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**Politics Turned Art: Appreciating Dionne Brand's "Sans Souci and other stories"****Afsal PC***PhD Research Scholar, Department of English, Annamalai University, (T.N.) India***Dr. S. Karthik Kumar***Assistant Professor, Department of English, Annamalai University, (T.N.) India***Abstract**

The narrative style of Dionne Brand and the language she uses to depict the ongoing activities from the vantage point of an omniscient narrator are always with the underlying implications to the sufferings of her past generations and the petrified premonitions thereby she left with in the focal vision of the present. A linear chord is felt to be laced through her narration from the ancestral roots and her identity, and the history of her race to the mutatis mutandis ambience she is placed now, striking on which vibrate the whole facets of her existence as a black against the mosaic background of Canada.

**Key Words:** politics, art, Dionne Brand

Dionne Brand whose reputation is said to be mainly resting on her linguistic diversity seems to have exploited the nuances of both the Standard English and that of the demotic Caribbean English in order to effectuate the voice of the most suppressed clan in the world. According to her, the demotic language reflects the battle between the Standard English which is powerful and the Caribbean indigenous languages which are vanishing on earth. The replacement of such local languages by the language of the colonizers founded the proper communication of the experiences of the colonized. Therefore Brand believes that as a way of resistance, the hybrid Trinidadian English--local dialect, violated syntax, and dropping of the suffix "-s" -- shall be resorted to. This type of linguistic hybridity is visible throughout her works. Moreover, she has succeeded in straddling both polaric ways of handling a subject: with the vein of lightness as well as seriousness to make the

language sarcastic and scornful to the targets. She seems to prefer the sarcastic light stroke to describe an incident of large gravity not only like the annihilation of black women's rights, but also the obliteration of their existence-- either by the men of the same race or the people of the privileged ones--at least as human beings in order to show the frequency of atrocities done to them. Thus the lightness in the narration directly denotes how pitifully there exists a race called the Blacks to be cowering beneath and for the women folk how it is doubled. Harsh criticism against the social matrix is also visible behind the sarcastic lightness.

Brand's resentment against the experiences of having faced racial discrimination is exposed with a description of an episode in which the black protagonist of the short story "Train to Montreal" becomes the butt of sexual abuse in public

during her journey. Her insecure feelings of belongingness amounts and is largely felt against the sneering stares and abusive songs of the white children in the train:

They were singing, “wops and frogs, Montreal is full of frogs”. She understood and was less willing to get up from the gray vinyl seat. the wheels of the train cackled to the song of the children, she wanted to stand, go to the washroom; but still song frightened her, made her sit still. maybe they would see her and start singing; maybe they didn't see her yet. She should stand up before they did, before they started singing about “wops and niggers”. (24)

The author has thrown her whiplash of criticism against the still existent color discrimination and the mistreatment her race has to face in a city where skins of polychrome are hesitant to rub. Even the reader with the premonition of the author's belonging and her justifiable scourge against the White domination seems restless at the probable verity of the incident in which the protagonist being publicly insulted by the “fright of a white man's hand running through her chest and arms” followed by the repeated jeering “Nigger Whore”. Further the reaction of the spectators leaves the reader with a knowledge or the feeling that such episodes are being staged there on and off and the subjects of insult is supposed to suppress her demonstration of agitation to a few hushed up mutterings:

They were silent. She, trying to hide, to be invisible, turning her head to see where she was, wondering how to

move herself her head, without being noticed. Her ears ringing as if slapped, she saw the crowd, some smiling at the obscure cough, others looking straight ahead. She turned away. Inside her, Why me. Why me. Please let the escalator end please. (27)

In the eponymous story, “Blossom,” the protagonist is pictured as the epitome of resistance and protest against the White man's sexual abuse. For Blossom, “Every once in a while, under she breath, she curse the day she come to Toronto from Oropuche, Trinidad”. The adverse ambience and the experiences therein backlash in the form of high protest. Blossom with Peg and Betty show up a placard saying “the Dr. So-and -So was a white rapist” and they, by grabbing by the collar of the doctor threaten to cut off his testicles. By assuming such a frightful figure, “black people on Vaughan Road recognized blossom as gifted and powerful by the carriage and the fierce look in her eyes.”

Brand's narration slowly assumes the vein of mysticism while she incorporates the supernatural elements in Blossom manifest during the Oya's visits in nights. In fact the author intends to convey her counterparts that both the ends of reaction are inherent. Blossom says that against the sufferings of the black people “Oya knife slash the gullets of white men and Oya pitch the world around itself”. By relying on such mouthpieces the author seems to exhort for an immediate restructuring in both the psyche and social fabric to eradicate the misery put up with by the colored community in Canada and all over the world.

Further the story “St. Mary's Estate” holds a mirror to the childhood experiences of the narrator. Phrases like “that goddamned house” and “that's where they used to live” translate itself into the fear and grudge even the supposed innocent children had against the white people dwelled there. Even after some decades, the narrator finds it hard to move further into the premises of the estate down to the weight of unpleasant memories she had of the house: “And still after this long, the imperative of habit and station causes my legs to stand where they are. Do not go near the house. It is the white people's house. It is their place and we are “niggers”. For having herself addressed “niggers” in these lines, the reader shall not labour under the false notion that the tone of the narrator is that of a sadomasochist or xenocentrist. Whereas beneath it lies the sharp scorn against the preposterous practice of “them” having called a community with such a derogatory and uneuphemistic terminology.

The degree of a Black woman being conscious of her “humiliated unbecomingness” with the consciousness of the Whites and the conclusive result of both in the social and political policies of Canada are manifest in the story “At the Lisbon Plate” which is rather a clinical approach to the politics related to the narrator's race. Exemplifying the narrator's aunt who used to have her “Hair slicked back to bring out the Spanish and hide the African”, any black person's inherent consciousness about the white people's melanophobia is represented to have transmitted to the younger generations. The narrator amusingly remember the aunt grab and scrub “as if to

take the black out of “their skins, and how they “would come five still bright-black girls, black intent on our [their] skins”. Further the narrator incorporates her hostility of the White's colonization and the adverse consequences therewith by reporting the carnages happened here and there in the colonies: “The young soldiers talked about the joy of filling a Black with bullets and stuffing a Black cunt with dynamite. Then they gathered around Columbus, the whoremaster, and sang a few old songs” (105).

Brand's victimisation on Canadian multicultural policy being a farce can also be deciphered through. Brand's narrative of Caribbean ancestry and the experiences therein during slavery and colonization, and the vindictive portrayal of the postcolonial Canada merge into a conclusion that colonialism--maybe in guise--is still prevalent through racism, sexism, neo-colonialism and other social phobias in the Western world. She not only through the lens of her Black sensibility perceives the political affairs of Canada, but also a paradigm shift in the perception is visible as she speaks for the working class. Her concern about the proletarians and the principles of Marxism is ostensible as she reacts to the radio news pertaining to the possible coup in Bolivia: “I said in my mind that the entire bourgeoisie should perish. It was the Bolivian army who killed Ernesto Che Guevara”. In her interview with Christian Olbey she admits that her works and perception about the world have been much influenced by the Marxist philosophy. According to her it was the “spectre” that was “haunting Europe” has given her the

proper direction to rightly suss the political intrigues of capitalism and imperialism which together constitute neo-colonialism in the modern world:

I certainly know that Marxism has had an influence on my writing in the sense that it influenced my thinking. Marxism was the only way I could find to describe the layered condition that I lived, or that Black folks in the West lived, and it was the most interesting way of coming at these experiences for me (95).

Through this multi-layered lens of Black sensibility and working class consciousness, and the regurgitating memories of the colonial periods against the still existent

segregationist social milieu, Dionne Brand counts Canada along with the imperialist countries like Britain and United States for entertaining the quadruple injustices-- Racism, Sexism, social phobias and Neo-Colonialism-- and for having it apparently invaded the English speaking part of the Caribbean lands to cultivate a new breed of people lacking in resistance, and further for unleashing violence against whoever "in the bushes" defended their homeland from any foreign hegemony. Thus the politics behind her writing reveals itself through her narratives of incidents, and to quote her further: "And it wasn't style, it was politics. I wanted to make politics resonate throughout, to say that it was a matter of saving our lives" (96).

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