

2015

***Aarhat Multidisciplinary
International Education
Research Journal (AMIERJ)***

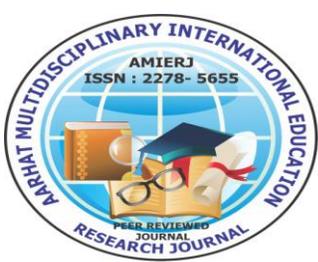
***(Bi-Monthly)
Peer-Reviewed Journal
Impact factor: 0.948***

VOL - VI Issues: I

***Chief-Editor:
Ubale Amol Baban***

30/11/2014





THE DESIRE OF OPPRESSED VOICES

Sanjana

Research Scholar (Delhi University)

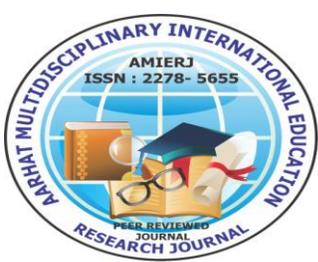
Department Of English

Abstract:

The following paper has made an endeavour to disclose the role of Domination which has dissected the world into diverse structures. The paper has focused on Richard Wright's Poetry "Between The World and Me" and make an effort to explain the bitter reality of "Culture of Kingdom" which has imposed an identity on Afro-American. The Paper tries to explain this notion by the help of "Double Consciousness" model imparted by W.B. Du Bois. This conception helps us to understand the psychological structure of people's mentality; who have ajar their mentality into the conventional Notions. The concept of "Double Consciousness" again, help us to understand that these kind of structure brings destructive result as these give rise to split psyche of people which is a disgraceful reality of the social order that we are living in such a civilization where individuals do not have freedom of living their life with dignity and autonomy

Keyword: *Double Consciousness, Afro-American, Lynching, Hegemonies, Split consciousness.*

The present paper helps us to understand the social structure of society which is based on various models of difference which are foundation for division in the society. The paper explores such facts with the help of "Double Consciousness" concept coined by Du Bois. The term "Double Consciousness" as first explored by Du Bois in 'The Souls of Black Folk', published in 1903. The first chapter titled as "of our spiritual strivings" from the book describes the idea of "Double Consciousness". According to the concept of "Double Consciousness" by Du Bois -"It is a peculiar sensation, this Double Consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. one ever feels his two ness -an American, a negro; two souls two



Aarhat Multidisciplinary International Education Research Journal (AMIERJ)

(Bi-Monthly)

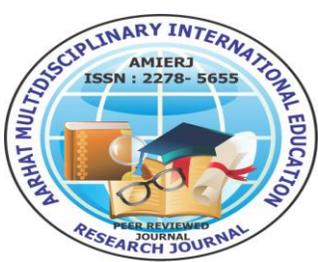
Peer-Reviewed Journal

Vol No IV Issues I

Jan 2015

ISSN 2278-5655

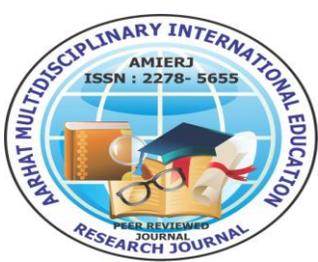
thoughts, two un-reconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (Lauter, 1376). The concept of Du Bois in such a way reveals the psychological condition of an Afro-American. The theory reveals the “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others”. As an identity of difference it reflects the identity of an Afro-American which is imposed on him. The actual identity which he possesses has been erased by America. He has been given an identity which symbolizes his ‘other-ness’ by erasing the original one and manipulating many facts about his history, legacy and social relevance. He has been exposed to a new identity, in a form of an imposed identity. Americans as a whole, think their ‘White’ race as superior, in their eyes Afro-American don’t have any right to live their life with dignity. Americans consider them as the object of utility, in this mode they have been commodified whose only purpose is to ‘serve’ for ‘White’ race, within the ‘kingdom of culture’. In mythologies written by the ‘White’ race they (Negros) are supposed to be a ‘demon’, ‘half-men’. The constructed world of ‘White’ class ideological domination becomes a mirror for them, where they must submit and accept the created image for them as a solid, valid and ultimate criterion of true evaluation and assessment of one’s life as an individual and social being. The concept of “Double consciousness” is not only about the condition of an Afro-American, but it can be correlative to Dalit history and society in Indian context, where we come across many examples which show us that -how the history reveals the bitter truth about discrimination of man versus man and community versus community. For example in Indian context one could see this “Double consciousness” in the psyche of a Dalit person whose world is also disturbed for the pursuit of his real, true identity. The one identity is imposed on him, which reflects that he is born from the feet of Brahma and hence his purpose is only to serve high caste, especially the Brahmin ones. He is neither a Hindu nor Muslim. According to Hindu Chaturvarna system he is *atishudra* (untouchable among other untouchable communities). His mind also continuously fights the same conflict which an Afro-American fights. Similarly, in case of women the society desires them not to interrupt with the male world, the structure of the world broke them into pieces. The society leaves no alternative to break their confidence. They are associated and compared with weakness. From family to professional world their roles are assigned for certain targeted deeds which consistently make them remember their natural bodily



structure. And even more embarrassing movement is when they are limited within certain negative ideological forces created by men to continue their domination in every area of life at every step. For example, to a girl child parents give them doll as their toy and from that moment girl serves the doll as its child, take care of her. Her mind creates the structure of her role as an individual being in such society who she has to continue in the outside world as well. She also wants a gender space and thus women's literature is an attempt for their self assertion and self-empowerment. Similarly the concept can be related to differently abled persons where several people assume that they are born as such because of their prior bad karma in their previous birth. So, here that person also fights a psychological conflict. They also desire to survive in society with love, self-respect a sense of equality. Similarly in the West the Jews are associated with a figure of darkness, a barbaric person, an uncivilized person, an uncultured person. The famous lines of Shakespeare in his play *Merchant of Venice* through his character and plots reveals the repressed, suppressed desire of a Jews who wishes from world to obliterate such binaries. The following dialogue helps to comprehend the context:

jews:.....[h]ath not a jew eyes? hath not a jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions. "fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapon, subject to the same weapon, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same means winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you trickle us do we not laugh? if you poison us do we not die? and if you wrong us shall we not revenge?(Drakakis, 284-85).

The dialogue in a way is a voice not of Jews only but a voice or cry of downtrodden. The dialogue is not only an articulation for self assertion but also reveals the consequence of such binaries which comes in form of vengeance. In a way one could see the world has drawn a line between humankind, which is a line of difference, demarcation. The base of this line is based on the model of Pure-Impure, Culture-Uncultured, Civilized-Uncivilized, and Human-barbaric. These become a pedestal to retain hegemony to rule not over the body but to rule over the mind of human being. Similarly, this concept of "Double Consciousness" can be seen and found in the poem of Richard Wright "Between the world and me". The title of the poem indicates the readers about a difference. The word 'between' in the title of the poem tells the division, the line of



Aarhat Multidisciplinary International Education Research Journal (AMIERJ)

(Bi-Monthly)

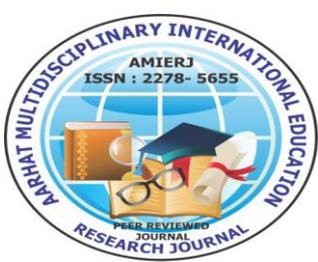
Peer-Reviewed Journal

Vol No IV Issues I

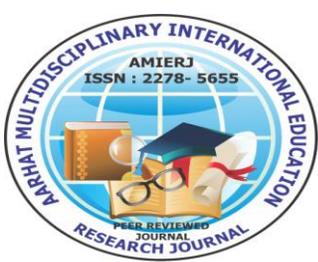
Jan 2015

ISSN 2278-5655

difference which is created by the world, a kind of huge gap which comes in the path of ‘me’ into a hideous, horrifying place by human beings. The poem presents the predicament of the Afro-American struggle. The horrendous scene has taken place because of the stereotypes; prejudice which has bound human being into the shackles and ‘World’ do not want to rupture those shackles. In a way it’s an indication for the hegemonic structures which comes between the one’s self and world. The poem gives the concept of lynching suggesting a horrendous psychological condition. The aesthetic beauty of nature in the poem is transformed into injustice and human being does not feel appalling in doing this, there is no feeling of culpability. In a way the poem is an exploration of dialectical struggle to discover out the origin, to disclose the mind-set of barbaric society which calls itself as ‘kingdom of culture’, to expose the veiled reality of ‘kingdom of culture’. In a way the title of the poem presents a kind of dialectical struggle to resist the stereotype and narrow-mindedness. The narrator of the poem experiences the pain of other in himself as the line ‘the ground gripped my feet and my heart was circled by ice walls of fear’ in the poem states the condition of narrator who becomes horrible with the hostility by the ‘White’ on Afro- Americans. The other line ‘my voice was drowned in the roar of their voices, and my black wet body slipped and rolled in their hands as they bound me to the sapling’ presents the hostility on Afro-Americans in a terrible manner where they are treating the body as not a living object, ‘but like a non-living entity. The stereotypes and chauvinism have made their spirit so rigid that they can’t feel the pain of other, can’t sense the suffering of other. They just want to annihilate that race who is trying to rupture the structure of society by asserting their human rights, by the act of resistance they desire to kill the ‘awakened’ Negro who is radical and who is interrogating their norms, questioning their hierarchy. They do not want and can’t see the Negro’s self from liberating itself from the mythological role which has been assigned to them in mythologies which provides the material to history and which in a way influence the social and cultural structure of the society. They do not want to liberate the soul of Afro-American from their pre-determined position and if they attempt to rupture their role they have to endure the violence, so, in a way it can be seen Du Bois concept of ‘Double Consciousness’ also conotates in Richard Wright’s “Between the World and Me” where both the writers are exploring the discriminatory nature of America where the ‘White’ race commit violence over the Afro-



American and feels superior on doing this. Du Bois' definition in a way explores the split or fractured consciousness which gives rise to this tussle, this psychological war. On the other hand in Richard Wright's work "Between the world and me" presents the consequence of "Double Consciousness". For example "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of other" gets upside down in Richard Wright who explores the New Negro, who does not want the world to look at him through their created images, and, when he refuses then lynching comes to crack his soul, to break his dogged strength, to prevent and keep away from the idea of solidarity. The Afro-Americans present in "Between the world and me" is a more cognisant and radical unlike Du Bois Negro. Because that Negro, is not taking any action .He sees him-self via the image created by America. He has been imposed the identity which America has given him to his self. If he had been a conscious person, he would not see himself as the image portrayed by them. His mind does not have to suffer the split consciousness, but "Between the World and Me" presents the Negro who takes a stand, who fights, in that way he is obstructed and torn with lynching but he does not fear to resist again and again. He has recognized the collective and individual power which is necessary for resistance. The world of "Between the World and Me" presents the idea where bodies are torn, where numbers of bodies are lying dead. But the Afro – American does not fear to take that stand again and again. They have recognized the power of unity and solidarity. In a way, the study of Du Bois and Richard Wright "Between the World and Me" connotes an idea to resist against the communal structure which works and are based on social injustice, the structure which has been manipulated the sources and distorted the facts to fulfil their (the Whites) own selfish motives. These structures not only colonize over the body, but colonize over the psyche of people also. For example, in case of Dalit his suffering are justified on the pretext of his bad karma. The sacred *Shastras* and *Manusmriti* distort the actual facts and rule over their mind. Where, even Dalit person does not feel dare to speak against the piousness of the sacred *Shastras*. If they do that or violate that, they will have to suffer the atrocity and violent act. The history is full of such suppressed desire, tears, oppression and subjugation. These binaries are responsible for spreading the violence in society. The society has been divided into hatred and violence. These binaries separate one community from other which does not allow them to mingle together. They retain the feeling of jealousy in their eyes and see



the other persons with a sense of different caste, gender and ethnicity. So, in a way study of both the work together helps to discover many things. While Du Bois exertion presents the striving of Afro- Americans to come into mainstream, the Richard Wright's present not a desire to come into the mainstream but the desire of Negro man has been transformed into an action. Both the study helps to disclose the psycho-social divisions existing in the society and Richard Wright's work explore the consequence of that division, which comes in form of lynching and atrocities on Afro- American. While Du bois concept of "Double Consciousness" breaks the individual into "split consciousness". Richard Wright's work "Between the World and Me" speaks about the feeling of internalization of that trauma. In a way it can be seen that both the writers' work talks about the repressed voices of Afro- Americans which want to come into the centre and mainstream of society. The desire of Afro- American is not to brawl for a space but to brawl for equal space. Both the writers help us to understand the structure of unjust society by which they are able to maintain hierarchies and bring a desire to manoeuvre this unreasonable model of society.

Bibliography

- Lauter, Paul..... Zagarell, A. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Volume D, Modern Period: 1910-1945, Wadsworth, Cengage Learning: Boston, USA (VIIth edition) 2014. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*. Eds. John Drakakis, London: Bloomsbury, 2010. Print.
- Chapman, Abraham. *Black Voices: An Anthology of African-american Literature*. New American library: New York, 2001. Print.

Copyrights @ Sanjana..This is an open access peer reviewed article distributed under the creative common attribution license which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provide the original work is cited.