

Depression to Fury: A Psychological Study of Indian Immigrants with Reference to Salman Rushdie's Fury

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Abstract

Many people migrate to various countries as a result of war, or to promote their economic condition or simply to get a better life. Immigrants normally face many challenges when they settle in a new land politically, socially and the most important of all is their mental illness. Apart from their attachment to their homeland thought, the fear and the social adjustment which they are forced to do in the new land make them feel depressed. In a way they think that they have lost all their freedom. The racial discrimination they face among the native people make them feel alienated. Wherever they go in the new country they are identified not as one among them. But they are identified as "others". Even though they try to move one with the native people there is a gap between them always. The suppressed feeling of alienation and the term "other" make them react in an opposite manner. Salman Rushdie, who himself has gone through all these differences among people, clearly explains in his novel *Fury*, the depression faced by the protagonist Malik Solanka and the changes that happens in his mind which leads him to hate everything that he comes across in his life. A person cannot have a peaceful life if he is not free in his mind or even he cannot do his job perfectly well. Malik Solanka, the hero of the novel is a perfect example to this depressed nature which makes him react furious towards his society.

Keywords: depression, anger, fury

Introduction

In the novel, *Fury* the protagonist Professor Solanka is an Indian immigrant to New York. Before arriving to New York, he lived in England. In search of wealth and fame he leaves to New York. He holds a very high designation and acts like an Englishman. His disguise as an Englishman is a kind of escapism from the native Englishmen who overlook him in a different manner. He often ruminates about his own homeland, his family and about his own descent. In the beginning of the novel he feels proud about his profession. He earns very well by his profession as a toy maker. His creation named Little Brain gained popularity among people. With his creation, he also became popular. But this position as a creator of dolls did not provide him happiness. He started thinking about his life in a new land. His unsatisfied life made him feel depressed.

Depression of Life

Professor Solanka, not able to lead life as a university teacher resigns his job. He tries his hand in various jobs like television. Later BBC called him for "a late night series of popular history of philosophy programmes"(14). After this job, he creates the doll Little Brain. He tries to put his own character through the toy. When talking about the character of Little Brain, he refers,

Little Brain was smart, sassy, unafraid, genuinely interested in the deep information, in the getting of good- quality wisdom; not so much a disciple as an agent provocateur with a time machine, she goaded the great minds of the ages into surprising revelations.(17)

When his creation overthrows his creator, Solanka feels handicapped. He struggled a lot on the perennial problem of authority and the individual. His anger was endless. Atlast his first book *What We Need* dealt with the

problem of State vs. Individual. It also attacked the political spectrum of his time. He also tried his hand in creating other Puppet kings. Still his violent rage was not under his control. All the medications and therapy were not of any use.

His opinion about life is different and turns out to be philosophical. In one of his ruminations, he says,

Life is fury, he'd thought. Fury- sexual, Oedipal, political, magical, brutal- drives us to our finest heights and coarsest depths. Out of furia comes creation, inspiration, originality, passion, but also violence, pain, pure unafraid destruction, the giving and receiving of blows from which we never recover.(31)

He knows that he is harboring murderous impulses. Out of fear of killing his near and dear, he leaves his wife and children and flies to another country in the name of job. He knows that there are laws for the protection of people. But those are concerned only with improper behaviour of people like Covetousness, adultery, and lust. In reality there are so many unanswered questions in life, which Solanka meditates in his mind as,

Thou Shalt Not Be an Absentee Father. Cometh to Thinkst of It, Thou Shalt Not Walk Out of Thy Life Without a Fucking Good Reason, Buster, and What You've Put Up So Far Doesn't Even Come Close. What Dost Thou Think? Thou Canst Do Any Goddamn Thing Thou Wantest? (33)

When he thinks about the present society he is not able to control his anger. He needs an outlet for all his depressed feelings. All people have the terrifying human animal in us and we always try to civilize the animal nature. We disguise ourselves to be "exalted, transcendent, self-destructive, un-trammelled" creation of God. Solanka relates his fury to Lord Shiva in Indian mythology. He says fury is the driving factor behind all creation. He says, "Shiva dances his furious dance to create and also to destroy."(31)

When Solanka looked at the American way of living, he felt secluded. He found everything in the new country with a capital A. Every person in the world had their own dreams and ambitions. But the way by which the Americans change themselves is quite astonishing. To them everything in the world is their own special

characteristic. They claimed everything with an America logo: "American Dream, American Buffalo, American Graffiti, American Psycho, American Tune. (55)" The tendency of the Americans made Solanka to think about them as Capitalist. Infact Solanka wanted to identify himself with the same label. Fortunately he became friend with many white colleagues and he stopped hyphenating himself and became an American. After his self recognition as an American, he started realizing that it is the dark secret wish in him. His self understanding arouses a rage within him. He could see the seeds of fury growing within him. He explains the fury as,

"...he had been seduced, and his desire to be accepted into this white man's club was the dark secret he could not confess to anyone, perhaps not even to himself. And these are the secrets from which the anger comes. In this dark bed the seeds of fury grow."(58)

Transformation of Depression

Mila, a friend of Solanka understands the fury in him and she tries to pull out the toymaker from his depressive feeling. In the initial stages of his relationship with Mila, he finds a solace in his life. He thought of her as a model of Little Brain. After some time he thought that Mila is not an angel in his life but she is a "spider – sorceress". He also thought about Mila as ,

"...the very incarnation of a Fury, one of the three deadly sisters, the scourges of mankind. Fury was their divine nature and boiling human wrath their favourite food."(134)

But the relationship also made Solanka to create new dolls. He tried to create a living doll with the incarnation of Mila. He created" the vision of Mila as Fury, as Tisiphone, Alecto or Magaera ..."(139).

Solanka throws Mila over another beautiful girl named Neela. She makes him involve himself in the political turmoil of her native country. The revolutionaries wearing masks of his Puppet King characters stood among the people in public and held the green flag of the proposed "Republic of Filbistan". Even the Puppet Kings website gained popularity on-line and also attained high level hits. He could see people furious everywhere. When he saw the

fury of the people, he felt that his fury is nothing important. He explains the fury of the people as,

“... A group fury, born of long injustice, beside which his own unpredictable temper was a thing of pathetic insignificance, the indulgence, perhaps, of a privileged individual with too much self interest.(193)

Fury as Universal

Solanka thought that only he is not able to withstand the present situation and developed a kind of fury against his society. Later he came to understand the fact that fury is universal which almost all people experience in their life. He thought that “the fury blew him to pieces and there wasn't enough of him found to collect up and put in a box”(114). He could understand that all the people are burning in a shorter fuse. And when the time and opportunity are given then the fuse explodes with a heavy sound. Fury in every person is explained by Solanka in the words,

“There was a knife twisting in every gut, a scourge for every back. We were all grievously provoked. Explosions were heard on every side. Human life was now lived in the moment before the fury, when the anger grew, or the moment during – the fury's hour, the time of the beast set free- or in the ruined aftermath of a great violence, when the fury ebbed and chaos abated, until the tide began, once again, to turn.”(129)

Everything about his anger and revolt against society takes a turning point with the death of the three sisters. Solanka imagines his fury flies with the death of the sisters. He imagines it to be the call of the fury. He laughs loudly and says that “the goddess of wrath had departed ; their hold over him was broken at last”.(219)

Conclusion

Violence happens in the life of all human beings. One should know the cause and reason of the violence. Without understanding the proper reason if he reacts to the situation then the remaining is depression and solitude. When the family bonds are not given importance as in the case of Malik Solanka, Furies tries to enter in the life of all human beings. Hesiod says that Furies were born of Earth and Air. It has siblings included Terror, Strife, Lies, Vengeance, Intemperance, Altercation, Fear and Battle. When a man is not able to control Fury then he becomes a prey for all its siblings too.

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