

MAN AND WOMAN RELATIONSHIP IN THE FICTION OF KAVERY NAMBISAN

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Men and women form the two major groups of the world. In the present evil world of separation, division and segmentation, if these two major groups do not coexist, mankind will be wiped out from the surface of the world. Since the origin of the world, man – woman relationship and their union are considered to be indispensable. Without the male – female union, not only the mankind but also the other creatures would not have multiplied in the world. Today's literary writers are also aware of the concept and stress the need for man – woman existence in their literature. Kavery Nambisan, an FRCS Doctor cum novelist from Coorg in Karnataka State, highlights the philosophy of man – woman coexistence in her fiction.

Stressing the need for men – women coexistence is like returning to a life of the past. It is a known factor that patriarchy has been oppressing, women exploiting their biology. Feminism arose as a movement in liberating women and it also became one of the main themes of creative writing. But now the trend is changing from feminism to post feminism. Jose defines, "Postfeminism is a term which suggests that women have made plenty of progress because of feminism, but that feminism is now irrelevant and even undesirable because it has made millions of women unhappy, unfeminine, childless, lonely and bitter." (62), Though this observation seems to be a merciless blame on feminism, it is true to some extent. Feminism has made many women men-haters, lesbians, childless and lonely. Nambisan comes at this juncture of post feminism recommending a life of coexistence between man and women.

Luce Irigaray proclaims, "To remember that we must go on living and creating worlds is our task. But it can be accomplished only through the combined efforts of the two halves of the world: the masculine and the

feminine.....We live here together" (An Ethics of Sexual Difference: 108). This proclamation of the interdependency of man and woman is the primary objective and vision of the living writer, Nambisan. Nambisan is neither a fighting feminist nor a dividing separatist. She dreams of a life of togetherness; longs for the same and preaches the same in her fiction. She has a view about life that man and woman in fact are complimentary to one another, and this would be a different world, if only both of them could lead a harmonious life and work not in confrontation but with cooperation. With this basic philosophy of life, Nambisan recommends the coexistence of man and woman.

The vision of Nambisan is that, centers on the communion of the two different beings and all her other approaches regarding life, work centripetally towards this vision and her fiction moves centrifugally from this vision. Nambisan, though like many of the other women writers, declares that she is not a feminist; the female in her erupts in the form of women characters in her novels. She does not question the concept of creation, but believes in a pattern that prevails in the life of man and woman. In this pattern of life, as a lady doctor, she realizes the fact that biology sets the pattern. So, anything that goes against this pattern will lead to trouble in life. Moreover, the most important matter of concern is the interdependence of man and woman, which is also based on biology.

Many feminist writers have written against the oppression of women, and about the liberation of women. They blame men for oppressing women to revolt against patriarchy and existing social norms. Nambisan takes a natural and a neutral stand in considering man-woman relationship. She does not harp on oppression and liberation. She blames neither men nor women. Instead

she analyses various factors – psychological and physiological that work behind man-woman relationship and also the factors that will strengthen it.

Since the origin of the world, man-woman relationship and their physical union are considered to be indispensable for procreation. Mankind would have been wiped away from the surface of the earth if there had not been man-woman sexual relationship. The world population is directly proportionate to the male-female copulation. The explosion of population is a proof in itself for the majority of the world accepting heterosexuality. If women, on the advice of the radical feminists, shirk heterosexuality and avoid the life based on it, the world's population will dwindle and mankind will come to naught.

Applauding heterosexuality, Nambisan suggests that it is the strong foundation on which man-woman relationship has to be built up. In the coitus of heterosexuality since a unique pleasure is experienced and shared by both man and woman, it is quite natural for them to crave for it. The craving for heterosexuality leads to the craving for each other and further to the union of each other. In her novel, *The Scent of Pepper* by presenting the husband of the female protagonist, Nanji, the mother of thirteen children to admire his wife, Nambisan proves that heterosexuality is an adhesive that binds man-woman relationship.

As charity begins at home, coexistence too should start at home or rather in the family. Globalization is the concept of creating oneness amidst fragmentation. Nambisan tries to drive home her message of eradicating fragmentation or segmentation in *Mango – Coloured Fish*. The title itself suggests the idea of the novelist. A fish is segmented and kept in a bowl. A female character Yash, identifies herself with the fish and says "Don't we all have fractured segmental personalities? We are everyone of us, mango coloured" (119). Here the character hints at her personal life segmented from her husband. Hers is a family split within itself. Nambisan wants to expel segmentations from families. She wants the nuclear family, the basic unit of the society to remain intact in unity. In order to achieve this unity the husband and wife must live together. Nambisan being a woman

writer, instead of talking for women she talks to women, emphasizing their role in binding the family.

In her another novel, *On Wings of Butterflies* through three philosophical women characters Nambisan brings forth her point of view about women. They are Aunt Foot, Milar and Megha Dasi, who also happen to be Nambisan's favourite characters and her spokespersons, conveying the message of unity. In the novel Aunt Foot, while talking about the discrimination of sexes says, "Everything starts from the difference between what is thought to be masculine and feminine". (225). Having made this observation in a Jungian manner she proclaims, "There's maleness in females and femaleness in males" (225) Anita Myles in her work, *Feminism and Post modern Indian Women Novelists in India* observes, "The ideas of Carl Jung attracted some feminists. Jung believed that each person needs to incorporate certain aspects of the opposite sex into his or her personality, only then can he or she achieve wholeness" (4) Based on this Nambisan tries to project that the positive side of anima and animus will form or create a peaceful and happy coexistence of man and woman.

Jung calls these qualities in *Man and His Symbols* 'anima' and 'animus'; and conveys that the anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche (186), 'Animus' is just the opposite, it is the personification of all masculine psychological tendencies in a woman's psyche. Both anima and animus have positive and negative sides. The positive side of anima and animus contributes to the mutual understanding of man and woman and also to their peaceful coexistence. In *The Scent of Pepper* Baliyanna's anima is stimulated when he watches his wife, Nanji giving birth to one of her children. About this Nambisan writes, "Her husband was devoted to her and after watching her give birth to Subbu, he had become her admirer for life. He loved her, she was his beautiful, bone- thin ever –fertile wife" (97-98). The anima in Baliyanna makes him realize the travails of his wife and stimulates him to love her; admire her and live together with her.

Through the character Aunt Foot, Nambisan further advises women who have formed a women's movement against men. Citing the concepts of anima and animus, she advises women to live in harmony with men. She says "Ladies! I beg plead and threaten you to think with your heart, your breasts, your womb and vagina-without fear. You have enough of Man in you. Stop bickering and see yourselves as you are It's humanness we want, and that is neither male nor female. The bucket, my dears, must be emptied of polluted waters and filled with that which sparkles (*On Wings of Butterflies* 226). Nambisan through the above imagery advises women that their hearts must be emptied of the pollution of hatred and filled with the sparkles of love.

Milar is a young widow, who refuses to remarry and remains alone in *On Wings of Butterflies*. She is the spiritual guru of Evita, who is the organizer of the women's movement. When Evita approaches Milar for advice on forming the feminist movement, she readily gives her opinion echoing Nambisan's views on man – woman relationship. She tells how man – woman relationship is indispensable traditionally, "Thousands of years agothere was Man and the Mother – the Primordial Woman: Purusha and Prakriti. The one who does and one who creates and nourishes" (119). She further suggests, "Why blame men when it is women who feel inferior? All this false anger against men is only anger against ourselves" (121). She proceeds to discuss the relationship that must exist between man and woman, "Man is the child of woman, is he not? She must not hate him or hurt him when she has the power to guide. Male and female are two sides of a coin, Eva, They must unite..." She continues prophetically, "If things continue like this, one day there will be nurseries without nannies, schools without teachers, children without mothers. Men without wives or lovers, kings without concubines, boys without girls. And in the end in the end-Eva? What is the matter?" (121) Nambisan stops here without giving answer to the question but seems to convey the message that the end of the quarrel between man and woman will be disastrous.

Megha Dasi, another important character in *On Wings of Butterflies* describes Evita's serious mission of forming the feminist movement as a tamasha with dereliction. She observes, "You women must understand your anger before anything else" (128). In the climax of the novel, *On Wings of Butterflies* with the theme of forming a feminist movement, Nambisan, who is also a writer of children's stories, makes use of the children to teach a lesson to both men and women. The children advise the leaders of the movement saying, "A world without men is what you end up withThink of young girls. They must marry and raise families"(246). She appreciates marriage and welcomes family life with husband, wife and children.

Shobha De, a celebrity writer, devoted wife and mother of six, about her experience of married life says in the Introduction to her work, *Spouse: The Truth about Marriages*, "Marriage, with all its complex, complicated, dizzying ingredients remains my number one comfort zone" (Xvi). So, for both man and woman marriage must prove to be a comfort zone. Nambisan through Aunt Foot's speech on the final day of the women's conference suggests that love is the solution for a peaceful married life. She says, "There isn't enough love in this world. There isn't enough touching and holding and caring.....Love, my dears, is the most difficult thing in the world (224-25) She also advises that women should not hate men. Milar in *On Wings of Butterflies* observes, "There is sadness of course. How can I be happy while hating the men?" (22)

Thus, Nambisan, a Post feminist writer, whose latest novel, *The Story That Must Not Be Told* has been short listed for Man Asian Literary Prize, suggests through her fiction that man and woman should live together in order to prevent the annihilation of mankind from the surface of the earth. According to her, population can survive only by heterosexual copulation, which is a strong cord that ties up man- woman relationship. She also suggests that the positive anima and animus can bring man and woman together. She advises women not to harbour hatred against men as they are the sons of the women. She opines that man

and woman should love each other. Love shared mutually between man and woman will build up happy families.

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