Dissecting "Everydayness" in Ben Okri's *The Freedom Artist*: A Heideggerian Analysis

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Abstract

Okri in *The Freedom Artist* (2019) highlights the very setup in which the masses accept certain deceptions, trends, and "myth" in order to siphon their lifestyles and realities willingly. These structures whether coming from any particular cult, source, or impact as an abstraction on the masses, control and deceive them. In the present research plan Heidegger's theoretical concept of The They or "Das Man" has been utilized because it highlights the concept of world within its "Everydayness" further determined and ruled by The They. This concept has been applicable on the hegemonic urban spectrum of "The Hierarchy" in The Freedom Artist because of its faceless and clueless monopoly on the urban structure in which the masses are enmeshed into deceptive yet coercive trends siphoning their lives. This inspection is associated with the objective to conduct a multidimensional analysis of the aforementioned aura of "Everydayness" in connections to the abstracted hegemony of The They because it utilizes various means to obscure the pristine freedom which for sure comes with the essential ontological status of Dasein.

Key Words: Dasein, Das Man, The They, Apophantic, Everydayness, Sociopolitical Structures, Ontological Essence

Introduction

There are various apparent differences between being civilized and uncivilized, being human and nonhuman (animal). One of these differences is man's structure-oriented lifestyle which includes his mindset; the way he behaves (instructed or learns to do so) thinks and perceives the world around him. This structural approach sometimes becomes a sort of cauldron which pulverizes one's ontological self which in simple words can be addressed or termed as 'original' self. These structures on sociopolitical, psychological and theological grounds cannot be spotted at once neither the originators of these deep rooted frameworks are to be traced out in first place.

One needs ontological expertise and enough courage to resist (in philosophical sense) in order to spot the symbolic or metaphoric incarcerations in these structures that one perceives as the perpetual truth of one's life and self. Ben Okri's *The Freedom Artist* (2019) explores the very deceptive structures that shape man's life and his whole personality sometimes in the name of civilization and sometimes in the name of reality.

Ben Okri's *The Freedom Artist* resonates with the theoretical yet philosophical wisdom of Heidegger which aims to conduct an ontological inspection of the opaque social structures syphoning man's mindset and enmeshing people in a perpetual chaos which often excruciates on detrimental levels. This perilous intensity has been overtly recorded in the accounts of human history. Correlating with Heidegger's concept of "The They" we can see that in *The Freedom Artist* Okri highlights the monopoly of an invisible authority that requires complete conformity in order to ensure survival. People, even one's own self becomes its subject and force if succumb to its invisible hegemonic structure in all spheres of one's life. Okri addresses this untraceable force as "The Hierarchy" in the dystopian novel.

It is understood that every author fabricates his own experience and perception of his contemporary world, thus accordingly Okri also represents the sociopolitical issues of his contemporary era. He spent his life in Nigeria as well as in England. He has addressed his protestations against the deceptive and oppressive sociopolitical structures experienced throughout his life in his literary works.

The most enticing feature of his literature is his adroit utilization of the literary term "Magical Realism". By dexterously using this technique he successfully manages to draw the attentions of his readers to the gravest issues described in his works without offending or boring them at all.

The Nigerian culture and its gradual deterioration under colonial rule can be interpreted in the allegorical toxic social structures in *The Freedom Artist*. The appraisal for oral traditions and art can be taken as a symbol of pre-colonial Nigerian culture. Then the arrival of the "new myth" which stigmatizes the whole sociopolitical structure in the novel can be taken allegorically as the hybridization and then complete vilification of that culture under inhuman hegemonic structure of colonial authority which apparently changed the preferences and interests; deceptively convincing the masses that the new social order is beneficial for them as they can be civilized by surrendering to its monopoly. This colonial structure can be interpreted as Nationalism which has curbed people in the name of an unchangeable or unchallengeable authority of state which followed the Western structures left by the colonial ramrods, even after decolonization or so called independence of a region or culture.

We can see that, the opaque dystopian construction and the dilemmas of Karnak, Mirababa and Amalantis in Okri's *The Freedom Artist* must be explored as the core of this inspection in order to study the baseless structures that control and drive an individual in this world of "Everyday-ness". The plot of the literary work is not linear or conventional as per the trendy literary poetics. Due to its remarkable opaqueness it appeals as a primordial ontological representation of human existence which is marred by various dogmatic creeds and authorities determining the deceptive structures of reality for the masses.

Heidegger's approach towards the structural authority highlights it under the term "public-ness", "They-self" or "The One" (Das Man). It does not target any specific authoritarian group of people or demagoguery of any sociopolitical kind rather it is something deep rooted and unclear in its completeness of structural system. It is unfolded, determined and established majorly through language. There are various dimensions and interpretations which can be explored and applied on the detrimental yet unclear structure suppressing the masses in Okri's *The Freedom Artist.*

Literature Review

Heidegger under a multidimensional study and interpretation requires here to review the interpretation of "Thrownness" by Postic (2021) He has applied this theoretical lens on Algis Budry's short story "Wall of Crystal, Eye of Night" in order to explore the Heideggerian philosophical agenda in considerable analytical depth. For him "Thrownness" is no less than a "range of possibilities for acting, and understanding and interpretation is the process by which it projects itself into such possibilities." (Postic, 2021)

Furthermore, Read (2008) applies the Heideggerian approach on Urban space and the constructions of city in relation to cultural and sociological setups. For him the constructed realities impacted by the urbanized "technical" structures of cities follow the "ready-at-hand" possibilities for *Dasein* that are abstracted on the basis of situational variations and interests as well as the rule of the majority "Das Man". The very idea of urban "authenticity" follows a specific structural order of preferences and interests that are introduced, shaped by the *They* and for the *They.*

The things we encounter in the spaces we make are the products of those spaces and we are assured of their return in the patterns of the ways we do things. The city made possible the sharing of words and actions in such a way that significance and persistence could begin to accrue to them. (Read, 2008).

Moving forward with our review of relevant literature conducting a multidimensional analysis of Heideggerian ontological theoretical corpus, we can refer to Igwe & Ikechukwu (2021) because of their critical examination of Heidegger's concept of authenticity and the sociopolitical pressures of the *They*. It is understood that in Heidegger's hypothesis, *Dasein* is free to choose his way in order to distinguish itself primarily from the identity, limits and so called determination of authenticity set by *The They* in order to preserve and look back to one's ontological roots. For Igwe & Ikechukwu (2021)

Heidegger's concept of authenticity (which is inauthentic in actual or ontological sense) which forces *Dasein* to conform with the hegemony of the *They*, is its self holds various conceptual loopholes that require a thorough analysis which can further solidify this study of human existence in present century. Igwe & Ikechukwu (2021) posit the following questions that can highlight the rigidity of Heidegger's hypothesis on being authentic.

A critical mind may be tempted to ask; does authenticity depend solely on the intensity of and individuality of a choice? And does conformity to rules translate to inauthenticity ipso facto? Can a terrorist or a tyrant for instance, be characterized as living an authentic life because he or she consciously and willingly chose to be a terrorist or tyrant? Conversely, in that case, a law abiding citizen can be adjudged inauthentic especially if his or her law-abiding character is ensuing from unthinking habituation? There seems to be some inherent contradictions. (Igwe & Ikechukwu, 2021)

Moreover by directing our review towards the selected subject which is *The Freedom Artist* we can examine various multidimensional analytical approaches highlighting the significance of this masterpiece by Okri (2019). The suppressive and deceptive aura of "The Hierarchy" appeals the readers in a way that they can clearly correlate Foucault's concept of "Docile Bodies" because throughout the dystopian urban structures the masses are treated in a way that it has become a twofold impact because the masses are entrapped in a constant deception as well as they willingly fall into it. Hafeez & Liaqat (2021) come up with this approach by utilizing this aforementioned concept. In the light of their analysis we can presumably study the use of institutional methods to solidify docility amongst the masses in the name of disciplinary stability and welfare. This deception of disciplinary precautions people are controlled and inculcated with certain illusionary credos that curb their social and personal lifestyles. Unlike the ancient methods of public torture and violence to ensure docility out of them, today it has become a camouflaged yet deceptive malpractice applied through more institutionalized means to target the minds of the masses to siphon them as per an ideological apparatus.

The other aspect of prison is the society where disciplinary mechanisms are functioning in order to train subjects by the means of coercion and surveillance. When the mechanisms of prison expand beyond its geographical limits and encapsulate the premises of a society then that becomes a disciplinary society. (Hafeez, Liaqat, 2021).

Quite relevantly, Mukhopadhyay (2021) deems *The Freedom Artist* as a seamless allegorical approach towards our contemporary sociopolitical situation which is based on deceptive malpractices and mind games without any doubt. In this era, one must use critical faculty while receiving information in order to judge and consider its authenticity. For her it is "the story of a society unpleasantly reminiscent of our own." (Mukhopadhyay, 2021) Ubiquitously, Anderson Tepper's interview with Okri is worthy to be alluded here because he himself has appraised *The Freedom Artist* in regards to spotlight the deceptive orders of contemporary sociopolitical setups. He stultifies the ways "in which freedoms were slowly being eroded; the ways in which myths were being distorted and used to manipulate us." (Okri, B, 2020)

Additionally, for Merrit (2019) where is in list it is a significant representation of the role of artists and penmen in regards to their deep rooted impacts on the minds of people that can either deviate or direct them towards their objectives. "This is not a book that is so easily pinned down. It's savagely political, disturbing and fiercely optimistic, the deeply felt work of a writer who refuses to stop asking the hardest questions." (Book Marks Reviews of the Freedom Artist by Ben Okri, 2020) While highlighting the roles of artists and the literary icons in *The Freedom Artist* Mond's (2020) review can be accounted as consternation against the suppression of art and the production of literature. "This here is the heart of *The Freedom Artist:* a deep appreciation of literature, storytelling, and flights of the imagination; a condemnation of the tendency to dumb down great works of art; and the overriding message that true freedom can be found in the pages of a book." (Locusmag, 2020)

Hussain (2021) has Freudian analysis of *The Freedom Artist* conducts a behavioral inspection while examining the dramatis personas in the literary work. There are two categories can be spotted in the dystopian social structures set by "The Hierarchy". One type of the masses is in total gloom without even realizing it due to their preplanned ignorance under the totalitarian rule and on the other side we

can see a group of furtive revolutionaries. Their psychological reaction can be analyzed and overtly spotted in their aims to overthrow the cumbersome social structures that curb their natural freedom of will. As per Freudian psychoanalytical study it is understood that it is quite impossible to completely curb one's behavior because in one way or the other he is likely to channelize one's impulse. That is why Karnak, Ruslana, Amalantis and Mirababa including all the intellectuals and artists, are up to react in every possible way against the deceptive channelization of the dystopian social structure in which they are surviving.

The state affair in the text is indicative of the fact that society in general and the characters in particular are in state of confusion, crises and conflict because books, artists and common mobs are within the chains. Ignorance and lack of courage have further diminished the gloomy situation. Very few have the courage to speak about and majority is the follower of what is being imposed and enthused upon them by the tyrants and societal existing norms because of the fears, anxieties and burden of bars. (Hussain, 2021)

Sheikh'S (2017) psycho-linguistic analysis can be applied on *The Freedom Artist* which can be correlated with the contemporary sociocultural setups that shapes a person's personality as well as his desires and visions about the world in which he is living. Their subjectivity which is considered as the so called independent and original status of a person while holding a perspective, is shaped linguistically and psychologically in a way that a person adores a deceptive agenda and the truths of his life without questioning them. The truths about the world around him are inculcated to him through the semantic symbols of linguistic structures. Language without any doubt shapes the imagination of a person as well as Sheikh hypothesizes the linguistic structure as the "system of signs or more precisely ofsignifiers defines the mechanism of operation of our psyche, our conscious as well as unconscious. Structure of language is the grammar, the rules which determine the mutual relation andarrangement of signifiers." (Sheikh, 2017)

Results and Discussion

In order to explore the study of Okri's *The Freedom Artist* in collaboration with Heidegger's philosophical setup which tends to illuminate the ontological roots of human existence in this world we need to have a thorough consultation of his whole framework of *Dasein* and its relation to this world within its structural completeness or wholeness. *Dasein* is a generalized term used by Heidegger (1962) in order to hypothesize and demonstrate his ontological study of human existence in his notable philosophical work *Being and Time* which explores the phenomenology of the ontological truths of human existence. Ubiquitously, *Dasein* represents the spatiality of an existential being within its pre-ontological status along with its presence "within-the-world" as well as "Being-along-side-world".

For Heidegger the whole structure of *Dasein* consists of its connectivity with other entities which can either be other concepts (in Delauzian sense), it can be solid tangible things, spaces as well as other people. The only thing which differentiates him from traditional philosophers is his considering the concept of truth as ever changing and mutable. For him truth never lies within certain static utterances or records that are exposed in regards to their vulnerability towards dogmatism and deceptions.

For Heidegger it is more of a linkage between entities which represents the reality of *Dasein.* While speculating upon the relationship between entities Heidegger presumes *Dasein* as the existential status of man in this world. His relationship with the worldly entities is based on "concernedness" towards a certain entity which can be interpreted as the usage, result "Causa finalis" of which is derived or uncovered "disclosed" within the process of its usability "ready-at-handedness". To hypothesize Heideggerian approach on a complete general level it can be perceived that he lays stress on the importance of the phenomenological discovery "disclosed-ness" or "un-concealment" of reality under the term *Aletheia* and the very discovery is only possible if the subject or an entity is dissected in its structural and relational wholeness.

Heideggerian formula reiterates that the concept of "world-hood" is made up of relational structures conjoining numerous existential entities studied under the term *Dasein.* For him everything

exists in an abstract structure which in accordance to its participation or position within this structure as whole ensures its wholeness along with the wholeness of the *Dasein*. One of the most important synthetic approaches of Heidegger is his conception of language as a structure of smaller symbolic hermeneutic entities that in coherence tend to disclose the linguistic truth within itself as well as its demonstration of "world-hood".

We must demonstrate that Reality is not only one kind of Being among others, but that ontologically it has a definite connection in its foundations with Dasein, the world, and readiness-to-hand. (Heidegger, 1962)

Every relation or pact between two or more entities unfolds their reality. If a person pursues his concern with another person, there are following ways in which the relation between both of them unfolds a process of discovering which leads towards the "un-concealment" of their existential reality which further generally contributes to the determination or discovery of the reality of the world in which they live and pursue their concernedness towards entities lying within its structural system. Heidegger (1962) holds the view that "every agreement, and therefore 'truth' as well, is a relation". Therefore, language through the mutual discourse of two persons unfurls their reality as well as the reality of the world within its temporality and spatiality "There" for them.

Another important philosophical approach towards human existence for Heidegger is man's circumspective relationship with technology as well. This idea has been explored thoroughly in the collection of his essays on technology titled under *The Question Concerning Technology* (1954). Man's linkage with technology proves as a lens which highlights his relation with a technology based upon the invention and through it a relational reality is discovered in advancement. The evolution of technology also derives the evolution of the world by uncovering the ideas and relations those remain in a chiaroscuro shade presented-at-hand but not discovered "ready-at-hand". Every entity along with its idea of usability "ready-at-handedness" is discovered from the uncovered phase "present-at-hand". This discovery further sheds light on the temporality, spatiality along with the idea "reality" of an entity.

Human world has always been circumspective towards the technological setups throughout its primordial phases. The use of a technological entity ensures the discovery of its reality. Usability "ready-at-handedness" unfurls the nature of a specific reality. It can prove hazardous for mankind as well as productive. The gradual advancement of armaments from wooden logs to bronze stabbers, from sharp edged sickle *Khopesh* to bayonet piercing muskets and blunderbusses; from 12 gauge trench guns to Bomber Mafia (during World War 2) with its so called idea of clean warfare from the skies excruciating things more and more till the day when B-29 Superfortress bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulting an enormous number of deaths (which uncovered the detrimental *Aletheia* of the abusage of nuclear power). The more technology evolved, the more mankind suffered from the trauma of destruction.

Everydayness and the Monopoly of The Das Man *The They*

Moving forward with the analysis, it is quite obvious that in *The Freedom Artist* technological setups for broadcasting information are abused to create a deceptive aura of in the name reality which corrupts the ontological and existential bases of *Dasein* that prefer its freedom from the deceptive yet inauthentic "Everyday-ness" of the world. The invisible authority of "The Hierarchy" plays its hand in deviating the masses. It misleads *Dasein* from its original spatiality in perpetual directionless limbo. It sets up a deceptive substitute of being-within-world through various means. By manipulating language and discourse, and various inhuman hegemonic apparatuses, the reality of the masses is marred in the world of Karnak and Mirababa. This idea is addressed as the hegemony or authority of *Public-ness,* or *The They.* It is not focused towards any specific oligarchical center or cult rather it is a mindset, a sort of experience of the masses, shaping their psyches in a certain sociopolitical setup which is established as their unchallengeable reality "Everydayness".

The *Theyself* (Das Man) monopolizes the "Everydayness" of being-within-world. It propagandizes a public image as hegemony of crowd. Our day to day lifestyle is shaped in a specific way which becomes as the de rigueur. One must keep in mind that it is not a specific trend, a symbol

of a band, political party or a person rather it is a deep rooted aura which impacts an individual in his or hers everyday life. Apparently, "Everydayness" in the world is a deception on surfaced level which brings forth its own illusionary, static and inhumane structures covering up the essential, existential yet ontological structural basis of *Dasein* and enmeshes it in an unending inauthenticity (considered an illusionary authenticity in everydayness) until its death. *Dasein's* "being-with-death" breaks its ties from the deceptive world of everydayness and ubiquitously seals its ontological completeness. Death is the only thing which cannot be symbolically or deceptively signified or interpreted authentically or completely unless or until it is experienced and attested once through one's senses.

It is the public which tells one about one's identity and claims complete adherence towards its established archetypes of reality or truth. If one does not follow the dynamics of a specific reality such as being civilized forces one to act in a certain way. One needs to behave in a certain way to keep up with the so called sanity of the world otherwise a gargantuan antagonism becomes inexorable. As Heidegger clarifies that a specific relation between entities uncovers and establishes a specific type of instrumentality "equipmentality" which further sets up the idea of "environmentality" in which *Dasein* exists within-the-world along with its nourishment on the relation with its "being-ready-at-hand". At this point as an inter-textual relevancy we can consider Rizwan Akhtar's beautiful verse from his poem "I Cannot Prove Love" as his words can be interpreted in a way that one must trim his hair and keep up with the formality in order to avoid the stereotypical darts of the society "public".

"Shower gel, shaving cream, Combs/I use them all over to stay away/From the market of insanity." (Akhtar, 2017)

In *The Freedom Artist* it is a dystopian sociopolitical setup in which the individuals holding a resistant attitude towards the hegemony or the trend setting public via "The Hierarchy" try their best to preserve their ontological roots of their existence which tends to be free and immune from the dogmatism in the name of reality. Mirababa, reverts back to his ancestral "primordial" yet pristine roots and goes against the arrival and establishment of the "New Myth" which enmeshes the masses into a suppressive yet tyrannical sociopolitical structure in which people are made the subject of a certain aura or experience which prevails in the society in which they live. It is "public-ness" of *They* in "Everydayness" of "the-being-within-world" which is curbed and bound to follow a certain way, a trend in order to achieve an ideal truth. The very ideality of truth varies environment to environment which is a layer which has covered the ontological presence (existence) of *Dasein*.

The Panoptic *Aletheia* of *Theyself*

In *The Freedom Artist* it is quite obvious that the hegemony of the others *The They* has been established through various technological means. The deceptive broadcasts have manipulated the mindsets of the masses and illusionary trends have been introduced and established made "public" a broader scale. Okri has demonstrated two different sides of truth. At one side, "The Hierarchy" is furtively abducting the rebels who are up to muster enough courage to challenge its "public" monopoly; ubiquitously on the other side the masses are shown everything as stable and peaceful on TV broadcasts. Along with it people are under a constant panoptic structure of surveillance and an inevitable and deceptive docility in the name of discipline or perfection. The application of this malpractice on contemporary human social networks then it is made obvious that how masses are deceived through social media and information technology. These means corrupt their mentality in a way that they are become docile enough to accept the deceptions of their lives as the conceptions of their reality. Through CCTVs, satellites and other numerous furtive electronic means people are under surveillance. They are in control and manipulated without even knowing it.

For the first time the authorities began to harbor doubts about the populace. It had therefore been decided that everyone would be spied upon, that everyone would be placed under surveillance. The most sophisticated devices for spying on people had been deployed. (Okri, 2019)

We have presumably interpreted the hegemony of "The Hierarchy" as per the deceptive and manipulative aura of *The They*. Quite overtly, as its initial promptitude it tends to interpret things in a worldly way, to feed the deception of "Everydayness" in which things must be illuminated and made

"Public". As a result of this malignant practice the ontological yet existential structures of truth pillaring one's self "present-at-hand" were reintroduced in a way that the *Dasein* gets distracted, controlled, and contested against the Other "public" until its death which is both in "Everydayness" and ontological phenomenology.

The plethora of laws, norms, morals, prohibitions, concepts even experiences are reinterpreted as per the force of *They*. In short the *Dasein* is reintroduced and siphoned as per the monopoly of Das Man. That is why this malpractice is unable to define *Dasein* in its absolute completion uncovering its essential roots. *They* only seeks its own conformity from all the entities that are considered as its part.

The *They* deals with the concept of "Everydayness" which thrives on the circumspective approach of *Dasein*. The central concernedness or usability which *They* seeks is to pursue its perpetual thirst for power that is why the demagoguery of "The Hierarchy" plans to setup of concept of "Everydayness" focusing on a multidimensional vastness of its deception manipulating the masses to recognize and conform to its monopoly. Karnak, Ruslana, Amalantis along with the underground rebels try their best to avoid the very toxic establishment and the apparatuses of "Everydayness" or the "New Myth", launched by "The Hierarchy". The "ancient myths" hypothetically presumed as the ontological yet essential structures of *Dasein* were bulldozed by the dystopian reinterpretations supervised by the so called "brighter minds in the Hierarchy" to launch and ossify the deception of "Everydayness".

The brighter minds in the Hierarchy came up with a method of ensuring a spirit of productive obedience. It was the most fiendish and the simplest idea they had had in a long time. They decided to have the old myths altered. (Okri, 2019)

Okri produced *The Freedom Artist* as a Post Truth consternation deconstructing the ideological, sociopolitical, psychological, as well as theological apparatuses. While associating the contemporary usage of information technology with the role of media and press in broadcasting a type of information which only aims to solidify and establish the panoptic monopoly of *They*. The more masses conform to it, the more its embryos breed and mutate into a gargantuan system which pinches individuals in more excruciating way. Technology is used in a way that its usage results or unfolds *Aletheia* in the shape of surveillance, manipulation of information through language which further siphons the social activity of the masses depriving them of their existential rights deceptively. In this way Lacan demonstrates his symbolic phase in which people are met with sociopolitical law and order made by the linguistic cubes forming or deforming their personalities and turning them into sociopolitical subjects of *They*. For him the aforementioned means or apparatuses are used to ensure the deformation of a subject.

I will confine myself to mentioning that the very society that wished to restore the hierarchy responsible for the relations between production and ideological superstructures to its rightful political place, alongside the privilege of the producers, has nevertheless failed to give birth to an Esperanto whose relations to socialist reality *(reel)* would have ruled out from the start any possibility of literary formalism. (Lacan, 1966)

Following Lacan's psychoanalytical perspective on "Symbolic Order" we can hypothesize the Heideggerian idea of *They* and "Public-ness" within its connection to the linguistic structure and its usability "ready-at-handedness" by lucubrating its status as a base in constructing and establishing truths in a sociopolitical setup. In *The Freedom Artist* this very usability has been manipulated. The concept of taboo and prohibitions is introduced, established and made public through language. In the plot, we see that the people experience a severe shortage of linguistic expression because the authority of "The Hierarchy" is up to suppress various words that can jeopardize and challenge the code of "public-ness". Words like "Thinking", "hope", "truth", and "freedom" etcetera are banned from discourse which is indeed a usable process that uncovers truth of an entity. The interaction amongst the masses is reduced to grunts and gesticulations due to gradual shortage of linguistic expression and exclusion of words. Dan Brown (2013) holds the view that language can be abused to corrupt and conceal the truth of an entity as he says in *The Lost Symbol*. Language can be very adept at hiding the truth. (Brown, 2013)

Literature as an application of linguistic spectrum of reality which is further made public (in Heideggerian sense) is also distorted and manipulated in a way that people are misguided on sociopolitical and psychological levels. The books contain suppression of words. The idea of introducing and establishing the "golden age of simplicity" is to ossify the inhumane authority of *Theyself.* In accordance with it, the books are printed in abridged form. This malpractice has deviated the masses into toxic "Everydayness". Karnak experiences an oddity in the prevailing "Everydayness" of his society because majorly it tends to establish an agenda of equality as a static structure. It is quite illogical that a scholarly wise man must be debased to the levels of an illiterate simpleton. Books are discarded in the dystopian society in which Karnak is clinging to his resistant personality in order to survive and preserve his essentiality by all means. The deceptive idea of "Publicness" is strong enough that it designs the mentality of an individual. The *Theyself* or Das Man demands complete surrender from the masses. It misrepresents all the contradictory elements as paranoiac and hazardous for oneself as well as the sociopolitical conception of reality in order to ensure of its solidity and dystopian longevity. In *The Freedom Artist* Okri demonstrates the literary and linguistic predicament in quite a dexterous way.

Everyone wanted an easy life. Then there were protests against elitism in art and difficulty in writing. This was really popular. The people were used to simple newspapers and publishers found that simple books sold better. Then writers simplified their language. It became the fashion to write with words no longer then two or three syllables. It was the era of short words. (Okri, 2019)

We have reiterated the idea of establishing or deriving the reality of "world-hood" as "Everydayness" or "Environmentality" to which the usability "ready-at-handedness" is centripetal. It is the public idea which can be analyzed and termed as "The Deception of Perfectionism" in Karnak's society as represented in *The Freedom Artist.* The ontological originality of "being-within-the-world" which preserves the free self, is covered up with the deceptive layer of "Everydayness" and "Public-ness". The writers in a society actually draw attention to the primordial or innate emotional and psychological yet pristine insights of individuals and revive them from the deceptive slumber of "world-hood" and *Theyself.* That is why "The Hierarchy" is up to launch a crackdown against them and books by all means. Immaculate literature itself is a juggernaut resistant against all that is coercive and deceptive under the idea of perfectionism. It represents human nature and the world within its corporeality, abstracted structural setups and flexible imperfections. At this point Shashi Tharoor's appraisal for the penmen is worthy to be noted.

Not that literature implies a retreat from the globe: rather, it is the mind shaped by literature that understands the world and responds to its needs. Literature teaches us to empathize, to look beyond the obvious and beneath the surface. (Tharoor, 2003)

In *The Freedom Artist* (2019) it is quite obvious that "The Hierarchy", if interpreted under Heideggerian theory clues that it stands as the representative of public reality and its establishment. It denudes individuals of their pristine yet existential essence by shaping their personality, sociality, desires etcetera. It is understood that, it is quite difficult to setup and establish a trend for a single entity or a group of people unless or until the number of their followers increase on a considerable level. Demagoguery can be synonymized in this way because it tends to eliminate the gap between the coercer and the coerced, the master and the subject, self and the other, deceived and the deceiver etcetera. The reality of *Theyself* becomes the reality of public. Thus it becomes perilously difficult to stand against it.

They saw that the Hierarchy was them and that they were the Hierarchy. They and the Hierarchy were one. They had always been one. (Okri, 2019)

Resistance as the "Potentiality-for-Being-its-Self"

Throughout the plot, we can see that Amalantis is the very first person who adopts a resistant attitude towards the "Public-ness" established by "The Hierarchy" by all the possible means to establish and broadcast the hegemony of *They* (Das Man). She challenges the contemporary truths of her time and joins arms akimbo with the underground revolutionaries that are engaged in the production of the propaganda against the false yet coercive reality and its invisible promoters. Through her resistance

which actually originates from her own house, from her own family, we can notice the importance of familial structure as a main institution to ensure the conformity towards *They* those who setup the idea of being alongside with public. Her skepticism becomes a sort of irksome disturbance for the totalitarian yet panoptic system of public. When she reads various philosophical scholarly books, she is dawned upon with the impression that the reality, the very ideals people crave for are nothing mere a deceptive coercion which denudes them of their pristine roots of existence.

You are all wrong. I am fine, but you are all deceived. (Okri, 2019)

This idea is quite stronger that Amalantis represents the very "potentiality-of-being-itself" which motivates a resistant attitude towards the blind authority of public "They". It is required to have a keen eye on the basis of reality in which a person experiences his "thrown-ness". The hydra of "public-ness" of *They* vacuums the pristine essentiality of an individual's existence. A critical approach towards life and circumstances which is obvious in Karnak and Amalantis can help one to understand the actuality of both stages: authenticity and inauthenticity in their actual sense.

They deceptively utilize the power of majority in order to establish the monopoly of public and establish it as the sole ideal of authenticity which must be adhered with by all means. This malpractice results in the suppression of one's pristine (authentic in real sense) self which is shown distortedly as inauthentic just because it does not follow the so called logics and statics established by Das Man. A critical mindset which revolts against the deceptive constructions of reality "Thrown-ness" is the only way to shun it and come vis-à-vis with one's authentic self and inauthentic *Theyself* by conducting an immaculate ontological study. Heidegger proposes accordingly:

But because Dasein is lost in the "they", it must first find itself. In order to find itself at all, it must be 'shown' to itself in its possible authenticity. In terms of its possibility, Dasein is already a potentiality-for-Being-its-Self, but it needs to have this potentiality attested. (Heidegger, 1962)

Heidegger's idea of "Being-within-the-world" integrated with its "Everydayness", "They-self", "Public-ness" which is further elaborated through his conception of "Thrown-ness" into this world. "Thrown-ness" refers to the idea of existing of a being into a specific situation, environment and sociopolitical structure which further siphons an individual's whole personality, his past and present as well. *The Freedom Artist* resonates with the very idea of "Thrown-ness" of individuals in a dystopian setup of coercion and deception established by "The Hierarchy".

When it comes to dissect the idea of resistance as the potential of being one's "real" ontological self, Karnak, Ruslana and Amalantis can be considered as the epitomic symbols of one's struggle to cling to one's free self and fend off the deceptive coercion of what we can hypothetically presume the rule of majority, "public-ness", *Theyself*. These characters do not follow the concept of "ones' self ", as "one" should do this and that which is acceptable and cognizable as per the symbolic setup or lens established by *They*. The "Everydayness" for them is no less than a panoptic prison in which the hypnotic docile bodies exist as the subjects. The "electronic dreams" have entrapped the masses around them into a deceptive oblivion of "Everydayness".

The furtive fugitives launched a revolution through pamphlets denouncing "The Hierarchy" and promulgating a call to arms through their slogans "Upwake" and the questions "Who is the Prisoner?"; these slogans clearly shake the masses to break through the deceptive screens of "Everydayness" and struggle to locate the ontological essentiality of their *Dasein* as "the-being-itself". One's resistant attitude and critical approach help him evade the invisibility of one's self into the deceptive yet cumbersome whirlpool of "Everydayness" in which the majority of the masses abandon their essential visibility or authenticity by accepting the deception of *They* as the only truth which represents their lives, status and priorities as well.

How do you find people who have made themselves so invisible that they have become an urban myth? (Okri, 2019)

Conclusion

We have analyzed the dystopian structures in Okri's (2019) *The Freedom Artist* as per Heideggerian concept of *The They* because the order of "The Hierarchy" does not refer to a specific oligarchical political party rather it is a whole social system which derives the psyches and shapes the socio-personal lives of the masses. It covers everything that falls under the idea of *Dasein* and the ways of its determinations and cognizable representations. These representations are made "publically" cognizable in order to ossify their establishment which Heidegger considers under "Everydayness". The "apophantic" deceptions are malignantly effective because the masses receive them as their truths. Heidegger does not favor the "apophantic" judgment of subjects on the basis of a predetermined or prototypical idea about an entity which is "present-at-hand". For him comparing subjects deviate and corrupts the analysis because it can never uncover the ontological yet existential essence of *Dasein*.

In *The Freedom Artist* the rigidity of *The They* and dystopian "Everydayness" is on an exaggerated level that it is based on an "aphophantic" structure which determines an inhumane prototypical features, logics and criterion for the masses to fulfill and conform with the ideals of "Everydayness". It has been reiterated in this analysis that Okri has designed it as a critique on contemporary sociopolitical structures of our world. Additionally and extensively we can broaden this analysis on more a generalized level. From a family structure to that of a state or an urbanized city, we can perceive that the role of *The They* is somewhat inevitable. It layers up covering and obscuring the ontological subject of *Dasein* forcing it into alienation. The labyrinthine webbings of purposeful "circumspective" relational structures obscure the ontological essence of *Dasein*.

By applying the theoretical presumptions of *The They* on Okri's representation of dystopian reality on our day to day sociopolitical variations we come to know that the very hypothetical idea of "Everydayness" is not a specific or static situational or conceptual plane rather it is a structural conundrum which is based upon abstractions that are determined on the basis of one's experience with his life and the sociopolitical setup in which one is living. It is not deniable that these ideas, norms, concepts, creeds come from nowhere and are without a static origin rather it is a whole process, a temporal experience which discovers the spatiality in the relational structures of entities.

The faceless monopoly of "The Hierarchy" in *The Freedom Artist* clearly represents the domination of *The They* which rules the public opinion, mindset, behavior, and lifestyle. A path is introduced and determined "publicly" and individuals have to follow it and express in the only way which is established and accepted publicly. If one musters up enough courage to tread the opposite roads then the outcomes often prove as a perilous opposition which either denounce the culprit as an outcast or just exterminate because it is like engaging in a competition against majority *The They*. People contribute to this plane of "Everydayness" on various hierarchical levels. They "discover" their relations with the entities along with their statuses of being "Ready-at-hand".

The plane of "Everydayness" in the light of Heideggerian analysis of *The Freedom Artist* ossifies the hold of *The They* in the world through various means and structures. The miraculous advancement of technology, especially information technology and media broadcasting in present era participates and impacts on this plane and demonstrate the trends experienced and established by the majority "Das Man". In *The Freedom Artist* this thing is quite hyperbolic that the "New Myth" is broadcasted on a broader level to enmesh the masses into a perpetual deception throughout their lives.

This Heideggerian analytical lens incorporated with *The Freedom Artist* can be used as a theoretical scope to study the contemporary sociopolitical urban systems demonstrating and establishing an abstracted monopoly of "Das Man" or *The They* in the shape of popular trends, law and order, creeds, interests etcetera culminating under the conceptual aura of "Everydayness" which indeed blurs the ontological and essential yet existential roots of *Dasein*. This blurring effect of "Everydayness" becomes so much stronger and inevitable that the ontological origins become alienated (it remains as the question to be or not to be) and a welcoming hypothetical quests for philosophical dissections. Language is the only way in which "Everydayness" is either established or disputed (but in a fruitless way).

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