The Concept of Art and Performance of Politics

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Abstract
In a today’s socio-political context it is necessary to have a clear idea about what kind of culture is getting produced and to become part of it. The concept of art is defining the culture of society, in which it is essential to understand what kind of art have been produced and consumed by the public. The politics of mobilising people with the help of certain culture is emerging tools in every sphere of life. So it is needed to be understand in which way and for whom this collective mobilization is doing favor. Even in the progressive movement, it is needed to understand that what are the genesis of this movements and where it is intended to develop through particular culture. The alternatives mostly found through revivalism of particular culture, which is also questionable in the way it is happening. In this context, this paper is divided in to five sections which deal with these ideas which are mentioned above. In the first section the paper trace out the concept of ‘art’ and its necessity to become socially inclined. The second section deals with the idea of established politics and the cultural agitation which established as an alternative cultural practice. Third section discusses the politics of space and the mobilization politics; the idea of mobilizing people on the particular political agenda and its other perspective are also discussed. The fourth section deals with the concept of ‘individuality’ in the contemporary time, which defined as the way to challenge the established political scenario. Fifth section is the brief conclusion of the arguments which are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Art, Culture, Mobilization, Politics, Public, Individuality

Concept of Art and Social commitment
Today’s struggle for freedom and democracy in the entire world is the fight against communalism and religion, there is constant progress of modernization based on the progressive thoughts in the socio-political and cultural context. The concept of art and culture has to be directed towards truth, it has to be progressive, and any regressive thought which is an obstacle for progressiveness cannot be considered as the part of art. In the entire world if the fundamentalist are trying to suppress the modern thoughts in the form of artistic creation, cannot be considered as aesthetically beautiful. Art is liberated through modernity and that is the reason it is not associated with the right wing philosophy. The concept of beauty is very much debatable in the aesthetics on the context of the basic debate of "Art for Art's Sake" or it is for the social change. The independent artists fight for the freedom of their expression arguing that they do not want to be categorized as the artists who are dealing with only the social issue based art, George Sand, wrote in 1872, that L'art pour l'art is

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an empty phrase, and an idle sentence. She asserted that artists has the "duty to find an adequate expression to convey it to as many souls as possible", which ensures that their works are accessible enough to be appreciated in the society. Friedrich Nietzsche also claimed that there is no art for art’s sake. Contemporary postcolonial African writers such as Leopold Senghor and Chinua Achebe have criticized the slogan of being a limited and Eurocentric view on art and creation.

Achebe, Chinua, (1975), in the "Black African Aesthetics", Senghor argues that "art is functional" and "in black Africa, 'art for art's sake' does not exist." Senghor (2011) Achebe is more scathing in his collection of essays and criticism entitled Morning Yet on Creation Day, where he asserts that "art for art’s sake is another form of deodorised dog shit" Walter Benjamin discusses the slogan in his seminal 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". He mentioned that with regard to the reaction within the realm of traditional art in to innovations and reproduction, particularly in photography. He also claimed that the slogan "L'art pour l'art" is part of "theology of art" which limited the art only in to the context of social aspects. In the Epilogue to the essay, Benjamin discusses the link between fascism and art. He mainly used the example of Futurism and the thinking of his mentor Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. One of the slogans of the Futurists was "Fiat ars - pereat mundus"4 ("Let art be created, though the world perish"). Provocatively, Benjamin concludes that as long as fascism expects war "to supply the artistic gratification of a sense of perception that has been changed by technology", then this can be turned as the mere 'consumption of art', which reflects the argument "L'art pour l'art"(Benjamin, 1936). The progressiveness of using tools of making experimental art can be lead towards the light and modernity which do not stick in to the rigidness and dead regressive form, so that without the progressiveness of art it cannot be beautiful In this context, it is important to discuss the how established politics in the society manipulate the art to spread their culture and how the counter cultural agitation has also emerged

Established Politics and Cultural Agitation

It is important to look at how the post-imperial cultural movements brought out their agitation and propaganda so forcefully, especially in the field of literature and art, they never bother about colonial schooling. This power of mobilization through performance always attracted the political parties that can be used as their political tool; as the Historian K. N. Pannikar constantly writes that the constant mobilization of particular culture can be considered as a political move (Pannikar, 2005).

Here, the paper tries to explore the way how the right wing politics mobilize the public and communalize them, is the biggest threat for the masses especially in India. For instance, if one look at the example of RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), which is the biggest communal organized group in Asia and supporter of current government of BJP ( Bhartiya Janta Party). We have witnessed the communal riots and mass lynch of Dalits, Adivasis and other minority religious groups. In the book India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India by Christophe Jaffrelot, the author developed two themes of understanding the way of operation by the RSS in particular and the Hindu nationalist movement in general. The first was that the movement adopted the ideology which targeted the identity based groups of 'stigmatisation and emulation' which is portrayed as a 'threat to Others' (Indian Muslims, Christians and the Dalits etc.), which threaten the idea of 'one Nation'. The second was the "instrumentalist" strategy of ethno-religious mobilisation, which was transformed in to the 'Sanghatanist pattern' of implantation and party building. The Political Scientist, Zoya Hasan criticized the argument which is raised above in the book that, “Finally, the crucial issue of the rise of communalism and the growing contribution of OBCs and Dalits to anti-Muslim violence make it necessary to engage explicitly with the discourse of lower castes and its relationship to Hindu nationalism. This book does not frontally address the above issue. The argument which she raised that, the caste mobilisation is a progressive political force and also
antithetical to Hindutva is an important one, especially in the view of the general tendency to assume that caste mobilisation generates disintegrative social conflicts\(^6\). The eminent political analyst and scholar Bhadri Narayan stated that ‘many of the marginalized, due to the lack of the means and resources to engage in the sustained dialogue in this situation provide fertile ground for the right wing mobilization that calls for facile majorities politics’\(^7\). We can also find similar theorization in the Dipankar Gupta’s, article ‘Between Ethnicity and Communalism the Significance of the Nation-state’\(^8\), he argued that the ethnicity of particular religion, ‘Hindu’ is a serious threat to the secular and democratic state.

If we look at the rise of communal groups in Mumbai like ‘Shiv sena, we will be able to analyze the complex history of Shiv sena, and its political tools to gather the Marathi speaking people across the state and their hatred politics with the non-Marathi language speaking people from their own country. We can see the writings of Jayant Lele and other writers to understand this issue very deeply.\(^9\) Recently, the political activist and the writer, Jayant Lele talked in the ‘Vidrohi Sahitya Samellan’ stated that the policy of right wing politics by using cultural as a tool to spread hatred in the masses against the minority of the state from the government.

On the other side, it is important to read and understand the basic work of modern thinkers and social reformist’s thoughts to know the post thought progressive literature, culture and the movements in the context of modern cultural movements in Maharashtra. The cultural movements in Maharashtra are far more radical, here in this context, this paper look at the movement which emerged among the working class of Mumbai, since the sensibility of worker’s rights emerged through the literatures and movements of workers all over the world. The key performers and performing groups were associated with the workers movements from the beginning of the contemporary era. Many events and moments emerged through the working class in the form of strong agitations in the process of workers movements. Similarly, in the case of Dalit movements, the community of Dalit’s also brought out massive mobilization of people on the street for their rights. In these movements the larger representation of their own identity and symbolization resembled through the performance of their own culture. In these movements due to the outburst of cultural literature and performances, helped to develop their own aesthetics as a political performances. The working class and Dalit community share a larger part of the society, and also playing the major role in contributing in the growth of the democratic nation. They also enjoy their democratic rights, and also demands their rights from the states to do the things like protest, march, dharana, squatting, etc. For example, the huge gathering on ‘Mahaparinirvan Din’\(^10\) at Shivaji Park in Mumbai.

**Politics of Space and the Mobilization Politics**

This politics of space—the hierarchical gridding of space that structures as well as constitutes everyday practices, and the strategies for access of dominant space— which gives the conception of mobilization politics. Differentiating Gandhi and Ambedkar’s conceptions and practices of mass mobilization, Gopal Guru argues that while Gandhi’s mobilization is based on moral ground, Ambedkar’s mobilization is based on the motivational ground. The “motivational” ground for bringing in self-respect and social justice therefore for the author is closely linked to the transformation in spatial practice.\(^11\)

In the given situation this paper is not looking at them as a particular community, but as a democratic impulse in the society. While looking at the above situation, the paper argues that the space is playing major role in this, and in the movements the protesters claim their space again through their performances and protests. Historically, the globalized space like Mumbai itself witnessed the several such acts.
Here, the paper trying to elucidate how the space is constructed socially, and how the social transformations occurred through the spatial practice. In the context of theatre, the idea that the participants emerge from the empty space transform as individual and again ready to transform as the society which is dependent on the idealistic construction of the creative imagination. It leads to the following familiar logic: the imagination is most free when it is least influenced by the society, when the imaginations are most liberated, it will lead to the creation of better societies. Although, the above argument appearing appealingly very democratic, it ignores the social context in which the drama takes place in many ways in which the spaces are interpreted, experienced and lived. While it gives an idea of the text, it also introduces through flexible structures which creates the opportunities to perform as the festivities, public speeches and other contemporary relevant issues. What is apparent is that the performance often turns the didactic into the performative, often adopting subversive overtones, the articulations of identity politics linked with performance strategies create radical expressions. Arguing that, the narrative of “politics of reform” have been used historically, over the period of time and also in the contemporary context to often propagate the ideas. It needs to be understand the complexity of these performances as a ‘spatial practice’, raising the question of from where they draw their power and in which way they activate and institute in the present.

In the context of the study of Indian performance practices, generally a binary distinction is made between elite performance practices that claim the hegemony of the public sphere and the other is the subaltern practices. This paper discusses this binary to show the inter linkages between these two spheres. To defend this argument, the paper use Michael Warner’s concepts of public and counter public from the book Publics and Counterpublics, While public represents the open (rational) category of communication in the society, where no limits are set down, the concept of counter-public is regarded as a more closed one limited to a particular community.

In the case of Dalit and working class communities, it is of utmost significance to see the early practices as counter-public, where the idea of creating a community of “self-respect” and critique. The efforts of construction new iconography and strategies of humor in these performance practices are made only in the context that it can be seen as counter-public. However, the distinctions between public and counter public are not categorical, as Warner argues, “we cannot understand counter public very well if we fail to see that there are contradictions and perversities inherent in the organization of all public that are not captured by critiques of the dominant public, exclusions or ideological limitations. Counter publics are public too. They work by many of the same circular postulates it might even be claimed that, like dominant publics, they are ideological in that they provide a sense of active belonging that masks or compensates for the real powerlessness of human agents in capitalist society” (Warner, 2002). This will phrase out these complexities by showing precisely how the counter-public moves into the sphere of public, and the changes occurred in the movement in the performative idiom. This is reflecting in the performance—processions, jalsa, vag— in their militant presentness can probably be the most important example articulating these contradictions and movements.

This perspective of looking at the performance forms as deriving their power from wider performative space—popular performance as spatial practice—will enable us to understand the close relationship between such diverse cultural practices such as celebrations of Ambedkar, Jalsa, and theatrical activities on Kamgaar Rangabhoomi and Dalit Rangabhoomi and in the May Day celebration, these performing practices help to create a democratic impulse.

Established Politics and Individuality
As in the given established politics by using cultural politics there is an enforcement to stabilise the social structure and getting a majority of people acceptance, had been used it as a cultural medium
from the ancient time. All kinds of art has been influenced by the emerging technologies and medium like internet, tele-vision, cinema, etc. and especially the social media is very much hyped to create a new and established culture in the recent time. When the majority of people trying to recreate the traditions individually, they are becoming part of that culture.

It is the biggest move towards the revivalism in society. When that individual started questioning that particular tradition, he is not concerned about that fact that whether it should be accepted or rejected, instead he is trying to be alienated from the social slavery. Once comes out from that slavery, he will be accept the change on the basis of his personal instinct and need. There is a big hope in the Individuality and vernacular politics to make a difference for a building a new concept to make free the human beings. In the book ‘Democratic Transformation and the Vernacular Public Arena in India’ there is a discussion on this issue that “it is suggested here that this vibrancy is possible because of the subjectification of diverse social groups and individuals who have begun to raise their voices in the vernacular public arena, the source of the vibrancy of the democratic politics of contemporary India lies in the participatory agency of multitudes of vernacular publics who have begun to speak from their diverse subject positions. The ‘vernacular criticality’ as pointed out by ‘Bhadri Narayan’ in this volume is not meant to reject the modernity and democracy that are disseminated in the life world but to create a context of critical reception for modern democratic institutions and values”.

Conclusion
As discussed in the beginning, regarding the concept of art and the major debate ‘art for art’s sack’ or ‘art for society’ the paper tries to argue that art always stand for the progressiveness of the society and without the element of progressiveness art cannot be aesthetically beautiful. Even though, though this two concepts are debatable the element of individuality is common in between. The art is for individual liberation, and that is why it is subversive towards the establish cultural social structure. If we see the mobilization in the performance happens we can find that it is possible through the political motivation. If we try to analyze this in several aspects, we can see it is getting mobilised on several ground. When there is an emergence of religious fundamentalist society, there can also be an emergence of the society which demolish the existing structure. Different forms of political performances like marches, meetings, agitation, strikes are possible only through the motivation of democracy and also through the boosting of the democratic impulse. As already discussed in the concept of ‘public’ and ‘counter public’, we could see that the concept of ‘public’ can also turned to be as ‘counter public’ can be questionable the idea behind the concept of art as ‘counter public’. In this context, the concept of ‘individuality’ and ‘vernacular politics’ can create a hopeful picture on cultural arena, which is also be in favor of the alternative cultural struggle.

Endnotes
1 Affirmed that art was valuable as art, that artistic pursuits were their own justification and art do not need moral justification – and indeed, was allowed to be morally neutral or subversive.
2 He asked: “…what does all art do? does it not praise? glorify? select? highlight? By doing all this it strengthens or weakens certain valuations….Art is the great stimulus to life: how could one understand it as purposeless, as aimless, as l’art pour l’art?”
4 Walter Benjamin, essay, The work of art in the age of Mechanical Reproduction, 1936
In the book ‘Religion, violence and political Mobilisation in south Asia’, edited by Ravinder Kaur

On the day of 6th Dec in 1956, on Shivaji park at Dadar area in Mumbai, generally perform the death anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. In the year 1958/59 the statue of Babasahab and his remembering space was built on the same area, since then people from Dalit community gather together on Shivaji park throughout the nation.

Gopal Guru and Sundar Sarukkai (2012), The Cracked Mirror: An Indian Debate on Experience and Theory, Oxford University Press, India.

Is a theatrical performance of Dalit and working class political cultural movement in India, Bhimrao Mahamuni from Otur is credited with having staged the first jalsa with the support of Chatrapathi Shahu. KrishnaraoBhalekar, Ramachandra Ghadge (Kale, Satara district) started his famous jalsa troupe in 1915. By 1929, more than twenty-nine troupes were performing in southern Maharashtra.


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