

COMMUNICATIVE ACTION AND WOMEN: LINGUISTIC AND SOCIAL 'LACK'

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This paper explores socio-linguistic factors of the communicative actions of women. The dominant patriarchal world order acknowledges the collective collection of language symbols, which are arguably created by males. Factors like Cultural taboos, linguistic limitations, cultural lacunas etc. affect the language of all social members, but in case of women these factors are more dominant in nature. The concept and politics of 'real' and 'truth' are the significant elements that shape the understanding of social members. *Adamical Real* is the term used in this paper to refer the real that was available to the primitive man only and *Evical Real* in the same sense is the real available to the primitive female only; before the formation of the society where the effect of external factors as well as linguistics symbols was minimal. With the passage of time and development of society as absolute maximum this availability is shrouded with many external factors. Women, who try to break this vicious circle, are named as hysterical, insane etc. The battle to get authenticity for female communicative actions need to be initiated from the level of linguistic elements, so that overhaul of the complete structure give way to its very much needed replacement

Communicative action in any society is consisting of free play of arbitrary verbal or non verbal signs, which are related to the 'parole' constituted in the collective consciousness of humanity. The formation of this parole is dependent on the society in which the people live. Parole is consisting of beliefs, linguistic possibilities, semantic boundaries, pragmatic acceptance etc. All these mentioned elements act together to affect the langue of a person. This collective consciousness also creates taboos and restriction on communicative actions that take place in the socio-linguistic sphere. To mend the gap between these taboos and their representation the mechanism of 'real' and 'truth' has been introduced. Language acts as a vehicle of these expressive and non-expressive concepts. Language as means of expressions does not only determine the semantic aspect but also determine what not to express and if possible what not to think. These linguistic realities also establish the concept of truth and real for the social members. Real in the cultural is dependent on the (il)logical extension of acceptable norms. The acceptability of norms is the extension of socio-political milieus. Society at large makes its own concepts of truth, possibilities, sins, blessings, sanity, insanity etc. Woman in the society is the part of same politics of binary. Being the part of this society, her desires are doctored by the all pervasive rationality. Truth from the ancient time depends on different outlook- it can be religion, superstition, science or economy. All world views try to provide comprehensive, complete and semantically feasible understanding of

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Universe. All these linguistic extensions frame the common sense of social subjects. Thus the common sense is the one that try to frame the background of all possible communicative actions of the community. Martin Steel (1991, 40) in his essay, "The Two Meanings of 'Communicative' Rationality: Remarks on Habermas's Critique of a Plural Concept of Reason" states, "... for the nexus of theoretical and moral-practical lines of argumentation. As is the case with the 'comprehensibility' of speech acts and symbols, which is to be understood differently in different contexts, so too the status of truthfulness, no matter how it varies, is also a ubiquitous phenomenon in the communicative usage of language and cannot be pruned so severely that it comprises only the root of a specific norm of rationality". Thus communicative action does not impact only the linguistic behavior, but also convey moral or societal limitation to the speaker. Women, almost in all societies' invariable to different ages, times and spaces are the integral part of these communicative actions, but surprisingly in the construction of the world view their role is very limited. Their role is to safeguard these 'hyper-real notions' without knowing *Evical real* (real that was understood only to the primitive woman) and the *Adamical real*(real formed by patriarchy) prevails and the narrative of Eves are lost as the fruit of the knowledge is anti-women. How does the woman understand the meaning amongst the male generated signifiers' that further signified male generated notions and ideas? In this galaxy of Adamical ideological notions the concept of woman is the binary of man. Gayatri Spivak (1988, 495) states, "Man is such a word in common usage. Not a word, but the word". In the same manner, *Adamical ideology* is such a common usage and it is not an ideology but the ideology. In the society this ideological exchange is symbolical in nature and is "a kind of elusive anthropological construct that is needed in order to upset the discourse of generalized equivalence" (Jean Baudrillard, *Forget Foucault*, 16). Whereas the rejection of sex based ideological dimension is easy to revoke and even acted upon, rejecting the Adamical ideological dimension is difficult. Reason is very simple male and female both participate in sexual activities, but in communicative action female participation is symbolical in nature as her ideas need to be expressed in the socially accepted language and symbols. Moreover, idea bank available to these social subjects are limited and affect the rate and frequency of exchange. The schemata of the word order and coherence of socio-ideological symbols is referential and all parts of these ideological bodies are disjointed but perfectly at place. Baudrillard (2007, 15) in his article "The Vanishing Point of communication" states

The whole complex has succeeded today as a dominant system of values, and as a collective operational network at the same time. But the point is: are we really communicating or isn't it rather the problem of our whole society expanding, transcending, exhausting itself in the fiction of communication?"

For women the above definition is quite real as the communicative action that they perform is unable to get the authenticity as the signifier they use failed to achieve

the meaning they want to convey. The collective meta-system of signifiers is anti-female. The communicative action of women is marked with the 'lack' as per the definition of power and authenticity. The origin of this lack is not in the biology as most of the common perceptions of the women's weakness argue about the women's biological differences. Women are biologically designed to carry the life force and for the continuation of species they act as producer of the male's labour. The communicative action, related to this act is anti-female, but the most interesting factor that is related to this act is- mostly this act is performed by females.

Communicative act in any society is not consisting only of verbal and non verbal activities; culture plays an important role also. In case of women their communicative action fails to get materialized due to their inhaling of anti-female culture. They largely self objectify themselves. Most of the cultural theorists are agreed on one opinion that culture is anti-female as culture in most of the existing societies is the formation of the power politics of males. Patriarchal societies deny female communicative actions by ridiculing it, by demeaning it and sometimes putting it under taboos. Politics of taboos has been played from the ancient times and this works in favour of dominant groups. Women as group are among the least political conscious group and their role in the formation of any binary is least. They are passive participant in this process and they protect the very world order that condemns the essence of their existence. The problem in the women's communicative action is related to the problem of exchange. Foucault (1989, 207) defines exchange thus:

...in order that one thing can represent another in an exchange, they must both exist as bearers of value; and yet value exists only within the representation (actual or possible), that is, within the exchange or the exchangeability. Hence two simultaneously possible ways of construing the matter: the one analyses value in the act of exchange itself, at the point where the given and the received intersect; the other analyses it as anterior to the exchange and as a primary condition without which that exchange could not take place.

Communicative action of the women has its disadvantage at this exchange value. While exchanging with male counterpart of the society, the value of female communication in term of exchange exists, but the "anterior to the exchange" are not valued. The reason is social division of communicative actions. Almost in all societies, actions of women are considered as secondary and marginalized. This is possible with the help of linguistic signs, which shapes the mentality of social members.

Female's role in this linguistic power politics is very perplexing and this forms the nucleus of this power politics. Women safeguard this symbolical exploitation by accepting the ideological supremacy, validity of linguistic symbols and the cultural references of these symbols. Every language is called as mother tongue; not because the language is created by the female, but because these signs are refereed by them to the new members of the society. Women, while teaching

language to the children, do not differentiate the signs as Adamical or Evical. In terms of teaching, she uses same parameter. For male, these symbols are the centre of his existence, but for female these symbols emphasizes on the 'lack'. The symbols lead her journey toward the being of 'incomplete Adam' and a sinful Eve. Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 238). states, "...becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself; but also that it has no term, since its term in turn exists only as taken up in another becoming of which it is the subject, and which coexists, forms a block, with the first". Women turn into this lack as they become the object in their own communicative action and let the male discourses of the negation of female ideology take the central stage.

Women while interacting with other women, speak very less about their solidarity and unity (with few exceptions). They value their interaction as a mean of expressing emotions and giving feedback rather than framing a common ground for interaction. Male interaction are the battlegrounds of ideological differences and establishment of their point of views, but these fierce battles end up in the unconscious solidarity; in contrast to this female interaction are consist of nodding, accepting, empathy, but ends in rivalry and jealousy. It seems sometimes that whole interactive session was about who can use Adamical langue better than other. Rather than condemning the world order, they try to celebrate the positioning of male (husband or father) by praising it publically and detesting it inwardly without realizing it or suspending the disbelief. Margaret Atwood (1970, 140)portrays this in *The Edible Woman* where Clara discusses female body with protagonist Marian by objectifying it as a reservoir of socio-male desires:

"Would you like me to bring you anything to read?"(Marian)

.....(Clara)- "Now that's a kind thought. But really I don't think I could concentrate enough, not for a while. I will either be sleeping, or," ... "listening to those other women. ...all they ever talk about are their miscarriages and their diseases. ...they seem to think that each of their grisly little episodes is some kind of service medal; they haul them out and compare them and pile on the gory details, they are really proud of them.

In this communicative action Clara has been objectifying woman body by stating it as the reservoir of male desires and rather than condemning woman celebrates their ailments. These 'gory' details do not scare them but make them believe that they sacrificed a great for the male world order and earn their position in this order.

Male to female interaction is more interesting example of the free flow of power politics and an interesting example of communicative action that displays the social disparity. An example of the interaction of husband and wife from Manju Kapoor's novel (2002, 294) *A Married Woman* will help to elaborate this point:

'Out in the streets, jostling with goondas, neglecting your family, all for some fool masjid you didn't even know existed before your great friend Aijaz chose to educate you.'

'It has nothing to do with Aijaz,' said Astha, choking on the rage she had kept inside her the last three days.

'Then his widow.'

'I suppose I have no mind of my own.'

'I didn't say that.'

You meant it.'

'I refuse to talk to a hysterical woman,' said Hemant, 'especially when I have got a busy day ahead.'

This discussion between Astha and Hemant points out that if woman decides to act as her own she is termed as "a hysterical woman". According to Hemant, Astha should prefer over her ideology because ideology is luxury for her and family is the nucleus of her existence. He refers his work to get the supremacy in communicative action. The right to stop and initiate any communicative action also determines the existence of power politics. Astha neither initiates nor ends it. Hemant was on the verge of losing this ideological battle but he uses his veto power to stop the communicative action which takes an ugly turn against his male rights.

To get the authenticity to the female communicative action it is important to change the battleground of linguistic signs and their socio-cultural references. Foucault rightly comments:

To attempt to improve one's power of observation by looking through a lens, one must renounce the attempt to achieve knowledge by means of the other senses or from hearsay. A change of scale in the visual sphere must have more value than the correlations between the various kinds of evidence that may be provided by one's impressions, one's reading, or learned compilations (145).

The contemporary knowledge bound the sign with arbitrarily united and linguistically disjointed signs and concepts. "Visual sphere" is determined by the linguistic utterances and cultural references. To point out the disjuncture and mending the system requires establishing of female centric hegemonic position.

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