

POST-APOCALYPTIC IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN AYN RAND'S ANTHEM WITH REFERENCE TO CULTURE/NATURE DUALITY

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Abstract: The present article endeavors to explicate the process of identity construction in Ayn Rand's post-apocalyptic dystopian novel, *Anthem*. The utilisation of language and the dissemination of symbolic meanings are significant factors that contribute to the formation of identity, which enchains individuals, transforming them into obedient subjects. Fiske's perspective on identity construction elucidates the interplay between power and resistance, which appears to be absent in this post-apocalyptic work. The imperialising power is predominantly responsible for the mechanism of identity formation in the subjectivity of the characters, as there is no discernible systematic resistance to the dominant representations of power throughout the novel. Despite the absence of the duality of power and resistance, the duality of nature and culture is at play, significantly impacting the way identity is constructed. The imperialising power aims to eradicate or limit representations of nature, as the semantic burden that nature carries poses a threat to its existence. We aim to clarify how the imperialising power responds to the representations and meanings that nature embodies. Lastly, we posit that the imperialising power's reaction towards nature is stronger in post-apocalyptic contexts, where representations of nature are highly restricted, confined only to the "Uncharted Forest."

Keywords: Nature, Culture, Identity Construction, The Post-apocalyptic, Imperialising Power, *Anthem*

1. Introduction

Ayn Rand, a noteworthy novelist and philosopher of the twentieth century, was born in Russia but developed her career in America. In her quest to explore human mentality and subjectivity, Rand found it necessary to assume both roles of novelist and philosopher, as noted by Knapp (61). Rand held a strong opposition to collectivism and championed individualism, recognizing that "collectivism holds that man must be chained to collective action and collective thought for the sake of what is called the common good" (Rand "The Only" 353). Her lesser-known work of fiction, *Anthem*, written in 1937 during the Second World War and published a year later in the United Kingdom, was completed

within a mere three weeks, as attested by Heller (103). The story can be interpreted as a radical critique of collectivism that ultimately embraces individualism. The genesis of this literary work is largely informed by Rand's personal background and political views. For Rand, "Russia embodies the principle of collectivism" (Lewis and Salmieri 591), a principle which she vehemently opposes.

Her novels "testify to the great gift bestowed by creative individuals on humanity" (Montmarquet 3). Rand wrote many essays and articles concerning collectivism in which she questioned its fundamental structure. As a political philosopher, "she worked to understand the world around her" (Gotthelf 12). The Soviet Union was the representation of a collectivist society in which "the subjugation of the individual to a group" (Rand "The Only" 114) was more significant and everything revolved around the satisfaction of the people as a group than individuals. Rand's *Anthem* is a dystopia in which collectivism is preferred to individualism. As Burns argues, her dedication to individualism, "was a natural rights theory derived from the Declaration of Independence" (61) in that she was an enthusiast of America's political atmosphere.

Rand seeks to put into practice a collectivist, egalitarian regime and she "neatly exposes the ultimate logic of totalitarianism: perfect conformity for perfect control" (Heller 111). Rand's dystopian society prohibits individuals from exercising their autonomy in choosing their own names, instead mandating designated appellations. All facets of communal life, including the formation of rules and codes, are determined exclusively by the ruling power, thereby precluding direct contributions from members. Compliance with the prescribed regulations is mandatory and enforced stringently. Our aim is to analyse the strategic methods employed by the imperialist authority, the role of nature, and the function of language in the development of individual identities. A significant theme expounded in Rand's "Anthem" is the naming of characters and places. In this world, there exists no record of any nomenclature that would suggest even a modicum of individuality.

The places in the text are named merely based on their usage, for instance, 'the Home of Useless' which is applied to a place where everyone over forty resides. Knapp explores the justification of this sort of naming and proposes that "the disappearance of names accords with the overall regression in society. By dispensing with names, by approaching anonymity, the society in *Anthem* is on the road to abandoning basic humanity" (80). The given names signify a given identity, by hailing the subjects through naming them, the subjects are defined in a frame of meaning which brings about some expectations.

The precise act of hailing the subjects within the dystopian framework serves to constrain them within the preferred confines of the ruling power. Notably, the author's intention to depict a dystopian narrative in which collectivism is favored over individualism is a prominent theme. The author,

having experienced years of suffering in Russia, harbored a fervent anti-communist sentiment, which is painstakingly portrayed in "Anthem." Some scholars posit that Rand's advocacy for individualism is intended to counter religious collectivism. Simental states, "her views on religion just prior to composing Anthem show how the work itself aims at religious collectivism" (99). It is widely accepted that Christianity promotes collectivism as a fundamental tenet of its ideology. However, the novella "Anthem" does not contain a sufficient number of religious allusions to substantiate Simental's assertion. The dystopian society depicted by Rand appears to be a secular authoritarian system that emphasizes egalitarianism.

2. The Birth of Meaning and Identity in the Duality of Power

Fiske's understanding of power is entitled to a duality which acts as a binary opposition. He introduces the 'imperialising power' which aims "to extend its reach as far as possible_ over physical reality, over human societies, over history, over consciousness" (Fiske, *Power Plays* 11). The imperialising power seeks dominance and subordination. It is the "top-down power" (Fiske, *Power Plays* 11) which seeks to control the subjects and shape their identities. It is empowered by "a constellation of discursive structures, (scientific) knowledge and practices that accompany them which create a set of rules and standards" (Manokha 430). On the contrary, he introduces the "localising power" (Fiske, *Power Plays* 11) which is the power of the subordinated people who quest after some space in which they can avoid and escape the imperialising power. The localising power is reflected through different forms of resistance which are "varied and contradictory as the concerns articulated by the people" (Maase 45). Fiske asserts that identities come into existence in continuous struggles of the imperialising and the localising power. The localising power resists the imperialising power. As Haugaard points out, "resistance to domination is not only about winning episodically... but can also be about preserving identity" (272). In order to conceptualize the dynamic interplay between power and resistance, it is necessary to situate this phenomenon within the context of social relations and the physical and semantic space in which they are enacted. Thus, it is imperative to establish resistance as a social phenomenon that arises within a particular locale, where individuals engage in strategies that run counter to those of the dominant power structure. It is important to note that the unsystematic resistance of individuals who do not share this locale cannot be classified as a form of resistance that localises power within the duality of power and resistance.

The opposition between these two sorts of power occurs in the realm of representations, in the realm of meaning. The imperialising power and the localising power become semiotic power and semiotic resistance, respectively. Semiotic power "... is the power to make meanings" (Fiske, *Reading The Popular*

10). This form of power functions directly in creating identities and also it endeavours to achieve hegemony. Thus, the significance of the semiotic power must be considered in all the texts and contexts since “[e]very text and every reading has a social and therefore political dimension” (Fiske, *Reading The Popular* 97). As a result of semiotic power, semiotic resistance comes into existence “that not only refuses the dominant meanings but constructs oppositional ones that serve the interests of the subordinate is as vital a base for the redistribution of power as is evasion” (Fiske, *Reading the Popular* 10). Power and resistance constantly circulate in a social system. In the commodified world, every object can represent a value, and “the circulation of commodities in the marketplace is, in the economy of style, the circulation of meanings and identities” (Fiske, “Miami Vice” 118). These values or meanings take an active part in constructing subjectivity through commodification and various institutions.

Two opposing forces are constantly at work to create meanings for their own benefit through language. It is “this dual articulation [that] allows for accounts of power relations that show the ubiquitous presence of power as well as its inescapability” (Hardy 411). These two forces are as well, critical to the formation of subjectivity. Everything takes place within the terrain of language, it is the existence of language which creates meaning and as a result, values come into existence. The multiaccentuality of language exists because of the semiotic power and semiotic resistance. “Language is always multiaccentual. It always has the potential to be spoken with different accents that inflect its meanings towards the interests of different social formations” (Fiske, *Power Plays* 31). Language is a contributing factor in the power structure; it is “a crucial site of struggle, for all of our circulation systems it is the one with the widest terrain of operation” (Fiske, *Power Plays* 30). The localising power and the imperialising power are constantly struggling in the terrain of language. It is where these two forces achieve their utmost form of exploitation. The centrality of language in a social system is because of its availability and effectiveness in the terrain of power. Furthermore, the instability of language is quite similar to the culture and the people. “Language changes over time; it differs between cultures, and even within the same society and historical period it is inflected differently by different social formations - class, race, gender, age, region, and so on” (Fiske, “Semiotic” 34). Consequently, it can be argued that the entire system of language is dramatically affected by countless social factors which are determined by the historical context of that society.

3. The Essence of Power in Ayn Rand’s Anthem

At the beginning of *Anthem*, the narrator depicts the rules and conventions in society. He asserts that “it is a sin to write this. It is a sin to think words no others think and put them down upon a paper no others are to see” (Rand,

Anthem 7). Already the imperialising power is at work to restrain the efficiency of language for the subjects. They are not allowed to write “unless the Council of Vocations bid them so” (Rand, *Anthem* 7). Using the word ‘sin’ proposes the ethical or religious ideology which the imperialising power acquires to subvert the subjects. To write is “base and evil. It is as if we were speaking alone to no ears but our own. And we know well that there is no transgression blacker than to do or think alone” (Rand, *Anthem* 7). Writing is not allowed which suggests the stress of the imperialising power to limit the language for its subjects. Since language is multiaccentual and serves both power and resistance, the imperialising power in this society seeks to limit this characteristic. The result is a uniaccentual language which only serves the imperialising power and is limited to the construction of meanings only by the imperialising power.

As a result of potential resistance, the imperialising power has devised an alternative treatment for the disobedient and that is punishment. “What punishments await us if it be discovered we know not, for no such crime has come in the memory of men and there are no laws to provide for it” (Rand, *Anthem* 7). To be alone is drastically reprimanded “for this is the great transgression and the root of all evil” (Rand, *Anthem* 7). To be alone provides the subject with the experience of selfhood which is a great violation in this social context. What Rand’s social system fails to consider is that “the construction of individuality is fundamental to social life, and the boundaries of that individuality are among the most fiercely contested” (Fiske, *Power Plays* 64). Individuality in this society is neither fundamental nor necessary to the objects of the dominant regime. The rules clearly object to any sort of individuality or anything that might represent that, proposing a motto which asserts, “WE ARE ONE IN ALL AND ALL IN ONE. THERE ARE NO MEN BUT ONLY THE GREAT_ WE_ , ONE, INDIVISIBLE AND FOREVER” (Rand, *Anthem* 8). The reason for this sturdy opposition to the idea of individualism is related to the differences that individualism would create.

The exercise of power involves an inherent desire to control, and the prevalence of individualism complicates the imperialising power’s efforts to achieve such control. In Rand’s social context, disciplined control is a constant practice that serves to maintain the authority of power through the imposition of specific social practices. These practices “carry meanings that may be common to a whole period” (Foucault, *The Archeology* 118). Equality-2521 keeps violating the dominant rules in different ways. “We stole the candle from the larder of the Home of the Street Sweepers. We shall be sentenced to ten years in the Palace of Corrective Detention if it be discovered” (Rand, *Anthem* 7). Within the context of dystopian fiction, punishment is typically portrayed as the ultimate solution to transgressions. In the case of the protagonist in question, the minor offenses that he commits are not viewed as posing a significant threat to the dominant power, and thus are not considered to be a

form of systematic resistance that could serve to undermine the established order. These transgressions occur infrequently and in a highly erratic manner. Each new offense leads to yet another transgression, which remains shrouded in mystery but appears to be of considerable significance. He asserts, "Nothing matters save the work, our secret, our evil, our precious work" (Rand, *Anthem* 7). Equality-2521 is working on a project which is banned by the dominant regime. Equality-2521's act of writing does not suggest the multiaccentuality of language since his writings are partly self-criticism and do not seek to subvert or question the authority of the imperialising power.

In this society, names are assigned to individuals without their consultation, a practice that serves to highlight the extent of control sought by the imperialising power over its subjects. Names are the representation of the dominant ideology and "representation is control. The power to represent the world is the power to re-present us in it or it in us" (Fiske, *Power Plays* 158). The imperialising power keeps representing itself and everything in its terrain, the subjects, in particular. "Our name is Equality-2521, as it is written on the iron bracelet which all men wear on their left wrists with their names upon it" (Rand, *Anthem* 7). Names are assigned to the subjects and they are unable to change them. Throughout the novel, the narrator grapples with an internal struggle in relation to the sins and crimes that he commits. Equality-2521 is physically superior to his peers and because of that, he is reprimanded. The reason for the narrator's internal struggle is due to the dominant power's ideological drive towards achieving a state of absolute sameness. When the physical world fails to conform to this ideal, the dominant power seeks to subvert any differentiating elements that exist. They keep telling him: "There is evil in your bones, Equality-2521, for your body has grown beyond the bodies of your brothers" (Rand, *Anthem* 8). It appears that a singular characteristic of post-apocalyptic societies is the tremendous effort of the imperialising power to homogenise. Fiske suggests that "theories of ideology or hegemony stress the power of the dominant to construct the subjectivities of the subordinate and the common sense of society in their own interests" (Fiske, *Understanding* 8). It can be argued that the main problem which led to a social breakdown and post-apocalyptic worldviews is the existence of differences and inequalities.

In order to establish a validated perception of truth, the imperialising power must eliminate all other competing forms of truth and create its own version of reality, which it then imposes upon its subjects. Within Rand's post-apocalyptic world, the dominant ideology is one of unity and sameness, which forms the core of the established truth. "And these words are the truth, for they are written on the Palace of the World Council, and the World Council is the body of all truth" (Rand, *Anthem* 8). The World Council serves as the cornerstone of the imperialising power, representing the truth and reality of the subjects through the use of language, assigning names, education, and jobs. In the

struggle to establish truth and reality, a formidable opposing force to the imperialising power is history. Equality-2521 proposes that the World Council is the representation of all truths “thus has it been ever since the Great Rebirth, and farther back than that no memory can reach” (Rand, *Anthem* 8). Our understanding of history is shaped by collective memories, and the absence of history leads to the erosion of oppositional elements, leaving only the dominant ideology of the imperialising power. ‘The Great Rebirth’ refers to the time when this new utilitarian system came to power. Reaching the time before the Great Rebirth is threatening.

The inflexible imperialising power subverts and eliminates all the opposing forces putting in view that “we must never speak of the times before the Great Rebirth, else we are sentenced to three years in the Palace of Corrective Detention” (Rand, *Anthem* 8). The fact that one can be subjected to three years of physical and mental punishment for simply pondering about the time before the emergence of the dominant ideology underscores the degree of threat perceived by the dominant power. The times before the Great Rebirth is called “Unmentionable Times” (Rand, *Anthem* 8), and the subjects are not allowed to discuss that. Not all subjects can be potentially threatening to the existence of the imperialising power. Accordingly, although the main population is banned from even thinking about the ‘Unmentionable Times’. “It is only the Old Ones who whisper about it in the evenings, in the Home of Useless. They whisper many strange things, of the towers which rose to the sky, in those Unmentionable Times” (Rand, *Anthem* 8). Old people are not considered to be a threat. The old people are useless and are put in the Home of the Useless.

All of the pillars of power are in constant motion to ensure the dominance of power and to preserve the reality it has constructed. This unyielding pursuit of dominance extends to the mentality and physical reality of the subjects, impacting how they perceive themselves and others. Equality-2521, for example, reproaches himself for having a stronger body than his peers. Despite committing numerous crimes, his primary source of guilt comes from these physical differences. “All men are good and wise. It is only we, Equality-2521, we alone who were born with a curse. For we are not like our brothers” (Rand, *Anthem* 8). Equality-2521 keeps facing this inner conflict which he finds excruciatingly unsettling. Many ideological institutions exist to ensure the reproduction of meaning through this system. Reproducing meanings is one of the most fundamental ways in which power practises itself. The culture of this society which is its episteme prevails over the production of meaning. “Culture is the constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience, and such meanings necessarily produce a social identity for the people involved” (Fiske *Reading* 1). Who are the creators of social meanings? Fiske argues that social meanings are produced both by the imperialising power and by the localising power. The problem in Rand’s *Anthem* is that social groups do not exist

as resisting opponents to the imperialising power. As a result, the production of meaning is simply in absolute control of the dominant imperialising power which includes "all meanings of self, of social relations, all the discourses and texts" (Fiske, Reading 1). Now that the creators of meanings, identities, social relationships, and realities are the elements of the imperialising power, the subjects come into existence only under the strong influence of the dominant imperialising power.

Disciplining the subjects begins at an early age. Children are the most exposed subjects to the rules and dominant disciplines. "There are few offenses blacker than to fight with our brothers, at any age for any cause whatsoever... and of all the children of that year, we were locked in the cellar most often" (Rand, *Anthem* 9). Mitigating subjects through imprisoning them at an early age seems radical and brutal. "Inspection functions ceaselessly. The gaze is alert everywhere" (Foucault, *Discipline* 195). The imperialising power, however, does not spare any sort of mercy upon its subjects for domination and control are more fundamental issues to its existence than moral, or ethical matters. The subjects pass a regular process in which they move from one Home to another. The ideology keeps being reproduced through meanings and social practises at all stages. "We are nothing. Mankind is all. By the grace of our brothers are we allowed our lives. We exist through, by and for our brothers who are the State. Amen" (Rand, *Anthem* 9). These ritualistic practices convey strong disciplinary meanings which seek to internalise the ideology for the subjects. The ideal subject accepts the dominant meanings and ideologies submissively than by coercive force.

As the children grew older, they were sent to the 'Home of the Students' where they had to learn for ten years. "When we were five years old, we were sent to the Home of the Students, where there are ten wards, for our ten years of learning" (Rand, *Anthem* 9). These wards and teachers continuously reflect the dominant ideology by creating meanings and practising the dominant social conventions. "The Teachers were just, for they had been appointed by the Councils, and the Councils are the voice of all justice, for they are the voice of all men" (Rand, *Anthem* 9). Equality-2521's inner struggle, as experienced in the Home of the Students, is closely linked to the educational materials and courses that he is required to undertake. While Equality-2521 finds the coursework relatively straightforward, he is forbidden from expressing his intellectual superiority, as doing so would conflict with the imposed doctrine of equality that dictates he must remain on par with his peers. "It was that the learning was too easy. This is a great sin, to be born with a head which is too quick. It is not good to be different from our brothers, but it is evil to be superior to them" (Rand, *Anthem* 9). This agonising conflict within Equality-2521 is the result of the realities and truths that have been imposed upon these subjects in Rand's *Anthem*.

The meanings that are generated in this society give rise to anti-scientific discourses, wherein technological progress is restricted to the Council of Scholars. In contemporary times, technological advancements are closely tied to the disciplinary control of the imperialising power. Knowledge is a product of the imperialising power and is always oriented towards serving its own objectives. Fiske asserts that “the most powerful knowledge is disciplinary, that is, it is produced by a discipline and it disciplines... its objects” (Fiske, *Power Plays* 68). The only source of knowledge that circulates in Rand’s dystopia is disciplinary knowledge. *Anthem* fails to envisage the efficiency of knowledge and technology as a controlling device. “We wished to know. We wished to know about all the things which make the earth around us. We asked so many questions that the Teachers forbade it” (Rand, *Anthem* 10). The resistance of the imperialising power to knowledge and technology may be due to the fear and perceived threat that such access presents. Knowledge is a double-edged sword that can both repress the subject and allow for participation in the discourse of power.

Opposition to technology is central to the ideology of this dystopia. In Part Three of the novel, we witness Equality-2521’s invention of light through electricity. “We, Equality-2521, have discovered a new power of nature. And we have discovered it alone, and we alone are to know it” (Rand, *Anthem* 24). The thought that he can be a useful part of the community and might be given a chance to join the Council of Scholars provoked him to confess: “we can light our tunnel, and the City, and all the Cities of the world with nothing save metal and wires” (Rand, *Anthem* 28). When he was found out, he was sent to the Palace of Corrective Detention. “They tore the clothes from our body, they threw us down upon our knees and they tied our hands to the iron post. The first blow of the lash felt as of our spine had been cut in two” (Rand, *Anthem* 30). The fierce physical violence illustrates the inflexibility of the imperialising power. Equality-2521 keeps resisting the dominant power and he is sent to a cell: “we lay in our cell for many days. The door opened twice each day, once for the men who brought us bread and water, and once for the Judges” (Rand, *Anthem* 31). The interrogations are interminable. The imperialising power cannot allow any failure in practising itself upon subjects. The subjects need to be absolutely docile if the dominant imperialising power is to remain well-functioning.

After spending several days in confinement, Equality-2521 ultimately decides to escape and make his way to the Council of Scholars, where he confesses everything. “It was easy to escape from the Palace of Corrective Detention. The locks are old on the doors and there are no guards about” (Rand, *Anthem* 32). The reason why there are no guards in the Palace of Corrective Detention is that “men have never defied the Councils so far as to escape from whatever place they were ordered to be” (Rand, *Anthem* 32). This illustrates the dominance of the imperialising power. There is no systematic resistance to the

imperialising power because there is no physical or semantic space for the people to produce meanings and practise social activities which can aim at deposing the dominant power. The result is an absolute absence of the localising power. When there is no localising power, there would be no resistance. When there is no resistance, power tends to create subjects and identities on its own. All the subjects in Rand's *Anthem* are the sole production of the imperialising power. In a society in which the imperialising power is the only available source of power, there is no chance of systematic resistance. All the subjects are normal in the eyes of the imperialising power while "the normal is a product of power" (Fiske, *Power Plays* 71). Equality-2521 eventually manages to escape to his pit to take his invention to the Council of Scholars.

As he enters the Council of Scholars, he is interrogated about his identity. "Our name is Equality-2521... and we are a Street Sweeper of this City" (Rand, *Anthem* 33). The reaction of the imperialising power to a Street Sweeper in the Council of Scholars is significant, "a Street Sweeper walking in upon the World council of Scholars! It is not to be believed! It is against all the rules and all the laws!" (Rand, *Anthem* 33). Fiske once argued that "a degree of subordinate control can be allowed or even encouraged" (Fiske, *Power Plays* 69) and yet, *Anthem* is radically stiff and intolerant. The presence of a Street Sweeper in the Council of Scholars is heretical and against all laws. Despite all the difficulty and rigidity on the side of the Scholars, Equality-2521 convinces them to listen to his proposal. "We placed our glass box upon the table before them. We spoke of it, and of our long quest, and of our tunnel, and of our escape from the Palace of Corrective Detention" (Rand, *Anthem* 33). Although he informs them of a power which can enhance the living standard in their cities, they strongly oppose and reject it: "but terror struck the men of the Council. They leapt to their feet, they ran from the table, and they stood pressed against the wall, huddled together, seeking the warmth of one another's bodies to give them courage" (Rand, *Anthem* 34). Equality-2521 seeks to convince them to accept this new technology which can serve their own purpose but they refuse: "but they looked upon us, and suddenly we were afraid. For their eyes were still, and small, and evil" (Rand, *Anthem* 34). One of the scholars further suggests: "It took fifty years to secure the approval of all the Councils for the Candle, and to decide upon the number needed, and to re-fit the Plans so as to make candles instead of torches" (Rand, *Anthem* 35). The opposition to technology is strongly evident in *Anthem*. Rather than harnessing the power of knowledge and technology, the society depicted in the novel seeks to eliminate any traces of them altogether. This is due to the fear that technology and knowledge could become a site of struggle between the dominant and the dominated.

Immediately after Equality-2521 informed the scholars of his new invention, they declared that "It must be destroyed" (Rand, *Anthem* 36). At this moment, an epiphany occurs which widens Equality-2521's views on the entire

foundation of his society. Previously, Equality-2521 believed in the importance of the Scholars. "No single one can possess greater wisdom than the many Scholars who are elected by all men for their wisdom" (Rand, *Anthem* 26). This belief is prior to Equality-2521's encounter with the Scholars in the Council of Scholars. After he notices the scholars' ignorance and enmity for his new invention, his beliefs in the knowledge of the Scholars fall apart. "You fools! We cried. You fools! You Thrice-damned fools!" (Rand 2014, 36). The clandestine nature of the imperialising power has been found out now. The moment that the nature of power becomes known, "it would lose its effectiveness and its virtue by being divulged" (Foucault, *The History* 48). Power does not tolerate such an offense and as a result, he must be eradicated before spreading the news to his peers. Equality-2521 is well aware of the circumstances that threaten him and he attempts to escape. "We fell, but we never let the box fall from our hands. Then we ran" (Rand, *Anthem* 36). The box represents the opposition and resistance to the imperialising power and it must be destroyed alongside its creator. Equality-2521 manages to escape which brings him to a collapse of an imperialising identity. Another reason why the imperialising power rejects Equality-2521's new invention is that he does not belong to the Council of scholars and meddling in their works is unacceptable. Power has organised everything with tremendous preciseness and order.

4. Nature: Equality-2521's Loyal Shelter

The epiphany that Equality-2521 experienced caused an unsettling view of his beliefs and ideas concerning the dominant social structure which directly contributed to his identity and made him break away from society both physically and semantically. Equality-2521 takes his invention and runs to the forest. The first time that we are informed of the existence of this 'Uncharted Forest' is in the first part of the work. Equality-2521 describes the edge of the city which is a border between culture and nature. "Beyond the ravine there is a plain, and beyond the plain there lies the Uncharted Forest, about which men must not think" (Rand, *Anthem* 14). Why does the dominant imperialising power seek to subvert and eradicate the representations of the forest? What is it about the forest that makes it a forbidden issue to be discoursed among subjects in this dystopia? The semantic burden that a forest bears is the most fundamental threat to the control of the dominant imperialising power. Nature is an opposing producer of meanings through its signs and representations. The dominant ideology in Rand's *Anthem* opposes the 'Uncharted Forest' since it represents the essence of nature. Objectively, the physical and "geographical opposition has no meaning until our ideology imposes one, and then it serves to naturalise the ideological" (Fiske, *Understanding* 44). The ideology has naturalised all the cultural elements in its terrain and opposes nature, as a consequence, it represents nature as unnatural.

The Uncharted Forest is a source of aspiration for Equality-2521 and on many occasions, he keeps describing it as a transcendental remedy for his mental imprisonment: "And beyond the City there lies the plain, and beyond the plain, black upon the black sky, there lies the Uncharted Forest" (Rand, *Anthem* 23). Equality-2521, a key protagonist, consciously employs the hue of black to symbolize the inscrutable and the enigmatic. This is because the figurative darkness, signified by the color black, epitomizes the realm of the unknown and represents a domain beyond the control of the masses. Notably, this obscurity is compounded by the existence of the Uncharted Forest, whose moniker is a metaphor for the unrestrained and inscrutable nature of the woods. The forest is, in essence, an area that is undefined, unexplored, and unmapped, a state of being which reinforces the idea that the forces of the imperialising power lack control over it. Consequently, it is the idea that this forest represents, rather than the forest itself, that poses an existential challenge to the dominant power.

The opposition between culture and nature is the "opposition between freedom and control, between the signifier and the signified" (Fiske, *Understanding* 64). The imperialising power seeks to gain absolute control over its subjects. Nature, on the other hand, represents a free and liberated world in which the imperialising power has no control or dominance. It is thus forbidden to converse about the 'Uncharted Forest'. Before running into the Uncharted Forest, Equality-2521 illustrates the dominant ideology and the discourses concerning this Uncharted Forest. Equality-2521 elucidates a few troubled people who ran into the forest over a period of a hundred years. "These men do not return. They perish from hunger and from the claws of the wild beasts which roam the Forest" (Rand, *Anthem* 23). This horrifying explanation is uttered by the imperialising power and it seeks to create countless discourses in which the Uncharted Forest is represented as dangerous and threatening to the lives of the subjects. Despite myriad discourses which are circulating in every layer of Rand's society, Equality-2521 managed to explore his own opposing views about this Uncharted Forest. "And as we look upon the Uncharted Forest far in the night, we think of the secrets of the Unmentionable Times, and we wonder how it came to pass that these secrets were lost to the world" (Rand, *Anthem* 23). In spite of the rigid disallowance of the imperialising power to contemplate the Uncharted Forest, Equality-2521 keeps pondering about it and its relation to the previous forms of society.

Fleeting to the Uncharted Forest is the greatest transgression that Equality-2521 has committed. By describing the Uncharted Forest, we are exposed to the number of available representations of nature in Equality-2521's society. "Trees taller than we had ever seen before stood over us in great silence. Then we knew. We were in the Uncharted Forest" (Rand, *Anthem* 36). Describing trees that Equality-2521 has never seen before can suggest the eradication of the physical representations of nature in Equality-2521's society. Whatever

threatens the imperialising power must be eradicated alongside its representations. As he moves through the Uncharted Forest, he distances himself from the dominant ideology and culture. The problem is that mankind does not belong to nature. Equality-2521 is liberated from the imperialising power in his society and has now, entered the realm of nature which is untamed and free. "We stopped when we felt hunger. We saw birds in the tree branches, and flying from under our footsteps. We picked a stone and we sent it as an arrow at a bird. It fell before us" (Rand, *Anthem* 38). Hunting is a form of ruling and domination over the environment. "Hunting is where man first denotes his master over nature: it is the prerequisite of cooking, which, in turn, becomes the resonant metaphor for the process of culturizing nature" (Fiske, *Understanding* 60). Equality-2521 is escaping a nightmarish episteme and dominance only to create his own meanings and values. He seeks to tame nature which is unknown and mysterious to him.

The pertinence of nature as a counterbalancing agent to culture becomes manifest upon the arrival of the Golden One, consort of Equality-2521, in the forest. This is evidenced by the fact that sexual activity is strictly verboten within their societal framework. Nevertheless, the Uncharted Forest affords them a haven to engage in a subversive self-expression that challenges the dominant power structure. It is the Uncharted Forest that furnishes them with this possibility. "We seized their body and we pressed our lips to theirs. The Golden One breathed once, and their breath was a moan, and then their arms closed around us" (Rand, *Anthem* 40). Sexual intercourse has always been an unsettling subject for the imperialising power since "the pleasure of the body...occurs at the moment of the breakdown of culture into nature" (Fiske, *Reading* 41). Bodily pleasures represent the resistance of the dominated and it is thus dangerous. Although Equality-2521 and the Golden One managed to escape the dominance of the imperialising power in the physical sense, the meanings that have been produced by the imperialising power still haunt them. Fiske argues that there are two stages in which the pleasure of the subordinated can be controlled: "those of repressive legislation, and those of appropriation by which 'vulgar', uncontrolled leisure pursuits could be respectable and disciplined" (*Reading* 57). The repressive forces are not available in the Uncharted Forest. The subjects can claim to have defeated the imperialising power only when they have resisted the 'appropriation' strategy in which the imperialising power seeks to shame and humiliate the subjects through constructed meanings. "And that night we knew that to hold the body of women in our arms is neither ugly nor shameful, but the one ecstasy granted to the race of men" (Rand, *Anthem* 41). Equality-2521 and the Golden One are now liberated from the control and dominance of the imperialising power. They are now both mentally and physically liberated from the physical and semantic realms which the imperialising power has created.

5. Conclusion

Language is both available and constrained by the hegemonic imperialising power, exemplified by the plethora of Councils and organisations in this dystopian society. Despite being subject to this power, Equality-2521 ultimately resists its verities and realities. The imperialising power has created an episteme that mandates physical and mental uniformity, with dire consequences for any deviation from the norm. Rand's Anthem implies that the imperialising power has eradicated any manifestation of localising power, fashioning a homogeneous society in which subjects are solely produced under the sway of the imperialising power. Any opposition to this system is intolerable, rendering the cultural critics' algorithm to advocate for resistance ineffective. The subjects do not emerge from the battleground of power and resistance, for power has singularly constructed identities that conform to its criteria and eradicated those who contest it. Analysing the portrayal of the Uncharted Forest, it may be argued that all post-apocalyptic ideologies exhibit equal antipathy towards nature, for it symbolises freedom and liberty that stand in direct opposition to control and domination. Nature is an opposing force that generates and reproduces meaning, a fact that threatens the hegemony of the imperialising power. By exhibiting a distinct form of life that remains viable and feasible for subjects beyond the control and domination of the imperialising power and ideology, nature serves as an existential threat that reminds subjects of an alternative existence apart from that of the imperialising power.

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بازساخت هویت پساآخرزمانی در رمان سرود آین رند بر اساس دوگانگی طبیعت/فرهنگ

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چکیده

مقاله حال حاضر به دنبال نشان دادن چگونگی ساخت هویت ها در متن رمان پساآخرزمانی سرود آین رند است. یکی از عوامل مهم در فرایند هویت سازی، به کارگیری خاص زبان و گردش معانی نظم نمادینی است که افراد را با تبدیل آنها به سوژه های مطیع به زنجیر می کشاند. برداشت فوکو و درک فیسک از ساخت هویت به دوگانگی قدرت و مقاومت می پردازد که به نظر می رسد در این اثر پساآخرزمانی وجود ندارد. این قدرت امپریالیزه هست که به تنهایی مسئول مکانیسم هویت سازی در ذهنیت شخصیت هاست. در سرتاسر رمان هیچ مدرکی دال بر هیچ نوع مقاومت سیستماتیک در برابر باززمانی های مسلط قدرت امپریالیزه وجود ندارد. در حالی که دوگانگی قدرت و مقاومت در رمان سرود آین رند وجود ندارد، دوگانگی طبیعت و فرهنگ مستقیماً بر نحوه ساخت هویت تاثیر می گذارد. قدرت امپریالیزه به دنبال ریشه کن کردن، و در بدترین حالت محدود کردن باززمانی های طبیعت است. بار معنایی که طبیعت بر دوش دارد، وجود قدرت امپریالیزه را تهدید می کند. ما قصد داریم که روشن کنیم که چگونه قدرت امپریالیزه به باززمانی ها و معانی که طبیعت ایجاد می کند واکنش نشان می دهد. در نهایت، ما پیشنهاد می کنیم که واکنش قدرت امپریالیزه نسبت به طبیعت در زمینه های پساآخرزمانی بسیار قوی تر است. به عنوان مثال، باززمانی طبیعت فقط محدود به "جنگل ناشناخته" است که بسیار محدود است.

کلیدواژه ها: طبیعت، فرهنگ، بازسازی هویت، هویت پساآخرزمانی، قدرت امپریالیزه