

BODY AND NATURE: INDWELLING IN KUNAL BASU'S *RACISTS*

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Abstract

Kunal Basu's *Racists* (2008) houses two scientists-Professor Samuel Bates of the Royal College of Physicians, the master craniologist and Monsieur Jean-Louis Belavoix, a member of the Societe Ethnologique de Paris. They are engaged in the investigation of the superiority of the race for which they have two samples, a black boy and a white girl to be brought up by a mute nurse Norah in an island, totally alienated from human civilization. The children are not to be tutored in language or any skill. Bates holds that the measurement of the human skull will reveal the superiority. Belavoix argues that it is not the external shape that matters but the mind inside the skull needs to be understood for understanding the nature of man. He loyally rejects the idea of the superiority of one race but asserts that they belong to human family. With his wide travelling, he thinks that one tribe will enslave and murder the other. But in total contradiction to this view, Bates takes his stance that the Europeans are at the apex, a superior race and in the last position of the hierarchical scheme stands the Negro. As the children grow up, neither punished nor rewarded, every two years they use the craniometer to measure the skulls and record the details but Belavoix observes the behavior and predicts that one will attack / kill the other. The girl gets a scar between her brows and the boy mauled marks. After twelve years of experiment, who will prove to be superior? Will they be able to endure for twelve years, especially the children in the lonely island? Will Norah be able to protect them all by herself?

The article attempts to peep at the micro world of the children pitted against the Racial Science. The theoretical base is mainly drawn from Susan Rowland's analysis of Wendy Wheeler's concept that fits in the evolutionary science and she finds that an understanding of nature is significantly oriented around the body as a 'knowing' organ. After the enumeration of the concepts, the text is to be analysed.

Key Words: Biosemiosis, tacit knowledge, racial superiority, synchronicity, psyche, body, nature, beauty, and creativity.

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This inordinate bewitchment by culture results in a reductionism that is as pernicious and costly as its biological corollary ... we humans are basically the same. Though we speak in different tongues, speaking tongues are part of our evolutionary heritage; though we explain the world in different ways, explaining the world is part of our evolutionary heritage; though we dance, sing, tell stories, and paint differently, such creations are part of our evolutionary heritage.... When we ignore these ties that bind us in a common humanity ... we put ourselves out of reach of our own history, insulating ourselves from corporeal matters of fact and the archetypal forms within them. We proportionately distance ourselves from our own human nature. (Maxine Sheets-Johnstone-*The Roots of Power* qtd. in Love, 61-62).

Racists (2008) delves into the stance of establishing the superiority of the race. Professor Samuel Bates adheres faithfully to the fact 'to understand humans one must examine skulls and nothing else!' (26) The other scientists left mad Bates to occupy the Madhouse by himself, to set up his laboratory in one part of the building. A large room of the laboratory, built like a crypt was reserved for the skulls, over three hundred of them, in cabinet after cabinet with locks in their doors in London. He tells Belavoix that they are to 'understand what makes one race superior to another. What makes it stronger, wiser, the winner' (29). He argues that it was the mind that made one race superior to another. 'The brain was the mind's organ, and the cranium the brain's home. Measuring the home would reveal the true worth of its owner' (32). In Bates's chain of races chartered the entire human species, based on the cranial features of each race. At the top stood the European and at the bottom was the Negro. At the scientists' forum he submits his theory amidst applause. Belavoix scorned the idea of relying on the idea that goniometer measured the facial angle of the cranium between the slope of the nose and the line joining the ears to decide the superiority of one race over the other.

He enumerates the German is stubborn, the English cunning, the Finn dull and the French charming and does the funny angle under the nose decide everything? He astounds the audience by a question where does our semitic savior, the brown Jesus stand in the chain? He states clearly that the English have relied on the size of the skull and 'we French have followed him to his home, not to the morgue' (39). When Reginald Holmes, Bates's master, questions on the choice of the white girl, Bates upholds that 'the white male is far superior to the white females, whose mind is closer to those of children and savages'. The white female's brain size on average is seventy-five cubic inches and a facial angle of eighty-one degrees. By the contrast the black male's brain size is about seventy cubic inches, and the average facial angle is only seventy-one degree. So the inferior white is still superior to the very best of negro / black race. He assumes 'The white girl's victory will do more for our racial theory than anything else' (55). As the experiment progresses, Belavoix states 'we mustn't stop with the brain, we must read the mind' (85). Louisa, Bates's wife and Esther get worried about the suffering of the children and he retorts they suffer to prove that the English are superior to the Bushman and that the English have the 'God-given right to civilize the savage. It's your self-indulgence' (141). At Bates's growling, Esther whimpered and Louisa needed her inhaling kettle to take a puff.

After six years of observation, Belavoix comes to know that the children fought and he predicts ferocious fight at the next level. He sums up :

They've shown nothing more than a *plain* character. Yes plain and vicious, stubborn, quarrelsome, awkward, comical, slow ... They are no better than a pair of hedgehogs, spending every waking hour digging, burrowing, scraping. Even their games are dull (167).

Bates reminds that they performed a significant act when they attacked Belavoix when he intervened during their fight but Belavoix replies, 'The fight wasn't an isolated act but a rare

glimpse of the truth. We've witnessed the germ' (168). He says anything like rape, murder and mutilation would happen. As they tasted his blood, they would wait for more victims and it could be Norah. He states : 'In his primitive state man is no more than a small animal. The brute in him waits to strike at the precise moment, transforms him into a ferocious animal' (168). But for Bates skulls are more important than living samples. Belavoix a Celtic specimen 'a mischief-maker, puckish, quarrelsome' is no match for his Saxon rival, Bates. Belavoix is on the verge of stopping the experiment.

Against this debatable issue, that had gone on over decades, the children are mere samples especially for Bates. Nicholas Quartley, loyal assistant to Bates, recites the Ten Commandments to Norah in the *Rainbow* itself during the passage.

The children must be raised free-free to roam, play, fight, rest. They must be protected from danger, but left alone to do as they please and to learn from their own mistakes. They are never to be smacked or spanked-their actions are to go uncorrected, unpunished. They must never be allowed to nibble the carrot of praise. Nothing should force the two to be together or part. The children must choose for themselves (33).

Norah should not teach them games. Even if one were an angel, he / she should not be favoured over the other and as she is mute, she cannot teach them the language. Captain Perry, a veteran of both traders and slaves who wants to prove the racial superiority, would bring supplies over each month. She could write a note and leave it in the hut and the requirement would be met. Before getting to know the process of their growing, it is necessary to become familiar with the place, their habitat.

Rising from the sea, the island Arlinda resembles a catamaran with green sails floating between two layers of white – the sea waves and the band of clouds. A few hundred nautical miles south-west of Gibraltar, unlike the other islands, she is free of the troubles that come with the black gold. With a pleasant climate 'her beauty is worthless ... without food, without sport'. As they get down, they gaze upon 'the wild red flower, the African tulip, the island's only prize-the flame of the forest' (7). The rocky landscape does not allow seeding and cropping. The sun rise leaves one half of the island in shadow due to a hill. The foliage hides the rock. The forest is dense and prickly round the lower part of the hill. The trees are ever green and may bloom all year round, the island is named after the tree Arlinda. Its fruit is inedible and poisonous. Its kernel as hard and dark as loose rock. A sulphurous stream, a witches' cauldron hisses with lizards, frogs and snakes that coiled around stones rarely moving for years. Robert David Sack reminds us the importance of place :

We cannot live without places ... A geographical awareness helps reveal how the segment of our lives fit together. It shows how we are cultural and natural, autonomous and independent. Most important, it focuses our will on our common purpose as geographic agents – transforming the earth and making it into a home. (qtd . in Love, 92)

The place, island, chosen for the experiment becomes significant. As the children come in contact with the Mother Earth, they evolve. It is appropriate to know Wendy Wheeler's view, as Susan Rowland phrases it 'biosemiotic bodies : the complexity evolution'. The children without the communication mode of language contact the earth and its animism. How do body and nature interrelate?

Wendy Wheeler applies Polyani's concept of 'tacit knowledge' in evolutionary science of biosemiosis. Body becomes a knowing organ. Understanding of nature is oriented around the body. As Rowland puts it, Polyani's tacit knowledge is the kind of embodied, partly unconscious knowing that we acquire by body and psyche working together at levels not accessible to ego

(separation) consciousness. Tacit knowledge is based on body and connection. Speaking about it mythically, tacit knowledge is of the earth mother.

Tacit knowledge is creaturely skilful phenomenological knowledge. Human creatures know they have it ... which cannot be put into words, but which is experienced in all creative artisanship and art, and in creative and skilful living generally. This is language as semiosis which is not reducible to words, but which is embodied in acts. (Wheeler, qtd in Rowland, 36).

Since it is ordered and communicated, it is semiotic. It is part of an intimated order and it is far greater than can be articulated. Tacit knowledge, in its deep rootedness in nature through the human body, generates new dimension in art and culture. The psyche and the body work together at psychoid interface (36). Explaining this further Rowland posits: 'What is native to the psyche is creative fantasy and images produced in dreams. Hence psychic image and psychic meaning are identical because the *flowering* of the unconscious in human creativity is more innate, more 'true' than any ego-controlled rational construction' (12). The unconscious is the natural part of the human being and also connected to nature in the psychoid. Wheeler also emphasises that we do not understand things by looking at it but by dwelling in them.

Tacit knowledge exhibits 'the profound desire to re-animate, re-incarnate and *re-embody* earth mother consciousness'. It is through the creative unconscious, the new happens and this complexity is regarded as key to evolution in nature. Evolved nature does not present a mode of species competing, as envisaged by Darwin, but is more like successive, 'even more complexly interpenetrating environments'. Talking about complexity and tacit knowledge, Rowland asserts 'Culture is therefore *nature creating through the tacit, unarticulated knowledge of human beings*. Tacit knowledge is realizing ... the synchronous nature of nature' (37). Biosemiosis refers to the signifying systems of non-human nature. It means that plants and animals communicate across species and within them. Transmitting signs can be at the cellular level and visible gestures.

Rowland connects Wheeler's idea of creativity and Jung's synchronicity. Wheeler speaks of implications of biosemiosis and of an underlying rationality in nature. This rationality does not banish feeling and earth. She re-envisioned rationality in nature as an attribute of creativity. Similarly, Jung calls synchronicity 'acts of creation in time' specifically associating these meaningful coincidences with nature as mother. Jung's concept is that the synchronous events are apprehended through tacit knowledge in the body. Creativity of nature occurs through tacit significance into culture. Synchronicities are moments where tacit embodied knowledge grasps just a little more of nature's creativity (38). Wheeler's sense of creativity sums up :

Creativity is in many ways a word for describing autopoiesis as biosemiotic life: all nature and culture is creative becoming and change. In human complex system, creativity is semiotic liveliness: liveliness in language and liveliness in processes via which tacit knowledge can emerge in concepts which can be articulated or, rather more accurately, *are* articulated as the process of such emergence. (qtd. in Rowland, 38).

Jung's unconscious is both embodied and embedded in nature. Synchronicity is where the unconscious comes in meaningful semiotic contact with material nature. Human unconscious is nature in us and the nature of the non-human world in us (38). Synchronicity indicates creativity carrying both the unconscious and nature in an interlinked manner.

The nameless children in *Racists* spend entire time in the lap of nature. What tacit knowledge is exemplified in them and can creativity be expressed in their wordless world? How do they interrelate with nature? The camp in Arlinda is fenced on all four sides. In the cottage Norah has lived with two children since they arrived five years ago in Arlinda. 'The island is home-a home they have never left for a single day, not even for a leisurely sail on the luminous

sea' (12). 'The Arlinda trees have thrown a canopy of branches over the cottage....(13). When the scientists arrive, the boy runs and catches hold of Bates's hand, 'shrieking and blabbering through his full-lips like a glib-tongued monkey'. He ignores while Belavoix holds his hands and the boy points at the swirl of black flies. He leaps up to catch them. Perched on his shoulders, he is excited to see the camp from this height 'wriggling like a rare beast in an exotic forest' (13). Looking at the craniograph the girl looks more worried than the boy. He comes 'laughing and babbling much amused by the gleaming instruments on the table' (14). But he bites the coil around his lips in the measuring time and bites Quartley's fingers blood spilling down on to the table. The girl escapes but when caught she foams at the mouth and chokes for breath. For the girl eighty seven degree is marked as eighty eight under Bates's command. The children communicate through their bodies which are totally neglected by people around them. Bates categorises the black boy as monster for biting the assistant's hand but fails to acknowledge how much pain they induced in him for carrying out the experiment. Both the children show friendly gestures but the torsionmeter and goniometer scare them due to the pain they experienced. In contrast nature delights them.

Once measurements taken, without heeding to the feeling and the bodily torture, the children are left to themselves. 'The two seem to carry their own map of the island in their tiny heads'. The visitors do not know it with such intimate details. But they know 'a universe hidden inside the forest.... Secret passes that lead to flat meadows, lush like grasslands, a string of private gardens... The forest shows their true colours' (18). They mingle with the island so much that it is the forest that speaks of their personality. They carry a knowledge that surpasses that of the intellectuals / scientists. Nature in turn opens itself to envisage their free selves, uncontaminated by prejudice and rationality and the hierarchical structure of the racial science.

Digging for roots, they both have their heads down over the spot, and find the 'treasure: a cone-shaped bulb like an egg'. The girl with bare hands and the boy with a jagged rock dig and the 'boy rips it out by its roots and passes it on to the girl, who draws it close as if to plant a kiss'. They keep passing it from one to other rapidly, till the 'boy bites into its berry-brown skin. The sharp taste makes him gasp, juice squirting all over his bare arms'. Next they dig another spot, looking for egg. 'In place of speech, they have their own grunts and babble-a language of gestures made with their necks, arms and agile faces'. Their laughter rises and falls like a 'duet', 'as if phrases spoken in a secret language'(19). Their tacit knowledge gets embodied in all these visible semiosis. These signs definitely import deep significance.

Alfred North Whitehead, who advanced organic mechanism over materialist mechanism, supports the 'organicism gospel of conciliation and fraternization' says Jozef Keulartz. Whitehead holds that traditional science is obsessed with the trees that it had lost sight of the forest. He states :

But in nature the normal way in which trees flourish is by their association in a forest. Each tree may lose something of its individual perfection of growth, but they mutually assist each other in preserving the conditions for survival. The soil is preserved and shaded; and the microbes necessary for its fertility are neither scorched, nor frozen, nor washed away. A forest is the triumph of the organization of mutually dependent species (129).

If forest carries this message, the children literally grow in the forest. And they seem to evolve from the principles of nature. Hence they are so mutually interdependent. The connection between them binds them up in every activity. Whatever is the mode of action, they work together and they are never seen to indulge in any exploration individually. They develop

deftness and executive ability through their dependence on each other in their sphere of life. Given all the disadvantages they are placed in, artificially constructed by scientists, when compared with normal children in society, they grow up in natural way but it never makes a marring mark in them. They are full of energy and dive into pleasurable activities. In fact their aesthetic faculty seems to emerge explicitly. The importance of cooperation and community spirit, the lack of normal and civilised society, find ample space in and around them.

A splendid tuber is their next prize. It is a 'purple core studded with milk-white thorns, like a queen on her throne. With soiled hands they lie about on the dirt soil around 'their freshly dug crater, admiring silently, like earthworms too full to reach for their feast.... Veterans of the forest, they know perhaps her secret: a sting more painful than the poisonous fruit' (29). Rain drops wake them up from this surfeit of pleasure. At another instance they chase after a lizard and manage to hold it in a bucket. It bites the girl and the boy yelps. The next instant they run towards the stream and splash into it. 'Face up, they float, clouds criss-cross the blue sky'. They become busy dashing to the spring and back and fill the bucket. A dead lizard floats inside. Belavoix observes all these from afar and records it. Arguing there is no organism without an environment, no environment without an organism, Love points out that in the phenomenological tradition they posit that 'the primacy of the lived world of bodily experience is the foundation for all human thinking, meaning and communication' (93). He attaches the working of the body and brain to the power of place. The children's experience of every event is connected with the environment and each experience makes them evolve from aesthetic pleasure to meeting pain, seeking nature cure and eliminating the lizard. They dwell in the non-human world at ease and find it more inviting than the camp .

The nurse, Norah, silently makes them build pyramids with berries, Norah counting them and the children with their fingers. The winner gets rewarded with both piles and she hugs the loser. But Bates's anger stiffened her like a 'kneeling prisoner' and grabbing her by the hair, jerked her head and shouted into her face 'How dare you break the rules?' It necessitates knowing the children's response at this outburst of anger. The girl dashed forward to grab Norah's waist burying her face against her flanks. 'The girl's moan grew to a wail' (36). The boy dashed towards Bates with a cry and hurled himself on his back. Bates pushed him, without letting go off Norah's head. The boy set off again, bent on pulling him away, still yelling at the top of his voice. Quartley caught him before Bates could hit him again. In protecting Norah, they act spontaneously in two different ways-wailing and attacking-embodiment helplessness and using physical strength. Perhaps the civilized world might curtail attacking the elders, that too the god of science but in their natural world they need to safeguard her. They perceive the threat and abuse of one human by the other.

Bates and Quartley think that the two children are like animals and Bates assures Quartley that the girl will 'become curious and confident' and of the two, she will be quickly civilised. The children, on the other hand, had sympathy for each other, played and swam together, ate from the same bowl and slept 'curled up like pups on the floor'. When Quartley says that the boy is a dare devil and visualized the scene of him 'climbing a tree to steal from a honeycomb' and 'he is as courageous as the girl' (64), Bates cannot equate it so with his prejudiced mind. He applies a logical conclusion:

In the Negro, a deficient cranium produces an animal courage-a bent for haste and rashness; an impulsiveness that leads to costly mistakes. The superior cranium of the European, on the other hand, leads to a reasoned courage. That's the difference between the boy and the girl (65).

Quartley doubts how she could reason without words and would not she need a 'secret language' but is afraid to contradict his master. Bates concludes that the boy will become a human too, but a lesser human. Human knowledge seeks difference and discrimination is the yardstick of the hierarchy. Cultural construct intervenes in their conversation and the social systems operate in defining them. When the chance arises, these systems of the cultivated get inculcated in the natural breeding.

Bates plays the role of a doctor and notes down the treatment. The girl had wheezing, lice and scabs along with infected nail and a coated tongue. The boy had a scar halfway down the neck. To know the cause, Bates issued the ultimate threat and demonstrated that the girl might have tried to 'wring his neck' and that caused Norah to run away 'flooding the kitchen with the throttled sound of her sobbing' (75). The boy who stood obediently so far, ran out behind her. It shows that he is unable to see the caretaker in distress. Belavoix attributes three causes 'anger, neurosis, insanity' (76) for the wound. They make several guesses but not able to draw the fact. Belavoix also says 'The one on top of the chain will certainly kill the one below' (77). Bates counters that the 'test of racial superiority isn't murder'. Belavoix argues 'The ability of the civilized, the most civilized of all, to show the highest savagery-that's the real proof of racial superiority' (78). The scientific quarrel continues but they cannot have a broader embracing attitude that the humans all belong to the human family. Racial dominance is an alien feature to the aesthetic and joy-infused world of the children. In the discussion of the issue, they do not even apply medicine to the raw wound. Does Norah, the 'Bird of Paradise' know the secret of the wound?

Norah herself is an explorer crossing the unknown stretch. The sea seems to be 'roaring louder than her screaming mind' and nothing can 'rival its crashing whisper' (81). She drowns in the sea remembering that once she lived among others. They told her that the island is safe but as they grew up they posed a threat 'How could it be safe with the two of them hanging from branches by the tips of their fingers, biting into poisonous roots, hiding in forest amidst lightning and thunder?' (82). They climbed steep rocks, drenched their clothes with a swim in the sea, hid in their secret caves and nooks and were fast asleep curled up against each other. When Norah searched, they smelt her presence and ran in different directions excitedly, almost expecting her to follow. They despised cooked food when their bellies were full of forest food. At times they looked as if they were devoid of mind and memory 'Like apes, they shared a love of darkness, a craving for earth-eating' (83). The girl liked to be stroked but snarled at change of mood. The boy smashed and threw things and was inexplicably sad in the morning. Except for these occasional mood changes, they seem to intertwine with the natural landscape. Gary Snyder says:

The trees we climb and the ground we walk on have given us five fingers and toes. The "place" (from the root plat, broad, spreading, flat) gave us far-seeing eyes, the streams and breezes gave us versatile tongues and whorly ears. The land gave us a stride, and the lake a dive. The amazement gave us our kind of mind. We should be thankful for that, and take nature's stricter lessons with some grace. (qtd. in Love, 94).

The awe-striking point is that they were not taught to swim but they swam at ease and with dexterity, they climbed the trees with such alacrity, and they ate the earth-food without knowing poisonous from the edible but were not harmed. The civilized world's warnings had not sent waves of fear in them and they dared. Paul Shepherd puts it concisely 'cognition, personality, creativity and maturity-all are in some way tied to particular gestalts of space' (qtd. in Love, 113) In the island-home-space, they evolve amazingly. Wheeler's view is appropriate

for nature has created a new dimension in them and the psyche's creative fantasy reigns in them. Against the rational construction, their innate selves dictate and they embodied that in their varied activities. They seem to be fully immersed in the biotic community of the island.

In sharp contrast, another scene emerges when the scientists conduct the mirror test for the children. The girl stuck to the glass, hanging from it like fruit. She called him by a 'sharp bleating call' and she was 'untroubled by her own image'. She seemed to have told him 'something in their secret language' (88) and he followed but with worried eyes and slack limbs. He bared his teeth at the mirror and was terror struck. Bates ruminates over the scene, praises her for 'winning the test of intellect ... Her curiosity for the unknown, her inquisitive mind bent on solving the puzzle of the mirror, places her a cut above the other sample'. He almost surmises that the black boy had shown sloth, fearfulness and vanity and had failed to 'put up a fight against his bigger-brained rival' (89). Bates, as a scientist, has fixed the white to be of superior race and has not taken an impartial stance. When the children are unobserved and in the natural world, their response and behavior defy the observations of Bates, traditionally handed down systems and stereotype images.

At the black boy missing at night, Norah drags Bates and others to search for him. Armed with rifle and medicine box, they go through the forest thinking of all possibilities. As they climbed up the steep path to the hill top, Norah almost froze and they spotted the solitary form, the boy. Quartley raised the lamp. The boy did not blink. 'A pair of black boys stared ahead at the black sea'. Bates 'folded his powerful arms around the boy's tiny shoulders, drawing him firmly into his chest' and they sat like father and son. 'A piercing cry flew from Noah's lips. Then she lapsed into her savage silence' (98). Norah, at a later point, writes about the girl's eye-disease. Bates confirms it rheumatic ophthalmia. It might even take a decade to close and he calculates that experiment might be over then. The black boy's night escapade reminds Professor St. Peter's Jungian primitive dream state and his analysis fits in. 'He was only interested in earth ... Wherever sun sunned and rain rained and snow snowed ... Desire under all desires, Truth under all truths ... He was earth, and would return to earth' (qtd. in Love, 113). Perhaps the boy was in such a state. The civilized world did not erect a barrier for the boy and as he lived naturally, he just roamed to the hill top. Fear of darkness, night and fear of being alone are constructed due to man's evil nature. Man is afraid of man for man inflicts cruelty on fellow being. The girl suffers but in a heartless manner, the scientists are more worried about the experiment than about the well-being of their samples.

They are like 'a pair of determined explorers, turning over an empty shell, as if searching for treasure'. Along the stretch of the beach, they walk up and down, and then move on towards higher ground. They do not even go to eat for they have a way of feeding themselves- 'digging out a juicy bulb from the earth or discovering a hidden patch of wild mushrooms. A feast of earthworms' (125). They reach a nest full of eggs. The girl scares away the gulls with a stick. Perhaps as the wiser of the two, he hurls pebbles at the birds. With each attempt, the girl becomes bolder against the fluttering wings, darting beaks and a swooping bird. Waving the stick over her head, the girl scatters the birds and smashes the eggs. Then 'the two take off down the beach, running shoulder to shoulder like a pair of hunting beasts' (129). At every venture, they are together. Co-ordination works symmetrically between both of them. Each activity they indulge in calls for a survey, analysis, planning and executing. The girl uses the stick and the boy small stones as instruments to carry out the task. They begin to look at it from different angles

before smashing the eggs. The unconscious embodies the creative energy in different actions and results in completing the task. When the gulls swoop down on the girl, she begins to swirl the stick over her head and he aims at the birds with precision. It is a destructive act yet they finish the task. Never one leaves the other, though there are occasions of each fighting with the other and hurling things at each other. Do we find man's evolutionary stages in their growth?

Music is the finest of artistic endeavours. It involves synchronicity and synthesizing. A man who is averse to music is considered to be evil. Perhaps Norah crosses the border and has taught them something at the crudest level. What sense of imitation do they possess? The sea's roaring waves produced music. The whispers and mutterings of insects produced sounds in that lonely island. The breeze gliding by, wind luring through and storm rushing through produced a symphony at intervals. The sounds did differ. The leaves rustling, the whizzing of the branches, and the swirling branches effected different musical notes that went almost unheard in the island. The children had become attuned to the cooing of birds and other sounds vibrated through their senses. As a result, when the scientists searched for them, it is the children's sound that helped in tracking them.

The scientists circle the sound, getting closer, then spotting the children sitting next to each other on a tall boulder. They seem to be singing a song. Bates frowns. A song without beginning or end, but a clever blending of pure noise. They don't stop when they spot the scientists, simply raise their voices a touch to ignore the probing eyes (152).

The tacit knowledge leads to creativity and every fine art and culture is born out of it. The children's symphony, perhaps cannot stand the test of cultivated musicians and be equated with their symphony. What needs to be emphasized is that they have been so familiar with the orchestra around them that it carried its effect on them, stirring their senses and resulting in creative expression. Art is born out of nature.

The island is a vast place that has too 'many hidden sanctuaries' (151) for the children. A flat meadow, like a lush garden appears a perfect hiding place. Creeping step by step, the girl takes the box from the cupboard and passes it to the boy waiting outside. 'It is a tricky business, trickier than they had expected' (154) to go through the slippery path with the weight. They stumble but hold on to the prize. Joining arms, they carry it round the bends and enter their 'private garden'. They take the instrument out of the box, and it gleams in the light. They understand that its trap is different from the one they were suffered to insert their head for measuring. Looking at it, she searches for the hidden door. 'It's the opening she must find in which to insert the head of her sample, a discovery that's crucial to their game' (155).

She begins to play double role, scientist and child. The scientist observes it from all angles, creeps on her belly and tries to force her head in. In anger she kicks and raises a cloud of dust. 'The two of them sit in silence, observing the instrument. Their minds run over all the routines they've learned'. Resuming the work, she fiddles a knob and it opens a 'nest large enough to hold a small cranium. 'The discovery startles her' (155). She inserts and the cage comes down to her neck.

The boy yelps his delight, running round the girl in circles. She screams too, face flushed with excitement, gurgling, as if to alert him to record the vital measurements. She crouches on the ground, head inside the trap, triumphant with success. (156)

But the trap remains shut, and with every wriggle, the snap tightened round her neck. 'She screams, tears streaming down' and heaves with the weight. 'The heavy frame threatens to snap her neck' (156). She cries. The boy watches silently, with unblinking eyes. 'His face shows

no dismay at their game gone astray'. The game seems to be 'the trapped scientist, watched by the savage'. Like a 'trapped animal', having given up, she lies on the ground. Will he use his intellect? He rises to examine the girl's condition then 'releases the trap with a deft move, turning the knobs like an expert,' (156) as if he had known it all along. Without the mesh biting her skin, he releases her. 'Lifting up the instrument, the boy hurls it down the hill with one powerful fling of his arm'. Bates suspects everyone over the 'mysterious disappearance' (157) of the instrument and sees the motive – to disrupt the experiment.

The above game is played alone by the two children in a secluded place. Even if the scientists were to have observed with the telescope, which they do frequently, from the tree-house constructed for the purpose, they would not have succeeded. As they remain fixed in their conceptual world, they never suspected the children. The children's game reminds the reader the cryptic remark of Wilson '... the brain appears to have kept its old capacities, its channeled quickness. We stay alert and alive in the vanished forests of the world' (qtd. in Love, 103). He also adds 'we are in the fullest sense a biological species and will find little ultimate meaning apart from the remainder of life' (qtd. in Love, 163). Creativity and intelligent acts are tied up to the ecological space. According to the scientists, the girl is intelligent and the boy is full of sloth and a monster.

However, the game unfolds that the boy is wiser and with physical prowess, he flung the instrument and maintained the game, a game and not a tragedy. It also tempts one to draw a metaphorical meaning. The white girl, representing the white race, for Bates is proud that she will prove to be at the apex of culture, is trapped. In other words, they are trapped in what they have constructed, the instrument, an agent in establishing objective knowledge and they cannot extricate themselves from it. Even if the black race were to perform an intelligent act to release the entrapped person, it will go unnoticed and unseen. His wise acts remain hidden in the ecological space. The instrument, which made him undergo torturous moves and a symbol of horror had been thrown and could not be recovered. The scientists are defeated by the children but the intellectual aura remains in all its brilliance.

Tacit knowledge is based on body and connection. It is ordered and communicated. It is assumed that the children cannot communicate and in fact they are barred from communication and no one is to communicate with them. In spite of the built-up-system, intra-communication takes place which no one can measure and no instrument can record it. Besides the intra-communication, intercommunication gets carried successfully through the body. The communication between the two children never seems to go amiss. There is a perfect and an effective correspondence between them. Both are able to fix a target and get it executed. What has caused terror, they will eliminate it duping the organized scheme of the renowned men at the apex of research world. It is paradoxical that the ape-like creatures at the lowest bottom of the knowledge scale are able to overthrow the plan of the scientists at the crucial phase. They have thrown them a challenge in a concealed manner. If they had been detected they might have been chastised even brutally but now they have succeeded to leave them in the lurch.

Dexterity and adaptability manifest in the samples as in growing children. Except for the lack of language, they seem to be functioning as normal children would, in fact in a better way with their mutual understanding, unexpressed in words. Moving and working, playing and being still, they express a union that challenges the normal children. Yet there is one scene in the text where they fight ferociously that the scientists follow them with the telescope and note down

their observation. Belavoix looks at it and terms it that the savages are fighting but once Bates raises a question if it is just child's play. The boy hunched, fangs bared, and was ready to fight with his jaws and teeth. The girl stood on her toes with a rock in each hand. Blood was dripping from a deep gash on her knee. She charged and aimed a rock but he dodged and threw a handful of rubble. She chased and 'standing his ground as the girl charged in, he bore her full thrust, knocking her over and landing on top' (163). When she broke free, he chased her. At Belavoix intervention, a rock hit him. His head bleeding, he had to be hurried for treatment. The girl had a scar on her forehead and the boy scratches on his chest. Quartley noticed Belavoix's 'suffering in mind as well as in body – the scientist defeated by his science'. Belavoix makes a general statement of the fight that 'the brute killed the angel' (165). Even Bates feels that the odd measurement was not enough and without Belavoix he knows that his reports were meaningless.

The fight between the children did not carry a malevolent animosity. They came to the camp and ate the food. The effect of the fight did not get restricted to their bodies but its consequence had tilted the plan. Belavoix was in no mood to argue with rage. His mind seemed to be in a trance and no longer had he interest in the children or in the note books. The children were often missing in the cottage; Norah took food to the forest, hiding it in basket and fed them. Belavoix looked as if the visit had lost its purpose and due to that mental aura, Bates seemed to lose something of his zeal. 'His observation of the samples dwindled to nothing'. It was a scene of a sick Belavoix and a raging Bates. Belavoix packs his case but Bates quietly coaxes him into argument. He even hints about the fight and their reaction to Belavoix - 'Stopping an outsider from intruding into their affairs' (168). Belavoix decides to leave and promises to send him a reply on reaching France. The fight had triggered a series of actions and varying surmises.

At this juncture, what is the role of science in life? Jozef Keulartz says that at one time, 'reason was perceived as an immanent principle of reality and science was assigned the task of supplying a systematic interpretation of this ethically charged logos'. But at present age

the logos has been reduced to an icy logic ... or instrumental reality. Science has fallen under the spell of scientism, an ideology that treats the world, including human and social relations, as an ethically neutral object of manipulation and control. Technics has been reduced to technology, a powerful weapon in the hands of bureaucratic elites (121).

He refers to Bookchin's view that the classical philosophy of nature conceived of nature primarily as an inexhaustible source of inspiration and it is its great strength. Bookchin's dialectical naturalism conceives of holism, the concept of 'wholeness', of unity-in-diversity. Keulartz cites Bookchin's view:

In conceiving them holistically, that is to say, in terms of their mutual interdependence, social ecology seeks to unravel the forms and patterns of interrelationships that give intelligibility to a community, be it natural or social. Holism, here, is the result of a conscious effort to discern how the particulars of a community are arranged, how its 'geometry' ... makes the 'whole more than the sum of its parts' (122-123).

This approach of holism remains alien to the scientists – Bates and Belavoix – and in their search for objective fact-finding process they cut apart everything. Segregating and dwelling in the isolated phenomenon of science, they are on the verge of realizing its purposelessness but the ego cannot yield to the truth of holism nor acknowledge it. Reason has become their god and rationality drives them to become inhuman and it is sad that they are blind to their own becoming.

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The children find that it seems different when the scientists are around but with Norah and Quartley, now that both had fallen in love and the children sense it and spy on them, it is a congenial atmosphere for them.

The cottage is a happier place, the kitchen just another playground. The children pile heaps of shells they've collected from the beach on the floor, like a string of hills – each hill made up of shells that are of the same shape and colour; piling higher and higher, till a heap explodes and forms its own string of hillocks (182).

They allow Norah and Quartley to watch their game. They have turned the 'kitchen floor into an ocean bed'. Norah and Quartley cannot walk around without 'crunching their precious possessions ... The children surround their feet with shells, make it impossible to move, turn them into prisoners'. The children want them to join in their pursuits / games. When they are with Norah and Quartley, they 'appear far from wild' (182). With their lack of speech, they are unable to express a sudden inspiration, change of mood and departure. Then the adults spy on them and follow them at their disappearance.

Nature speaks to us through the body and the imagination. Rowland posits that Jung's infant psyche is part of evolved nature. It contains inborn potential structuring called archetypes. The psyche is creative and it wants to give birth to the ego. The archetypes are rooted in the body, yet not governed by it. The unconscious is of the body and it is a bodily inheritance. Secondly the unconscious is also somatic (20). The children at game show the creative expression. Conversely, they also seem to bring out a shade of the archetype rooted in their bodies. The ocean world communicates something of beauty and in turn they create a mini-ocean on the floor. Man cannot look at himself in isolation of nature. They bring out the truth that nature is embedded in our life and we live in the web of nature. The archetypes get manifested in the symbolic order of language. The children, unused to communication through language, represent the creativity in creating a chain of hills and a bed of shells. They recreate the nature that they live with, through their collection of shells. It needs to be emphasized that they indulge in such a creative act after the ferocious fight that they had. An act of imitation of what they look around, carry a symbolic meaning.

Emptying a sailor's pouch on the floor, Quartley gifts them with 'a handful of cowries, shining like pearls'. He had thoughtfully bought it from a deckhand on his way over for the children. 'He lined them up in two rows, facing each other, like rival armies'. He offered them the cowries and spoke to them that they are theirs. 'Two pairs of unblinking eyes stared back'. Then at night they search for the cowries waking up Norah and Quartley and the 'thieves' left the place (183). Quartley speaks clearly that they could have the cowries. But they are unsure and want to possess it. Their desire drives them to search for the cowries under the bed and tilt few things. Even at such flight, they are together in their hunt. They move stealthily and the puzzle is about the process of communication that they act in such unison. Why do the cowries attract them so much? In the text this is the first time that they are shown the wealth of the natural world with all its attractiveness and with a touch of love. The beauty of the cowries has perhaps enraptured them that they would steal and admire them. The aesthetic tendency evinces itself in them.

At dawn, they stroll over the beach. 'They dived into the surf and floated on the waves'. When they disappeared thus, 'a touch of panic gripped' them but soon after Norah spotted them. They were 'staying submerged for eternal moments, ... swimming far ahead like a pair of dolphins, frightening the gulls with their screams'(183). If our evolution is part of nature, their

swimming indicates their evolution. It was not an ordinary superficial act of swimming but the bodily experience and the unconscious brimming with the indefinable delight arises out of submerging with nature. It would not be an exaggeration to say that experienced an ecstasy beyond words. The refreshing and engulfing sea water carries them afloat without a tidal wave washing them away. Andrew Bennan and Y.S.Lo, refer to Rolston's view 'Biology does generate religion ... Nature is the first mystery to be encountered and society comes later, much later, after one learns evolutionary history'. They say that at times there is an experience of 'mysterium tremendum'. It comes 'sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship'. It may pass over but it is 'thrillingly vibrant and resonant' but as days pass by the soul may return to its profane non-religious mood (139). The children seem to touch the fringe of this numinous experience.

A glance at Quartley and Norah relating with nature becomes imperative to understand their attitude towards the children. The children are just samples for the scientists but Norah loves them and Quartley follows the trail. Quartley's mother was a herbalist who visited ailing neighbours. She had passed on to him a country quack's intuition. He had a pair of skilled hands that enabled him to get a job of helping a taxidermist and then to morgue. He gazed at the islands, when he could be off his duty and 'the sea calmed him' (24). Regarding Norah, Belavoix confronts Bates that Norah is Nature herself. She is forbidden to love and teach them good or evil. So she lives for others and 'Her game is Nature's game' (50). Quartley watches her for signs of madness and tries to find a clue to her mystery. '*It is a mystery far greater than the mystery of our experiment*' (79). Norah too is an explorer and takes different tracks, runs crushing live snails and baby crabs and drowns herself in the sea.

At another moment she was 'floating like a lotus in the spring' (87). All alone in the island she could not stop 'mumbling and cooing, singing ... screaming, cursing' (177). When both fall in love, they go to bat's cave with dark layer and dead silence. He hears the bats 'breathing – a million of them, inhaling and exhaling, filling the cave with their breath ... The island's beast. Eyeless'. They hear the roar of a million wings. 'When they swam in the spring, they seemed like two giant lizards lashing the rock steps with their naked limbs, waking a water snake from its sleep and setting it off hissing' (180). Naturally Quartley finds Norah 'more mysterious than the mystery of her silence' (179). Her past, living as an orphan among costers, then prey to bullies and gaolbirds, had been a litany of tragedy. But she overcomes personal suffering in loving and caring for the children and truly, she plays the role of Nature.

Norah sings in the dark and the children were locked in the room to prevent them venturing out at night. Quartley worried that Bates may 'attack her like an animal inside the dark cottage' (217). Bates entered and nearing with menacing steps called her 'Rotten lying whore'. Grabbing her by hair and shoulder, he forces her to sing and yells that the pure samples have been turned into 'little devils – stinking scum' (218) like her. Veins throbbing in her temple, she assures that they are pure and they cannot speak. In the meanwhile, Quartley stands with the finger on the trigger and Norah manages to tear away for Bates and confesses 'I lied for them. To save them from wild beasts'. He answers 'They're rubbish! Dead or alive, they mean nothing' and when he goes to attack the children, she takes an axe and says 'I'll kill you first, before you touch them!' (219). Looking at Quartley, he turns his fury on him and says that he has become Norah's slave and accuses that both have killed the experiment. They worry over the safety of the children. In privacy Norah utters 'The children will become wilder; they'll refuse to be

treated like animals' (222). The ship *Rainbow* arrives and captain Perry informs that Belavoix died as the ship *Soldat Patriote* in which he journeyed, had a terrible accident. Bates leaves by the *Rainbow*, as the solitary passenger. Norah tells Quartley that even if they were to die in Arlinda, 'they[children] must live as humans not savages' (228) and they plan of their future.

The next day, they hear a cry and they find the two children chased by a band of men dressed in white. The black boy sensing danger for the girl, as a 'master rock-thrower' (230) aims at a man and the wounded man yells and he begins to shoot with his musket. The boy scrambles like a crab and hides behind a boulder. Norah swims with the aim of taking a weapon to fight back. Quartley fights with a man. The scream brings Norah back to save the girl. In a semicircle they chase the boy who is 'shrieking and yelping at the girl. When Quartley wants to save the boy, a club hits him. A man catches the boy and dives into the sea. All the three swim and see the boy held by powerful hands. They see him terrified and he screams 'Ari' and the girl screams back. When she reaches out towards the boy, a boatman hits her with the oar. The traders are Arabs, the oldest slavers of Africa, and they capture to make the girls become harem maids and the boys eunuchs. And their captives are bound for Damascus and Baghdad. Evil in man seems to oppose the natural and wants to enslave fellow beings. Trading on human beings is the dark side of cultural heritage.

Norah the broken mother and Quartley with his head throbbing manage to reach the camp. 'Sobbing comes from the girl's room'. Quartley groans and wails grieving for the boy, their son. The three sit around the rock column the children built a few days back. They bury his clothes, shells in a pit at its foot. 'The column stands up to the sky. As dark as the boy. Indestructible' (232). What an edifice it is! It is so connotative and stands with layers of meaning embedded in it. A tiny structure but stands in the vast stretch of nature, which nourished them endlessly. Its intrinsic value is witnessed by the bioregionalism. Creativity is embodied in its own semiosis in the column. Scott Slovic refers to Rick Bass's *The Book of Yaak* wherein he writes, 'There is a place, a sanctuary you go to...and upon emerging from it... and the inhabiting of that you feel new energy, new understanding. You've touched mystery' (58). The two children have inhabited the place and bubbled with enthusiasm and energy and the mysterious experience, in their level, has become an everyday phenomenon for them.

The three of them settle down in America. Ari goes to school but she is a rare species among the school children and looks serious at school at Wallasby. In the woods, she loses it. 'Badgers and squirrels have her in raptures. She chatters and squeals at them, swings from branches at will. This is her true nature' (236). She slithers up the trunk to leave the fallen nest in a leafy hollow and comes slithering down. She stands before the mirror and touches the scar – 'It reminds her of who she was' (237). Norah and Quartley have started their life from the failed experiment. Quartley teaches her with much patience. It is a pathetic ending. Aldo Leopold writes, 'a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community' (qtd. in love, 123). Norah and Quartley, as opposed to Bates, put up a fight to protect the children and the children fight against a group of men to protect each other. In normalcy, Ari protects the birds and at times looks vacant, unaware of the rest. She travels back to her beginning years with her brother. The children, Norah and Quartley never practiced the taboo of racial superiority / inferiority.

Growing up in the midst of biotic community and isolated from the family and societal system, the children are not hindered in their psychic growth. As stated earlier, the unconscious

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with its creative power is active in them and their tacit knowledge, if not embodied in language, manifests itself in ever differing activities. In their absorbing of nature, they are never intimidated but grow freely and nature's rationality, in other words creativity, operates in them and they grow to the extent of defeating the scientist's plan. They take not destructive route but seek harmless way to protect themselves from the horror of inserting their head into the trap. They function as efficiently as they have relied on synchronous nature of nature. Their tacit knowledge expresses itself in creative aspects and they are instrumental in cutting the island's culture. Shrieking and yelping is followed by singing. They embody what they see in designs and games. The column stands in symbolic dimension. They can neglect pain and enter the world of trance and ecstasy which the scientists had never entered in. Their micro community speaks against the rationality and inhuman attitude of the scientists. They have the fort of love, love for fellow being and nature; they care for one another, though they cannot use human language. No one can escape the trapped boy's cry 'Ari'. The island Arlinda echoes with it, the text resonates with it and Nature carries it within her.

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