

Totalitarian Agriculture as an Outcome of Popular Culture In The Light Of Daniel Quinn Ishmael

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Abstract:

Culture is always defined as a way of living and culture is always an opposite dipole to that of Nature. Human culture developed after the practice of agriculture, man made agriculture never provided food to everyone instead it gave power to control the recessive group. Totalitarian agriculture started to create an imbalance in a society. It created ecological imbalance and it also created economical imbalance in the society, this issue of totalitarian agriculture is discussed in the works of American Eco-cultural critic Daniel Quinn. In his book he starts from the biblical story of Cain and Abel. Cain who plowed the land is cursed by God whereas Able is blessed for rearing cattle because Cain is against nature; he creates an imbalance in the society. The main goal of Totalitarian agriculture is to provide food to people who starve, but starvation never ends by Totalitarian agriculture. This research proposal attempts to express that agriculture is the product of Popular culture. Popular Culture is defined as the culture of everyday life of the larger number of people that agriculture is practiced all over the world for the food production, though it creates an imbalance in ecology we continue to produce food by using totalitarian agriculture. This research proposal focuses on totalitarian agriculture as an outcome of popular culture in the light of Daniel Quinn "Ishmael" that delivers a story in a Socratic narration method. This Research paper tries to establish the relation between popular culture and agriculture.

Key Word: Totalitarian Agriculture, Food Politics, Power control, Popular Culture

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"A Great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself within"- (Will Durant, Apoclypto)

Culture has its etymology from a Latin term that is 'cult' or 'cultus' which means cultivating, human culture evolves once after cultivation started in land. "Agriculture" is not only a way to produce food products but agriculture is the byproduct of culture. People's culture is defined not only by their way of living but also the way they practice to produce food. When it comes to popular culture as Pramod K. Nayar quotes in his book titled *An Introduction to Cultural Studies* as "Popular culture is culture of masses" (Nayar 5). It is a set of practices that is very popular among groups of mass gathering. This research paper focuses on totalitarian agriculture as an outcome of popular culture.

Nature and culture are always opposites, when people first born they lived a life without any culture. The concept of man's superiority over nature arises only when man starts to control nature. If a primitive man doesn't have food they starve and they die it had a natural ecological balance. When modern man or takers started to practice totalitarian agriculture this ecological balance was broken by the modern man. As Daniel Quinn comments totalitarian agriculture as "putting the food under lock and key", this research paper tries to elucidate totalitarian agriculture (agriculture which is man-made practiced by all) as a product of popular culture.

As popular culture always represents the culture of mass people, the culture that attracts mass gathering. In the present day scenario popular culture denotes the way the contemporary society youths live, some include media objects, entertainment books, giraffe novels, fashion trends that suits not only for elite people but for all people in the society. Some of the examples of popular culture include common movies, music, TV shows, trends and food habits that are tasted in our day to day life by a vast variety of people. This research paper want to act as a idiosyncratic one and that is it attempts to explore way back tradition of a elite people that later practice by all in common and turned as a popular culture that is practiced, influenced and created a great impact in our daily life and created an impact in food production and food politics.

Popular culture as a set of practice that is understood and embodied, shared meaning in the social system. When we think about present day definition for popular culture it denotes daily technological

advancement and fashion. But we quite common forget the religious scriptures that propagates ideology are not always taken into account as a text of popular culture that propagates meaning for large mass of audience. One such religious text is bible. Bible which is the religious scripture of Christians but the impact of bible and its influence among the mass group of people can be considered as a text that to be first added in the popular culture.

It is a known fact that popular culture and religion are entirely different arenas and they act as dualism. But the real fact is not the same: the rise of consumer culture and popular culture is first initiated from the Holy Scripture 'bible', though it preaches that the spirituality culture of mass people around the world is constructed only based on the Holy Scripture. As Daniel Quinn in his book *Ishmael* he quotes "story. A story is a scenario interrelating man, the world, and the gods" (Quinn 43).

Daniel Quinn, famous American, environmental activist eco critic who is best known for his trilogy *Ishmael I, The Story of B and My Ishmael*, he is the one who coined the term Neo-tribalism, when you come across the word totalitarian agriculture somewhere in social media the very first person who comes in mind is Quinn, he is the first person to address the totalitarian agriculture in his works, when Daniel Quinn Started to talks about agriculture he pinpoints the first farmer from bible 'Genesis'. Now this research paper sketches a outline from agricultural reference mentioned in bible then bible as text of popular culture, and what totalitarian agriculture is all about, do the totalitarian agriculture gives food to the people who are starving or the totalitarian agriculture surplus the food this act increase the accumulation of power in single place and it tries to exhibit the relationship between totalitarian agriculture and popular culture are critically analyzed in the light of the novel *Ishmael*.

At first in the book of Quinn he tries to explain about the mother culture which started after the practice of Totalitarian Agriculture. In the novel *Ishmael* he gives biblical anecdotes of Cain and Abel. Cain is addressed as the first farmer and Abel is addressed as the first shepherd in myth.

The Myth or story, which interlinks life of human beings (culture) with that life of god that gives power to enact the story, here the myth, is the story of Cain and Abel this story narrates the story of first man with sin in his and it talks about the impact of agriculture.

In Genesis

"By the Lord's help I have acquired a son." So she named him Cain. Later she gave birth to another son, Abel. Abel became a shepherd, but Cain was a farmer. After sometime, Cain brought some of his harvest and gave it as an offering to the LORD.⁴ Then Abel brought the first Lamb born to one of his sheep, killed it and gave the best parts of it as an offering. The Lord was pleased with Abel and his offering, but he rejected Cain and his offering. Cain became furious, and he scowled in anger (*Today's English Version Bible*, 2018)

The above verse from Genesis narrates the event of first murder that in Earth caused by totalitarian agriculture. That is Cain who tilled the land is cursed by God whereas Abel who maintained the livestock. Cain as a first agriculturist and Abel as a hunt-gatherer this story indirectly narrates the conflict between Nomadic Herders and Sedentary Farmers. God favored the hunt gatherers to maintain the ecological balance where as the farmers (Sedentary Farmers), practiced totalitarian agriculture, in the words of Quinn they were addressed as Takers and Quinn addresses the Hunt gatherers as the leavers and here the story to enact is the story of the farmers and preparation of food by use of totalitarian agriculture.

Major Research Question in this Research

1. Does Totalitarian agriculture solve the issue of starvation?
2. How do we see issues of Environmentalism/ disaster and crises reflected in popular culture and in literary works?
3. Does Totalitarian Agriculture affect the balance of the ecological System?
4. Does Totalitarian Agriculture the root cause for Food Politics?

Totalitarian agriculture is defined as a set of practice and belief about agriculture is that for food production to the increasing population any part of land like forest can be converted into farming land this shows that practicing agriculture in a way of dictating and practicing a power culture in a social system. As Aaron Milavae, in his article *Daniel Quinn's Analysis of Our culture of Death* he quotes as follows;

According to 'B' the origin of Western culture does not rest in agriculture itself but in a peculiar form of "Totalitarian Agriculture" (1996. 151-155) that was never practiced from the beginning of the world save by one culture, our own. According to totalitarian agriculture the food produced is not only set aside as "of limits" to all others, but we actively destroy every species of animal, bird or insect that persists in trying to forage in our fields (Milavae 1)

Totalitarian agriculture paves way for starvation. First world countries are producing enormous amounts of food products but still somewhere in the world the third world population is starving hard. Daniel Quinn addresses this issue as to prevent starvation we should not produce large quantities of food. Increase in

the food production never stops starvation instead it increase the population and Daniel Quinn says this as a Population Bomb that totalitarian agriculture increased the population. Totalitarian agriculture forms an imbalance in a society where it accumulates power. Leavers or Hunt Gathers were totally evaded from the popular culture; this phenomenon was said as “The Great Forgetting”.

The Environmental issue and Eco-criticism is an inevitable arena in popular culture, as nature is an integral part of our day today life though we have moved far away from the nature we can never completely ignore nature from the life of human beings as Quinn affirms that Takers the modern man is trying to have a supremacy over nature and Totalitarian agriculture an outcome of popular culture do the same. Totalitarian agriculture means power over nature that is power over controlling the food production in which the equilibrium in the nature is spoiled, as Charles Darwin’s theory of *Natural Selection* and the phrase made by him “The survival of the fittest” is changed by this totalitarian agriculture and this eventually increases the people to starve. It is very important to address the environmental issues in popular culture books, movies, songs and so on.

Food Politics in Totalitarian Agriculture dictates that totalitarian agriculture produces a large quantities of food but through accumulating huge stock of food people are controlled by the dominant class of the society. Food Politics is an important topic to be discussed at first when people started to settle in a place the very first initiative step is that they started to cultivate stable food, for an instance if we don’t cultivate our stable food for example, rice we tend to search for food and we at that time depend on nature in that case we protect our nature because our life source is in the hands of nature then we don’t deforest. If people can find food from a normal tree, no one will strive hard to lead their life. But vice versa, we create food for a large group of people and the native tribe starts to forget about their hunting gathering instinct and now by practicing agriculture they started to control the power, and they accumulated power, food production paved the way to food politics and food politics paved the way to greedy, crime and starvation.

The depiction of environmental issues, myth making and the concept of neo-tribalism in Popular Cultural the movies, books, novels are *Instinct, Thumbad, Bible, Ishmael, Story of the B, My Ishmael, Apocalypto, Fantastic Fungi, Sethumaan, The origin of Totalitarianism, 1984.*

As this research paper starts with the quotes of Will Durant that a civilization can never be destroyed by external force without an internal defect, our mother culture or popular culture has continuously repeated the story of Cain and Abel in our ears that practicing Totalitarian agriculture gives the modern man a power. Totalitarian agriculture is not a way to stop starvation, instead it allows the population to increase. Food Produced in First world countries like America tries to feed the starving third world countries like Ayod. They not only supply food but they try to take power over the country. Danile Quinn also has confusion that totalitarian agriculture can never be stopped altogether instead the concept of Neo-tribalism can be implemented. Popular culture is daily cultural practice the way we live . One such practice is for more than a hundred decades we are practicing totalitarian agriculture which is practiced by the majority of the people in the world so it can be considered as an outcome of popular culture.

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