

Hybridisation And Cultural Amalgamation In Kamala Markandaya's Possession

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Abstract

Indian authors have been motivated and troubled by the eastern and western cultures clashing for many years. Kamala Markandaya, an author of Indian descent who now resides in English land and writes in the English language, was able to convey the intricacy of the relationships between these two poles via personal experience. The issue of the characters' national, cultural, and sexual identities is complicated as a result of such inter-cultural and inter-racial mingling. We may also claim that Markandaya's book tells the story of how corrupted sexual and economic discourses collide.

Keywords: hybridization, culture, Amalgamation, English language, and sexual.

Introduction

In Colonial Studies, hybridity" is defined as "the making of one of two distinct things" (Boltagici 2004: 77), or, to put it more simply, "Hybridity is one of the cultural amalgamations" (Ashcroft et al. 1998: 118, 119). The phrase "mutuality of cultures" (expressions of syncretism and transculturation) is included in this definition. The main topic of the cultural and racial argument, Robert J.C. Young asserts that hybridity, (particularly the indiscriminate use of this term in colonial and imperial rhetoric "in negative accounts of the union of disparate races) (Ashcroft et al. 1998: 120). In his study Colonial Desire, Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race, Robert Young emphasises the historical relationship between language and sex (where sexuality had long been regarded as a threatening force—the spearhead of racial contact"), representing the perverse and degenerative aspects of British culture. starting with the records of its initial application in the 19th century, "to denote the crossing of people of different races,"

Young also highlights other uses of the word, such as miscegenation, which was first used in 1864 and is “conventionally used for the fertile fusion and merging of races” (Young 1995: 9). His study is focused on the so-called “interbreeding,” “racial mixing,” or “the miscegenated offspring,” all of which result in a rising number of hybrid offspring (which goes hand in hand with the general preoccupation with “people having sex”, or this “interminable, adulterine, aleatory, illicit, inter-racial sex,” according to Young) (1995: 181). One of the most contentious problems in Kamala Markandaya's novel *Possession* in the 1960s was the clandestine sexual connection between Válmiki (Val) and Caroline, yet it seems that inter-racial sex is still prohibited today. The idea of hybridity has always been contentious, provocative, and nebulous. Recognising hybridity as the condition of being in-between is also crucial since it entails, in the words of Pieterse (2001: 238), “going beyond dualism, binary thinking, and Cartesian epistemology” in the West. Nederveen Pieterse claims that hybridity refers to “a wide register of multiple identities”, “intensive intercultural communication”, “everyday multiculturalism”, and other things, but most crucially, it signifies the “erosion of boundaries” (2001: 221-223). This prevents us from putting the definition of “hybridity” in brackets. This essay will instead focus on the Valmiki and Caroline characters from Markandaya's book and how their so-called hybrid identities evolved within post-colonial society.

Post-Colonial Literature Hybridity

More than 75 percent of the world's population today has had colonialism's impact on their lives in some way. The daily realities experienced by colonised peoples have been most effectively encoded and profoundly influential through their writing, as well as other arts like painting, sculpture, music, and dance (Ashcroft et al. 1989: 1), and literature offers one of the most significant ways in which new perceptions are expressed. Indian authors have been motivated and troubled by the “cultural clash” from the East to the West for many years. Kamala Markandaya, an author of Indian descent who now resides in England and writes in the English language, was able to convey the intricacy of the relationships between these two poles via personal experience. Markandaya successfully explores the political, social, human, cultural, and artistic aspects of the “East-West encounter,” which serves as the main theme of her ten novels, according to Bhatnagar (1995: 28). At the same time, she maintains her distance by viewing the situation through the eyes of a “detached observer,” having demonstrated her impartiality and lack of

allegiance, she leaves the reader to draw moral conclusions. In her book *Possession*, which deals with "the perpetual conflict between Indian spiritualism and Western materialism" (Bhatnagar 1995: 35), the collision of civilizations is pretty simply presented. According to Boehmer, who believes that all "migrant postcolonial literatures" are "marked by the pull of conflicting ethics and philosophies" and are thus always "a potential source of tragedy" (1995: 227), Bhatnagar's interpretation of the book is consistent with this position. What *Possession* is essentially about is the awful ending of the emotional conflict between (and inside) the two main characters, Valmiki and Ellie, which leads to Ellie's suicide and the premature death of their "miscegenated," still-unborn child. According to Boehmer (1995: 227), all post-colonial texts may be thought of as hybrid objects, and the hybridity of immigrant art should finally signify "the freeing of voices, a technique of dismantling authority, a liberating polyphony," in an effort to liberate oneself from "the authoritarian yoke."

Hybridity and Identity

"It is striking that many novelists, both contemporary and historical, write almost obsessively about the uncertain crossing and invasion of identities," writes Anderson (1995: 2). This is the particular issue in Markandaya's book: the mingling of British and Indian identities (represented by the major characters), and more crucially, the colonisation of the still-forming, tenuous Indian boy's identity by an upper-middle-class English woman. Such inter-cultural and inter-racial mixing complicates the question of the characters' national, cultural, and sexual identities. According to Papastergiadis (2005: 50), place reliance poses a threat to one's identity or poses a challenge to one's ego stability within Friedman's classical model of culture. Hybrid cultures and identities, according to Friedman, are examples of "forces threatening traditional and national cultures" and "rootless cosmopolitan subjectivities" as a result of displacement (Papastergiadis 2005: 50). They also lack or lose their authenticity. This is an example of a profoundly adverse opinion, and I must say that I largely disagree with it. Due to the relevance of location and the ensuing impacts of displacement, the tale of exile and alienation really occupies the central position in the cultural discourse of the majority of post-colonial works. The *Empire Writes Back*'s authors claim that displacement is the root cause of "the particular post-colonial crisis of identity" because "the valid and active sense of self" may be "eroded by dislocation" or even "destroyed by cultural denigration," which is the "conscious and unconscious oppression" of a "indigenous personality by a

supposedly superior racial or cultural model" (Aschroft et al. 1989: 9). Possession isn't quite a narrative about exile, but it is a story about dislocation and, should we say, the unproductive effects it has on the protagonist, Valmiki, who is the exiled subject of the book. Early in life, young Valmiki was transferred to England to further his artistic career after being uprooted from his Indian village. Valmiki experiences some sort of identity problem the moment he sets foot on English land. This crisis affects not only his artistic imagination and creative energy but also his artistic productivity since he was unable to fully develop and apply, or "cashed in," the creative potential he had displayed in his native England. This viewpoint contends that Valmiki's creativity is actually "confined to closed forms of tradition," as Papastergiadis would contend (2005: 41); it was Valmiki's paintings of Indian deities in caves that first enchanted Caroline with their unmistakable beauty. Papastergiadis asserts (2005: 41) that "cultural identity is rooted in a specific landscape and locked into atavistic values"; clearly. This may be seen in the fact that Valmiki failed to produce such magnificent paintings while he was a resident in London. Only when we take into account Caroline's repressive influence on Valmiki's thinking (and creativity), who is a "supposedly superior" person, do the findings become negative. He was unable to fulfil his own creative potential or her expectations. It won't be possible for Valmiki to start producing again unless he re-establishes his connection to his own country through the "atavistic desire." The identification conundrum of this Possession, however, is not straightforward. In his analysis of the connection between the coloniser and the colonised, HomiBhabha, for instance, underlines "their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities" (Aschroft et al. 1998: 118). In contrast, this was essential for Valmiki's development and the revelation of his genuine ambition, which was to go back to India and continue his creative career there, where hybridity is, on the other hand, seen more favourably as a form of "cross-cultural exchange" (Aschroft et al. 1998: 119). As a result, according to yet another critic in the field of postcolonial studies, the alteration of soil may also be understood as "a necessary step towards emancipation" (Drichel 2008: 598). It's crucial to keep in mind that the otherness of the colonised, in this case Valmiki, might ultimately result in "othering the colonised" (Caroline) in order to destroy Western metaphysics (Drichel 2008: 598, 603). By having the narrator "explain" that "Caroline came of the breed that never admitted defeat," with a slightly ironic conclusion that "so radical a change of her imperious nature could only mean death to her" (Markandaya 1963: 232), we can see that

Western logocentrism is deeply ingrained in Caroline's personality. However, Markandaya appeared to have placed more emphasis on the growth of the colonised than the coloniser. However, we must also keep in mind what Young mentioned regarding the Englishness phenomena. He asserts that because it has never been adequately defined by a fundamental identity from which the other is excluded, the English identity has also developed over time into one that is heterogeneous, or "an identity that is not identical with itself" (Young 1995: 3). Because of this, even though Markandaya chose to emphasise in her book the problematic issue of Val's racial, cultural, sexual, and professional identity, the underlying message might also be that, despite Caroline being portrayed as an exceptionally strong-willed and self-righteous woman from the first to the last pages, with not only her English good looks [and] daring behaviour, but also "with that clear forthrightness just the side of insolence that the novel's protagonist The only way to evolve into an adult is to have the freedom to do so, and that is precisely what Valmiki felt he lacked under Caroline's reign, Markandaya does desire to call attention to. The work has a didactic tone, which is aided by The Swamy's assertion that this is ultimately "a lesson we all in time have to learn" (Markandaya 1963: 232).

Conclusion

Hybridity, a contentious concept in post-colonial philosophy, is transformed into the story of class, culture, gender, and race in literature. Since *Possession* tells the story of a purported colonial yearning—or, in Young's words, "the creation of culture itself and the world art" (1995: 112)—it serves as an illustration of the post-colonial hybrid narrative. However, possession is more than that. The "corrupt conjunction of hybridised sexual and economic discourses," the "decadence of bourgeois hegemony," the "production of cultural differentiation as a sign of authority [...]" (and) the revaluation of the symbol of authority as the sign of colonial difference" are other themes that could be cited in relation to Markandaya's book, according to Young (1995: 158). Whatever the bleak prospects for Valmiki's artistic career in a so-called "hybrid" culture may have been, and whatever the bleak prospects for Valmiki and Caroline's relationship may have been, at the end, a rather universal message, but still a message of hope, reads: "Yet the end results were not uniformly bleak. The British in India, Caroline, who overcome the worst features of a foreign temperament and location, and perhaps one day Valmiki as well, might all be examples of people who, if they had the courage, could rise beyond the absurd to become remarkable and great."

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