Christopher Nolan's Gotham in View of Samuel Johnson's London

Ridhima Narayan

Department of English, CCS University, Meerut, India

ABSTRACT

Johnson's "London" is topical proclamation of fostered corrupt government which has physically and ethically blemished the suburbs. In this paper, I shall attempt to compare and contrast Johnson's portrayal of London with Christopher Nolan's Batman Trilogy. As Nolan's Gotham is a city exposed to anarchy in an apocalyptic frenzy, In any case both Thales and the Joker wish to disturb the current state of affairs, operating outside the law. When is a man a city? When it's Batman or when it's Gotham. I'd take either answer. As Euripides claimed "The best prophet is common sense". Man made legislation is not necessarily just nor does it allow for the pursuit of attainment of justice. There are circumstances in which the rule of law, the putative bedrock of modern democracy should be suspended or ignored altogether. So something new in the something older in some sense it's like a resolution to understand problems in state which cannot be redone justificatory pretext of of political oppression, socioeconomic disadvantages or the threat of subversive forces from within. If the values of a city can be described as order than the crime is disorder.

KEY WORDS: VIGILANTE-VAGABOND, JUSTICE, CORRUPTION, VIOLENCE, CRIME AND MORAL DECADENCE.

INTRODUCTION

Eighteenth century was a rigorous, individualistic age an accurate picture cannot be presented without suggesting contrast and even paradox. Hard materialism, cruelty, public hanging, dirt, diseases, brutality, gin drinking but also the age of gracious living, prosperity growing humanitarianism and greater security. Truth resides on both sides with an achievement of looking onto them with new pair of eyes. In London middle of century deaths exceeded birth and the rapid growth of capital is to be explained by the steady influx of people. Samuel Johnson (1709 - 1784) whose thoughts always borders on synthesis, tremendous surge of Commerce in London impressed him but not startled. His London got published in 1738 particularly appears to have been largely inspired by personal motives like those which suggested to Pope his Imitation of Horace. Johnson saw London as the greatest of man's achievement in attempting to lift himself above the animal level, to create a world of thoughts and aims

an institution human rather than natural what had been in Juvenile preminent as an exposure of city life an end exaltation by contrast or supposedly latter condition in the country, developed in Johnson's hand into a political attack on Walpole's administration.

The mood and direction of attack was changed with abstractions which for others also often a seagull political device, has the force of true metaphor. "It is not sufficiently considered in the hour of exaltation, that all human excellence is comparative; That no man performs much but in the proportion to what others accomplish, or to the time and opportunities which have been allowed to him." The Dark Knight trilogy directed by Christopher Nolan shows Gotham city which at instances seems in relation and contradiction with Johnson's London but makes the concept of moral decadence, rebellion, revolution former idea of Vanguard/ vigilante clearer in sense of contemporary account. Christopher Nolan has given us a Gotham that's crime ridden, bloated, corrupt and sadly more like a real American city. The police are corrupt, the judges corrupt, city officials, etc. So, it's a question that arises "Is Gotham plagued with corruption? Or plague with fake promises of a prosper life that tricked down low-class citizens into making Gotham their home just to be pushed down into a life of crime?" Same way description of London by Johnson is spirited and just for who can deny that.

Biosc Biotech Res Comm P-ISSN: 0974-6455 E-ISSN: 2321-4007

Identifiers and Pagination

Year: 2021 Vol: 14 No (8) Special Issue

Pages: 86-89

This is an open access article under Creative

Commons License Attribn 4.0 Intl (CC-BY).

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21786/bbrc/14.8.21>

Article Information

Received: 10th Apr 2021

Accepted after revision: 18th June 2021

Here, Rapine, Accident Conspire, and now a Rabble Rages, Now a Fire: Though we can point out the difference that there was no police force established like in Gotham City. Johnson states its French people who were corrupting London with their virus culture people are chained from government system, so, to accept them because of trade business and other political resources to maintain the balance. He deliberately lays emphasis on Queen Elizabeth's rule because Anglican church came during her reign. "Struck with the seat that gave Eliza birth." He complains that there is no place left for merit and virtuous people only way to progress is to "resort to evil level to rise". One of the reasons he provides for French people to be the resident in London is that they are criminals who escaped from their homeland assembling in a place with less dangerous Middle East punishments.

Thales states clearly that Britain has lost its sensibility freedom and have been imitators of French customs satirizing their political manners. Johnson here and there keeps drawing connections with past, above stated instances are examples to it. Here London was a possibility for foreigners who failed to beg, steal and prefer to get hanged of pardon end fall for bribe they are participating in all jobs. Nolan's Gotham is also a city exposed to anarchy and chaos, where criminals like Bane and Joker are suppressing masses, "doing as they like." Good people face constant danger as evil exploits them. Bruce Wayne's transformation into Batman was a result of the murder of his philanthropist parents by people seeking mere riches.

"On Britain's fond credulity they prey."

Thales also points out that English people are not able to understand parasitic character of French people; In this sense it can be regarded as the thoughtless age everyone is following principles coming from courtiers. All ideas are implanted reducing all this French influence on level of whites then the idea of rebellion automatically becomes virtuous. He is drawing connection between political corrupt life and suspicious private on goings, comes up with a conspiracy theory in a way. "If you kill a killer, the number of killers in the world remains the same." Here we can remember Bane who tells the people they can do what they want he is not imposing his on order on them he is not just a blood thirsty terrorist but a person of deep love, with a spirit of sacrifice. This Manichean ideology is seen in London while connecting evil to material life and virtue to spiritual existence.

In Batman begins, the hero is simply the classic urban vigilante who punishes the criminals when officials of law enforcement agency, respond ambivalently to his help as they see him as a threat to his monopoly on power and therefore as evidence of their inefficiency. Same threat which Walpole's government face to prevent satires bringing about follies and corruptions prevalent in system The Licensing act 1737 was issued. "With warbling eunuchs fills a licensed stage" line59. This way London becomes a sonorous as call to reform it breathes

the adducer, the vehemence, the keen sense of right and wrong. Same way Bane's authenticity leaves traces in the films texture. Johnson has same attitude as Bane "Has heaven reserved, in pity to the poor", poverty is reduced to the idea of guilt. Idea of retributive justice (righteous punishment), primal form is vengeance which follows mayhem of violence and ultimately those driven by it are self-absorbed, emotionally erratic and entitled. They feel those who hurt them deserve not the same suffering but worse. Hence, punishment outweighs the crime. Vigilantes places themselves above their trauma to not have disproportionate cruelty, masking and transcendent their individuality.

Johnson declares that it was a thoughtless age as people were following principle not meant for their flourishing, they were not aware of underlying corrupted policies not believing that Walpole and his minions were conspiring to destroy the liberties and moral stamina of valiant Englishman. Similarly, the Gotham City continues to function almost normally throughout, the people parrying each of the governments trust in unison and without Gandhian level of nonviolent resistance. Divine violence. Just like Bane, Johnson also leads the vanguard to walk to evoke, invoke and provoke people to wake up to justice. London this way is a work of man newly came to the city, shocked by much of what he sees and still clinging to his early ideals, still hoping that a change of leadership may bring improvement. It has the impetuous jest of someone ready to throw himself into the political arena." Well may they rise, while I, whose rustic tongue" line 79 is from where he switches vigilante to vagabond. "Behold rebellious virtue quite o'erthrown" this calls out for either a participation in the rebellion or support Thales and leave or do something against corruption.

Aim to make people realize this condition and need for rebellious attitude towards vices generating the idea of revolution but not telling what is beyond; This idea is also emphasized when he talks about degeneration of glorious past; Supposing revolution is going to happen which will turn into bloodshed which might lead to utopian formation (not practiced till now) bringing down whole corrupt system; When aggression or evoked emotion takes over state revolution occurs. This is a manifesto like revolutionary in nature, but this fails in Christopher Nolan's trilogy as people coming to power after suppression leads to anarchy and not utopia. This way both Bane and Johnson stand as vigilante fighting for people and not representing them. The verbal sweep and emotional impact of seen in knowledge handling of Bane's army taking control of Gotham, in the football stadium scene, his entrapment of Gotham's police force underground and the police fight back on the streets of Gotham.

Though the question generates "Is Wayne/ Batman's punishment of criminals justified or is it just vigilantism? Bane claims he acts on behalf of the oppressed against a greedy and corrupt ruling class, but is he really motivated by revenge and egoism?" Same attitude as Bane is shown by Johnson when he exclaims that

poverty is reduced to the idea of guilt, only remembered of fate. "Has heaven reserv'd, in pity to the poor" line 170, Johnson was qualified as an authority to speak on poverty on his personal disappointments. Bane is after vengeance and not justice. That is Dent who aims to fight injustice effectively relativizing morality that something is determined by circumstances.

When is a Man or City?: When it is Batman or when it's Gotham, I would take either as an answer. The determining characteristic of Gotham city is that there is always crime. Connection between Wayne and city seems to be circular his obsession to get rid of crime. So, it does not merely remain a setting, city breathes as a character same way Johnson's London is bound by corruption and crime turning into a nightmare as if he will burst through the payment and group. The Gotham that resembles our own world can be more terrifying on the face of established order; It accounts for in changing world same is with London taking us to the idea of Kairos propounded by Antonio Negi in time for revolution idea of Kairos functions well in twentieth century; destination is projected; time period provides motion making time take the opportunity to bring about spring revolution crime that is constant in both the irreplaceable criminal underclass that plagues the city with whom either the police are in league or powerless. London and Gotham both are profound known by the stories that happened there by the spaces generated in the encounters. Inconsistency discontented into the unthinking world of fiction. "The best prophet is common sense, are native wit.", Euripides.

Moral Decadence: The broken system is the crux of the matter. Man-made legislation is not necessarily just, nor does it even allow for the pursuit of attainments of justice. There are circumstances in which the rule of law, the putative bedrock of modern democracy should be suspended or ignored altogether nature, men, wealth, corruption, and decay.

Bruce Wayne: My parents deserve justice.

Bruce Rachel: You are not talking about justice you are talking about revenge.

Bruce Wayne: Sometimes they are the same.

The decline is decency in the city that had begun long before Joker's arrival there are two juxtaposed scenes showing Batman drops a mafia figure from several stories up and Harvey threatens to shoot one of the Joker's helpless henchman in the head. But this is exactly the kind of behavior that Joker wants to provoke articulating message that human morality and social stability are not absolute, but consistent contingent. The Joker says to Gotham's citizens that "Their moral, their code" the unconventional villain provoking Wayne to push boundaries of law and morality; He realized the game was almost up "I have seen what I would have to become to stop men like him".

Similarly in London Johnson remarks "Poor folk, good folk merged" the only way to resent corruption was rebellion to revolution or one must become corrupt. Land calls in in the need of rejuvenation the degenerated creatures must be replaced by such man who will prefer a virtuous simplicity to corrupted wealth. Here degeneration is also about the glorious past and values associated with it; threat that of conquest and capitalization. Thales, a 'true Briton' cannot brook living in the capital under an administration that has sold out to Britain's traditional rivals. Ray of hope when in final part Wayne passes the baton on to Lt. Robin John Blake and Thales entrusting hope to his agitated young friend, since he feels leader must come from the masses. In both there is an unspoken promise of return when city is at peak of revolution at an opportune moment it will arise and change the city forever. "Since hope but soothes to double my distress."

CONCLUSION

A single jail, in Alfred's golden reign, could half the nation's criminals contain. It is this imagined past that the corrupt present shames and threatens to obliterate. He increases prudence without impairing virtue. "Of those uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason." Samuel Johnson. Thales and Wayne both consider all the people corrupt parasites of evil, residing in everyone. He suggests opposition is patriot and patriotism are virtue, playing with binaries. Trying to evoke sovereignty against people in power committing crime. Corruption as if personifies whole city, religious allegory is made "SLOW Rises Worth, by Poverty Deprest". Universal truth acknowledging pain of everyone giving a remembrance of 1640 war between Protestant and Roman Catholics that was like Civil War two sets of same religion, it surely leads to formation of something new in the old sides in some sense, it is like a resolution to understand problems in state which cannot be redone. Justificatory pretext of political oppression, social economic disadvantages or the threat of subversive forces from within. If the values of a city can be described as order than the crime is disorder. "Life is surely given to us for higher purposes than together what our ancestors have wisely thrown away, and to learn what is of no value but because it has been forgotten." Samuel Johnson

REFERENCES

- Boichel, Bill. (1991) "Batman: Commodity as Myth." *The Many Lives of the Batman: Critical Approaches to a Superhero and His Media*. Routledge: London, ISBN 978-0-85170-276-6, pp. 6-7.
- Boswell, James (1986), Hibbert, Christopher (ed.), *The Life of Samuel Johnson*, New York: Penguin Classics, ISBN 978-0-14-043116-2.
- Folkenflik, Robert (1997), "Johnson's politics", in Clingham, Greg (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0-521-55625-2.
- Hammond, Brean (2001), "The city in eighteenth-century

poetry", in Sitter, John (ed.), *Eighteenth Century Poetry*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 0-521-65885-3.
Hardy, J.P. "Reinterpretations" London, 1971, pp. 112-113
London: A Poem In Imitation of The Third Satire of

Juvenal (5th ed.). London: Printed by E. Cave at St. John's Gate and Sold by R. Dodsley in Pall Mall. 1750. Retrieved 16 January 2019 – via Google Books.
Uslan, Michael; Melniker, Benjamin; Guber, Peter; Mankiewicz, Tom; Hamm, Sam (2005). *Shadows of the Bat: The Cinematic Saga of the Dark Knight—The Road to Gotham City* (DVD).