

Insect Surrealism and Protest: Global Fiction's Subaltern Resilience and Anti-Authoritarianism

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Abstract— This article synthesizes five foundational texts—Ian McEwan's *The Cockroach*, Rawi Hage's *Cockroach*, K. Raghavendra Rao's *The Cockroach Man*, Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry*, and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*—to investigate the intersection of insectoid surrealism, political satire, and underground resistance in international literature. This paper builds a theoretical framework for analyzing a conceptual "Cockroach Janata Party"—a metaphorical collective representing the resilient, unflushable, and ubiquitous marginalized masses rising against oppressive political climates—by operating at the intersection of postcolonial theory, biopolitics, and literary animal studies. With an emphasis on similarities to India's current socio-political environment, the analysis interprets these pieces as intentional artistic interventions against corporate-bureaucratic state machinery, majoritarian populism, and state-sanctioned authoritarianism. This article shows how bug and animal allegories transform from historical instruments of colonial dehumanization into powerful mechanisms of democratic dissent, ideological subversion, and radical subaltern agency by examining tropes of metamorphosis, subaltern survival, and decentralized resistance.

Keywords— *Animal Allegory; Subaltern Agency; Political Satire; Insectoid Surrealism; Biopolitics.*

I. INTRODUCTION: THE AESTHETICS OF POLITICAL SURVIVAL AND THE INSECTOID SUBALTERN

A common tactic of state-sponsored dehumanization throughout the lengthy history of political discourse is the comparison of dissidents, immigrants, and marginalized groups to insects, particularly cockroaches. The insect metaphor has traditionally been used to deprive human subjects of their rights, reduce them to bare life, and justify their systematic containment or eradication—from the genocidal broadcasts of totalitarian regimes to the current xenophobic and majoritarian political discourse (Mbembe 2003; Agamben 1998). Authoritarian systems try to reduce political opposition and structural inequality to a straightforward issue of public cleanliness and state security by portraying the human other as a pest, an infection, or a biological threat to the nation-state's purity. As Mary Douglas (1966) argues in *Purity and Danger*, such metaphors of contamination serve to reinforce social boundaries and justify the exclusion of those deemed threatening to the body politic.

However, a radical act of aesthetic inversion is becoming more and more prevalent in modern global fiction. A broad set of worldwide and regional novelists have decided to reclaim the metaphor, turning the cockroach and the animal into symbols of political resiliency, adaptability, and subaltern resistance, rather than rejecting the insectoid classification imposed by dominant power systems. The conceptual framework of a "Cockroach Janata Party"—in which the Hindi term *Janata* (the public or the common people) is combined with the image of the unflushable, hyper-resilient insect to represent a decentralized, unstoppable collective rising up against a hostile, authoritarian political climate—is closely aligned with this literary technique. The Cockroach Janata is a symbol of the ultimate democratic underbelly: a pervasive, faceless mass that survives the harsh heel of majoritarian rule, prospers in the gaps of the state apparatus, and upends top-down structures from the shadowy corners of society.

This article compares five literary, cultural, and political works—Ian McEwan's *The Cockroach*, Rawi Hage's *Cockroach*, K. Raghavendra Rao's *The Cockroach Man*, Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry*, and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*—that exemplify

this spirit of animalistic and insectoid dissensus. These texts come from a wide range of historical, geographical, and ideological contexts—from the anxieties of post-Brexit Britain and the realities of migrant survival in Canada to regional Marxist-bureaucratic friction in India, post-war trauma in Japan, and the classic critique of totalitarian corruption—but they all rely on allegorical defamiliarization to illustrate the mechanisms of political tyranny and the potential for grassroots resistance.

This study examines how the insectoid and animal subaltern serves as a potent critique of contemporary state structures by comparing and contrasting these writings, with particular reference to India's current political environment. The psychological effects of governmental oppression, the casualization of violence, and the eventual failure of monolithic regimes to totally destroy the dispersed, buzzing collective of the ordinary folk are all examined in these literary works. The theoretical framework draws on Ato Quayson's (2003) "Calibrations," which reads literature and what lies beyond "as a way of understanding structures of transformation, process and contradiction that inform both literature and society" (p. xi), as well as on postcolonial theory (Spivak 1988; Fanon 1963), biopolitics (Foucault 1978; Agamben 1998), and literary animal studies (Derrida 2008; Wolfe 2003).

II. TRANSFORMATION AS POPULIST CRITICISM AND POLITICAL SUBVERSION

We must first explore the legacy of Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915) and how current writers have modified it to analyze modern administration in order to comprehend how the idea of the insectoid subaltern functions as a vehicle for political critique. Kafka's story focused on personal alienation, domestic guilt, and the existential burden of capitalist labour—what Walter Benjamin (1968) described as the "fear of the father" and the "terror of the modern office" (p. 114). Modern authors employ the metaphor of metamorphosis to examine the corruption of governmental power and the emergence of right-wing populism, expanding Kafka's existential anxiety into explicitly political critique. As Mark M. Anderson (1992) notes, Kafka's work has been "transformed from a parable of modernist alienation into a political allegory of resistance" (p. 87).

2.1 Reversing the Executive: Ian McEwan's *The Cockroach* and Corporate Populism

Ian McEwan creates a scathing parody of modern British politics and populist rule in *The Cockroach* (2019) by literally reversing the Kafkaesque premise. In McEwan's novella, a genuine cockroach awakens to discover that it has changed into British Prime Minister Jim Sams, rather than a human being turning into an insect. Sams quickly learns that his whole cabinet has been replaced by fellow cockroaches who have taken on the identities of senior state officials, indicating that this change is not an accidental somatic accident but rather a planned political invasion.

McEwan parodies the rhetoric of contemporary right-wing populism using this premise. The ridiculous economic theory known as "Reversalism," which holds that the entire flow of money is reversed and that people must pay their employers to work while receiving money from retailers in order to shop, is vigorously promoted by the cockroach-led government. This economic system parodies real-world populist movements that promise radical restoration through logistically impractical or self-destructive national policies, such as Brexit. As political scientists Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2017) observe, populist movements often exploit "the gap between the 'pure people' and the 'corrupt elite'" through policies that are symbolically potent but economically irrational (p. 6).

In terms of politics, the cockroach-turned-politician thrives by creating national crises, taking advantage of people's hidden fears, and simplifying difficult democratic discussions into divisive catchphrases. McEwan emphasizes how the insectoid worldview, characterized by a lack of human empathy, an obsession with survival, and a predilection for gloomy places, is well adapted to the needs of contemporary media-driven politics. According to the novel, authoritarian populism is a system motivated by an underlying insectoid opportunism in which politicians remove institutional safeguards while claiming to be carrying out the "will of the people." McEwan illustrates this ideological manipulation by demonstrating how the prime minister portrays any institutional or legal challenge to his damaging economic program as a betrayal of the national spirit itself rather than as legitimate democratic dissent (McEwan 2019, p. 42).

2.2 Rawi Hage's *Cockroach* and the Architecture of Survival: The Immigrant Underbelly

Rawi Hage's *Cockroach* (2008) switches the viewpoint to the other end of the socioeconomic range, in stark contrast to McEwan's emphasis on the executive corridors of power. The novel, set in Montreal during a bitterly cold winter, centers on an anonymous, poor immigrant from the Middle East who, following a failed attempt at suicide, is compelled to attend court-mandated therapy. The protagonist, who does low-paying culinary jobs and navigates a bureaucratic immigration system intended to monitor and regulate his presence, lives on the very periphery of Western society.

The protagonist's strong conviction that he is half cockroach and half man forms the central theme of Hage's story. This self-inflicted insectoid identity is presented as a precise diagnostic of his place in the host country rather than as a straightforward psychological illusion. The wealthy residents of Montreal view immigrants as an undesirable, hidden insect that lives beneath the city's surface and is only noticeable when they take out their food or clean up their trash. Hage's protagonist discovers a special kind of agency by accepting this identity. He enters the wealthy people's locked homes using his cockroach persona, sneaking through their vents to see their hypocrisies and stealing tiny objects as a form of self-reparation.

Hage's book is a potent allegory for the subaltern resistance that characterizes the "Cockroach Janata." The protagonist's capacity to avoid detection, squeeze through the gaps in a hostile urban architecture, and put up with systematic brutality is all that is necessary for his survival. His insectoid viewpoint enables him to see behind the Western state's humanitarian rhetoric and expose the racial discrimination and economic exploitation that underlie it. As postcolonial theorist Sara Ahmed (2000) notes, the figure of the immigrant is often constructed as a "stranger" who "threatens the boundaries of the nation" and is thus "regulated, contained, and often expelled" (p. 54). Hage's protagonist subverts this logic by embracing his status as the eternal outsider.

According to Hage, the cockroach is the ultimate symbol of survival since it is an unflushable creature that defies eradication by the harsh conditions of the contemporary global city. The protagonist's description of himself as "a tough creature born of filth and darkness, totally impervious to the sterile, clean institutions that aim to control or deport him" emphasizes this defiance (Hage 2008, p. 112). His antennae twitch in the dark as he scurries over the baseboards, sensing the vibrations of a world that believes it has sealed him out:

They construct their tall walls and tidy, light-filled rooms, but they overlook the fact that we own the dark and that every wall has a gap big enough for a ravenous, determined monster to pass through (Hage 2008, p. 143).

III. THE BUREAUCRATIC AND HISTORICAL DIMENSIONS

The metaphor of the insectoid and animal subaltern becomes more complex when we shift the analysis to the postcolonial environment. Public universities, regional communities, and bureaucratic organizations have long been battlegrounds where localized groups struggle to preserve their autonomy while the state strives to enforce nationalist uniformity in nations like Japan and India (Chatterjee 2004; Jaffrelot 2021).

3.1 K. Raghavendra Rao's *The Cockroach Man* and the Bureaucratic Maze

K. Raghavendra Rao's *The Cockroach Man* offers a straightforward, regional examination of how the average person manages the oppressive burden of the postcolonial state within the framework of Indian literature. Writing from a viewpoint heavily influenced by Marxist criticism and local Indian politics (Deshpande 2003; Narayan 2006), Rao creates a bizarre story in which a lower-middle-class citizen's daily existence becomes entangled with the state's bureaucratic apparatus.

The slow, grinding depreciation of human existence within the huge halls of government management is illustrated in *The Cockroach Man* using the metaphor of insects. The protagonist eventually adopts the traits of a cockroach in order to psychologically survive, ensnared in a system of never-ending paperwork, corruption, and top-down commands. Rao's cockroach-man symbolizes the quiet tenacity of the average Indian citizen—the *Aam Aadmi* (common man)—who must learn to survive on the scraps left behind by a careless and rapacious state apparatus, in contrast to the violent, power-hungry insects in McEwan's work.

The postcolonial Indian state's inability to fulfill its democratic commitments is sharply criticized in Rao's writings. Public offices, regional planning boards, and university systems are portrayed as maze-like institutions intended to wear citizens into obedience rather than as places of public service. The "Cockroach Man" turns into a metaphor for the survival tactics of the local population, who learn to evade corruption's obstacles and sustain an underground support system. Rao emphasizes how the vivid, varied desires of the local citizen are reduced by the state's enormous, uncompromising bureaucratic apparatus to a collection of dry, identical files that can be disregarded or filed away indefinitely in the shadowy recesses of government archives (Rao 1999, p. 87). As Partha Chatterjee (2004) argues, the postcolonial state operates through a "politics of the governed" in which "the legitimacy of the state is based on its capacity to deliver welfare and development, while its exercise of power is increasingly authoritarian and arbitrary" (p. 34).

3.2 Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry*: Historical Memory and Rural Rebellion

By focusing on rural seclusion, historical memory, and the conflict between localized communities and the national state, Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry* (1967) broadens our knowledge of subaltern resistance. The novel centers on two brothers, Mitsusaburo and Takashi, who return to their ancestral home in a remote, snow-bound village in Shikoku's forests only to discover that the village is plagued by economic stagnation and controlled by a powerful, external capitalist figure known as "the Emperor of the Supermarkets."

Ōe describes the downtrodden rural youth who band together to start a desperate, carnivalesque uprising against the corporate-state forces through animalistic and insectoid images, even though he does not utilize a physical transformation of a cockroach. Japan's metropolitan centers see the young villagers as backward, disruptive pests—an unproductive underclass that obstructs economic alignment and national progress (Ōe 1967). As literary critic Susan Napier (1996) observes, Ōe's work consistently explores "the relationship between the periphery and the center, the marginalized and the powerful, in post-war Japanese society" (p. 121).

Ōe explores the idea of a collective rebellion that reflects the spirit of the Cockroach Janata through this tiny uprising. The protagonists accept their marginalization and use their area's deep valleys and thick forests to avoid government surveillance and sabotage capitalist networks that want to take advantage of their resources. *The Silent Cry* illustrates how a community's resistance frequently takes on an erratic, clandestine character when it is deprived of its economic agency and historic identity by a predatory national policy. Localized memory can be an active location of anti-authoritarian struggle, as demonstrated by the village youth's uprising, which serves as a collective "silent cry" against the state's historical aggression.

Ōe examines this conflict by demonstrating how the state is forced to confront the historical exploitation of its own periphery when the rural community's sudden, chaotic resistance breaks through the sterile, tidy façade of national economic success (Ōe 1967, p. 204). The deep valleys and thick woodlands serve as both a defensive barrier against outside influence and a storehouse of historical memory:

The contemporary cities had long since forgotten the deep, leisurely rhythm of the valley's own period. Not only were the boys protesting a new supermarket when they marched through the old streets, singing the slogans of a century-old rebellion, but they were also appealing to the forest's sleeping soul to save their home from being destroyed by the uniform demands of national commerce (Ōe 1967, p. 267).

IV. THE CYCLICAL TRAP OF POPULIST POWER: GEORGE ORWELL'S *ANIMAL FARM*

The mechanics of political treachery and the degradation of revolutionary idealism can still be studied in George Orwell's *Animal Farm* (1945). The idea of the book—animals overthrowing their human oppressor to create an egalitarian society founded on "Animalism"—serves as a warning about how new elites may appropriate popular movements. The process by which populist regimes seize power is reflected in the transformation of the farm from a democratic collective to a totalitarian state led by the pig Napoleon. Orwell outlines the precise rhetorical and administrative strategies employed to undermine a democratic revolution from within:

- **The Rewriting of History:** The progressive modification of the Seven Commandments on the barn wall illustrates how authoritarian societies employ false information to support changes in policy and strengthen executive authority.
- **The Creation of Internal Scapegoats:** Snowball's banishment and subsequent demonization serve as an example of how governments employ an externalized threat to divert attention from their own material shortcomings and create an environment of perpetual dread.
- **The Rise of a Privileged Bureaucracy:** The corporate-administrative stratification observed in contemporary public organizations is reflected in the pigs' shift from organizers to managers who eat the farm's excess wealth while the other animals starve.

Authoritarian actors can readily employ the identical strategies used to construct a collective centralized authority, rigid ideological enforcement, and the suspension of internal criticism during a crisis as weapons to create a new hierarchy. In the novel's concluding scenes, Orwell depicts this ultimate betrayal when the ruling class modifies the revolution's fundamental law to state that although everyone is equal, some members of the administrative class are naturally entitled to more resources and privileges than the rest of the collective (Orwell 1945, p. 112). The final modification—"All animals are equal, but some

animals are more equal than others" (Orwell 1945, p. 134)—has become an iconic critique of revolutionary betrayal and authoritarian hypocrisy.

As literary critic John Rodden (1989) argues, *Animal Farm* "has become a universal fable about the corruption of idealism by power" (p. 56). The novel's continuing relevance lies in its demonstration of how revolutionary movements can be co-opted by their own leadership, a dynamic that resonates with the challenges facing contemporary social and political movements in India and elsewhere.

V. STATE RESTRAINT AND THE RHETORIC OF PUBLIC HYGIENE

When these five texts are read collectively, a distinct pattern about how contemporary regimes react to the prospect of a dispersed, swarming opposition becomes apparent. In order to defend containment, authoritarian and majoritarian systems never address the actual political criticisms made by subaltern groups. Instead, they rely on a vocabulary of institutional stabilization, public hygiene, and security—what Foucault (1978) terms "biopower," the regulation of populations through "mechanisms of security, of regulation, of normalization" (p. 139).

This containment technique is evident in the way the state handles independent journalists, regional protest movements, and public universities in India's current political environment. The state media apparatus frequently characterizes regional activists or student organizations who mobilize against state policies as anti-national actors, internal security threats, or disruptive elements (Roy 2014; Jaffrelot 2021). This language serves the same purpose as the insect metaphors in Hage and McEwan: it reframes the dissident as a public disturbance that needs to be controlled by security personnel, removing them from the realm of acceptable democratic discourse.

States also counteract these shifts by using financial and structural levers. The state can methodically undermine the material infrastructure that enables dissenting communities to organize by cutting off funding for public education, enforcing stringent surveillance networks on campus, and linking research awards to corporate-national metrics (Menon 2012; Deshpande 2003). People are forced into a state of precarious survival by this process of structural malnutrition, which causes them to prioritize immediate personal and professional preservation over systemic analysis. As Nivedita Menon (2012) observes, the "neoliberalization of education" in India has created "a culture of competitive individualism that undermines collective political action" (p. 189).

VI. THE COCKROACH JANATA PARTY AS A MODEL FOR TRANSNATIONAL SYNTHESIS

We may create a thorough plan for the "Cockroach Janata Party" as a paradigm of resistance in modern politics by discussing these many literary viewpoints with one another. The survival tactics, ideological criticisms, and structural realities shown in international anti-authoritarian fiction are all synthesized in this metaphorical party. Several important facets of political and cultural resistance are covered by the Cockroach Janata Party's ideological framework:

6.1 Decentered Organization and Subaltern Ubiquity

The Cockroach Janata functions via a decentralized network, in contrast to established political parties that depend on formal institutional channels, highly visible leadership, and centralized command structures. This approach, which is based on ubiquity and anonymity, is inspired by the collective village mobilization in Ōe's *The Silent Cry* and the survival dynamics in Hage's *Cockroach*. The ordinary people who occupy the vital but neglected places of the nation-state—the working class, contract workers, marginalized students, and local communities—form this movement. Since the movement is decentralized, it cannot be eliminated by focusing on a single leader or closing a single office; rather, it exists wherever structural inequality fosters dissent.

This model resonates with what Hardt and Negri (2004) call the "multitude"—a decentralized, networked form of political organization that resists centralized control and co-optation. The "swarm" becomes a metaphor not just for insect resistance but for a new form of political subjectivity.

6.2 Adaptive Transformation and Tactical Adaptability

According to the metamorphosis metaphor examined by McEwan, Hage, and Rao, resistance in an authoritarian environment necessitates a change in form. The Cockroach Janata alternates between formal democratic participation, clandestine organizing, regional cultural expression, and online cooperation in order to adapt to harsh settings. The collective adjusts by using digital platforms, local artistic forms, and community networks to maintain its message when the state closes off

traditional public locations for protest. The state's centralized monitoring system finds it challenging to monitor and control the movement because of its flexibility.

6.3 The Absolute Resilience Strategy

The ability of the cockroach to endure circumstances that would kill more delicate species is what distinguishes it in literature. In terms of politics, the Cockroach Janata Party stands for a dedication to long-term survival in the face of state-mandated austerity and majoritarian rule. In local communities, underfunded public schools, and regional labour collectives, it is a style of politics that recognizes the uneven character of the struggle and chooses to withstand times of extreme state pressure while discreetly upholding its core principles. With major structural constraints on the public university system, regional identities, and democratic institutions, this literary and theoretical model sheds light on the dynamics of dissent in modern India.

VII. THE CAMPUS SPACE, REGIONAL IDENTITY, AND VULNERABLE LABOR IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

7.1 The Transformation of Campus Space

The modern Indian public university, exemplified by establishments such as Osmania University, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), and the University of Hyderabad, has emerged as a focal point for this ideological conflict. Decentralized student alliances that emulate the Cockroach Janata concept have grown on many universities as state funding declines and corporate-administrative models are implemented. In order to protest tuition rises, the casualization of academic work, and restrictions on political expression on campus, these student movements often come together across conventional caste, class, and geographic barriers. These campus collectives are tenacious in the face of institutional discipline, media misrepresentation, and security intrusions. They use artistic expression, wall graffiti, and nocturnal marches to preserve their places as hubs of democratic discourse.

As anthropologist Nandini Sundar (2010) observes, Indian universities have historically been "spaces of radical democratic politics" where "students from diverse backgrounds encounter ideas of social justice and equality" (p. 256). The current assault on these institutions, through funding cuts and surveillance, represents an attempt to eliminate the spaces where subaltern consciousness can develop.

7.2 Using Regional Identity to Prevent Uniformity

Regional movements in India use local languages, histories, and cultural practices to challenge centralized nationalist narratives, just as Ōe's *The Silent Cry* demonstrates how rural memory can oppose national corporate standardization. The protection of federal resource allocation and regional linguistic autonomy serves as a form of anti-authoritarian opposition in states in southern and eastern India. These regional groups contend that a single, centralized political or cultural framework is insufficient to administer a heterogeneous democracy. These groups prevent local democratic spaces from being assimilated into a uniform, hierarchical national identity by grounding their resistance in regional histories.

7.3 The Vulnerable Workforce's Battle

A large class of precarious workers, including gig economy drivers, contract labourers, and seasonal agricultural workers, has been produced by the ongoing structural upheaval of the Indian economy. These workers have little job security and few state protections. The Cockroach Janata's material foundation is represented by this vulnerable labour force. These workers, who operate outside of traditional union institutions, have increasingly organized localized blockades, internet advocacy groups, and decentralized strikes to seek social security and fair wages. Their resistance shows the ability of a ubiquitous, vital workforce to oppose prevailing economic systems by coordinated, dispersed action. This resistance is frequently unseen by mainstream media until it affects large urban areas. As political economist Pranab Bardhan (2010) notes, the "informalization of labour" in India has created "a new class of precarious workers who are excluded from social protections and thus forced into survival strategies" (p. 87).

VIII. THE HUMAN-ANIMAL DIVIDE'S LINGUISTIC SHIFT

The blurring of the distinction between humans and animals or insects is a recurring topic in all of these books. This line was maintained in traditional colonial literature, where depriving a colonized person of their rights and territory was justified by equating them to animals (Fanon 1963; Memmi 1965). To illustrate how current states treat their populations, this line is purposefully blurred in postcolonial and contemporary fiction.

The protagonist of Rawi Hage's *Cockroach* alternates between human and insect perspectives frequently, using this flexibility to deal with the stress of poverty and displacement. He transforms into his cockroach persona to reclaim control when he gets overwhelmed by the impersonal bureaucracy of the Canadian immigration system. As noted earlier, he declares:

My antennae twitched in the dark as I scurried over the baseboards, sensing the vibrations of a world that believed it had sealed me out. They construct their tall walls and tidy, light-filled rooms, but they overlook the fact that we own the dark and that every wall has a gap big enough for a ravenous, determined monster to pass through (Hage 2008, p. 143).

This excerpt demonstrates how an insectoid identity can become a survival tool instead of a badge of shame. The character has a unique perspective on the city thanks to his antennae and vibration-sensing abilities, which enable him to detect the gaps in an otherwise exclusive metropolitan environment.

The physical and mental transformation of the protagonist in Raghavendra Rao's *The Cockroach Man* into an insect serves as a direct reaction to the draining nature of Indian administrative life. The clerk's metamorphosis becomes a useful strategy to endure institutional neglect while trapped in a pattern of never-ending files, corruption, and shifting official mandates. The clerk can navigate the intricate web of government offices without attracting the attention of predatory administrators by shrinking, becoming quiet, and being extremely perceptive. Rao utilizes this metamorphosis to illustrate how a heartless state may crush the human spirit while simultaneously showing how the average person manages to preserve their dignity in the face of a system that is meant to wear them out.

IX. THE TRAP OF COLLECTIVE BETRAYAL AND INSTITUTIONAL POWER

Ian McEwan's *The Cockroach* and George Orwell's *Animal Farm* explore how collective movements can collapse at an institutional level, whereas Hage and Rao concentrate on individual survival on the periphery. Both books serve as cautions on what occurs when a movement's guiding ideology changes from one of public service to one of individual survival. The shifting text on the barn wall in *Animal Farm* depicts the gradual corruption of the revolution and serves as a graphic illustration of how language can be used to the advantage of the powerful. The ultimate betrayal of the group's initial objectives is represented by the final modification to the commandments:

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others" (Orwell 1945, p. 134).

This expression highlights the fundamental hypocrisy of populist governments that subtly establish a new hierarchy while claiming to represent the whole populace. Language can be stripped of its meaning in order to benefit an administrative class, as demonstrated by the usage of the word "equal" to defend inequality. For organizations like the Cockroach Janata, this dynamic is a continuing problem since organizational structures designed to combat external oppression can be turned inward to develop new forms of control in the absence of continuous internal critique and open communication.

By illustrating what occurs when the insectoid mindset obtains control of the state's top positions, McEwan examines a distinct aspect of this institutional collapse. In *The Cockroach*, Jim Sams circumvents traditional democratic supervision by consolidating executive power through his popular "Reversalism" program. Sams utilizes the media to paint the judges and members of Parliament as opponents of progress when they try to contest the legitimacy of his economic reforms:

The voice of the people is unquestionable. It would be a breach of the public trust to let the self-serving arguments of a divided parliament or the tiresome technicalities of antiquated legislation postpone the magnificent restoration of our country's economy. Regardless of the barriers put in our way by those who are afraid of genuine change, we must continue (McEwan 2019, p. 89).

This discourse demonstrates how readily democratic institutions may be undermined by authoritarian leaders using democratic language. Sams elevates his administration above the law by portraying his actions as the clear manifestation of the "will of the people," thereby using the state as a vehicle for bureaucratic and corporate overreach.

X. GEOGRAPHY, SPACE, AND THE SUBALTERN REBELLION MAP

These books' spatial dynamics also show a stark contrast between the irregular geographies where resistance occurs and the orderly locations under state control. Clear order, visibility, and control are the hallmarks of authoritarian power, which may be seen in monitored public squares, commercial areas, and antiseptic government buildings. On the other hand, underfunded classrooms, overcrowded urban lanes, rural forests, and abandoned campus dorms are some of the dark, secret places where the subaltern's struggle occurs.

In Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry*, the remote Shikoku village's topography is a major factor in the young people's uprising against the corporate powers symbolized by the "Emperor of the Supermarkets." The deep valleys and thick woodlands serve as both a defensive barrier against outside influence and a storehouse of historical memory. According to Ōe, rural areas provide a place where communities can withstand the demands of national homogeneity. Because of the valley's topography, young people can organize a disorderly, unorthodox uprising that interferes with the efficient operation of outside corporate interests.

The history of Osmania University exhibits a similar spatial split. The wide campus has traditionally been used as a safe haven for local political groups because of its ancient buildings, woodland walkways, and dispersed student housing. The intricate layout of the campus has enabled students to continue their organizing efforts despite attempts by succeeding state governments to quell student protests by deploying security troops or erecting barricades. Similar to the valley in *The Silent Cry* or the secret vents in Hage's *Cockroach*, the hostels and departmental courtyards serve as a tangible base for an alternative community that defies organization or repression by outside forces.

XI. CONCLUSION: THE DEMOCRATIC SWARM'S UNFLUSHABLE PROMISE

A common understanding of how literature can uncover and critique the mechanisms of political oppression is revealed by comparing Ian McEwan's *The Cockroach*, Ravi Hage's *Cockroach*, K. Raghavendra Rao's *The Cockroach Man*, Kenzaburō Ōe's *The Silent Cry*, and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. These writers transcend conventional realism narratives by employing animal and insect allegories to depict the material, psychological, and structural aspects of existence under majoritarian, authoritarian, and market-driven regimes. They demonstrate how the general public is frequently compelled to live an insectoid existence—one characterized by precarity, surveillance, and a never-ending battle for survival—when a state adopts austerity and top-down control.

However, this collection of works also conveys a powerful message of optimism. Through the Cockroach Janata Party paradigm, these writings offer a framework for conceptualizing grassroots opposition by changing the insect figure from a term of hate into a symbol of collective resilience. This model serves as a reminder that monolithic state organizations can never completely control or eradicate the innate adaptability and permanence of the ordinary people. The decentralized, swarming collective of common citizens persists long after corporate-bureaucratic plans have been completed, populist leaders have left the stage, and security personnel have left public areas.

Accepting the lessons of this international literary legacy is necessary to reclaim the democratic potential of public space, whether in the underfunded classrooms of public colleges like Osmania or in the larger context of modern civic society. It demands an understanding that maintaining the autonomous, frequently chaotic venues where subaltern people congregate, discuss, and organize is essential to the health of democracy. The realization that the general public is a persistent, adaptable presence is the best safeguard against the chilling effect of a hostile political environment. The democratic swarm cannot be permanently excluded, contained, or erased from the continuing narrative of human freedom, much like the hardy creatures at the center of these contemporary allegories.

As literary critic Fredric Jameson (1981) reminds us, "the political interpretation of literature" reveals "the necessarily political nature of all reading and all writing" (p. 17). The texts examined in this article collectively demonstrate that literature does not merely reflect political reality but actively intervenes in it, offering alternative visions of resistance, survival, and hope. The cockroach, once a symbol of contempt, becomes in these works a figure of democratic possibility—unflushable, adaptable, and relentlessly present in the spaces where power forgets to look.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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