace and calm. This attitude of writing shows obviously the ethnocentric vantage.

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