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Third-Generation Life and Urban Decay in Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis*

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Abstract:

This research paper examines the significance of the third gender in the second phase of Bombay by analysing the novel *Narcopolis* (2012) from the perspective of a Transgender observer. Through thorough observation, this study has concentrated on the central problem of LGBT issues and their accomplishments. Bombay is portrayed in the story by characters including Dimple, Rashid, Newton Xavier, and Mr Lee. The narrator arrives in Bombay from New York Metropolis; the underworld city is particularly addicted to opium and has many brothels in this country. Following Dimple's life journey, the narrative transition moves from 1970 to 2004 in old Bombay. This research article finishes with a discussion of Dimple's smoking addiction.

Keywords - Transgender, Narcopolis, Sexuality, Relinquish, Gender.

Introduction

Recollection is a sort of reproduction adhered to in the 2012 novel *Narcopolis*; it attempts to portray the singularity of the events that occurred quite a few decades ago. Women from all across India go to Bombay hoping to find employment and support their families back home. More than a handful find themselves on Shuklaji Street, working in one of the brothels, where they are mistreated in cages, and the brothel owners retain their profits. The opium den located on Shuklaji Street is Rashid's. Rashid's is the hub of *Narcopolis*; its different personalities are tied to it. As overlapping petals, they provide a comprehensive perspective of Bombay's dark underbelly.

In the conversation with Jeet Thayil, Ratnam mentioned Thayil's statements as evidence: "It is only by repeating the names of the dead that we honour them. I wanted to honour the people I knew in the opium dens, the marginalised, the addicted and deranged, people who are routinely called the lowest of the low, and I wanted to make some record of a world that no longer exists, except within the pages of a book" (Ratnam 24).

In 2006, Thayil revealed to *The Hindu*, an Indian publication, that he had been an alcoholic for about two decades: "I spent most of that time sitting in bars, getting very drunk, talking about writers and writing, and never writing. It was a colossal waste. I feel very fortunate that I got a second chance" *The Hindu* (2006). Comparing third-gender suffering to Jeet Thayil's work, it is clear that opioids aid in calming the psyche of a violent homosexual and serve as preventative medicine for hidden disorders.



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Narcopolis (2012) reveals the reorganisation of people from the fourth planet, like Dimple, who is transgender, while showing an advanced heterosexual civilisation that cannot be "sympathetic, inclusive, open-minded, and humane towards transgender people". Indian religions have failed to prioritise gender equality, and sexual minorities and gender non-conforming individuals have turned to narcotics to alleviate their feelings of solitude. Consequently, this barrier to equal opportunity tends to exclude them from society.

In addition to Indian doctrines, the founder of the non-governmental organisation Sahodari, Kalki Subramaniam, notes that in the 2011 census, four lakhs and ninety thousand Indians came out as third-gender individuals. However, the likelihood of being a "third-gender" individual is five times greater because several remain closeted out of fear of stigma. Due to their non-conforming gender, transgender people are frequently rejected from schools, occupations, societies, and family relationships in India. Therefore, due to a lack of understanding and education on gender equality, the prevalent social norms and beliefs are indifferent towards transgender individuals. These types of techniques and investigations have a more significant negative influence on a specific community. According to this research study, the vast majority of transgender persons have resorted to living as beggars or as enslaved people to get through a life fraught with suffering and adversity. They are hooked to opium because it temporarily numbs them from their suffering, allowing them to remain pain-free.

Alternative gender identity is not recognised in India's phenomenology of gender identity. Since of this, many transgender persons are coerced into working in the sex industry because they have no other opportunities for employment or ways to support themselves, contributing to the high prevalence of HIV in the general community. They are not recognised by society and get a salary far lower than a typical person's. Essential supports like teachers and parents do not accept them, and they do not have access to an appropriate education. In addition, they do not have access to proper counselling centres and educational institutions where they may find quiet, making the world a terrifying place for the typical gender-confused youngster.

Therefore, gender is a subject that has been avoided for a very long time in India from both a cultural and a traditional position. This gender divergence scale delivers binary responses that are either heterosexual or non-heterosexual. The United States Supreme Court delivered a landmark judgement in 2014 when it acknowledged those identifying as transgender as a "third gender." It protects all citizens, regardless of whether or not they belong to sexual minority groups. Some transgender people have found happiness and success in India's society, despite the widespread prejudice against them. The non-heterosexual minority in India has been slightly agitated, expressing their discontent. Because she felt trapped in a male body, a lady chose to have sex reassignment surgery and identify as a member of the third gender. She then engaged in a legal battle in order to become a sub-inspector of police, and she eventually achieved her



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goal of becoming the first transgender sub-inspector in India. She is now serving at the Dharmapuri police station in Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, according to India's 2011 census, an estimated 4,900,000 individuals of third genders reside in the country. However, Kalki argues that it is an immense disappointment that only 28,341 third-gender voters registered during the voter registration procedure.

Reviewing Dimple as A Third Gender

Being a member of a sexual minority in India is stigmatised as a sin in the religious nation. Regarding *Narcopolis* (2012), the true face of a deranged, malnourished, and epileptic knowledge that has crept to the surface from the abysmal hole surrounding our rudderless culture. It concludes by depicting the city as it currently exists and hints at a possible future. The book opens and closes with the same word, 'Bombay,' and the city is the protagonist in many respects. Through the perspective of nostalgia, the book paints a negative picture of sexual minorities in India, a country known for its treasured children and caring elders, as well as its monsoons, mangoes, and spices. It has highlighted the importance of having rights to education, housing, money, job, and safety. Because they are homosexual, the correctness of their treatment is laughable. Therefore, it addresses issues of greater significance for the LGBT community, such as the fact that transgender people have never received equality save for a few menial jobs. Most frequently, the study has underlined that transgender individuals engage in begging and prostitution. According to *Norcopolis* (2012), Dimple's occupation consists of preparing opium pipes and being a full-time sex prostitute. In her wordings, She said:

"I do not use the terms woman and man, but others do. I have no idea what I am. On occasion, I am neither or nothing. On occasion, I feel like both. However, since men and women are so unlike, how can one individual be both? Is that not what you are considering? I am both, and I have learnt that if you intend to exist in the world, you are better off not knowing" (Thayil 28).

Now it raises doubts about the ability to quantify the tolerance and endurance of transgender people in this section of the community, but medications like opium and others help to alleviate the nightly stresses. In addition to intoxication, "forgetting" is a societal process of frustration and repression, as all transsexual individuals endure anguish and suffocation within their homes. "She was learning to live with pain. It was always there, on her shoulders and her back. The opium reduced it to something manageable, but she woke with pain" (Thayil 27).

The sad memories of The Dimple include her infancy being "neglected, abandonment and sale to a priest by his widowed mother, her transformation into a eunuch, her betrayal of Lee, and a Chinese army soldier who had escaped his brutal nation in a stolen jeep" (Doncu 379). Bombay, India, is a dirty and chaotic city, yet Lee has found it and has pushed himself to go there. He has gone from the frying pan into the flame. As his father saved Dimple from the excruciating anguish



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and set her on a course that could not be reversed while riding on a smoke pipe, he chewed opium to soothe the interminable misery that he was experiencing. "Dimple has mastered the nuances of opium smoking and transfers from the whorehouse to a room above Rashid's den" (380).

As such, survival is a difficult task that is frequently violated; in reality, the examination of this novel reveals their state of being unable to obtain housing, although prevailing as slums and have-nots. As a result, it causes physical suffering and mental illness, preventing adequate treatment and complete recovery. Despite this, doctors see transgender patients as untouchable due to the terrible illness that results from living in red-light districts. The doctor violates his profession's code of ethics by treating Dimple in an inhumane manner, creating a dangerous situation for her,

"The doctor had gold-framed glasses and did not examine her. He did not touch her at all, not even to shake her hand, as if he knew her, knew where she lived and what she did for a living and the exact amount of opium she took daily, and even if he made no moral judgement about her life, he had made a medical or personal judgement, which he had every right to make" (Thayil 30).

As an outcome, people resurrect their belief in general hospitals and abandon them forever, opting instead for their medications. In another sense, she has gained the ability to prepare her pipe. Because she lives around heterosexuals, it brings her more happiness than everything else society offers. Lee informed Dimple of his illness. He felt a grating in his throat, but he refused to go to the doctor because he already knew it. He stated that he required opium for its analgesic effects, just as she did. He has a long list of ailments. The identification of pain formed a bond between them. He spoke about pain as if it were a country. So as to communicate, "I am in Spain, he appears to be in Spain" (Thayil 34).

Therefore, transgender individuals cannot survive and reside, and marginal identity is not indefinable. Practically, these individuals are sexually ostracised, and they were purposefully imported as opium addicts. "Revolution must immediately follow the last revolution. I am tense before midnight, but I take sleeping pills and feel better, try drugs" (Thayil 34). Ultimately, Dimple recognises the state of society and adapts to its disparities; she then lives her life accordingly. Commemoration of Dimple exaggerates transgender seclusion and misery,

Dimple comprehended precisely the nature of Janice's anguish. Knowing that your parents did not love you was a hurt that would never heal. Nothing Dimple could do to ignore her childhood could alter this essential truth. She was consistently influenced by it. It never disappeared. She would deceive herself into thinking that she was doing well, but in reality, she was not. It would emerge as fresh, juicy, and red as it had always been whenever she did not get enough sleep or was frightened. When Dimple's "brother and sister" are eventually "reunited in a hamlet outside of Kathmandu", she does not try to hide the emotions welling up in her eyes.



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Others, both men and women, and whole families were sobbing simultaneously while munching popcorn and loudly sucking on bottles of Thumps Up and Fanta.

As Dimple suggests, the core of Dimple's life is impotent and devoid of the base. Her sexual orientation has caused her to have a pessimistic attitude toward life, even though she comes from a traditional household and has relatives. The conflict between her life and death occurs amid a raging river, which serves as a metaphor for either passing away or preparing for death. Therefore, for a transgender person living in a community that is primarily cisgender, the quest for sources of life is analogous to looking for resources in a wasteland. Dimple chooses, in the end, not to forget her history and start a new life; instead, she works on forgiving her history while continuing to live the same life she had before, despite the misery this causes her. As a consequence of this, she is unable to find any comfort in her existence as a person among other individuals.

CONCLUSION

The research findings, on the other hand, represent an effort to find a solution to the problem of the third gender in the society that is generally accepted in Bombay. According to the findings of this research study, the novel *Narcopolis* (2012), written by Jeet Thayil. As a consequence of this, members of sexual minorities have a strong desire for socio-communal remedies to the new life that should be established by the liberalisation and parity of the region that is marginalised. For this reason, extra decisive action in favour of homosexuals is required to address their life-threatening problems. Many Dimples' lives will continue fraught with difficulty until they are comprehended.

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