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An Invogue Myth of Dear Brutus

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Abstract

Shakespeare has made Brutus a renaissance humanist. He is identifiable with Plato, Aristotle, Thomas More or Francis Bacon. He is a republican and an idealist. He is made to love the nation and to love the individualism. In this way Shakespeare makes him the image of the renaissance embodying all the beams of the spirit. In course of time, Brutus becomes a knowledge center and who undergoing a change to fit an ideal to the changing situation. The image of Brutus also changes in due course. The image is socialized and secularized to represent the meaning of freedom and liberty in different versions. In this regard, one can bring an analogy between the character of Brutus in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and any character in Barrie's play Dear Brutus. The thoughts of the Elizabethan Brutus are reminded and practiced by the common men and women in their routine existence. During the transition, the new knowledge is spread as if it is the Christian knowledge which can brighten the human condition pushing aside the dark ignorance. The brightness of Brutus is now distributed in the form of the practicable human activities preserving the same values of liberty, equality and the brotherhood. The renaissance Brutus symbolizes the love of the nation, the love of new knowledge, the love of justice and above all the love of freedom. These ideas become the main forces in the formation of Brutus myth. Brutus continues to live propagating these values even to the modern periods. Being an archetype Brutus passes on through the path of art and through the doctrines relevencing the path human construct in society.

Keywords: *Dear Brutus, modern literary theories, Victorian period.*

1. Introduction

There are two ways of the approach to 'Dear Brutus', written by J.M. Barrie, a Scottish writer during the transition between 1890 and 1910. He is known for his significant literary contributions as a novelist and a playwright in England during the tail end age of Queen Victoria. He had seen Boer war which was fought for three years between 1899 and 1902. He was aware the way socio-political events were transplanted as the causes for the war. There was a gradual change taking place in the social saga. People were becoming the disbelievers of faith and also the disbelievers of their own social identities. They were found to be insignificant wandering without experiencing the responsibility. They began to receive the life as it had come to them. This in turn created a political

unrest and a moral derogation. England was expanding its power on the various African and the Asiatic regions. It was confiscating the riches but the political administration of England then had failed to bring peace and order to the social existence of man. On one side man was growing imbibing the democratic doctrine avoiding the differences between colour, creed, sex and gender. The writers like Galsworthy, Somerset Maugham and Conrad began to depict the life in the African nations and the way that the Europeans went to them as the representatives of the light and the civilization. In the attitude of the English imperialism the non-Europeanage was dark and uncivilized. They culturally crusaded on them and established their both the political and cultural hegemony. They began controlling the dark. But

they began professing that they had brought civilization to the dark places. They had to fight to dark and to bring in the light which they thought a Christian responsibility.

History changes, it advances towards the progress. The new ideologies are woven around the movement of history. During the Victorian period, individualism is focused as a philosophic theory. The democratic individualism began to break the social barriers between the aristocracy and the ordinary. Everyone was becoming the member of the middle class. The democratic individualism focused on the member of the middle class and began to describe his explorations and the innovations. Individualism has made the man in his fullest aspiration realizable in the objective realism and the real situation of the nation. It had worked in England during the 16th and 17th centuries. Man began to travel to the centuries from the renaissance till the modern period. It is humanism that makes him to undertake the journey 'remembering always that England of the 16th and the 17th centuries is the England not only of the feudal land owners and the puritan business man but also of the intellectuals and the humanists like Thomas More and Bacon. J.M. Barrie takes the name of Brutus, keeping him as an intellectual, a scientific philosopher and as an activist we can implement his ideals. Barrie takes from the renaissance the character of Brutus not as just a philosopher like Bacon or More. But Brutus is a concept, a myth that suggest the eternity of the human values. [1-3]

During the transition in England, the people love their social identity and hence literature of the period undertakes this job of socializing the people and keeping them in human communities. The characters in any novel or a play are socialized, liberalized and equalized in one given community. In view of this, J.M. Barrie and the rest of the writers create such of the characters in their works who speak equality and try to live in 'equality' itself. The characters in the play 'Dear Brutus', are equal and they live in the same community with the same aspirations.

In the modern literary theories which are influenced by the Marxian thought man is taken out of the center. In the traditional writing man was at the center embodying the power. But in the

modern theories the traditional humanism is rejected. Accordingly man is no more a power center but merely an intellectual and one who seeks the new knowledge. In fact, the rejection of humanism is the rejection of the idea that the human can constitute a fixed point of view. Practically, it is true that knowledge is not consistent. It is not constant or fixed. It advances, it grows and it is acquired by multitude. This process is shown in the modern literary theories also that there is the center which is going to be broken so that the things in the periphery begin freely playing their role as the signifiers from whom the meaning is borrowed. The secularization of the man's center allows the meaning to be borrowed from the images which are freely playing in the periphery. The meanings become more. Any text can move from monism to pluralism only when the center is decentralized and the image is around give altogether the new illumination of the meaning which becomes pluralism. Shakespeare has made Brutus a renaissance humanist. He is identifiable with Plato, Aristotle, Thomas More or Francis Bacon. He is a republican and an idealist. He is made to love the nation and to love the individualism. In this way Shakespeare makes him the image of the renaissance embodying all the beams of the spirit. In course of time, Brutus becomes a knowledge center and who undergoing a change to fit an ideal to the changing situation. The image of Brutus also changes in due course. The image is socialized and secularized to represent the meaning of freedom and liberty in different versions. In this regard, one can bring an analogy between the character of Brutus in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and any character in Barrie's play Dear Brutus. The thoughts of the Elizabethan Brutus are reminded and practiced by the common men and women in their routine existence. During the transition, the new knowledge is spread as if it is the Christian knowledge which can brighten the human condition pushing aside the dark ignorance. The brightness of Brutus is now distributed in the form of the practicable human activities preserving the same values of liberty, equality and the brotherhood. Democracy is survived in the minds of the ordinary people when there are the invasions and the crusaders in the form of the war darken the human construct. The renaissance Brutus

symbolizes the love of the nation, the love of new knowledge, the love of justice and above all the love of freedom. These ideas become the main forces in the formation of Brutus myth. Brutus continues to live propagating these values even to the modern periods. Being an archetype Brutus passes on through the path of art and through the doctrines relevencing the path to the path human construct in society. It is enacted in Dear Brutus also though Brutus as a person or as a character does not appear on the stage. Barrie's Dear Brutus does not narrate the historical event related to Marcus Brutus. But the value system is persistently needed, the need of which is acted in the play. In this way one can link the historical Brutus to secular Brutus through the renaissance treatment of Brutus in the plays.

Even if Brutus myth is unitary it may denote some relative consistent reference points whose history movements and conflicts can be brought into the plot of any literary work. In the same spirit and the intention this unitary myth is reflected in the enactment of the play Dear Brutus in its modern version. J.M. Barrie proves that his contemporary society is in the darkness. The people grope for light and identity. He feels that there is need of Brutus for the people to get the light and to recognize one another. It is the illumination of Brutus that can make any character in the play recognizable. J.M. Barrie brings this abstract link between the two periods of modernity from renaissance to the 20th century. In Barrie, humanism is meant widely different things and different thoughts. Initially in its inception, humanism was a synonym to Judeo Christian morality, Causality and historical type as these were constructed between 1500 and 1900. But humanism experiences the trouble through the generations and through transition until it is kept on the crisis of the modern period. Because of its crisis humanism sometimes takes a derogatory meaning in parallel to the prototype images of women in feminism. During the recent developments the social values of man are changed. These values are now based upon the economic structure and relative employability and the sources of self earning. Marxism propagates equal opportunities and the equal wages to each and every work. It upholds the dignity of labour. But practically, the values based on cultural

practice are translated into the economic values. The same justifiable social morality may not be found in the economic structure of society. Naturally, the cultural values are found to be derogated in the modern society. But literature teaches the human values. The values continue to be the values eternally in any society. J.M. Barrie shows his concern in rejuvenating the cultural values and to confirm them practicable creating the situations in the literary works for proving the need of the cultural values even at present. In this connection, he refers to Brutus. He quotes only two lines from Shakespeare's play, The Tragedy of Julius Caesar. Cassius speaks to Brutus.[4,5]

*The fault dear Brutus is not in our stars
But in ourselves that we are under links.* (quoted in the play Dear Brutus Page 111, The Uniform Edition)

J.M. Barrie substantiate the title of his play only referring to these two lines which deal with the juxtaposing attitudes to political freedom and to the faith. Brutus does not physically appear upon the stage. He is present in the form of an idea from the first act to the last. There is only a reference passingly made on Dear Brutus and the last utterance of Julius Caesar 'Eu Tu Brute'. Contextually there may not be the significance but conceptually Brutus is signified as a perennial discourse on freedom whatever the forces of the circumstances would be. At the outset, it appears the title of the play is inappropriate but the intellectual movement of the dramatic action establishes once again the need of the ideology propounded by Brutus. The genealogical confusions, the gaps between men and women, the days and the nights, the rural and the urban are given the new interpretations in the context of the way Brutus is presented. In the literary works the body of a man can vanish away but the body of thought is relevant always. The new thought on the political philosophy is reoriginated..

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