

Aristotle's "Master-Slave Relationship," and Indian Soldiers during the Great War

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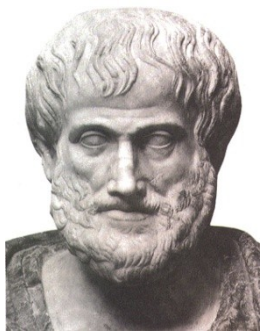
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Why this Paper

- The present paper, in general, is a reply to Robert Orme's essay on "The Effeminacy of the Inhabitants of Hindustan" (1782), wherein he famously argued how Indians "endowed with the nervous strength, or athletic size, of the most robust nations of Europe."
- Aristotle, however, herein remains a victim of collateral damage, whose reputation is questioned with Bertrand Russell, the British, who stated, "almost every serious intellectual advance has had to begin with an attack on some Aristotelian doctrine."
- The paper, indeed, attempted to project how Orme was wrong when he said, there are no men in India as they had the attributes equal to women, who cannot fight in battles.
- Simultaneously, it exposed the British claims how Indians, in the words of Aristotle, were just "slaves," or to say it more correctly, free slaves in the Great War as well as in its destructive brother with the name World War II.

Abstract

- The paper, accurately enough, is divided into three parts, which runs thus:
- In the current paper, the concept of “free will,” “slavery,” the British colonization, the World War I and literature will be utilized with a reference to Mulk Raj Anand’s famous war novel *Across the Black Waters*.
- It will, simultaneously, decode twenty first century’s history of neo-slavery or bonded labour to attest the truth whether Aristotle’s definition of slavery is in practice or eliminated completely due to the pressure of extremely radical-cum-humanistic circles in a republic or democracy that have full faith of citizens.
- Orient to dispel the critical ignorance, the hypothesis, thus, underlined how various nineteenth and twentieth century’s intellectuals begin their career with an “attack on some Aristotelian doctrine,” especially by interrogating his views on war slavery in the court humanity and ignored the demon of neo-slavery in the form of bonded or child labour.



Romanticization

- The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition, as noted by Alfred North Whitehead, is that it consists of “a series of footnotes to Plato.”
- However, the Roman philosopher, Cicero, easily contradict Whitehead when he famously said, “If Plato’s prose was silver, Aristotle’s was a flowing river of gold.”
- Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philosopher, is accused by Durant Will of inheriting his political philosophy from the writings of Aristotle.
- Bertrand Russell, the British, moves a step forward while stating how “almost every serious intellectual advance has had to begin with an attack on some Aristotelian doctrine” and concluded how these general errors mount difficulties to do historical justice to Aristotle.
- Avoiding the romanticized notions of Whitehead and Cicero, the current paper, thus, directly subjected its critical enquiry towards Russell’s notion of “attack.”
- By using Russell’s statement here, the conclusion attempts to engineer a sociable bridge only to connect this classical writer with the post-modern critics so that equilibrium could be build.

Background

- One's walking footsteps could hardly locate an Indian University that is able to delink itself from adding one special Greek book in their syllabus called *Poetics*, written by Aristotle who herein sensationalized the qualities of a branch of drama called tragedy, which is an amalgamation of the emotions "pity" and "fear" with "catharsis" attached to "hamartia."
- Since his time to till date his critics regularly mentioned how *Poetics* is written as a revolt to oppose Plato's opinion mentioned in *Republic* but they remained unsuccessful, throughout the text, even in tracing the name of the opponent, against whom it was written.
- The essay fears to trade a business with *Republic* or *Poetics* despite their popularity in Indian domain, rather it straightforwardly focus its attention around *Politics* wherein by mentioning the term "master and slave," Aristotle quite rapidly opens a fierce debate on their enigmatic relationships only to canvass the portrait of a time when slavery was in its full swing.

Master and Slave

- When Aristotle elaborated the concept of “master and slave” on the pages of *Politics*, he, at once, gave preference to powerful over powerless, master over slave, masculine over feminine, father over child, and to the King over its subjects.
- He went one step forward by defining a stronghold of “master morality” over the weak “slave morality” (source) and in such a way, Aristotle, without a shadow of doubt, found the war slavery as “just” and “Aristotle was right” is a statement comes from the pen of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Social Contract*.
- He wonders how “every man born in slavery is born for slavery. Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire of escaping from them: they love their servitude.”
- In using Aristotle’s ‘master’ and ‘slave’ terms, in case of this paper, the British are the ‘master’ (George V) and Indians are slaves.
- Indians were not real human-slave or ‘natural slave’ like the African Black but ‘artificial slaves’ that were used due to their physical quality. Aristotle was in favour of this kind of slavery while stressing that the slavery in the war is ‘just.’
- It reduced them to the ‘operative images’ or tools, which utilized for the achievement of the desired end. They heartedly followed the Master’s order so that he can ‘live well.’

Aristotle, Rousseau, and Nietzsche

- Rousseau in the footnote of *Social Contract* wonders how “every man born in slavery is born for slavery. Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire of escaping from them: they love their servitude.”
- It is another matter, that later Aristotle constantly labelled it a threat to the kingdom due to its rising power and the art of learning the tactics of war.
- The same negative point was challenged by Nietzsche when he raised the sound of pitch in bracketing the mystery of conundrum relationships of master with slave that were regularly practised by the Greeks and the Romans then and with this attempt, he answered, how they regularly “corrupted morality,” at least, in a general sense of the meaning (Friedrich Nietzsche’s “On the Genealogy of Morality”).



Indian Soldiers in the Great War

- As per the records of the Indian Colonial Government , around 1,440,437 Indian Sepoys were recruited in the War. In this odd number, the combatants were 877,068 while non-combatants were 563,369 (GOI).
- Out of the total, around 74,187 troops melted in the dust through their supreme sacrifice and the rest returned to India in the hope of a better future.
- Indian segment was the largest of any European colony that was around fourteen percent of the worldwide soldiers. Every seventh soldier was of the Indian origin.
- The war memorials Chattri (February 1, 1921) in England and India Gate (February 10, 1931) in India are dedicated to those Indians soldiers who sacrificed their life in the War. For their services, Indians were awarded with twelve Victoria Cross medals.
- Michael O'Dwyer, David Omisi, SD Pradhan, Shantanu Das and Tan Tai Yong revised that undivided Punjab Province contributed more than 'half' of the total in the Indian Expeditionary Forces.

War Memorials

- On the simpler level, the Chattri, the Victoria Cross and the India Gate are synonymous of respect for the Indian soldiers. However, on the deeper level, it is a western strategy to befool India. Constructing a monument in the memory does not mean the reward as many of the soldiers returned bare handed like Lalu of Anand's Across the Black Waters. Furthermore, the dream of self-rule remained unfulfilled.

Note: Photo source is Internet



Across the Black Waters

- The paper, therefore, is responsible to deconstruct Nietzsche's dominant claim with the help of a military novel *Across the Black Waters* which apparently has the honour of India's only war novel that narrates the saga of the 'heroes of India' in the WW-I who were saying 'God save the King' (ACB 16-17).
- The novel opens with Lalu—a sepoy, number 11-12 of Second Platoon in the Second Company of the Sixty-Ninth Rifles—in Marseilles attached to a song of victory and ends with Lalu as a war prisoner that has similarities with Aristotle's terminology called "the war slaves." A
- After finding how some of sepoys like him died—some shot dead and other suicides while some were captured by the Central Forces and later set freed—the life of Lalu, of course, could easily be categorized as an Aristotelian colonial soldier who rose as a War slave.
- To get the answer why Indians and African engaged in this task, one has to turn the clock back to history which regularly classified Indians and Africans in the league of the deadly poor countries along with the highly backward economies of the world. The inhabitants here could do anything to feed the thrust of their abdomen and the need of food and money was effectively fulfilled by the army. The effect of this is an acronym of Aristotle's master and slave, and this is the subject of this paper.

MORE MEN ARE WANTED FOR HIS MAJESTY'S ARMY

WHO MAY ENLIST.

All men who are 5ft. 2 ins. and over, medically fit, and between 19 and 40, and all old soldiers up to 45.

TERMS OF ENLISTMENT.

You may join for the period of the War only if you do not want to serve for the ordinary period of the regular soldier. Then, as soon as the War is over, you will be able to return to your ordinary employment.

PAY.

Ordinary Army Pay (the lowest rate of pay is 7s. a week, less 1½d. for Insurance). Food, Clothing, Lodging and Medical Attendance provided free.

SEPARATION ALLOWANCES.

During the War the State, by the payment of Separation Allowance, helps the soldier to maintain his wife, children or dependants. The following are the weekly rates for the wife and children of a private soldier, including the allotment usually required from his pay:—

	Ordinary Separation Allowance	Largest Allotment required from Soldier	Weekly Income from the State
For Wife only	9 0	8 6	12 6
" and 1 Child	14 0	8 6	17 6
" and 2 Children	17 6	8 6	21 0

For each additional child an additional Separation Allowance of 2s. is issuable. Families living at the time of enlistment in the London Postal area are allowed by the State 3s. 6d. a week extra as long as they continue to live there.

Fuller particulars as to Separation Allowance, and as to Allowances to the Dependants of Unmarried Soldiers, and to the Motherless Children of Soldiers, can be obtained at any Recruiting Office or Post Office.

PENSIONS for the DISABLED.

Men disabled on service will be entitled after discharge to pensions according to earning capacity, the maximum for a totally disabled private being 25s. a week, and 2s. 6d. a week for each child under 16 years of age, born prior to the time at which the soldier is discharged.

PROVISION for WIDOWS and CHILDREN.

The widows and children of soldiers who die on active service will continue to receive their Separation Allowances for a period which will not in any case exceed 26 weeks, and afterwards they will receive, subject to certain qualifications, pensions at various rates, the minimum being 10s. a week for a private's widow.

HOW TO ENLIST.

Go to the nearest Post Office or Labour Exchange. There you will get the address of the nearest Recruiting Office, where you can enlist.

MEN ARE WANTED — ENLIST NOW.

Deconstruction

- In using Aristotle's 'master' and 'slave' terms from *The Politics*, the British were the 'master' (George V) and Indians were the slave.
- With the word slave, the imagination captured the image of an African slave, who however, were like Indians and could be judged as 'artificial slaves' that employed due to their physical quality of fighting in war rather than the colour complexion.
- However, Aristotle show some fear about rising power and status of war slaves' as it could be dangerous for their masters. However, no 'danger' occurs in the War as Indian behaved against Aristotle's definition of 'automatic slaves,' but, Aristotelian fear showed its power after the WW-II when Indian Army revolted against the British Rule.
- After the War, These soldiers connoted 'private' that constitutes 'public' but after the War, they disbanded under the hallucination of rebellion (with or without rewards, like Lalu)
- One could ask what if 1,440,437 soldiers revolt from Indian side then, in answering, the fate of India would be entirely different. Their duty towards England has affected the politics of India in general and nationalism in particular. Aristotle goes on saying: "If then there are slaves by nature, it is because there have been slaves against nature. Force made the first slaves, and their cowardice perpetuated the condition."
- Indian soldiers are unfit in this Aristotle diction as they regularly participated in War however their participation remained unfruitful in drive any direct threat to the domination of British yet it was heavily seen after the world war when Indian navy revolted against them, thus, the fear of Aristotle was true.

Anti-Democracy

- If one compares Machiavelli's *The Prince* with Aristotle's *Politics*, then one could easily conclude how former was rejected the "values and morality" for the supremacy of Prince whereas the latter for benefit of the State.
- The concern of both, indeed, was to maintain a stronghold of "oligarchy," the aristocrats and educated, over the "polity," the poor class (Aristotle's *Politics*).
- A talk that become the cry of the post-modern critics is centred on the word "polity" which, according to Aristotle, includes farmers, slaves and others who were, without a shadow of doubt, lesser and disrespectful places in society.
- If such is true then the novel includes all the parts and is in league with Aristotelian theory of tragedy which he mentioned in *Poetics*, but it disdain the theory by the moralistic preference of democracy and the right to live with dignity for all.

Neo-Slavery

- The classical predecessors Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, undoubtedly, were in favour of slavery on the ground of “might is right,” however, it is, in twenty first century, a crime against humanity and thus banned by the strict stick of law, order and democracy in order to promote universalism, cosmopolitanism, equality, fraternity and brotherhood as imagined by the radicals.
- Henceforth, it is apt for a post modern critic in general and a Black critic hand in hand with a feminist critic in particular to look angrily at Aristotle not as a philosopher-friend but merely as an enemy who consciously preferred slavery for the progress of State.
- Slavery or War slavery in 21st century renamed itself as neo-slavery or bonded labour because Aristotle’s definition of slavery which was in practice is eliminated completely due to the pressure of extremely radical-cum-humanistic circles in a republic or democracy that have full faith of citizens.

- Rousseau “Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains” (Social Contract)
- Marx “You have nothing to loose but your chains.” (Communist Menifesto)
- Aristotle “every man born in slavery is born for slavery. Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire of escaping from them” (Politics)
- {However debatable this is, Aristotle rigid separated action from production, and argued for the deserved subservience of some people (“natural slaves”), and the natural superiority (virtue, arete) of others. Wiki}
- “Bird”: “the simple Aristotelian definition of a ‘bird’ was something that had two legs, two wings, could fly and walk.” (<http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/what-is-a-monster> by Natalie Lawrence in her research entitled “What is a Monster?” submitted at Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK.)
- Nietzsche’s “God is dead” against the philosophical corruption of Greek philosophers.
- “Aristotelian Society” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotelian_Society)

Social Exclusion/ Inclusion

- Amartya Sen (2000) argued that the roots of the concept of social exclusion can be traced back to Aristotle. Emile Durkheim (1885) focused on the concept of the social cohesion and the problem of the society and their relationships in the society and nation-state.
- The social Exclusion is originated from the Lenoir's work (1974, 1989) who referred it as consisting not only of the poor but also of a wide variety of people, namely the social misfit. There are various ways in which these segments can be characterised.
- For instance, we can think in terms of privileged inclusion, secondary inclusion, adverse incorporation or problematic inclusion, self-exclusion and 'hard-core' exclusion. Privileged insiders are those who occupy the central positions within mainstream institutions of a society, and whose collective influence shapes the framework of rules and norms within which all the key decisions of social life are made.
- One of the recurring themes in the early gender and development literature was that the Problem for women was not so much that they had been excluded from development, but that they had been incorporated into it on adverse terms (Kabeer 1994).

Establishing Slavery

- Towards whom was their loyalty?
- Were they nationalists?
- Were they part of propaganda?
- Who is responsible for their doom?
- Were they independent slave of the colonial government?

Interrogating Slavery

- Gandhi finds it necessary for the Indians to be enlisted ‘in the Army.’ He thinks that India cannot imagine its freedom until Indians ‘bear arms’ and learn to ‘use’ them. It was against Gandian theory of *Ahimsa*. He hoped for India’s freedom after the War, but it remains a fantasy not for Gandhi and the Congress but also for the soldier who died or returned.
- No one, neither Gandhi or the British, nor India or the Congress takes the responsibility of the butchering of Indian soldiers in the War.
- In sum, these Sepoys were fighting in no man’s land on the call of their leaders and party but they were unaware of the fact that on whose order and for what profit they are fighting.
- Truthfully, 74,000 Indians died in vain for other’s fight without any fruit. What they get is a *Chattri* and twelve Victoria Medals. That is the price of Indian soldiers. If we are historicizing it, we should think again what we are doing. We are not paying homage to Indian soldiers but we are celebrating the victory of England. Where is the question of India, and being Indian in context of the War.

Utopian Reply to Orme

- The war, in general, has never been the subject of Indian novelists except Anand, who broke this stereotype with *Across the Black Waters* (1940), which propelled a talk about the recruitment, propaganda and the horrible experiences of the blood sacrifice of 74,187 Indian lives in the War (O'Dwyer 214-18; Omisi 39; Das 33; Pradhan 217).
- In this War around 5,525,000 were dead casualties from the side of the Allies out of which around 74000 were Indians and out of them twelve were awarded with Victoria Cross medals. Indian gets victory not because of British soldiers but because of Indians as O'Dwyer accepts it. (The loss of Indian soldiers from the side of Central Forces is not included): **Sources are from Wikipedia**
- Total Indian combatants soldiers were 877,068. If ten soldiers killed one then they killed at least 87,706 the Central soldiers. In this sense, they were perfect killing machine. It is more than the Indians counting of casualties (wounded not included). While historicizing them, we see them sufferer rather than killer.
- In sum, we feel Aristotelian 'pity' and 'fear' for their services. As an Indian, we see them victim not as killer. Our heart filled with sympathy for them. They too were Indian hence we sympathize with them. Only reason of sympathy is that we hate England as it colonized India.

Conclusion

- When we historicize Indian soldiers, they become the object of examination with European standards. We never read them with our perspective. The ghost of the Commonwealth is still haunting the Indians.
- We never criticize Indian Congress, Gandhi and others for throwing Indians in the War but kept busy in casting our stinging satire on Europe. We were also equally responsible for soldier's doom.
- We often say that Indian soldiers do not get the respect they deserve. Here the question comes, from whom we are asking for respect? If it is from England then who is England to give us respect. Apart, why we are demanding respect from a 'captor' and why we are not giving respect to them.
- Of one excavates the roots from last century to till now that what is the length of respect given to those soldiers, then one will dig out the truth in the form of an answer that we neither practiced any effort of giving respect to them.
- Lets come out of our slumber, lets challenge the European notion with our collective consciousness for the Indian soldiers. If we are unable to do so, then lets us not to awake the sleeping ghost of their skeletons. If we cannot bring their honour back, then why we are crying over their death. Let them sleep in their unnumbered graves. May God bless them for serving but the question whom they serve, I do not know? I am leaving the question upon you to guide me whom they serve?

Endnote

When you go home tell them of us and say -
For your tomorrow we gave our today.

—“The Kohima Epitaph”

And some there be who no memorial have;
Who perished are as though they'd never been.
For our tomorrows their today they gave,
And simply asked that in our hearts they'd live.
We heed their call and pledge ourselves again,
At dusk and dawn - we will remember them!

Remembrance - A hymn for Remembrance Sunday

—Charles Henrywood

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