

ZULFIKAR GHOSE'S DON BUENO: A READING

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ABSTRACT

Zulfikar Ghose, widely known Pakistani American writer, is recognized as a major writer. He is already recognized as a remarkable poet and a novelist. Of his novels, the popular ones are -Contradictions (1966), The Murder of Aziz Khan(1969), Holmes's Investigations into the Bogart's Script (1982), and Don Bueno (1983). Of these novels only Don Bueno is chosen for thematic study as it deals with "foul perversions of sex-and-marriage, the craze for money, futility of dogma and the debasement of land and 'nature' by human avarice and possessiveness." His novels are powerful accounts of human tragedy written in poetic style.

KEYWORDS: *Foul Perversions, Sex and Marriage, Human Avarice, Possessiveness, Human Tragedy, Carnival Festival, Indulgence, Materialistic Life, Etc*

INTRODUCTION

The main theme of Don Bueno (1983) is of "perversions of sex-and marriage and the futility of dogma"². Of the narrative structure Alan Bold comments that the "stories are told" one by one. The main story of Don Bueno, a guerrilla, embodies other stories of his father, Calderon, of Caesar Calderon, his son and of Simon Boliver, the grandson, an urban guerrilla. In this novel, Ghose seems to emphasize that the hands of the Destiny shape the fate of Man. His philosophical approach to life in general is somewhat similar to that of Thomas Hardy's. Destiny plays a vital role in the tragic pattern. He also implies that sexual life of man and woman is harmonious only in the presence of the nature. Modern man, being cut off from nature, is bound to suffer. Human love, in modern times, has become mechanical.

In the beginning, Ghose projects a series of marvelous images of the Amazonian jungle and of the boat in which Caesar Calderon escapes from his life, sickened by his own crime of killing his father in a drunken brawl in hotel at Santa Rosa and of his wife's infidelity towards him. The novelist contrasts the natural life of Marcos's 'primitive love' and the self-exiled life of impotent Caesar Calderon. The Marcos copulate openly like the beasts of the jungle: "The sheet that covered the couple had slipped about them, so that it lay only across Marcos's back, showing her test present his knees and arms across his shoulders. Their motion was rapid and urgent (Don Bueng, 14 15). In contrast, there lies a reference to the 'modern love and marriage of Caesar

The omniscient' narrator goes back into the past life of Don Bumo and his early life, Don Bueno makes love to Alegria, the criminal-minded daughter of a shopkeeper who involves him in a case of car-theft and also in passionate love-making which results in her pre-marriage pregnancy. Four days before her marriage to a businessman, she admits of coceiving Bueno's foetus. A black woman seduces him in his boyhood. Don Bueno, after killing his father, Calderon, wanders aimlessly until he gets himself killed by his son, Calderon, a businessman with a "sorrow in his heart, Leticia, his

money-minded wife, ironically calls him "Senora Softy" implying his 'secondary impotence'. The futility of Christianity as a dogma is revealed through the reminiscence of Caesar's schooling in a monastery where he finds out a false father and knows the secrecies of brothers. The commercial motive of the Carnival festival is vividly described. The things like, miracles of rejuvenating impotence and sterility of men and women, the powder of dried skin of a python for leprosy, the jaguar blood for the anemic, the gums of the alligators teeth are openly sold and bought.

Simon Boliver, much hated by his sexually perverted mother, Leticia, becomes an urban guerrilla. His love affair with Mercedes, another guerilla girl, is still stranger. Unlike his father, he seldom marries her but impregnates her. The guerilla couple decide to name the baby either 'Alegria' or Jose de San Martin' after the birth. The new born baby is later named Jose de San Martin by her, after he leaves to a secret mission of blowing up an international summit at Palmir. After seeing Sofia, he has a change of heart and falls in love with her. For him, Mercedes appears to be "only a dream" and "he does not love her (Don Bueno, 218). His love affair with Sofia turns to be incest as it is revealed to her that they are brother and sister. Like Violeta, she commits suicide. Through the lives of Calderon, Don Bueno Caesar Calderon, and Simon Boliver, Ghose tries to exemplify the theme of Destiny and its vicious role to play in making the lives of the protagonists miserable, Don Bueno reflects; "Could it be that he was sickened by his degenerated body? If he had been the instrument of God, it had only been commit evil""(Don Bueno,53). Mrs Sonstroem, the landlady of the Morcos, exclaims: "...the copulation of the beasts...ah, the destiny of animals."(Dan Bueno, 138). Caesar Calderon worries : "...whatever obscure force that had driven him into his house, its energy was not yet spent, that he was obliged to continue that there was no question of returning to Leticia" (Don Bueno, 198). Simon Boliver, the grandson, half believes: "...that he had been the instrument of someone else's fulfilling his destiny" Don Bueno, 218).

In Don Bueno, the narrator impersonalises the story, like Joseph Conrad. As a modern novelist, Ghose comes close to Conrad in his technique of projecting a series of varied images of "human reality". Gerald Jay Goldberg comments on this similarity: "Brazil...where much of the book's action takes place, seems to have the fascination for him that in Congo had for Conrad."9. There are mental flashbacks into the past by the narrator and also by the recalling of the individual characters. In this novel he handles the "retrospective" and "chronological" aspects of time. So, the complex narrative is sometimes fragmented' as he deals with the different segments of the main story simultaneously. He also uses the cinematic and psychological techniques of close-up view and probing deep into the mind of a character, analyzing its feelings and emotions. Obviously, there is more violence than explicitly stated sexual scenes of men and women in Don Bueno as the novelist attempts to expose the inner recesses of the bestial nature of Man.

This novel reveals the major theme of man's excessive sexual indulgence in materialistic life. The primary relationships between the parents and children are broken. Thus, there is conspicuously visible tragedy in Don Bueno (1983). His other novels are yet to be carefully read and seriously studied.

REFERENCES

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6. *Op.cit.*,p, Waugh, p. 31.
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