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EDITORIAL NOTE

India. One of the middle income countries of the world has undergone far reaching changes in the areas of science and technology, arts and commerce and other areas of development. However we are not free from poverty, child labour, malnutrition, unemployment and poor health, specifically gender disparity or otherwise gender imbalance. Lexically “gender” is defined as ‘the state of being male or female’, grammatically a class usually masculine, feminine, common or neutral, and the word “feminism” is rooted out as the French origin *feminisme* which semantically means “the advocacy of women’s rights on the grounds of sexual equality.

According to the French writer Simone de Beauvoir, the author of the internationally accredited publication “The Second Sex” firmly records “What people have endlessly sought to prove is that woman is superior, inferior or equal to man created after Adam, she is obviously a secondary being, some say; on the contrary, say others. Adam was only a rough draft, and God perfected the human being when he created Eve; her brain is smaller, but relatively bigger: Christ was made man; but perhaps out of humility. In her “The Feminist Mystique” the transformational leader of the Women’s movement, the first president of the National Organization for women(NOW) defines woman as ‘occupational housewife and the problem woman face has no name.

In this controversial juncture of numerous unbalanced clarifications and classifications on feminism, the contents in this compilation discusses on the views and interpretations by different writers from ‘The Hindu Succession Act (1956’ to Feminism in Margret Atwood’s ‘The Edible Women’ with unbelievable truth and facts with which we feel so proud of the attempts of our writers taken and the positive and possible outcome drawn by them in a satisfactory derivations as possible as they could affirm.

We admit from our experience in editing task that editing, a compilation is not a “One-man Army” protocol, but in fact it is truly the impact on the outcome of so many people who journeyed with and within us to bring out this issue with a grand result more than the limit of our expectation. We are sure that this compendium would fulfill your expectations and quench the thirst to sip the facts behind the rigid title “Feminism’ without leaving any dot of controversy with its transparency of handling the title.

Special Issue Editors

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PROPERTY DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS WOMEN UNDER HINDU SUCCESSION ACT 1956

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Abstract

Women have been subjected to an innumerable form of discrimination. One of such subjects of discrimination has been the law of succession. In the initial phase of civilization, the women were denied the right of inheritance when the actual partition of property took place. Her identity was demarcated as separate when the question of succession arose. Though the position has changed and attempts are being made to change her right concerning succession, a lot needs to be done by the policymakers, taking into account the fact that the present woman is no more confined to the four corners of her house and family. The paper attempts to study the evolution of her property and how she has been controlled from enjoying her property rights.

Keywords: *stridhan, impartial improvement, inheritance rights, perpetuating mandates, coparcenary property*

Concept of Stridhan Under the Hindu Law

Stridhan is a classical concept of Hindu Law with wide interpretation in the different schools of Hindu Law. The word '*Stridhan*' is derived from the wor, i.e., woman, and *dhana*, i.e., property. *Manu enumerates six kinds of Stridhan (Manu IX,194)*

- a) Gifts made before the nuptial fire, explained by Katyayanna to mean gifts made at the time of marriage before the fire, which is the witness of the nuptial (*adhyagni*)
- b) Gifts made at the bridal procession, explained by Katyayanna, while the bride is being led from the residence of her parents to that of her husband (*adhyabahanika*);
- c) Gifts made in token of love, that is, says Katyanana, those made through affection by her father-in-law and mother-in-law (*ptridatta*), and those made at the time of her making (obeisance at the feet of the elders (*padavandaika*);
- d) Gifts made by the father;
- e) Gifts made by the mother;

- f) Gifts made by the brother.

To the above *Vishnu* adds:

- a) Gifts made by a husband to his wife on supersession, that is, on the occasion of his taking another wife;
- b) Gifts, subsequent, that is, says Katyayanna, those made after marriage by her husband's relations or her parent's relations;
- c) Sulka or marriage fee, a term which is used in different senses in different schools;
- d) Gifts from sons and relations.

Stridhan belonging to a woman is property of which she is the absolute owner and which she may dispose off at her pleasure, if not in all cases during covertures, in all circumstances during widowhood. However, a woman is not the absolute property owner which is not her *Stridhan*, nor can she dispose of it at her pleasure even during her widowhood. She is merely a qualified owner of such property; in other words, she takes only a limited interest in the property, the nature and extent of which depends on the character of the property. (Desai

2013) *Stridhan* has another important feature about succession. *Stridhan*, for the purpose of succession is categorized into *Saudayika*, i.e., a gift from affectionate kindred and declared to be her absolute property and *non-saudayika* which includes gifts from strangers, property acquired by mechanical art etc. The *Non-saudayika* property can be disposed by the wife only after she seeks permission from her husband. After the husband's death her power to dispose of the property becomes absolute.

Section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 subject to certain qualifications, confers full and heritable capacity on a female heir in respect of all property acquired by her, whether before or after the commencement of the Act, with the result that by retrospective operation of that section, she holds the property in her possession as full owner and not as a limited owner. Male and female heirs are treated as equals, without any distinction. The restraints and limitations on the powers of a female heir have ceased to exist even in respect of the existing property. The underscoring of the women rights to be in *equalibia* under the constitution, finds concrete shape in the Act of 1956 (Desai 2013).

To determine whether a particular kind of property is *Stridhan* or not depends on;

- a) the source from which the property was acquired;
- b) the woman's status at the time of acquisition, i.e., whether she acquired it during maidenhood, coverture, or widowhood and lastly;
- c) the school to which she belongs.

The Hindu Women's Property Act, 1937

The Act was one of the earliest legislation enacted before to independence. The Act in its earnest tried to bring about changes in the law and nature of inheritance especially with regard to the female succession.

The Act initially guaranteed rights to women, but later, these provisions became inconsistent and defective in their application. The Act turned out to be an impartial improvement of the previous legislation, and the rights guaranteed turned out to be limited and discriminatory for females. The Act provided the substitution of the widow in place of her deceased husband in the coparcenary. So long as she was alive, her presence defeated the application of the doctrine of survivorship, but she could never become a coparcener. Her introduction in place of her husband did not make her a coparcener but enabled her to enjoy his share in her own right, something which was not possible before this Act. (*Beni Prasad Puranchand (1896)*). The study of the Act revealed the fact that the woman were neither a coparcener nor was she the Karta of the Hindu Joint Family, and the Act was silent about the mode of devolution of the property in her favor.

The main objective behind the passing of this legislation was that a Hindu widow, after the death of her husband, should not have to be dependent on others for her sustenance but should be so strengthened economically that she acquires a capability to look after herself. The predominant motive was securing her maintenance rights by granting her ownership, even though limited, over the property. Under classical law, she had maintenance rights out of the property, as inheritance rights from the joint family property were denied. When these

inheritance rights, which were perceived to be instead of maintenance, were granted under the Act, the right to claim maintenance was automatically extinguished, as both could not co-exist. However, as the Act did not apply to impartible estates and agricultural property, families where the only property was of either of the two mentioned types, the widow, even after the passing of the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act of 1937 retained her rights to claim maintenance. (Saxena, 2015)

An analysis of the above Act reveals the fact that right of Hindu women never improved after the passing of the Act. She was never given the status of Karta nor was she a coparcener when compared to her male counterpart. Therefore, the status of women about the property never changed, and she continued to face discrimination in terms of inheritance and succession of the property. The Act being repelled by the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 has now lost its existence and is only antique legislation for reference.

The Hindu Succession Act, 1956

The Hindu Succession Act tried to introduce changes in the law relating to inheritance and succession, and it came into force on 17 June 1956. The Act applies to persons governed by the Mitakshara as well as the Dayabhaga schools. In other words, it amends and codifies the law relating to intestate succession among Hindus. When we talk of the Act in terms of women property, we find certain changes being introduced by the previous Act. Certain major improvements were made by the Act though later on these improvements turned out to be inefficient.

Under the previous law, women had limited control over her property no matter how she had acquired. She could not dispose of her property by her own sweet will. The new Act incorporated major changes in this regard. It abolished the concept of limited ownership and introduced the doctrine of absolute ownership. This reform was introduced in section 14 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. (Hindu Succession Act 1956 section 14). The section converted the limited ownership into full-fledged ownership and also ended the confusion and controversy regarding the share and the quantum that the widow took on the death of her husband, as his primary heir.

The topic necessitates mentioning here that under the previous law, succession to *Stridhan* varied according to the woman being married or unmarried and according to the form of her marriage. The Act also abolished this and outlined under section 15a definite and uniform scheme of succession to the property of a female Hindu who dies intestate after the commencement of the Act.

In *Ram Lubhayav Lachhmi* (2010), the court laid down that there are two basic objectives of the Act; the first one was to remove the disability imposed under Hindu Law on a woman, to hold the property only as a limited owner. The Act removed it expressly, enabling her to acquire the property from whatever may be the mode, as a full owner, that included a power to dispose of it at her pleasure. Any property that a woman acquired after the passing of the Act was her absolute property. In this sense, it abolished the concept of a woman's estate as different from a man's ownership. Second, it also transformed the limited ownership into an absolute ownership by

providing that where a Hindu female was in control of the property as a limited owner, her ownership would automatically get converted into absolute ownership from the date of the commencement of the Act.

A formal evaluation of the Hindu Succession Act reveals that there are inconsistencies and anomalies within its provision and the possible consequences of these upon the issues of protecting women's equal rights under succession. (Patel 2006). There are several clauses that continue the age-old discrimination of male and female heirs. The enactment is still infected with the various void perpetuating mandates of the Constitution. Even though the Act abolishes the difference of *Stridhan* and women's estate, partition and right of residence in the dwelling-house did the age old practice of discriminating against female children more exposed. (Halder and Jaishankar, 2008) Further, an important issue that arose regarding the interpretation of the Act was that the widow was to have the property on the date of commencement of the Act. In other words, for the application of section 14 of the Act the property should be possessed by the Hindu female and not merely in possession of a Hindu female. *Mangal Singh V Rattno* (1967)

The law dictates that a Hindu female has no title to the property, she will not become its absolute owner even though she is in possession. In *Gummalappur v. Setra* (1959), the Supreme Court held that the word 'possessed' in Section 14 is used in a broad sense and means the state of owning or having in one's hand or power. Thus, if a female cannot claim any title to the property than merely by her possession, she cannot become its absolute owner. The property possessed by a Hindu female, as contemplated in

the Section, is the property to which she has acquired some kind of title, whether before or after the commencement of the Act.

However, Section 14 was challenged on the ground of being discriminatory against men and favoring only a section of the society, viz, the women. - *Pratap Singh Union of India* (1985). The Apex Court opined that Section 14 is protected by the express provision of the Indian Constitution under Article 15(3), which permits the State to make special provision in favor of the women. It further stated that Section 14 was actually an initiative to remedy the plight of a Hindu woman who could not claim an absolute interest in the properties inherited by her from her husband but who could only enjoy them with all the restrictions attached to a widow's estate under the Hindu law. Therefore, there is now hardly any justification for the male Hindu to raise an objection and portray their dissatisfaction to the beneficent a women provision.

However, dissatisfaction persists about the interpretation of Section 15 of the Hindu Succession Act. Actually, Section 15 lays down a rule of succession in case of a Hindu female dying intestate. The Section groups the heirs into five categories mentioned in Section 15 and the order of distribution provided in Section 16. The difference is that two different schemes of succession has been provided under the Act. Based on the source of acquisition of the property, the Act highly discriminates in the devolution between male's and female's property. Concerning devolution of male's separate property, irrespective of whether he inherits from his parents or his wife, the Act lays down uniform rules of succession still, in case of female dying intestate, the heirs are determined

based on the source of property from where she inherited or acquired the property. For the determination of heirs, the property of a female Hindu is classified into three types (1) property in general, (2) property inherited from her parents, and (3) property inherited from her husband or father-in-law. Accordingly, for Hindu females the Act provides for three different schemes of succession depending upon the source of acquisition of property of the female.(Mishra2014). The time has come for us to figure why there has been an attitude of discrimination towards the female population. We could say that our patriarchy was uneducated when the whole issue of property rights was started, but now we have become a democratic country and we have legislators to frame our future, then why couldn't they provide equal opportunity for the fair sex. Why do a women have to face discrimination in every field of her life? She has to struggle to demand equal opportunity.

The reasons for not providing a uniform scheme under Hindu law are linked closely to the emphasis on the conservation and protection of the property in the family of a male Hindu, the old concept of *Stridhan* is still very evident from the content of section 15 and 16. A woman under the patriarchal setup is seen to have no permanent family of her own. She is born in her father's family and remains there till she gets married, after that she joins her husband's family. Her stay in none of these families is permanent. Even in her husband's family, in the event of a marital breakup due to the death of the husband or even divorce, she can remarry and move out of his family and join the second husband. In contrast, the husband's family does not change with his marriage or remarriage or

death of wife or divorce. (Saxena, 2011) A closer look at sections 15 and 16 also reveals that not only is a separate scheme of succession provided in the case of a female intestate, but there is also further divergence linked with the source of acquisition of the property and on consideration of her marital status, and factors like whether she died leaving behind children or issueless. A woman has never found a justified place concerning her property rights. She has very limited access to her property rights. If we analyze the Hindu Succession Act, we find that it has different mode of devolution of property for males and females. The law could simply lay down one method of devolution of property for both males and females. That would have been sufficient for doing justice. But we still follow the different modes of devolution for male and females.

The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005

There have voices been raised against gender inequalities in devolution of property rights to women. The Law Commission *suo-motu* took the study of reforms in respect of property rights of women under the Hindu law in its 174th Report as discrimination against women has been discernible in this area. Based on the report mentioned above the Amendment Bill was introduced in the Parliament in December 2004 and it ultimately came into force on 9th September 2005. The statement of Objects and Reasons of the Amendment Act 2005 read, "The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 has amended and codified the law relating to intestate succession among Hindus. The Act brought about changes in the law of succession among Hindus and gave

rights which were till then unknown about women's property..."

Regarding the need to render social justice to women, the States of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra have made necessary changes in the law giving equal rights to daughters in Hindu Mitakshara coparcenary property. The Kerala Legislature has enacted the Kerala Joint Hindu Family System (Abolition) Act, 1975. In fact, the present Act is a combination of the Andhra and the Kerala model.

The Amendment Act of 2005 tried to bring progressive changes to the law of Hindu Succession. The key change introduced in the Act was that the daughters were included in the Hindu Mitakshara coparcenary. In the joint Hindu family governed by Mitakshara law, the daughter of a coparcener shall by birth become a coparcener in her own right in the same manner as the son and have the same rights in the coparcenary property as she would have had if she had been a son, inclusive of the right to claim by survivorship and shall be subject to the same liabilities and disabilities in respect to as the son. (Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005, Section 6). It is noteworthy to mention here that the amendment of 2005 laid down that it would not affect or invalidate any disposition, including any partition or testamentary disposition of property which had taken place before 20th December, where a Hindu dies after the commencement of this Amendment Act of 2005 his interest in the property of a joint Hindu family shall devolve by testamentary or intestate succession, as the case may be and not by survivorship. So this was the beginning trying to recognize the women's right to acquire property rights.

A female heir could not ask for partition, before the 2005 amendment regarding dwelling house wholly occupied by a joint family until male heirs chose to divide their respective shares therein. She had very restricted rights in her demand for property rights. She was not on equal terms with her male counterpart. Though it appeared, she had been given right but in comparison to the male, that turned out to be unsatisfactory. Now this provision has been omitted to remove the disability of the female heirs. Thus, a female heir can now ask for partition in respect of a dwelling house occupied by a joint family, irrespective of the fact whether male heirs choose to divide their respective shares therein or not.

Challenges now arose about of coparcenary right to daughters. The Orissa High Court in *Pravat Chandra Pattnaik v. Sarat Chandra Pattnaik* (2008) has held that "submission that the daughters, who are born only after 2005, will be treated as coparceners, is not accepted if the provision of the Act is read with the intention of the legislation. The irresistible conclusion is that Section 6 rather gives a right to the daughters, who are coparcener. From the year 2005 whenever they may be born, they can claim for partition of the property which has not been partitioned earlier". Similarly, in *Rakhi Gupta v. Zahoor Ahmad* (2012), it was observed by the court that "the right accrues to the daughter born in a Mitakshara family on and from the commencement of the Amendment Act, i.e., 9th September 2005. The basis of the right is, therefore after the commencement of the amended Act. Thus, the natural ingredient of a coparcenary interest is acquired by birth and from the moment of birth. This acquisition (not devolution) until the amendment Act was the

right and entitlement only of a son in a coparcenary property by the amendment has also been given to the daughter of the Joint Hindu Family". In this contrast, a question to be raised why are not the daughters born in that family. Suppose a son can acquire rights by birth why not the daughter born in that same family and through the same mother. So why a discriminatory approach towards the daughters.

Another section of the Act which underwent change via the Amendment of 2005 was Section 23. (Hindu Succession Act 1956, Section 23) The Section has its application as it seeks to remove the disability faced by a female heir in claiming her share in the property. The section disentitled the female heir from claiming a partition of such property belonging to a joint Hindu family.. Section 23 of the Act is abrogated which though gave a woman a coparcener status, but she had no right to claim partition in the dwelling house with her brother, and hence the deletion of the section seems to be a welcome step.

A Need for Change

The Hindu Succession Act was enacted in 1956 when in the structure of Hindu society, women hardly went out to work. There has been a profound change in the social scene in the past few years, and women have taken a stride in all spheres. The consequence is that women own property earned by their skill. These situations were not foreseen by the Legislators. If that is so, what is the impact of these socio-economic changes? Do they warrant any change in the law of succession about the property of a female Hindu dying intestate? What is the fallout of gradual disintegration of joint Hindu family and emergence of the nuclear family as a unit in

society over the years in the context of the law of succession governing the issue at hand? One of the fundamental tenets underlying the law of succession has been the proximity of relation. A successor stands to the person who originally held the property that may be the subject matter of inheritance in a given case.

The fact that women have been given the right to inherit from their parental side also assumes relevance in the present context. These developments and changes lead to competing arguments and approaches that may considered in redefining the law of succession in case of a female Hindu dying intestate. Thus, three alternative options emerge for consideration, namely:

- a) The Self-acquired property of a female Hindu dying intestate should devolve first upon her heirs from the natal family.
- b) The Self-acquired property of a female Hindu dying intestate should devolve equally upon the heirs of her husband and the heirs from her natal family.
- c) The Self-acquired property of a female Hindu dying intestate should devolve first upon the heirs of her husband. (Law Commission Report 207th (2008)

About the first option, the protagonists of this approach contend that the general order of succession reflects gender bias. The supporters contend that the joint family system in our country has slowly been eroded, and an increasing number of nuclear and semi-nuclear families have replaced the traditional Mitakshara Hindu joint family system. Women are also becoming more economically independent. With the growth of the nuclear family, a married woman's dependency on her natal family and continued closeness to it is much greater today,

even if it was not so earlier. Most married women would prefer that their parents should be the more preferred heirs to inherit her property if her children etc. and husband are not alive. She would also prefer that her sister and brother have a better right to inherit her property than her brother-in-law and sister-in-law. Accordingly, it is urged that Section 15(1) should be modified to ensure that the general order of succession does not place a woman's husband's heirs above those who belong to her natal families like her father and mother and after that her brother and sister. It is contended that when a man dies intestate, his wife's relatives do not even figure in the order of succession despite how he may have acquired the property. Given this, parity is sought for the female by applying the same rules as applicable to male's property. Accordingly, it is suggested that it would be better to amend Section 15(1) to specify the general rules of devolution, which will apply not only to the self-acquired property by a woman but also to other property acquired through her family gifts, etc.

The second option in the property of a female Hindu dying intestate devolves upon the heirs depending upon the source from which the said property was acquired by her; the self-acquired property of such female is simultaneously inherited by her heirs both from the husband's family as well as the natal family in equal share. The fact remains that in spite of her closeness to and dependence on, her natal family; her relations with her husband's family are not separated and uprooted in entirety. She continues to be a member of her husband's family, getting support from it in all walks of life. One cannot afford to ignore the ground realities in this regard. The social ethos and the morals of our patriarchal system demand that the

existing system should not be reversed as claimed by the protagonists of the first option. Lest, there may be social and family tensions that may not be in the overall interest of the family as a whole and, as such ought to be avoided. In any case, it is open to the female Hindu to bequeath her property the way she likes by executing a will.

The third option may be disposed of summarily with the observation that the option essentially means continuing status quo. We have already seen earlier those socio-economic changes warrant corresponding changes in the law on the subject as well.

Conclusion

The inherent inequality in the law of succession is about the male and female property which needs to be discarded, and though the Amendment Act of 2005 introduced changes in the classical notion of succession, a little more needs to be done. It is disheartening but a truth that only piecemeal legislation and amendments are introduced to protect the women's right in inheritance matter. Socio-economic changes in the society necessitate changes in the law, and it is necessary that the legislature should take care of introducing changes according to the current socio-economic conditions. A woman is no longer confined to the four corners of her house. Instead, she has become a breadwinner of the family, contributes to the family, and by her skill and labor earned property. Hence, the legislature should consider the difference between women's self-acquired property and separate property considering the Law Commission Report. The gender inequality with respect to succession needs to be removed it is in violation of Section 15(3) of the Constitution of

India. The women deserve absolute right as has been given to the men about the distribution of her property. A better approach would be that a uniform rule of succession should be laid down both for male and female whether it is self-acquired or separate property. The National Commission of Women in its report suggested for deletion of section 15 of the Hindu Succession Act and amending Section 8 as “ the property of a Hindu dying intestate shall devolve according to the provision of this chapter- a) Firstly upon the heirs, being the relatives specified in Class I of the Schedule; b) secondly, if there is no heir of Class I, then upon the heirs, being the relatives specified in Class II of the Schedule; c) Thirdly, if there is no heir of any of the two classes, then upon agnates of the deceased; and d) Lastly, if there is no agnate, then upon cognates of the deceased.”

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2. Desai, S. A. (2013). *Mulla, Principles of Hindu Law*, (21sted.) LexisNexis, Butterworth, New Delhi, at p. 224
3. Ibid at p. 216
4. Beni Prasad v Puranch and, (1896) ILR 23 Cal 262
5. Saxena P. P, (2011). *Family Law Lectures- Family Law-II*” (3rded) LexisNexis, Butterworths, Wadhwa, Nagpur, at p. 339
6. Section 14 of Hindu Succession Act 1956: Property of a female Hindu to be her absolute property; Any property possessed by a female Hindu, whether acquired before or after the commencement of this Act, shall be held by her as full owner thereof and not as a limited owner.

Explanation – In this sub-section, “property” includes both movable and immovable property acquired by a female Hindu by inheritance or devise, or a partition, or in lieu of arrears of maintenance, or by gift from any person, whether a relative or not, before, at or after her marriage, or by her own skill or exertion, or by purchase or by prescription, or in any other manner whatsoever, and also any such property held by her as Stridhan immediately before the commencement of this Act.

Nothing contained in sub-section (1) shall apply to any property acquired by way of gift or under a will or any other instrument or under a decree or order of a civil court or under an award where the terms of the gift, will or other instrument or the decree, order or award prescribe a restricted estate in such property.

7. Section 15 of the Hindu Succession Act 1956: General Rule of Succession in the case of female Hindus;

The property of a female Hindu dying intestate shall devolve according to the rules set out in Section 16;

firstly, upon the sons and daughters (including the children of any pre-deceased son or daughter) and the husband; secondly, upon the heirs of the husband; thirdly upon the mother and the father; fourthly upon the heirs of the father and lastly upon the heirs of the mother. Not with standing anything contained in sub-section (1); any property inherited by a female Hindu from her father or mother shall devolve, in the absence of any son or daughter of the deceased (including the children of any pre-deceased son or daughter) not upon the heirs referred to in sub-section (1) in the order specified therein, but upon the heirs of the father, and any property inherited by a female

Hindu from her husband or from her father-in-law shall devolve, in the absence of any son or daughter of the deceased (including the children of any pre-deceased son or daughter) not upon the other heirs referred to in sub-section (1) in the order specified therein, but upon the heirs of the husband.

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15. Supra 5. p. 363
16. Ibid
17. Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 Section 6
18. AIR 2008 Ori. 133
19. Delhi High Court, (CS (OS) 1147/2012) 29 November 2012
20. Section 23 of the Hindu Succession Act 1956: Special Provision respecting dwelling houses;
Where a Hindu intestate has left surviving him or her both male and female heirs specified in Class I of the Schedule and his or her property includes a dwelling-house wholly occupied by members of his or her family, then, notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the right of any such female heir to claim partition of the dwelling-house shall not arise until the male heirs choose to divide their respective shares therein; but the female heir shall be entitled to a right of residence therein;
Provided that where such female heir is a daughter, she shall be entitled to a right of residence in the dwelling-house only if she is unmarried or has been deserted by or has separated from her husband or is a widow. (The Amendment of 2005 has omitted the section)
- 21 Law Commission of India, 207th. (June 2008) Report on Proposal to amend Section 15 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 p- 19
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FEMINISM IN MIGRANT LITERATURE: *PARADIS BLUES* BY SHENAZ PATEL AND *MIGRITUDE* BY SHAILJA PATEL

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Abstract

Although Paradis Blues from Francophone Literature, and Migritude written in English seem to be two texts far apart presenting two different worlds, what ties them together is the fact that both are based on theatrical representations and their writers belong to Indian diaspora. The novels challenge all conventional notions of genre bringing theater, song, prose and poetry together in one text. Drawing upon some relevant theories from feminist narratology, this article attempts to understand how the process of writing is not simply an act of relating a story of oppression but much more. By examining the tension between the performative aspects and scriptural practice, particularly the intergeneric character of these novels, I analyze how writing becomes a performance and the text a stage where the reader comes to play a crucial role. By taking intertextual aspects into consideration, I illustrate how the writers enter into dialogue with both contemporary and ancient texts, thereby contributing enormously to the ongoing debate on woman emancipation.

Keywords: francophone, scriptural practice, intergenericity, collaborating transgresses, tentacled octopus

Although *Paradis Blues* (2014) from Francophone Mauritian Literature, and *Migritude* (2010) written in English seem to be two texts far apart presenting two different worlds, what ties them together is the fact that both are based on theatrical representations (spoken-word¹) and that their writers belong to the second or third generation Indian diaspora. The novels challenge all conventional notions of genre bringing theater, song, prose and poetry

together in one text. The fragmented and polyphonic narrative structure of these hybrid texts that confound all categories and conventions merits close examination as it plays strategically with the expectations of the reader by blurring all boundaries of genre. How can one possibly interpret this transgression?

Drawing upon some relevant theories from feminist narratology and intergenericity, this paper attempts to understand how the process of writing is not simply an act of relating a story of oppression but much more. By examining the tension between the performative aspects and scriptural practice, particularly the intergeneric character of these novels, I analyze how writing becomes a performance and the text a stage where the reader comes to play a crucial role. I illustrate how the writers enter into dialogue with each other, thereby contributing enormously to the ongoing debate on woman emancipation.

¹Spoken word is an oral poetic performance based mainly on the poem and the performer's aesthetic qualities. It can be understood as a contemporary continuation of an ancient oral artistic tradition that focused on recitation and play of words focusing on performer's intonation. It is a term that includes any kind of poetry recited aloud, including poetry readings, poetry slams, comedy routines and even prose monologues.

Shenaz Patel is a contemporary Indo-Mauritian writer who has written four novels and numerous short stories. She is well known for her work *The Silence of Chagos* (2005). *Paradis blues* is a text she wrote for a theatrical performance to be held in 2009, largely inspired by the life of the protagonist Miselaine Soobraydoo-Duval called Mylene in the novel, a Mauritian who plays herself in the play. It narrates the story of her everyday life, repetitive work at various garment factories, her marriage, the abuse she faced in her conjugal life and finally how she transformed and refused to undergo oppression in her violent marriage. The director of the play Ahmed Madani explains that he chose Shenaz Patel another Mauritian to recount the tale because he wanted to present the Mauritian reality to the world. Shenaz Patel adds another dimension to the text as she intertwines Mylene's story with her meta discourse on the act of writing in the text in a manner that the text is much more than the personal story and provides a platform for numerous voices to mingle. The director calls this work *ménage à trois* where three people come together namely the actress with her story, the writer who adds her poetry and a director who desires to present the true face of Mauritius to the audience.

Patel considers herself to be the first reader of Miselaine's story as she states that the act of writing this work had to go through the process of being a reader who acts, reacts and interacts with the story and the emotions of the protagonist. This work prepared in collaboration transgresses all boundaries of autofiction, thereby providing a space marked by intergenericity that challenges the reader and opens the text to polyphony and multiplicity. Jean-Michel Adam and Ute Heidmann who have

been working extensively on genres and the notion of intergenericity claim that all texts are intergeneric in some way or the other and believe that one should rather talk in terms of genericity instead of genre. They explain that genericity is a much more dynamic concept than that of the genre and will therefore be more apt to talk about writings that are often experimenting with different genres. Intergenericity, according to them, examines the diverse forms of interaction between the different generic categories². In *Paradis blues*, the dynamics of intergenericity is recreated by conjunction of performative aspects such as repetition and scriptural aspects such as letters that underscore the sense of vacuity in the lives of Mauritian girls, particularly the narrator.

Describing her life full of boredom, the narrator states:

Shortly after, it was the factory. Hong Kong Shanghai first. Nothing complicated. Just cut the threads of t-shirts. Collar, sleeve, hem. Collar, sleeve, hem. Collar, sleeve, hem. From morning to evening, a pile of T-shirts, to take and turn always in the same direction, collar-sleeve-hem, collar-sleeve-hem, cut the slightest thread that protrudes, collar-sleeve-hem, until you have calluses in your hands because of the scissors. (9-10)

In this instance as in many others in the text it is the repetition of words and rhymes that foreground the reality of the Mauritius island, a paradise for the tourist but almost an entrapment for its own people. The only hope for these girls

²David Martens and Guillaume Willem, "Enjeux discursifs de la genericité des textes. Interview with Jean-Michel Adam" in *Interférences littéraires* no. 13, June 2014, p. 191.

who seem to be doubly alienated first as women who have to conform to a certain idealized image of womanhood and second as islanders within the confined space of the island is to get married to men settled abroad, mainly Europe so that they are able to run away from the persistent sense of claustrophobia that marks their lives in Mauritius. They are therefore expected to write letters to their suitors hoping that somebody would choose them and that would open a door to paradise for them. Many letters written by the narrator and their reply are incorporated within the text. The contents of the letters reveal that the suitors much like the girls themselves do not have the ideal life that girls dream of. The girls usually end up getting married to elderly men and that this marriage is no paradise but another trap for them.

As the narration progresses the reader notices that the narrator transforms from a civilized obedient girl to a person with “a venomous tongue”. The style and language of the novel bear witness to this transformation. She says, “I am invaded by words, vulgar words, tabooed words, words of revenge, violent words. There has to be a war. Force has to win. A sword, a club, a shard of glass, what is the sex of a man, a cave, something to be forced upon, what is the sex of a woman? God where are these words coming from”(39).

The narrator uses the stream of consciousness³ monologue to recount her tale in the novel but the use of this technique goes beyond her predecessors like Virginia

Woolf and James Joyce as she uses this style precisely to foreground a certain violence and aggression in her narration. Consider this passage that seems almost surreal in which she is standing in front of her mother's dead body, she says:

...and then black ink from my mouth, from both the sides of my lips, black ink that flows slowly first and then very fast [...] and then this ink spreads all over on the grey dress of my mother and worse on the white sofa, small tentacled black octopuses embrace my mother's body, her legs, her hands, and it goes on. later on she says to her mother you are lying there on the sofa and these octopuses will attack you, they will strangle you. (53)

In this passage black ink is a metaphor for words, it is the voice and the forbidden words of the obedient daughter that engulf the mother. The black ink that flows from the mouth of Mylene metaphorizes a frenzied debauched language that aims to shut her mother who incarnates the patriarchal society. These words become a manifesto of revolt against the society. In the story too she is accused of having killed her mother in a fit of madness. Her madness, the flow of words and the process of writing itself become the mode of emancipation by allowing her to express herself, express her oppression in an aggressive manner, present the violence to which she was subjected in her own language.

Underscoring the importance of writing, the narrator herself says

Words save me. They put me to life, intensely.

With broken nails, with obstinate nails of words

³Stream of Consciousness writing refers to a narrative technique where the thoughts and emotions of a narrator or character are written out such that a reader can track the fluid mental state of these characters.

I will go there where I can heal my wounds
 Where I can build relations
 Where routes open
 With my sail of words, I will sail
 I will open my mouth wide so that words
 fall out like fountain
 With these words I will sing this island. My
 dream (52-54)

The reader can notice a strong desire within the narrator to built relations, to open up to the world, to make her voice heard and her misery understood. The final aim of her narration is not simply to tell her tale in order to get the reader's sympathy but to goeyond. Her experimental writing destabilizes andro centric codes to create another language that grants her a long-denied agency. Thus, writing gives her the possibility of opening, of connecting with the readers. In the words of Shenaz Patel, herself, "Then write again, to try to break the confinement, to look for the crack, the pass that would open the beautiful exit. it will be Paradis Blues.

Shenaz Patel's desire to break open in order to communicate and be understood that is the motor of her narrative in *Paradis Blues* resonates with the narratologist Susan Lanser's notion of a feminine plotless text that she describes as a text in which:

The act of writing becomes the fulfillment of desire, telling becomes the single predicated act, as if to tell were in itself to resolve, to provide closure. Communication, understanding, and being understood, become not only the objective of the narration but the act that can transform (some aspect of) the narrated world. In a universe where waiting, inaction, reception predominate, and action is only minimally

possible, the narrative act itself becomes the source of possibility. (1986: 357)

Shailja Patel's *Migritude*, too, is a text written to be performed by the writer herself, a spoken word show, spoken word poetry. Shailja Patel is a third generation Indian born and brought up in Kenya. She is a poet, playwright and activist who works on feminist and migration issues. Because her work *Migritude* merges personal stories with political events, it is both autobiographical and collective at the same time and it is precisely the intergeneric character of this text that allows it to intertwine the individual with the collective. Foregrounding the performative aspect and intergenericity of the text, Vijay Prasad in his foreword to the book calls it a song : "the words hold me. They are a song. What does the song hope for? It wants understanding, which is a gesture towards freedom" (iv). *Migritude* is a collage of stories, poems and letters around a red suitcase full of saris given to the writer by her mother who had been collecting saris and jewellery for her daughter's wedding but gave up on her and finally handed over the suitcase along with *mangal sutra* to her single daughter. Shailja Patel not knowing what to do with her mother's treasure, decides to put it to good use in her work, first only to be displayed alongside her poems that explored their history and meaning. Later however she developed it into a one woman show that would tell stories of colonialism and imperialism through the lens of the South Asian Diaspora to counter the dominant official narratives of histories.

Borrowed from the notion of negritude proposed by Leopold Sedar Senghor that urged the blacks to be proud of their blackness rather than see it as something

inferior, Patel's "Migritude" refers to a migrant attitude through which the migrant accepts his migrant state with a sense of pride instead of assimilating himself in the host culture. In her own words; "It is the voice of a generation of migrants who speak unapologetically, fiercely, lyrically, for themselves. It is a celebration and revalorization of immigrant and diasporic culture and identity" (143). Migritude then is not simply the writer's story but a tale that reclaims all migrant suffering. As she explains:

So I make this work from rage/for every smug, idiotic face I've ever wanted to smash into the carnage of war/every encounter that has left my throat choked/with what I dared not say/I excavate the words that hid in my churning stomach through visa controls/words I swallowed down until over the border/they are still there/they knew I would come back for them this is for the hands/ hacked off the Arawaks by Columbus and his men/lopped off Ohlone children by Spanish priests/ baskets of severed hands presented at day's end/to Belgian plantation masters in the Congo/thumbs chopped off Indian weavers by the British. I make this work because I still have hands.(35)

The intergeneric aspect of the novel allows the narrator to allow place to oral testimonies from the women who survived the camps during the Kenyan war of independence, testimonies that have not been included in the official narratives: "the white officers had no shame. They would rape women in full view of everyone. Swing women by hair. Put women in sacks, douse in paraffin, set alight..we learned in school that we attained independence peacefully,

without bloodshed. We were the model the rest of Africa was supposed to look to! A happy multiracial nation where whites, Asians and Africans all lived in harmony"(17).

Coupled with these testimonies are Patel's mother's letters that present her personal struggle in Kenya and her parents desperate efforts to send the children out abroad at all cost to study in "safer" places. The section "The sky has not Changed Color" presents testimonies of "Masai" women, a tribal group, who survived brutal rape over 35 years from 1965. These testimonies are followed by a letter from the narrator's mother stating how she was stuck in traffic due to an ongoing protest by Masai women who were molested by British soldiers. For over two decades the soldiers roamed assaulting women and children at will. Condemning this in her poetic manner Shailja Patel like Mylene of *Paradis Blues* takes a fierce and ferocious style as she states: "...may the redness overtake them. May red ants feast in their groins. Scorpions nestle in their beds. Blood vessels explode in their brains, organs rupture in their bellies. Wherever they go, may the land rise up in redness against them. Poison their waking and sleeping. May they never escape the redness on their hands. On their dicks, the bitter nausea of it on their tongues"(47). She retaliates to violence by a language that is frenzied and debauched.

Lanser states that the act of narration has the performative capacity to change the narrated world. Considering this view point, I would like to focus on the reception of *Migritude* about which the writer herself speaks in the novel. The second part of *Migritude* called the shadow book, describes small anecdotes related to the performances discussed in the first part of the

book. These anecdotes might seem irrelevant at a cursory glance but they have an intriguing place in the narrative of the book. In one of her poems “Shilling Love”, describing the critical situation of her parents as migrants, the narrator explains why her parents never told her that they loved her, “my parents never say /they love us/they save and count/count and save” (27). Patel narrates that when she did a performance of *Migritude* at a bookshop in Genoa Italy, she wondered how much of it could possibly resonate with an urban Italian audience. The bookshop owner however came up and said afterwards that he grew up in rural Italy where conditions were so harsh the people would often say ‘kiss your children only when they are sleeping’. Any affection shown while they were awake would weaken them in their battle of survival.

Describing the response to *Migritude* by 59 people in Kenya, she exclaims that it was nothing short of electric. She was amazed at how her work had sliced through ethnic and socio-economic boundaries. “One of them tells me how powerfully affected he was by the integration of history, politics, and economics into my poetry. Someone else a brown Kenyan tells me he was moved to tears and was embarrassed by his emotion until he turned to see a black Kenyan also crying. I have never

had this experience before” (95). By incorporating these reactions of the viewers, Patel underscores the performative aspect of the play and the novel that ends up making a difference, creating bridges, making the stories heard and understood with compassion. On asked how she would define her work marked by an unflinching sense of multiplicity, Patel says: “Poetry, Spoken-word theatre, Text-based performance for stage, Fully embodied poetry. Story! I like the description “multiple souls”. What I do breaks new ground in melding genres and dissolving boundaries – it is fluid, multifaceted and constantly evolving” (138).

Both the novels in this article have genre bending and unconventional strategies that break our from androcentric narratives in order to make place for strong feminine voices.

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WHEN A WOMAN LIVE SALONE: BETRAYAL, ALIENATION AND FRUSTRATION IN WOMEN IN SELECT NOVELS OF ANITA DESAI

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Abstract

Anita Desai, a novelist, a short story writer and children's author has been a writer par excellence. As a writer her book have been short listed for the Booker prize several times. She was born in 1937 in Mussourie, India to an Indian father and a German mother. Desai's novels revolve around the themes of alienation, frustration and betrayal. Most of her novels are a reflection of the discord in marital relationships. Novels such as Fire on the Mountain, Cry, the Peacock, Where Shall we go this Summe ?as well as Clear Light of Day deal with the theme of hellish existence in a stifling marital bond. Desai is adept at analyzing a woman's problems in an Indian society and most of the novels deal with the themes of frustration and hence alienation of middle class women. Desai's forte is her insightful depiction of the secret and the inner workings of the minds of her female protagonists. Her female characters seem to come to a tryst with their destinies and after facing many trials and tribulations, misunderstandings and insensitiveness from their male partners they either choose to live the life of a recluse (Fire on the Mountain) or to murder their husbands (Cry, the Peacock). Most of the women in her novels are found facing some crisis or the other. They are found to be deeply burdened by their problems and developmental aberrations or disorders. Maya in Cry, the Peacock and Nanda in Fire on the Mountain form classic instances of women rebelling against their odd situations.

Keywords: disharmony, discord, alienation, male insensitiveness, loneliness, ennui.

The novels of Anita Desai depict the dilemma faced by modern men and women in adverse situations. The women in her novels seem trapped in a hostile world where they face their own dark ghosts either of their past or frustrating present times or insights into their bleak futures. The words of Desai elucidate the anxieties between the family members and the isolation and alienation of middle class female protagonists becoming the cause and also the consequence of marital disharmony and discord.

Anita Desai is the most prominent Indian novelist in English literature. She has written an entire gamut of novels and short stories on the plight of women suffering in a male – dominated patriarchal society. She has made

many insightful forays into the inner recesses of the female psyche.

The novels of Anita Desai explore the sense of isolation, alienation, frustration and tensions and anxieties of the middle class female protagonist as a result of problems between the family members. The notion that food, clothes, shelter alone cannot always satisfy women has been beautifully and aptly reflected in her novels. The patriarchal culture, the uniqueness of over and hyper – sensitive women have been dealt with in a superb manner by Anita Desai.

The heroines in Anita Desai's novels are glaring examples of modern women who find it difficult to cope with the practical, day – to – day mundane and prosaic world of today which is bereft of sensitiveness, sympathy and most

important understanding. They face an inner tension and the dilemma becomes all the more poignant as these female protagonists long for the warmth of human touch and a glance of tenderness, sensitivity and companionship of their husbands or their male partners.

The tempest within comes out excellently in Desai's novels more specifically in *Fire on the Mountain*, *Cry, the Peacock*, *Where Shall we go this Summer?* These female characters face an inner crisis and existential problem. Existentialists are usually rebels fighting against the established order. By denying their real world and rejecting the worldly truth, they come close to truth. Camus, Kafka, Sartre, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche and so on had all been famous exponents of Nihilism. Kierkegaard launched a powerful crusade for renunciation of all ties with the state, society, Church and other snares. He discovers the mystery of existence in the hidden recesses of the self. Sartre elucidates this existentialist philosophy with his dictum "Being-for-itself" which means remaining engrossed in one's consciousness. With consciousness comes the concept of suicide and murder when the inner self is faced with opposition from the outer world, the absurdity and the morbidity of the outer, greater world.

In Anita Desai's novel *Fire on the Mountain*, we come across the predicament of the middle class women. Here Desai depicts the life of Nanda Kaul, who has shut herself up in a secluded place in Kasauli. She leads a life of a recluse withdrawing herself from all movements and echoes of her past life of humdrum and chaos.

In a flashback form we are made to journey into her mind and thoughts where she recollects her life in the previous years as that of Vice

Chancellor's wife but who is now dead. Tired of the chaos and hullabaloo of her duties and responsibilities for so long, Nanda Kaul decides to retire to the hills and live a peaceful and restful life alone undoubtedly makes us take a tour of the inner recesses of the heart and mind of Nanda Kaul and her younger version in the form of Raka, her great grand niece who had come to spend some time with her great grand aunt. Her needs to remain in oblivion and be oblivious of the greater busier outer world is reflected in the novel.

Nanda Kaul remained in her bed, absolutely still, she would lie still, still – she would be charred tree trunk in a forest, a broken pillar of marble in the desert, a lizard on a stone wall. (*Fire on the Mountain* 24). In her desire for solitude after a tempestuous life spent with her husband and his extra – marital affair with a colleague in his University, she is firmly determined to forget all her past aches and pains and lie still like a stone at Carignano but providence plans otherwise and soon she is visited by Raka, her great grand niece who comes to stay with her as she is convalescing from a bout of typhoid and is advised to stay at the hill side. Raka as a product of a broken home, her mother is frequently beaten by an abusive husband and so she seems to be tired of family ties with no faith in the sanctity of human relationships. So she too like her great grandmother comes across as a recluse. In the novel, she is always spoken of in terms of a lizard or an animal or a wild bird and this proves true in her case as she does not show any inclination to mix with human company. At one point after coming to Kasauli at Carignano to stay with her great grandmother Nanda, she never ever attempted to get intimate with Nanda

rather avoided any look or gesture of endearment and went for long walks all alone by herself on the mountains. In another highly psychological novel *Cry, the Peacock*, Anita Desai explores the turbulent emotional world of a rather neurotic protagonist Maya who is seen reeling under a sense of acute alienation and goes to the extent of insanity which stems from her marital disharmony.

However, Maya's nervousness is very justified as she led a very protected and cocooned life. However, her married life and in-laws family are just the opposite to the family that she was born in. Thus, in both the families lie the seed of disintegration and nervous disorder that seem to unsettle her and lose her peace of mind. In fact, they determine the nature of her relationship with her husband Gautama.

For her insanity all three male members are responsible. Her father for treating her like a doll living in a doll's house, for Gautama who treated her as if she were a robot without any profound sensibilities or was never able to gauge the depth of need for husband's love and warmth. His treatment of her is like that of a father with his little darling daughter and her elder brother who is totally oblivious of her inner sufferings and pain.

Maya is born in a family where the mother has passed away and the only memory remaining of her is a photograph. During her early childhood days she is totally cut off from her motherly love and affection.

There is absolutely no clue as to why the mother died and what kind of life she lived. Thus, the natural bond of love and affection between the mother and child stands severed and broken. Maya craves for mother and her love. Though her father tries to fill the gap in

her life by showering her with a lot of care and attention, she still yearns for her absent mother. On being used to a life of pampering and getting love, care and over-attention, Maya naturally expects the same treatment from her husband Gautama who as the name signifies is a very practical, matter-of-fact, indifferent individual. Her brother is just the opposite of Maya who felt sick and disgusted of this life of affluence and over-indulgence and thus left home. As Maya constantly needed support and attention, her father being away on a trip to Europe, she craves for the support of her highly busy husband. Though she had sustained her married life for a span of four years and was found suffering from a sense of emptiness, she had failed to give birth to a child and put the entire blame on Gautama and perhaps on account of this barrenness. Maya had turned more introspective than she would be in a normal situation.

Being over-engrossed in his own work, Gautama too failed to an intense longing for a life of companionship and remaining sensitive to his wife which Maya so much craved for. Due to very little interaction with her husband, she was compelled to live the life of a mental wreck and lived an upset mental life. Maya is constantly tortured and tormented by the predictions of an Albino astrologer regarding one of the partners on marriage after the married life of four years. This eats into her and leaves her no room for mental peace or emotional wellbeing. She pines for close contact and intimacy with her husband that can ease her mental anguish to some extent. However, he remains thoroughly unsympathetic, deaf and blind to her troubled thought processes.

Bewildered by her searing pain and agony she bursts out at one point exclaiming:

Oh, you know nothing, understand nothing.

Nor will you ever understand

You know nothing of me- and how I

Can love. How I want to love

How it is important to me.

But you, you've never loved and you don't love me ... (Cry the Peacock 112)

Her intense frustration, her loneliness, her neurosis verging on psychosis, her sense of being neglected by her husband and so finely in comparison to her caring and loving father, all add up an intense desire in her to murder her husband and this seed of murder takes a practical shape when the words of the astrologer rings true in her ears and mind and interestingly and horrifyingly she at last becomes the killer of Gautama. Like a peacock she loved intensely, even capable of great and immense love and to be reciprocated in her love however unfortunately remains totally unreciprocated.

Desai's *Cry the Peacock*, explores the inner depths of female consciousness and psyche. By pushing her husband from the terrace which actually leads to his death, she in a way pushes the indifference and insensitivity from her life which inherited words is 'her life'. And by getting rid of her insensitive husband she gets rid of all those pulls and currents that go opposite to her loving nature.

The over- wrought Maya falls a prey to all the patriarchal forces. First the oppressive love, protection of her patriarchal father, next the stifling predictions of the obscene Albino astrologer, the lack of love, support from her elder- brother too caught up in an abstract world of dreams of rebel and resistance and who is poles apart from her in every way and lastly the

insensitiveness of her busy and worldly husband who did not even think his wife capable of possessing a heart and mind of her own and treats her like an automaton. Thus, all these men are responsible to a great extent in disturbing her mental and emotional harmony and well – being.

The psychological tempests playing havoc in the minds of the female protagonists extend to the next psychological novel, *Where Shall we got his Summer?* The heroine Sita of this particular novel is said to be a less intense version of the neurotic and introspective protagonist of *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya. She was bowled out by her predicament of a house wife already the mother of four children and carrying her fifth child in her decaying mid – forties and not at all comfortable with the idea of giving birth to the baby more so in a world fraught with corruption, violent , cruel, destructive, indifferent and corroding world and that tilts the authentic forces of being and living.

She yearns to leave the congested life of the city and move to a more peaceful place. Every year her husband would take them to exotic and different places for their summer vacations. At Raman's asking Sita where she would like to visit that summer, the place that immediately came to her mind beautiful and secluded island off the coast line of Bombay. Immensely disturbed and battered by the chaotic debris of her life at the main land she seeks alternative in the magical beauty and effervescence of this pristine and quiet island.

Sita felt and was convinced that the pristine, still calmness of the island could only transport from the filth and dirt of the humdrum city life of which she had been thoroughly bored and this fresh island breeze acted like oxygen

enabling her to breathe once more. Here she felt assured that could regain her lost paradise of childhood and her present missing selfhood. She would be able to relive the enamouring moments she had experienced earlier –

...She saw the island a piece of music, a magic – mirror, it was so bright, so brilliant to her eyes after the tensions and shadows of her childhood. Sita at one pointing the story while narrating her intense ennui of her married life to her husband Raman says that the most happy moment in her life was when she saw a young couple look into each other's eyes with love, warmth and tenderness and then her heart melted at the sight and perhaps in the couple she could superimpose her own aspirations of similar expressions of love from her partner Raman.

In the novel, Sita is seeing waging a fierce battle with the limitations of life. She rebels against everyone's desire to compel her to confirm to the present demeaning and dehumanizing environment.

In her novel *Clear Light of Day* we find how the characters like Mira Mashi and the two girls, Bimala and Tara and their younger brother Tara get on with their lives amidst family tensions. This novel is a saga of the affliction soreness and struggles writ large in the fates of the two most generous and sensitive women - the elder Mira Mashi and her younger version Bimala.

Mira Mashi emerges as a tottering, nervous, hesitating, faltering and extremely timid woman maybe on account of her dependent status as she had been abandoned by her husband and her in-laws had been only too happy to get rid of her when one of Mira Mashi's distant relatives brought her in order to take care of the three children whose parents had been always busy

partying and frequenting the clubs and playing cards and bridge games.

Mira Mashi evolves as an oak tree who though is not strong but bending and breaking gives shelter and emotional support to all these innocent beings who fail to provide them with emotional, mental and physical sustenance and support. But interestingly, though Mira Mashi breaks down under the immense load of taking the responsibilities of the family on her old, weak shoulder she is poles apart from Bimala who too sacrifices her life for the other family members especially her younger brother and sister Tara but herself remains lonely till the end of the story as the siblings who had been so dependent on her prove selfish and leave her and the house to settle and live comfortable lives with their own families.

The novels of Anita Desai are not only a treat to her readers but also provide a view of the subconscious and hidden desires, aspirations, hankering after love and compassion and understanding and at the same time give us a picture of the pain and emotional storms tempests but emerge out of this darkness and negative atmosphere by the force of sheer grit and will power.

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EXPLORING THE ASPECTS OF FEMINISM IN ANITA NAIR'S *LADIES COUPE*

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Abstract

Anita Nair is an Indian woman novelist who portrayed real things which she herself observed in her surroundings. Being feminist, she sensed that women have been constantly denied of their liberty, equality and rights. Therefore, she criticised the untold sufferings of women in the hands of male in the family as well as in the society. In most of her writings, she boldly pictured the dominant male activities against women. She succinctly gives her voice for women's pathetic conditions and tribulations prevail in the male dominated society. The term "Feminism" is effectively handled by many women novelists in India to echo the longings of women for their identity. Meanwhile, a few women writers described how cultural difference affected women folk at their bottom level. So, most of the feminist writers raised their voice for gender equality, women emancipation and empowerment through their stories. Hence, this paper traces the aspects of feminism in the novel *Ladies Coupe* by Anita Nair.

Keywords: feminism, liberty, equality, rights, sufferings, male domination, identity crisis and women's emancipation.

Anita Nair is not only a novelist but also a famous poet who is equated with other famous Indian female writers like Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Manju Kapoor, Anitha Desai, Shashi Deshpande, etc. All these writers have generally explored the living conditions of women especially after the colonisation. Anita has chosen the character Akhila in *Ladies Coupe* to narrate everything. Actually, Anita Nair is known for creating brave and confident female characters who used to fight for their rights. She has also portrayed some modern characters who justify their pre-marital or extra marital affair that is not accepted by the Indian Society.

Anita Nair in her novel *Ladies Coupe* vividly describes how the protagonist (Akhil and eswari) Akhil as lowly moves from her bondage of family expectations to her freedom and self-realization. She is forty-five years old and didn't marry as she lost her father. So, after her father's death, she headed the family and became a

multifaceted or multi-talented woman, sacrificing her life and energy only for the welfare of her family members. But, unfortunately, she was not recognized as the real head of the family, just because she was a woman. There was a big twist in Akhila's life after her father's death. Because the family members including her brother Narayan asked "What are we going to do?". Even Akhila asked herself the same question as she has to work in the office of her father. So, when she travelled in the train to Kanyakumari, she is worried about her loneliness. In the train, her mind was wavering and asked herself "can't a woman live alone in the society?".

The family atmosphere made her to think about her less recognition by the members and wanted to go away from her responsibilities and family bondage. In order to forget her worries, Akhila had conversation with her co-passengers. Therefore, through these co-passengers, Nair

portrayed women's emotional, intellectual and physical response to their life. In India, arranged marriage is happily accepted by the society and even women who followed the arranged marriage were respected both by the family members as well as the society. Here, Akila says "I am a woman who has always been looked after by her father, her brothers and her husband. When my husband is gone, there will be my son waiting to take off". In this juncture, the other character Janaki, the oldest of them, a dutiful wife says, "waiting to take off from where his father left off. Women like me end up being fragile our men treat us like princess (LC-22). According to Janaki, women need not be bold enough, as they were taken care of by male in the family. And that is why she says. "we look down upon women who are strong and who can cope by themselves. Do you understand what I am saying? (LC 22-23). Hence, Janaki's narration directly informs Akhila how the patriarchal control is unavoidable in women's life.

Nair's next character Sheela, a fourteen-year-old girl who also travels in the compartment is narrating the patriarchal control. As long as she was a child she used to mingle or entertain everybody. But, when she grew up, her father restricted her mingling with others. Now, she suspected why certain activities which was once encouraged was not accepted later. Being insightful, she had assimilated her past and the present conditions. Of late, she keenly observes the entire relationship of one another among the family members. For instance, the relationship between her grand-father and her mother; between her brother and sister and so on. Further Sheela understands why her Granma comes to her daughter (ignoring her son) for treatment.

From this story Nair tries to picture a society in which women are not only ill treated but also abused and exploited by men anywhere and everywhere. So, this incident informed Akhila that self-protection and self-respect are essential for women.

Further, Nair in this story explores the cross-section of the society. Now she narrated the story of Margaret Shanthi who has over dependence and love for her husband Ebenezer Paulraj, who controls all her movements, including her wish to have a baby. This is possible for him as she loves him blindly. After sometime, she developed the mind set of "To be or not to be". That is to be a 'silent woman' or to be a 'rebellious woman'. And then, she slowly realised that she lost her individuality and freedom. Even her husband's activities reflected his revenge motive on her. Therefore, she decided to react to her husband in a different and unassuming way. While she is enjoying her freedom in an unusual way, she triggers a silent war against him. Finally, Margaret Shanthi thought. "all that was good and noble about my life that he had destroyed, the baby that died even before it had a soul... there was nothing left for me to dream of and the words rose to the surface again I HATE HIM, I HATE HIM. What am I going to do"(131). So, through this story, the novelist says that the failures and disappointments in marital relationship are inevitable in any society. But women must emerge boldly and brilliantly to encounter such issues.

Anita Nair's keen observation of the present family system induced her to create a female character who does something secretly for her pleasure. One such character in this story is Prabha Devi whose embroidery was excellent

and loved by all. At the same time, she developed an extra marital affair for certain reasons. However, after facing some bitter experience, she came out of it. As she lost her self-image and self-identity after her marriage, she wanted to go out of the house very often, saying lame reasons. In that mood, she wanted to learn swimming. Actually, she enjoyed swimming and felt the sense of freedom when the water touches her body. So, again and again she was reminded of her loss of happiness and over dependence on some one particularly on her husband irritated her a lot. Even Prabha Devi's mother is not pleased as daughters are put in to so many confinements for being women. The confinement continued still in their husbands' house after marriage. Why this pathetic condition only for women? Even while playing games a girl child is destined to choose to play cooking or baby-sitting games as it is said, "A KITCHEN was set up for her to play house and mother games. So, Prabha Devi's mother joined in her daughter's games, pretending to be an adult- while her daughter tried hard to be a child adult". (L.C-170). Therefore, she enjoyed neither her childhood life nor her marriage with Jagadeesh. Because, everyday, she used to wait for her husband's early arrival so that he could talk to him happily. But she had only disappointments throughout her life.

The next character is Marikolunthu, who was exploited sexually by the upper class. Nair portrayed Marikolunthu as the most affected woman one among other female characters in the story. Because, on a particular day, she was raped by a man forcefully. But to her surprise, the man said that she only volunteered. This incident prepared her to fight back, takes

revenge and feels relaxed and content. Now, she was not only helpless but also had no boldness because of her mother's preaching during her childhood times. For example, her mother did not send her to the town school saying that, 'It is not just the money but how can I send a young girl by herself.... there is too much risk (LC 215). Hence, keeping all these bitter experiences which she faced till now in mind, Marikolunthu emerges as a strong independent woman and makes attempts to come out of the prevailing clutches in the society. Actually, Nair introduced this character Marikolunthu to inform the society that women are not weaker sex. Instead, she says that women are so strong and they are no way inferior to men. Marikolunthu's mother says there is a risk to send a girl by a bus to town for school. When she tells Akila, "I am the woman you think you have wondered about. Her childhood innocence is destroyed when Murugesan attempts physical brutality on her. When she is found "Pregnant her mother and Sujatha regret it as they just feel it is too late to insist Murugesan to marry her. Even this matter is taken to the chettiar's son Sridhar, he says "The girl must have led him on and now that she is pregnant she's making up on story about rape (245). But Marikolunthu is able to raise the question within her about "Husband's Protection".

Therefore, Nair has portrayed a few characters like Akhila's mother to prove that women have strong limitations about the patriarchal structure which has laid strict social, political and economic conditions on women. Throughout the story Akhila's mother is pictured not only as an orthodox mother but also a dutiful and devoted wife with her own follow ups. Further, Akila is portrayed as a

woman without authority or power to do anything individually.

Therefore, the heroines of Anita Nair usually object the prevalent gender stereotypes and assert their individuality. Some of her female characters do not react but blame themselves for their fall in life. In addition, she has checked whether woman can achieve her selfhood. In this way, the Novel *Ladies Coupe* reflects the role of woman in contemporary postcolonial India. The story also narrates how women's individual liberty is shackled by the patriarchal society. Though she is a feminist writer, her writing style differs totally from the other contemporary feminist writers. That is why, she is called by the other literary figures that she is a feminist with a remarkable difference. So, ultimately, Nair has succinctly portrayed Modern Indian women's search for revival of relationships that are essential to women in any society.

To conclude, in this novel, Anita Nair has beautifully depicted the actual relationship between husband and wife. Though she exhibited all types of women, the female protagonists are shown as struggling to come out of their domestic clutches to retain their identity. She described all the aspects of Indian society in this novel *Ladies Coupe*, particularly how

women are ill-treated and suppressed by the male dominated society and how they fight to relieve themselves. It is a prevailing system of Indian society in which the father or eldest male is empowered to head the family, pushing the women to the lower or powerless position. So the social set up in India treated women as a weaker group and they face numerous suppression in their life. Hence, Nair exhorts from this story that the patriarchy system as an unjust social system that must be eradicated as early as possible. Being a strong feminist, Anita Nair through the 'Ladies Coupe' succinctly presents the prevailing struggle of women who are not allowed to flow along the current.

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SUFFERINGS AND CHALLENGES OF MAYA IN ANITA DESAI'S *CRY, THE PEACOCK*: A FEMINISTIC VIEW

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Abstract

Anita Desai, a great analyst of the human mind, a creator of brilliant characters, and an astute interpreter of life, represents a gallery of vivid and realistic portraits. She concentrates on the predicament of modern women in the male-dominated society and her destruction at the state of marriage. According to her, most marriages prove to be unions of incompletely men who are apt to be rational and rigid with the women who are sentimental and emotional. Anita Desai's first novel Cry, the Peacock is about Maya's cries for love and understanding in her loveless marriage with Gautama. She wanted to live passionately like peacocks which tore at each other before making love.

Keywords: marriage, relationship, domination, detachment, crisis

Introduction

Anita Desai, one of the most appealing novelists on the Indo-English fiction, appeared on the Indian English Literary scene with the publication of her first novel *Cry, the Peacock* in 1963. Unlike many other Indian writers in English, Desai is not interested in merely narrating a story. She is more interested in her characters and themes and primarily her views. She is interested in the inner life of her characters. The themes of her novels are mostly related to the plight of women. These women characters react very strongly and sensitively to the forces of male dominated society. As Kohli points out, "No other writer is so much concerned with the life of young men and women in Indian cities as Anita Desai is" (62).

The novel *Cry, the Peacock* narrates the story of Maya's married life with Gautama. Maya, young, beautiful, intelligent and very sensitive as well as sensuous, fails to grow out of childhood, married to a reputed lawyer, nearly twice her age. She is incapable of leading an

independent existence. Her neurotic life is linked with her father's personal attention. She is filled with fear of death and so she cannot establish effective communication with her husband. She feels lonely and this isolation is total when she murders her husband in a fit of insane fury. The death motif is built into the structure of the story. R.S.Sharma feels, "The novel operates primarily on a symbolic level. But it has a vast Canvas of events, characters and relationships that add to the narrative appeal" (49).

Maya represents a class of women who silently suffer at the hands of men. Maya, as a wife, how far succeeded in capturing Gautama's mind, is debatable. There is a temperamental difference between Gautama and Maya, and a wide difference in age too. Her husband's indifference adds to her loneliness in the house. The nerve-racking experience of being ignored by Gautama and his family induces her to recoil to her childhood days.

There is a gap between the family status of Maya and Gautama. She comes from high class,

while he is from middle class. She is full of life and enthusiasm, but Gautama and his family members are busy and they are indifferent to her. She feels that none of his family members cares for her feelings. Thus, his house is like a dreary desert to Maya. In her past Maya considers the family members of Gautama as unemotional, but when she is afraid of death she finds them active and alive. She thinks that her death is very near, and there is no time left at all to live with the family members of Gautama. She suddenly feels the need of her father, who has told her:

The world is full of destruction that is born of the Western theory of life, not an Asian one. We have been taught for generations to believe that the merit of accepting one's limitations and acting within them is greater than that of destroying them and trying to act beyond them (Cry, the Peacock 72).

Maya, in Gautama's opinion, knows nothing about relatives and common human existence. She still walks on the memory garden of childhood and dreams about the fairies that sleep on buds and considers Gautama as the wicked bogeyman who refused to play along with her. Maya is emotionally immersed in her love for life. Gautama is a dry type of a matter of fact person who avoids all sentimentality. He is tender to her, but his cares and concerns are devoid of human understanding. As a husband, he neglects his wife and her need for love. Gautama's failure as a husband too hurts her. She is a childless woman, lonely and miserable. She laments his lack of interest in her, "Giving me an opal ring to wear on my finger, he did not notice the translucent skin beneath, the blue flashing veins ran under and out of the bridge of gold" (9).

Gautama refers to money and fame as something very fundamental. He is unable to give her the sense of security. Instead of loading her with logic, he should have won her over to his point of faith. When she longs for emotional and spiritual equation, he denotes his lack of interest in her psyche. Her feelings are immersed within her, unable to find a common chord with her life partner.

Maya is a solitary pathetic figure who has entered into wedlock, in the hope of revising the bliss. She had once enjoyed living in her father's home but is bitterly disappointed by the practical ways of her husband. Her major drawback is that she is very possessive, a person fond of all the good things in life, and enjoys living. As the days advance everything becomes powerless to silence the storm within. Maya revolts against this denial of life and her tragedy is heightened by another myth, the cry of the peacocks and she struggles to free herself from his nightmarish illusion. She then realizes that this marriage has hindered her liberation and her basic right to live.

The prophecy of the albino astrologer long buried under the load of years, glares at her in all its aloneness and anger. She completely withdraws herself from the rest of the family and passes her days in utter loneliness. She gradually loses the balance of her mind. She cries out in agony: "Ah storm, storm, wonderful, infidel storm, blow, blow! I cried, and ran on and on from room to room laughing as maniacs laugh once the world gives them up and surrenders them of their freedom" (52). Gautama thinks it very unnatural and considers it as mere father-fixation.

Maya cries for love and understanding in her loveless marriage with Gautama. She hungered

for his companionship and spent sleepless nights consumed with this hunger. She came to look upon her relationship with Gautama as a relationship with death. She succumbs to tears, flinging herself on her bed to muffle her outburst. She laments, “Am I gone insane? Father, Brother, Husband, who is my Saviour? I am in need of one. I am dying and I am in love with living. I am in love, and I am dying. God, let me sleep, forget, rest. But no, I’ll never sleep again. There is no rest any more – only death and waiting” (92).

The members of Gautama’s family, his mother and sister Nila, are like the city itself, indifferent to human relationships. Nila is an unhappy married woman who tries to divorce her husband, whereas Maya feels imprisoned in her in-law’s house. Gautama’s mother praises the taste of her daughter who keeps sleeping all through the day and playing sitar at night. She is not concerned with Maya’s health and she pays no attention to her. Maya feels the absence of Gautama in the house for long hours and whenever he comes, he gets busy with his clients or discusses politics or philosophy which do not interest her.

Maya longs for the love and affection of her husband. Her urge for love is almost spiritual and the demand of her spirit: “.... meet me half-way, in my own world, not merely demand of me, brusquely, to join, however safe, was so very drab and no longer afforded me security” (198). She is so close to Gautama and yet so far. She is like a soul caught between the two opposite motions without any support or contact “psychologists agree that it is impossible to live with such horror” (Bande 58). The brooding nature makes her a victim who fails to hold to either past or the present. The past in her father’s

house is the bliss of solitude. The thought about it was always a comforting bandage to her wounded psyche.

The philosophy of detachment becomes an abomination in Gautama. Maya revolts against this denial of life and thinks of him in terms of ascetic like the Buddha. The long discourse between the two gives us an insight into the working of their minds. Maya’s approach to reality is not based on an illusion, but on the philosophy of a vital contact. In Maya’s mind, marriage is linked with a yoke that destroys the female in every situation. Her marriage to Gautama only serves to highlight her total involvement with her father. She constantly thinks of him and unconsciously searches for him in her husband.

She sincerely tries to follow Gautama’s philosophy of the *Gita*. To alleviate her suffering, she needs the assuring warmth of Gautama’s company, as she would have needed and certainly received from her father. When she was a child, her father used to fulfill all her demands. Every summer he used to ask her to suggest the name of the place which she would like to visit. But after marriage when Maya tells Gautama about her desire to go to the South to see the Kathakali dance, he dismisses the idea.

A letter from her long-lost brother Arjuna again stirs her memory. Arjuna is a peculiar child. Unlike Maya, he never likes the garden and the flowers. He had no interest in their father’s world of parties and drinks. He is a rebel from his very childhood. Maya also remembers Leila, who had married a man suffering from tuberculosis. All these memories of the past and the inability to adjust herself to an indifferent family make her feel lonely and desolate.

Maya and Gautama are always disagreeing, even over trifles. Gautama is a dutiful and reasonable man and has a balanced attitude towards life. On the contrary, Maya is very sensitive. Gautama does not try to know the misery of Maya and how to soothe her. In a different situation, Gautama would have proved to be a remarkably successful husband. But he and Maya are irreconcilable. Their union is likely to ruin each other's life and happiness. She considers, "No, no, not hardness, but the distance he coldly keeps from me. His coldness, his coldness and incessant talk" (Cry, the Peacock 9).

Maya wishes to join the poetry session arranged in Gautama's house as she has done in her father's house, but Gautama does not like her entry and therefore she quickly quits the place. After the session is over, she complains "you did not want me ..." and he retorts, "Not want you? Did I say so? Did anyone say so? Why all this melodrama?" (111). Gautama tries to clarify things by quoting from the *Bhagavad Gita*. He says, "Listen, thinking of sense objects, man becomes attached thereto. From attachment arises longing and from longing anger is born, from anger arises delusion, from delusion loss of memory is caused. From loss of memory the discrimination, he perishes" (112).

Maya is more right-conscious, less duty-conscious with love sick, very feminine and human. She is a childless lady. She is doubtful about having a child in future also. Perhaps her childlessness may be a reason for her alienation. She also suffers from father-fixation. When Gautama comes to her and touches her cheek and hair lovingly and tenderly, she forgets all about his indifference. She clings to Gautama's arm like a child, even though she knows that he

detests it. She confesses, "I was flooded with tenderness and gratitude. I thought of him as my guardian, my protector, the one who had seen to the burial of my pet and then came to wipe the strands of hair out of my wet eyes and speak to me softly" (11).

Maya's relations with Gautama grow worse at the end of four years come close. Gautama is attracted by the clear night and its shining stars, while Maya is impressed by the myriad stars. She sees, "Death lurked in these spaces; the darkness spoke of distance, separation loneliness – loneliness of such proportion that it broke the bounds of that single word and all its associations, and went spilling and spreading out and about, lapping the stars, each one isolated from the other by so much" (22).

Maya loved not only the world but also her husband. She loved the very presence of Gautama, the very thought of being with him. She loves him too much and does not want to separate from him even in death. She tries to locate the mark on her forehead that prophesied what the albino detected, i.e., "a relentless and fatal competition between myself and Gautama" (106). The albino becomes a nightmare and his prophecy haunts her repeatedly. "It seemed real, I could recall each detail, and yet – God, Gautama, father, surely it is nothing but a hallucination, surely I sobbed" (64). Maya certainly does not murder her husband, because she loved him. Though theirs was not a love-marriage, she loved him in a certain way. Her confession proves it: "But do not presume no one must presume that our marriage was an empty one, a failure" (201).

Maya is taken to her father's house. She gets lost in the joy of getting back home perhaps because her temporary insanity made her forget

the death of her husband whom she loved with all her heart. Her mother-in-law and her sister-in-law, Nila had gone with her. Nila insisted on treating her brother's death as neither an accident nor a murder. For, Maya had said in all playfulness, "So then I pushed him hard, and he fell. And when I went down the stairs to the terrace he was lying there – don't you like your tea?" (214).

Even in such a mental condition Maya explains all that had happened and ends, "You see, so Gautama didn't really matter. He didn't care and I did" (216). Suddenly they heard Maya's frightened voice from the balcony. Perhaps, it was a moment of sanity when she realised that she had caused her husband's death and committed suicide. Much critical ink has been spilt on this issue. The questions asked are, whether Maya committed suicide or was sent to a lunatic asylum.

Thus, *Cry, the Peacock* is an open ended novel leaving the readers free to form their conjectures. Anita Desai has admitted to

Yasodhara, "I know the creative act is a secret one. To make it public to scrutinise it in the cold light of reason is to commit an act of violence, possibly murder" (An Interview 3). Maya's married life ends up being emotionally and socially sterile. Her cry is the cry of an agonised woman feeling lonely and unwanted.

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SOCIO-POLITICAL CONFLICT AND IDENTITY FORMATION IN MAHASWETA DEVI'S *MOTHER OF 1084*

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Abstract

Mother of 1084 by Mahasweta Devi is a critical appraisal of the civil unrest that shook Bengal in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The story revolves around Sujata Chatterjee, a middle-aged woman from a relatively wealthy background in Calcutta and her youngest son Brati who died in a police encounter. The story shows how Brati has grown up and been estranged from other family members who've been modelled after his father and how he is shot dead during the raging Naxalite movement in Bengal. Sujata holds herself responsible for Brati's death. That is why she found it difficult to grieve alone. Instead of mourning, she tries to make sense of Brati's case and comprehend his crime. This paper attempts to examine how her emancipation leads her on a journey of discovery during which, while struggling to understand her Naxalite son's revolutionary commitment, she begins to recognise her own alienation as a woman and wife from the apathetic hypocritical bourgeois society against which her son has rebelled.

Keywords: *sujata, brati, naxalite movement, emancipation, alienation, bourgeois society*

Behaviourism is a cognitive paradigm that emerged in the mid-twentieth century in response to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic beliefs. This method, which can be traced back to Socrates and the Renaissance, emphasises an individual's intrinsic need for self-actualization and creativity. Taking this method into account, *Mother Of 1084* by Mahasweta Devi can be considered as an interesting study of the intricate connections between the personal and the political. It is a journey of discovery for the protagonist, focusing on an individual's own realisation and nonpartisan mother's realization.

Mahasweta Devi, like many other women writers, focuses her attention on the role of Indian women and their battle to find their own identity, disillusionment, and estrangement. Mahasweta Devi opines that it is a writer's duty to speak up for the victimized. She views women to be one of the impoverished and

oppressed groups. Her writing is dominated by mothers who bore the burden of socio-political persecution, withstand it all, and later give indefatigable resistance.

Mother of 1084 portrays the psychological and emotional agony of a mother who wakes up one morning to the heart-breaking news that her beloved son is dead in the police morgue, and has been reduced to a mere number—corpse No. 1084. Sujata was baffled with the tragic death of her son Brati. She'd like to discover his ideals. As the plot progresses, her feelings for this son is revealed who was completely opposite from her other three children. Sujata spends one day of her life 'discovering' Brati for the first time, in a series of conversations with persons beyond her circle of familiarity; it is spent developing a connection with Brati, or rather with who she is. Mahasweta Devi writes:

I set an apolitical mother's quest to know her martyred Naxalite son, to know what he stood for; for she had not known true Brati ever, as long as he had been alive. Death brings him closer to her through her quest and leads the mother to a journey of self-discovery and discovery of the cause of her son's rebellion (31).

Sujata realizes that Brati revolted as he was dissatisfied with the current situation. He discovered that dishonesty and corruption is widespread across society, including in the bureaucracy, law, politics, the cultural-intellectual establishment, and, in fact, in each and every person associated with a particular social class. He has lost trust in the social structure itself, which he believed is unconcerned with ethical and social ideals, and he lamented how some of the most corrupt and dishonest individuals occupied the top positions in society, while those who cared about morals and their nation are slaughtered. Sujata can only seek a moral justification for her son's resistance after learning about a part of his life she is not aware of.

Brati's demise results to the mother's self-discovery. She travels back in time to examine her own life including her daily humiliation as a woman and her mute, relentless battle for identity and independence, which tragically gains impetus as a result of her son's demise. She recognizes for the first time that she has lived a shady existence her entire life, and that she has been very obedient, quiet, and devoted. Dibyanath, her husband, and his mother were the focus of attention in the house. Sujata clung to all of these beliefs, safety, protection, and everything that came with them without hesitation. Sujata had been denied the most basic

rights that a woman has. His mother has the sole authority and she used to take all decisions of the house. Her husband fails to understand that he can show his respect towards his mother without insulting his wife. Her husband believed that his wife should be at his feet while his mother should be lifted high. He was a male chauvinist who believed that Sujata's first and foremost job is to show affection, regard, and honor to her husband but he is under no obligation to do anything to earn his wife's respect, love, or devotion. He used to say that in their household he is the master and all have to oblige him and his ideas. Sujata is certain that her husband is having extra-marital affairs, but she lacked the nerve to confront him. When her husband had financial crisis, she is asked to get a job, but when his condition improved, she is ordered to leave. Brati is the only person who used to feel bad for his mother. He used to say that his father is treating her like a rag. Though she is from a well-to-do family, yet she is treated like a servant without any identity of her own.

Dibyanath is neither a good husband nor a great father. Even after Brati's death he is not bothered; all he thought about is his prestige and reputation. But Sujata objected to this side of his personality. When Sujata wished to go to Kantapukur to recognize Brati's body, Dibyanath denied to let her take the car. When he got the information about Brati's demise, his first idea is to keep it as a secret from his family and friends. He thought that if he will go to identify the body, then all will come to know about it. Dibyanath did everything he could to keep the news of his son's death from spreading that he is killed in a police encounter and he is a Naxalite. And he succeeded in his mission. Next day when the news came in the newspaper, information

regarding four Naxalites along with their names appeared, Brati's name is not there. With the disappearance of her son, the mother becomes conscious of her own presence as well as the true colors of the society, which views Brati's death as result of his misdeed rather than a sacrifice.

A heartbreaking event happens in Kantapukur. Kantapukur is the place where Brati is kept at the mortuary before being cremated by the police. Sujata can see that there are numerous bodies, and several people kneeling alongside them. She is instructed to check 1084 to see if she's related to him or not. Sujata knelt to examine the face more closely. She wished she could fondle his face with her fingers, can call him by his name, and can kiss his face. However, there is not even a little bit of smooth skin left. It's only damaged flesh and bruises. Sujata thought she is to be blamed for her son's death because she had not attempted to learn more about the real Brati. She believed that if she has known about the activities of Brati, about the real intention of Brati, she might have been able to save his life.

Sujata's transition from a submissive to a confident woman is portrayed throughout the narrative. When Brati was two years old, she protested for the first time by refusing to be the mother again. Her second act of defiance is to deny to leave her work. After Brati's death, she rebels for the third time and yells at her husband telling that she never questioned him that with whom he spends his evenings or who goes along with him during his trips or why he pays the rent of his assistant. So, now onwards he should not ask her any question. The story ends when Sujata breaks down at her daughter's engagement party. She urges everybody to speak

out instead of being a silent sufferer. She criticizes the police and dumb upper middle class people for their ignorance. Her protest comes out as a universal appeal against the ruthless society. Sujata steps in from a place of quiet anguish and repressed grief to the goal of providing a rallying cry to women throughout society to "awake and arise or be forever fallen" (81).

Devi felt it's her duty to write about the Naxalite youths. Devi's dedication to Marxism and her work as an activist to improve the lives of ordinary people (especially tribal people) empower her to speak up for these Naxalites and their suffering mothers. Sujata seems to be confident although her appendix explodes. Brati's demise bestows her the ability to protest Dibyanath and his family. Not wishing to have her appendix removed is a means of revolting and acquiring control over a culture that has no idea how it looks when it will see its own reflection.

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WALKING WITH ANUPAMA FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT IN SUDHA MURTHY'S MAHASHWETA

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Abstract

Sudha Murthy often sends a message through her writings about the common problems of society and their impacts. Her works depict human beliefs and values. She teaches the forgotten human values, plainness, the importance of friendship, kindness, etc., in today's society. In this novel Mahashweta, the author explores how superstitious belief destroys an innocent girl's life. Anupama, the protagonist, sacrificed her brilliant career, her ego, her identity and, her sincerity but it went unnoticed by her husband. He never valued her sacrifices. The following lines in Sudha Murthy's novel Gently Falls the Bakula expose the reality of most women in India who serve the family without any expectations. "She had to live like his shadow all the time. She would not have any identity of her own. Her life would be that of a planet which shines with reflected life, rather than that of a star which radiates its own light" (Gently Falls the Bakula 138)

Introduction

"Man is defined as a human being and woman as a female – whenever she behaves as a human being she is said to imitate the male."

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"

-Simone de Beauvoir

When people talk about educating women, they use this proverb, *"If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family"*

The proverb holds for Dr. Anand's mother, Radhakka who shows her meanness towards her only daughter-in-law due to a lack of outlook about societal ways and very little exposure to the outside world. Radhakka's family would not have broken and shattered had she been educated. She would have accepted her intelligent, smart and, beautiful daughter-in-law wholeheartedly rather than humiliating her for being from a poor family and her white patch.

The author's writings oppose the customs, norms and traditions of a society that tries to place a woman in a position inferior to that of a man, socially, politically, physically and economically. She deals with issues relating to rebellion against the existing social setup through her female characters as protagonists. The protagonists represented in the novels of Sudha Murthy are not weak, meek and submissive creatures; instead, they are depicted as symbols of sacrifice. The female characters often realize that they have roles to play in a family and society like their male counterparts. They have preferences, prejudices and raise their voices to be heard by the community. Most of them assert their individuality and emerge as new women awakened to face the challenges and lead a meaningful and dignified life, regardless of the insensible social criticism.

The present paper deals with Murthy's poignant novel *Mahashweta* where the primary discussion is to consider how a woman can get

respect along with equality in an unequal Indian society. The novel, *Mahashweta* is one of the best works of Sudha Murty. In the novel, the novelist tries to define liberation more from bondage to freedom, from indecision to self-assertion from weakness to strength through her protagonist Anupama. Anupama reaches a secured position financially, socially and psychologically after her transformational journey. She takes up challenges and turns them into opportunities, announces herself as a winner and thank God for all the setbacks:

I know what my goals are and where I am heading, and I don't need anyone's help to reach my destination. God has been very kind to me. I have been fortunate enough to live in a place like Bombay where even this mad rush has a humane side to it. I have excellent friends who trust me and will not hesitate to help me if I am in trouble. All my students are as dear to me as my own children would have been. Their unconditional love has never made me think of myself as blemished. I cannot help feeling sad for those women who are still at the mercy of their husbands and in-laws, and are emotionally and economically dependent on them. What will their fate be if they are unfortunate enough to get this kind of a disease? I am not dependent on anyone for emotional or financial support and that has given me enormous strength. I thank God for having been so fortunate(127)

Murty has tried to justify the unconditional love and dedication of Anupama in her novel by pulling a character from mythology named Mahashweta. Anupama of the novel *Mahashweta* has expressed her intense and unconditional love for her lover Dr. Anand, in a very emotional manner:

"Like Rohini to Chandra, like Lakshmi to Narayana, am I to him. Just as the creeper depends on a tree, emotionally I depend on him. I cannot live without him, and for his sake, I am ready to renounce everything. Let society say anything it wishes, I do not care.."(21)

Anupama justifies that her love is unconditional and she is happily willing to sacrifice everything for him. Like most Indian women, Anupama sacrifices everything for Anand, without bothering about her aspirations and education.' She had devoted her mind, body and soul to him, loved him without reservation, and in return he had hurt her deeply. She had devoted her mind, body and soul to him, loved him without reservation, and in return he had hurt her deeply.'(124) Anand's mother Radhakka accepts Anupama half-heartedly despite her poor background for the sake of her son.

Mahashweta is an inspiring and eye-opening novel for all modern Indian women. Murthy takes the name Mahashweta from the Sanskrit novel "Kadambari" by Bana Bhatta. Bana Bhatta in his novel kept the ending happy but life is not the same for everybody in reality. Life is not lived happily ever after sort of ending every day. In the Sanskrit novel, "Kadambari" Mahashweta is the daughter of King Gandhara. Her beloved Pundarika meets with an untimely death. Mahashweta could not afford to see him dying and she plunges into the situation herself with a severe penance by wearing a white saree and garland in the forest. With her heart-rending love and sacrifice, she brings Pundarika back to life and is reunited.

The name Anupama in the novel means 'no comparison'. She has been described as the

epitome of flawless beauty but later the white patches on her feet, which is known as leukoderma in medical terminology becomes a black mark on her beauty. The flawless beauty of Anupama has been described in the following words,

“With her beautiful large eyes, exquisite complexion, and face framed by long jet-black hair, she looked like an apsara. She was wearing a green cotton sari with a blue border and a blue blouse. When she smiled at Anand, deep dimples appeared in her cheeks” (14)

Sudha Murthy being a philanthropist has delicately handled the story where she sends a message to the readers and educates them about the disease that has affected Anupama. It is neither a hereditary disease nor a contagious disease. Anupama reminds Dr. Anand *“Nobody in my family had this disease. Then why did I get it? (124)* Society has to understand that leukoderma is neither curable nor contagious too. Sudha Murthy has subtly defined beauty through Vasanth that appeals to the readers. One's beauty is seen in one's nature. A good human being who is compassionate to others, who tries to understand the other person's difficulties and reach out to them in their hour of need has real beauty. Such people should always be cherished and honored”(114) Anupama becomes nostalgic thinking that Dr. Anand only admired her outer beauty “Anand had been bright, sharp, and intelligent, but very immature! He had never thought of beauty in such terms” (114) Vasanth, on the other hand, uses his parameter to define Anupama. “She was truly an extraordinary woman—compassionate, caring and eager to serve anyone in need. She took so much pleasure in everyone else's happiness and that was indeed a rare quality” (118)

The novel portrays a young, beautiful and bold girl named Anupama who is the epitome of courage and resilience. She stands as an inspiration for millions of young women in a world that is filled with illusions and betrayals. Anupama gets married to Dr. Anand beyond her expectations as it generally happens in a fairy tale. But her fairy tale life halts and shatters when she discovers a white patch on her foot. Anupama gets to know that she is affected by leukoderma which is not curable. She was abandoned by arrogant, rich, in-laws, her own family where her step-mother calls her ‘bad omen’ and ‘rejected wife’ refuses to accept her back and her educated husband. She is sent back with no choice left to her father's home. Murthy here gives a small message through these beautiful lines from a Kannada poem.

There is no perfection in anything in life.

Even in the great river Ganga there are black serpents.

The beautiful Saraswathi has jet-black curls;

The moon has a dark spot

Because even in nature perfection is not possible (89)

Anupama often consoled herself by saying that her husband will never leave her.

“Anand is not like these people. He is a doctor. Surely, he will persuade his mother to see reason, Anupama told herself repeatedly”(53)

In India, a married woman living in her parents' house is considered a social stigma. Anupama was forced to take up the easiest option of committing suicide after being ostracized and taunted by society. She musters courage within herself and prays to the Goddess,

"Give me the courage to live no matter what happens!" (70)

After getting a letter from her friend Sumithra she is determined to rebuild her life against all odds and becomes stronger than before. The wordings of the letter from Sumi to Anupama:

Dear Anu,

I know you are extremely unhappy there and I want you to come and stay with us in Bombay for some time. Instead of sitting at home and brooding over your fate in that village, come to this megacity. I am sure you will get a job; even I got one! I have discussed this with Hari; so you need not worry. Have courage and do not lose your patience.

Love, Sumi (64).

Anupama leaves for Bombay where she finds success, respect and the promise of an enduring friendship. This book sends a strong message about friendship where Anupama is not judged for anything but accepted unconditionally. Sumithra welcomes her despite the white patch. Murthy feels this is an eye-opener incident for the readers. For the time being Anupama takes a clerical job which gives her confidence. There she meets Dolly who becomes her good friend and she moves to stay with her. Dolly meets with an accident and Anupama donates blood for Dolly's surgery. Society gets a hint that leukoderma is no bar for blood donation too.

When Anupama finally meets Anand she explains the pain, which she has undergone for being somebody's poor daughter, and most importantly as a woman who was abandoned because of a white patch on her skin.

I am also somebody's daughter; did you worry about my future? You never treated me as

a human being. I was only a beautiful object that you wished to possess and flaunt. Had I known your attitude towards life, I would have told you to marry somebody else. Suppose you had got leukoderma, do you think I would have left you for some other man? A marriage is a lifelong commitment; for better or for worse, till death do us part. Wasn't that what you'd said to me before you left for England? Even though you are a doctor, you only know how to treat a disease, not tend to a patient's emotional needs. (126).

Anand quietly listens to her words and does not utter a single word. Anupama reminds Anand of the meaning of marriage in India. *"In any community, land or race, a woman always wants her husband to love only her." (123)*

Anupama has become an independent and self-reliant woman and tells her decision to Dr. Anand

"It would be better for us to part now and never communicate with each other again. We met accidentally, but we were not made for each other. Let us part with good grace." (126)

Dr. Anand knows that he will repent for his deeds that cannot be rectified. The novel ends with Anupama's students deciding on their next play *Mahashweta*.

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ANAGED SINGLE DALIT WOMAN'S INDEPENDENCE FROM SLAVERY IN BAMA'S SHORT STORY *FREEDOM*

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Abstract

Dalit Feminism is a stream of Feminism that emerged against the atrocities of privileged caste people over Dalit women. In India throughout history, the personality of Dalit women has been damaged and dehumanized. It gives a historical account of how the nature and intensity of women's exploitation changes with respect to their social location and challenges the myth that all women are equal and equally exploited. Dalit woman's problems are multi – faceted. The problems are ignored either by people or by machinery. Hence, the woman is deprived of basic rights and identity as a human being. Bama is one of the Dalit female writers who portrays the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit women in her works. Freedom is one of the stories from a collection of short stories Harum Scarum Saar and other Stories written by Bama. The collection of stories was originally written in Tamil and titled as 'Kisumbukkaran'. The stories are translated into English by Ravi Shanker. The short –story Freedom serves as a model of victimization of women within women. The characters are built on active victimized and passive victim traits of the individuals. As the events in the story progress, there is realization of slavery and resistance to it.

Keywords: dalit feminism, patriarchy, victimization, slavery, human rights, freedom, creative non- victim.

Dalit Feminism is a stream of Feminism that emerged against the atrocities of privileged caste people over Dalit women. In India throughout history, the personality of Dalit women has been damaged and dehumanized. Wikipedia defines Dalit feminism as "... is a feminist perspective that includes questioning caste and gender roles among the Dalit population and within feminism and the larger women's movement."¹

Dalit Feminism demarks the differences between Feminism and Dalit feminism. It "...gives a historical account of how the nature and intensity of women's exploitation changes with respect to their social location and challenges the myth that all women are equal

and equally exploited."² Dalit women are being discriminated against by women.

The Dalit women "... are affected by violence in a unique way due to their caste and gender identity, and this is something that both the women's movement and the anti – caste movement at large failed to address. In response to this, several Dalit women's organisations have emerged at the local and national levels to focus on social, economic and sexual violence, and the structural impediments in accessing justice."³

Theoretically Dalit Feminism "... centres Dalit women's experiences as a Vantage point from which one can understand patriarchy and

caste as intersecting social structures.⁴ Dalit woman's problems are multi – faceted. The problems are ignored either by people or by machinery. Hence, the woman is deprived of basic rights and identity as a human being. Bama is one of the Dalit female writers who portrays the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit women in her works.

Freedom is one of the stories from a collection of short stories *HarumScarum Saar and other Stories* written by Bama, a renowned Tamil writer. The collection of stories was originally written in Tamil and titled as '*Kisumbukkaran*'. The stories are translated into English by Ravi Shanker. The short –story *Freedom* serves as a model of victimization of women within women. The characters are built on active victimized and passive victim traits of the individuals. As the events in the story progress, there is realization of slavery and resistance to it.

The story is about an aged single Dalit woman's struggle for survival. Arayi, works as a servant maid in a rich upper caste family. Her co-servant, a twelve year old boy named Subramani, works along with her. Both of them live in a thatched hut behind the bungalow. A few servants also come from the neighborhood to work in the bungalow.

Eighty year old Ayya and seventy year old Amma are an aged couple living in a huge bungalow. The couple has four sons. All of them live with their families at their respective work places. The couple domesticates Nikki, a dog, and Pussy, a cat. Ayya suffers from diabetes, poor vision and hearing impairment. Therefore, Amma manages all the house hold work. Apart from Arayi and Subramani, the servants Saraswathi takes care of shopping like buying

groceries and medicines, Chinnasami, a financial manager, does transactions in the bank and post office. Murugan, the car driver, Kuppaswami, a gardener and other servants work in the house.

The Pathetic life of Arayi began when her parents died at the age of ten. As the eldest child of the family, she shoulders the responsibility of bringing her brothers and sisters. She became a child labourer at a tender age. Till the age of forty, she works as a maid in different households in different places. She remained a spinster throughout her life. Finally, she settles into Ayya and Amma's house. She is paid a hundred rupees per month and, in addition, she gets black coffee, kanji and pickle, curry and food. They loot the money actually to be paid. She is paid inadequately for the work she has done.

Arayi, like a machine, works from the break of day to the end of the day. Since then, she does all the activities done in every Indian household. She begins the work sweeping in and outdoors, sprinkling water on putting rangoli, watering the garden, washing the clothes, cleaning the dishes, preparing food for all the servants of the house on a large scale in the earthen oven. She distributes the food to all the servants with a measure. By the time of lunch again, she washes the vessels and utensils. Later, she grinds the batter for an hour. Likewise, the list goes on what she does till she goes to bed. She was almost a slave in the house doing every job. Arayi cooks food even for the animals of the house, Nikki and Pussy. When Subramani takes food containers to Amma, she puts some bones and pieces into the plates. The boys mash the food and feed the animals. Ayya and Amma took care of the animals, the dog and cat, better than the servants working at home.

By doing all these things, Arayi is so tired and exhausted. All her energy is sapped by the end of the day. She is not provided nutritious food to do all the work. Whatever food was given to her was insufficient. Virginia Wolf's words "one can not think well, love well, and sleep well, if one has not dined well" ⁵ are more apt to Arayi's condition ". If she ever rested for some time, Amma would get angry (Freedom p. 82).⁶ Thus, she works ceaselessly. "Amma was never satisfied however hard they worked... Ayya was better in this respect" (p. 84)

Ayya and Amma now and then go for a blood test for Ayya. Whenever Ayya and Amma are not there at home, only then Arayi and Subramani get freedom for a while. One day they leave the house for a blood test. It's time for both of them to speak fearlessly. They feel free to do whatever they do. They speak with a loud voice, jump, hop, move here and there as if caged animals are freed. "... They could talk to each other freely... They would cry so bitterly that it was pathetic". (p. 84)

Chinnarani teacher predicts Ayya and Ammas' absence at home by the laugh and talk of Arayi and Subramani. She makes a poke at them. Subramani, in mirth says, "it is freedom day for me today... for this patti too" (P. 85). It is a joyful time for both of them. The boy made all the fuss as he could. Arayi too becomes like a small girl, plays and alerts the boy about Ayya and Amma's arrival. When Ayya and Amma are at home, both of them are restricted to speaking to other servants, "... they were forbidden to talk to anyone who lived in the neighbourhood". (p.84) Now their freedom knows no bounds. Amma doubts and enquires to Chinnarani Teacher "Those lazy fellows working in my house, what were they doing in my absence

yesterday? Did they tell you anything? " (p. 86) but the teacher replies cautiously that she was at work on that day. The old woman, Amma, could not bear freedom for at least a little time from Arayi and Subramani.

Arayi guessed that Amma might enquire about their whereabouts from yesterday; hence she shared her vulnerable condition with the teacher. She ventilates her anguish saying, "... look at me, I'm unmarried, no man's hand has touched my body, there are not even worms in my belly. It still looks so young, but I'm getting older, Teacher, can I keep working like This Amma doesn't let me rest for a single second, doesn't let me go out anywhere". (p.87) She requests the teacher not to reveal any of their yesterday's activities to Amma. Knowing the condition of Arayi, the teacher sympathizes, saying "Poor thing, even at this age she runs scared, toiling so hard to keep her belly filled!" (p.87)

One week later, Subramani gets beaten by Amma. He suffers and says "... didn't like living in Amma's house at all... he was always unhappy and depressed" (P. 88). One day, Amma again abused the boy so severely. Both Arayi and Subramani were hurt by listening to her abuse. Arayi welled up with tears, but Subramani was firm. Arayi pounding the soaked rice, Subramani clearing the grass with a spade wept. While doing the work, both Arayi and Subramani introspect themselves. The actions they were doing are symbolic of their introspection. They desire to get rid of the slavery and unflinching insults at the house by Ayya and Amma. For Arayi and Subramani, it is a climatic situation acknowledging, "... the fact that...are a victim but to refuse to accept the assumption that the role is inevitable". ⁷

A new day dawns, as usual, Amma calls Arayi and Subramani "...but there was no one to do her bidding" (p. 89). Both of them are bold

enough to bring back their freedom from the clutches of slavery at Ayya and Amma's house. The event is comprehended as if in a Basic Victim position in Survival theory. Both of them disappear from the house "To be a creative non-victim".⁸ They decided to escape from the couple and persisted in slavery. The decision of the two servants escaping from slavery prepares them for the future to face 'come what may'.

Arayi is deprived of all basic and fundamental rights. She is crippled both physically and psychologically. Her wellbeing begins with the new gained freedom from the shackles of Amma and Ayya. As Virginia Wolf in her *A Room of One's Own* recommends that women should have "...money and a room of her own"⁹ to conduct any creative activity. Freedom is the most basic right and tool for creativity and for women's emancipation.

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WOMEN IMAGES IN POPULAR CULTURES: THE TRADITIONAL TURMOIL OF WOMEN IN JUMPHALAHIRI'S *THE NAMESAKE*

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Abstract

*Culture is the predominant identification of human race. In society, the tradition has been safeguarded and transmuted by women in particular. Women are being trained and educated to follow their way of life ardently in India. They are considered and expected as the protectors of tradition and culture. Indian girls are brought up with rich cultural practices aspiring to follow the same wherever they go. When she migrates to another country by chance, have to accept the new style and maintain Indianness. Acceptance and adaptation are not new to a female that she finds some extreme discomfort and it fractures as a predicament. She feels like an alien in the new soil. Ashima, the female character in the novel *The Namesake* by Jumphala Lahiri face the same challenge. She is migrates to New York from Calcutta. Along with Ashima, Sonia, Maxine and Moushumi also face a few cultural chaoses while they are supposed to live with other tradition. The nuances between two cultures are highly focussed by the couple Ashoke and Ashima.*

Keywords: tradition, displacement, transculturation, adoptability, sustenance.

From earliest period culture is one of the basic identities of an individual. Men are civilized by following certain rules that are framed by the people who know the ethical values. They followed given set of morals and manners without any questions. After the particular period it is called as tradition. We have different set of tradition for worth living. The people who followed tradition and culture taught the ways and primary aim of life. The basic principles of culture should be instructed to the next generation effectively. The people who are representing religion and culture are forced to follow the same without any adjustments. Men and women are equally played their role for the welfare of family as well as society. The basic ideas of culture such as love, mercy, faith etc.

are easily transmuted to the new generation by women rather than men. This may be the reason for multifarious restrictions for women who are representing cultural practices.

Compared with ancient times women are liberated and centred by the society. Though they have freedom in many ways strongly holds the familial responsibilities of their own. Changing own self according to circumstances, hardly compromising cultural practices make them the heart of a family and society. In ancient days a country is valued by its possession of culture, wealth and women predominantly. In this modern era it is not an exaggeration that we still give less importance to women. She has been receiving less attention and care. She fought for education, basic rights and what not.

Thus Feminism is explained as a belief that could raise voice for the equality for women in social, political and economical status. Wherever she goes she is being dominated or governed. Some migrate and some immigrate. It has been said that a women must be able to acclimatize a new circumstance and have to sustain though she wish or not. India is rich for its culture and tradition. It's common for all citizens who live as natives in a land for generations. Being an alien in some unknown land is difficult that too if she is supposed to suffer of personal issues in a family she will have belligerence, which can harm not only the individual but the family, society and finally culture.

The reason behind nostalgic feel is proximity of indigenous culture. Nativity is the root cause of migrated peoples' suffering. In particular women's nativity is widely discussed by many diasporic writers. Jumpha Lahiri's 'The Namesake' discussed the nostalgic feel of women characters. Ashima is a typical Bengali woman gets a chance to live in USA by marrying Ashoke. She faced various new problems that are solved by time except loneliness. She deals with all terrible situations by increasing adoptability and thirst of knowing new. Ashima's new life in United States begins with astonishing substance. She wished to name her child by Bengali rituals is strewn by the rules of the new land. Her longingness of nativity was an excruciating one. Ashima learned parental care without family elder's directions. Gogol, her son relieved her from all sorts of miseries as she cared him whole day and night though Ashoke helped a bit. She wanted to enlarge her circle to overcome the insecure feel after the incumbents of home left for school and work. She formulated her family to remember the

nativity by her Bengali cuisine on special occasions which marked her name inseparable from migrated Indian neighbours (including Bengalis) and friends. Her first visit to India is marked as a bitter experience, it is of her father's sudden death.

Ashima was terribly upset when she couldn't attend her father's funeral. She felt completely disconnected when the realization of distance between America and India. Generally, distance makes the people forget everything but Ashima's Indianness was nurtured by providing cultural habits to her children Gogol and Sonia. She felt the absence of relatives since then increased responsibilities that have rolled out by Ashima only. It was the toughest task for her to handle Gogol and Sonia, primary school boy and an infant accordingly with busy scheduled professor Ashoke. Ashima has known her role clearly as most of other Indian woman bringing up their family well.

As the year rolled on, changes in life style were adopted by Ashoke and Ashima in an external level. Ashima was started to accept all new practices with practical way of living. Though they have followed weekend trips, Christmas holidays etc. to mingle with society for the sake of children and neighbours, ardently followed their own cultural practices. Ashima cared the family in all levels. Once she tried Gogol's art not to violate Bengali traditional value makes Gogol uncomfortable but obeys mother's order. Likewise, Ashima canalize all the family members on the right path that makes Gogol and Sonia not to distract from their specific cultural life.

We are not given enough information of Sonia's school friends, her desires, behaviours as Gogol's details. Sonia is calm, reasonable and

genuine with morals. She is a good companion and perky sister to Gogol and helpful to parents. Sonia learned Indian culture and importance of relatives' presence in the trip of India. Gogol and Sonia faced the difficulties of remembering the terms "mashi and pishi, mama and maima, kaku and jethu" to address the relatives. This trip was helpful to learn the cultural backgrounds and customary habits of Indian especially Bengali tradition though they couldn't espouse the atmosphere. Their Tajmahal visit paves the way to know the heritage, architecture and another side of ancestral home land. Sonia had a terrible dream and screamed in a hotel. Moreover itching lips, delayed train due to murder, aversion of new food consumption makes Sonia ill. Back to New York makes her feel relaxed with her usual chores in home.

"Gogol and Sonia sleeps for as long as they want, watch television, make themselves peanut butter and jelly sandwiches at any time of day. Once again they are free to quarrel, to tease each other, to shout and holler and say shut up" (Lahiri, 2009:87)

Another woman character in the novel percolated most of the important chapters is Maxine Ratliff, assistant editor arts book publishers acquainted with Gogol, later falls in love with him. She learned new tradition and its background from Gogol's clear explanation of his family. As a typical western girl, Maxine wants to meet Gogol's parents for being 'different' especially living with same person for years. But Gogol was interested in the life style of Lydia and Gerald, so called parents of Maxine. Gogol has realized the variation of two different cultures and likes his own.

"Seeing the two of them curled up on the sofa in the evenings, Gerald's head resting on

Lydia's shoulder, Gogol is reminded that in all his life he was never witnessed a single moment of physical affection between his parents. Whatever love exists between them is an utterly private, uncelebrated thing" (Lahiri, 2009:138)

Maxine is coming from this western culture, wants to live a life with loved one only. She doesn't know the culture of family with relatives and some sort of cultural boundaries. She loves Gogol truly and supports him in all emotional levels of his family members. Gogol also merged with Maxine's family though some practical difficulties of uniting both families. He likes to live a westernised life with Maxine. Gogol avoids Ashima's call, reluctant to visit weekend. Maxine was so happy for visiting New Hampshire two weeks. She always likes parties, late night conversations with her friends and Gogol. Her upper class life accommodates Gogol comfortably. Maxine's genuine view of her life offered sophistication for him. But after Ashoke's death Gogol slightly avoids Maxine's company. Even though she couldn't understand Bengali traditions, wants to stay with Gogol after the cremation. Her consoling words and gestures are not completely accepted by Gogol's family, especially Ashima.

"I'm so sorry," he hears her say to his mother, aware of his father's death does not affect Maxine the least. "You guys can't stay with your mother forever." (Lahiri, 2009: 182)

Ashoke's death didn't affect Maxine, but Gogol badly. In this juncture he realized his mistake of being disconnected from his parents and Sonia. Maxine wants Gogol back to enjoy New Year's Eve and teach him ski. Maxine consoles Gogol well in her own way. But he is not ready to accept her call, decided to stay with his own family members. Gogol wants to stay

with his mother Ashima who is in deep distress of an unexpected death of her beloved husband. Maxine changed herself for living without Gogol. Her memories of Gogol faded away slowly and got engaged with another man. Though it was easy to accept new person in life Maxine suffered to forget Gogol's amiable shades in her mind. Bridget's secret affair with Gogol proves that the western cultured woman can easily espouse an unknown man without any culpable conscience. It's just a nature of their living, barely have degrading note of them. But Gogol feels guilty about unknown husband of Bridget who is working as a professor in college at Boston. Maxine and Bridget, both are right without any serious issues. Because their culture taught such things, that are usual and widely repeated by others in the society.

Moushumi, daughter of Indian American parent, exactly from Bengali tradition was raised in America with Ganguli family known her well from childhood days. Ashima directed Gogol to move further in life after ousting Maxine. Ashima takes the whole responsibility of the family. She thought over Gogol's further commitment for channelizing his life towards where they have move on. It's very simple to understand as committed family life which are not like as difficult to get a stage of 'deathlessness' by writers of Russian, Spanish and European inscriptions read and discussed by many characters previously in this novel.

Moushumi, an unforgettable person in Gogol's life, gave sufficient impression from the first meeting. As she introduced herself, a Ph.D candidate in French Literature and love failure Gogol was impressed. She found some similarities between herself and Gogol. They are interested in literature and reading, travelling to

different places, Bengali tradition etc. She accepted Gogol for the likeness of their families. This understanding of Bengali-American life is the key factor to unite both. Beyond that they understand each other and fall in love. Moushumi married Gogol by Bengali tradition. They had a good committed life in the beginning. But Moushumi understand that Gogol was disturbed by seeing her wedding dress with Graham and attending a party of Graham's friends Donald and Astrid knowing about Moushumi's proximity with those friends and continuation of smoking habits. Gogol was terribly upset by revelling the secret of his changed name and the meaning of Moushumi as a 'damp of south-westerly breeze' which is not uttered to him. Gogol was mocked by Donald and Astrid by his real name and questions the connection between Russian writer and Bengali family. This incident kindled the memories with Gerald and Lydia in past. Moushumi didn't care about Gogol's feelings and wound him with her embarrassing smile which barely cared a husband; a Bengali man strived to create the identity by changing name.

A period of a year after Gogol and Moushumi's marriage, she had an illicit relationship with Dimitri Desjardin.

"A month of Mondays and Wednesdays passes. she began to see him on Friday as well. She wonders if she is the only women in her family ever to have betrayed her husband, to have been unfaithful. This is what upsets her most to admit: that the affair causes her to feel strangely at peace, the compilation of it calming her, structuring her day. (Lahiri, 2009:266)

However she know it as an immoral deed, couldn't avoid it. As Gogol dislikes her close minded friends and lack of much emotional

bonds take him far from his love towards her. Moushumi's expectations of Gogol are not fulfilled perfectly. She wanted to spend time with someone who is not expecting anything from her. She knows Dimitry early from high school days, contacted voluntarily and had sex. They have conversation about literature and had extended the relationship physically and intellectually. This illicit relationship is revealed unknowingly by Moushumi to Gogol, makes her to accept her infertility. They separated.

Jumpha Lahiri's principle character Ashima is representing as an epitome of Indian culture throughout the novel. Though she has accepted to follow some western practices, didn't compromise Indian values. She played the fundamental role of her family and Indianness. Her daughter Sonia is not strict in traditional views. But she is a caring, loveable daughter who didn't surpass Indian tradition. Her decision to marry a Jewish- Chinese journalist Ben shows her adaptation of both cultures without losing any morals. Gogol also brought up with Sonia but lost familial values by trying to take up western way of life completely. His girl friends Ruth, Maxine, Brighet, Moushumi makes him to remember his own traditional values. The western girls Maxine and Bridget incorporated with that culture completely, couldn't accommodate Gogol in their life since the resentment condition of his staying neither

Indian nor western culture permanently. They remain unerringly in their own morals that are empowered by their western culture. Moshumi's condition is pathetic that she is unable to stick with Western nor Bengali tradition. The first migrants justify their suffering by reasoning their displacement. So the second generation endure more than the first. Moushumi's pricking conscience of illicit relationship is due to her Bengali culture where else Maxine haven't had any guilt since she remained in hers'. From all these women character we could conclude that copying and adopting another culture completely without forgetting own inheritance is the reason for all familial problems. Lahiri has depicted the characters well with emotions in this novel. On reading we can find longingness of characters towards something which is not only a migrants issue but of natives also. Problems apart, the love for family, culture, tradition is valued high without finding the middle ground in this work of Jumpha Lahiri.

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CULTURE: CLASHES & CONCILIATION FROM A FEMINISTIC PERSPECTIVE IN RAMA MEHTA'S INSIDE THE HAVELI

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Abstract

Our culture, our tradition, and our language are the fundamentals upon which we build our identity and individuality. The present research paper explores the study of "Culture: Clashes & Conciliation from A Feministic Perspective in Rama Mehta's Inside the Haveli." The Indian woman experiences an ever lasting conflict between a traditional mode of life and the modern life. Contemporary fiction in English by Indian writers often discovers the conflict and significances between tradition and modernity in India on women's lives. The foremost incidents are taking into account to support the study. Although Rama Mehta hails from a modern urban breed, she has her original sense of Indian amendment to the tradition culture, and identity. It also serves as important proof for the lifestyle of the womenfolk. The main objective is to throw light on the inner struggle and conflict of the main character for the cheerful lifestyle to adjust and to mingle with old-fashion edculture.

Keywords: culture, tradition, modern, crisis, patriarchy

The Indian woman experiences an everlasting conflict between a traditional mode of life and the modern life. Traditionally woman is concealed within her home, engaged in managing household and family matters throughout her life. Contemporary fiction in English by Indian writers often discovers the conflict and significances between tradition and modernity in India on women's lives. Rama Mehta, the new Indian woman writer, has portrayed the distinctions of this issue in her fiction. She has presented the effect of Culturalism, the feminine psyche and struggle, and its tyranny in the traditional setup of Indian society.

The central theme of Rama Mehta's writings was the role, and state of women in the clutches of tradition but hastily changing India. In addition to her three novels, she wrote several sociological books about the contemporary

Indian woman and their sufferings. Mehta's critical essay *The Western Educated Hindu Woman* (1970) defines the contrast between women in their twenties at the time of freedom who remained profound Hindus bent on upholding traditions. *The Hindu Divorced Woman* (1975) brings out the drawbacks of a woman's recognition of divorce which she may well live to repentance. *Inside the Haveli* (1977) presents an intimate picture of a system that existed since medieval times and is an exposure of attitudes towards women and their grade in a firm section of Indian society. It won the *Sahitya Akademy Award* for the best Indian novel in English.

The novel *Inside the Haveli* depicted the conflict between tradition and modern life faced by women belonging to the middle and upper classes, no doubt reflecting the experience of the author. It portrayed the beginnings of social

change in the life of the Oswal women from Mewar, who continued, until very recently, to practice the system of purdah long after Hindu women discarded it as an out-dated custom.

Inside the Haveli is an outstanding novel about a young, college-educated girl of Bombay. She married the son of an ex-prime minister of the former princely state of Mewar and came to her husband's traditional Haveli in Udaipur. It offered an intimate picture of a system that existed since primitive times and is a disclosure of attitudes towards women and their position in a firm section of Indian society.

The novel, *Inside the Haveli* presented the protagonist Geeta's identity-crisis in the cross-cultural content. Brought up in Bombay, Geeta, who was a self-determining young woman, struggles to withstand her modern identity in the traditional world of the Haveli of Udaipur, where she was married. Therefore, the novel projected a journey to find women space in society and search for one's own authentic identity. Geeta displayed a disgruntled self that was at war with the patriarchal and conventional society.

Inside the Haveli also explored a journey the protagonist underwent to overcome her search for identity at the mental, social and physical levels. There was also a movement from present to past and past to present, which occurred in the mind of Geeta. And she tried to speak in a distinctively personal voice, among the collective voice, asserting the independence of women.

At the very first, the instant she steps out of the train, however, Geeta got the biggest shock of her life, for not only was her face instantaneously covered by her women relatives

and maid-servants who took complete charge of her, but she also immediately finds herself engulfed in a pattern of life which was alien to her modern upbringing in Bombay.

As soon as she reached "home," she was further shocked by realizing that the men and women lived in different parts of the entire Haveli, without any communication with each other. Indeed, life inside the Haveli directed by an impossibly firm etiquette of dos and don'ts, and for her, as for all the other women, there was no life outside the Haveli's high walls.

The youthful Geeta finds herself unable to reunite with the idea of spending the rest of her life in purdah. But at the same time, she saw no escape from this outdated way of life, for her husband was too profoundly entrenched in his traditions and too extremely devoted to his parents to take up a job in some other city. Moreover, she slowly comes to realize that, in spite of their exacting difficulties of conventionality with the family custom, her parents-in-law were essentially affectionate and generous.

Gradually and painfully, therefore, and almost despite herself, Geeta finds herself amending to the life in the Haveli and with the thought of merging her identity and individuality of her children in the convention of her husband's ancient family. But in the practice she succeeds in commencing some improvements for the women of those ancient Havelis by starting literacy classes for them and by sending the female children to school.

Geeta's women folks, of course, contrasting her plans, still her father-in-law, recognizing that with the end of the significant era, the old pattern of life could not possibly endure for

long, supports Geeta's challenge to make the women less dependent on the Havelis. *Inside the Haveli* is a interesting novel in which the author has succeeded in assigning the core and feel of a world which is disappearing.

The female protagonist, Geeta, was a representative of the modern educated woman. She was torn apart by the other dominant character of the novel *Inside the Haveli* - Jeewan Niwas the Haveli. All the characters closely recognize with the symbol chosen. It was the pivot around that revolved around their aspirations, desires, hopes, and fears. It gave direction to the thoughts and sensibilities of the characters. It was the symbol of the cruelty and tyranny of age-old customs. It was often gabbed about as modesty, izzat, lead, Sharam, and was symbolic of conformity, while the perception of independence, freedom and self is all the things.

Geeta haunted by the ghost of the Haveli. It became open combat between the traditional and the modern. She fought hard to be free of this demon. She rebelled against the set pattern of living framed by the Haveli. But the battle proved to be futile. Despite all efforts, Geeta had to accept the traditional aspects as part of a heritage. This was reflective of the approach of the Indian woman; she had to compromise on her uniqueness and self-assertion. Geeta realized that the Haveli was a cage that has imprisoned her youthfulness. She desired to be free from its malicious clutch.

The novel delineated two different antithetical concepts of tradition and modernity. Geeta's objective was sociologically significant in rebuilding Indian society and family life by wedding these two concepts. The Haveli represented tradition, narrowness, and servitude of women and shackles of freedom. Geeta

emerged as a representative of modernism, a rationalism, new outlook, and emancipated woman. The cruelty of the imposts and delusions of the Haveli was quite marked on the occurrence of the celebration of the twenty-first day after the birth of her first child, Vijay.

The novel contained feminist thoughts like myriad roles of woman a daughter-in-law, wife, mother, the mistress of the Haveli-identity crisis & mental subjugation, and so on. Many Indian writers have voiced the same apprehensions, but they were more concerned with the exploitation. Rama Mehta felt that women had tremendous inner strength. She wanted to translate this inner strength into something positive - a real asset. Here, Geeta achieved security through reconciliation. The novel's ethos was neither the success nor the defeat but of accord and understanding between the two contrasting ideas of newness and tradition. She broke traditional ground wherever needed. It was proof of her uniqueness. It was Geeta's voice about her views and outlooks that we near in India, the Haveli.

Rama Mehta's aims in writing this novel are to help the western-educated Indian reader recover his belief in his tradition. The determination of the novel that Geeta progressively grows away from the Westernized insight acquired from her education and learned to appreciate the dignity, somberness, meaning, and worth of ethnic customs. Rama Mehta skillfully and precisely sounds out the culture in the novel. Her sense of belief is distorted a bit from within the customs. She takes over the voice of tradition by the end. Geeta changes tradition and her vision as well.

The chief theme of the novel *Inside the Haveli* is that we should not blindly follow old-fashioned traditions and customs. These old traditions are fatal to the life of an individual and

nation. Money spent on outdated customs is unwise. Man has a fully developed mind. He can reason out whether a convinced ritual is suitable or harmful to him.

Women looked as incurably weak, incompetent, and over-promiscuous. *Inside the Haveli*, this 'Inside' is dispensed only to women, as women have no universe in 'Outside' society. *Inside the Haveli* also dealt with this inside/outside dyad as the women of Haveli. They were passive sufferers, unable to remove the conventional, orthodox, and traditional rules and taboos of the Haveli.

Thus, this paper proposes to study closely the disposition of the thematic of tradition and modernity and explores how this stages 'nation and how a single woman tried to overcome and adjust with the old convention and ethos. The novel then valorizes the former, protecting its socio-cultural practices by interpreting over the integral oppressiveness. It organizes the thematic smokescreen of the clash between tradition and modernity to accept the perpetuation of patriarchal hierarchy.

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EXAMINING FEMINIST DISSERTATION IN A ROOM OF ONES OWN BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

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Abstract

Literature is a statistic element of isolated skill and assigning with the societal ecosphere, the forbidd ingrealisms of life and its happenings. Feminism is a kind of communal, radical, and philosophical association that parts a public area. Feminism means “the faith and goal that womenfolk should have the equal privileges and occasions as males” and “the fight to attain this ambition”. This paper deals with the feministic discourse in Room of one’s own.

Keywords: *oppression, male domination, sexuality.*

Virginia Woolf was born in London, as the daughter of Julia Jackson Duckworth. Virginia Woolf’s concern with feminist thematics are dominating in A ROOM OF ONE’S OWN (1929). Woolf witness the obstacle and prejudices that have delayed women writers. She separate women as object of representation and women as authors of representation, and argued that a change in the form of literature was necessary because most literature had been “made by men out of their own needs for their own usage. The tradition of distinguishing and integrating sexuality into fiction can be traced from the period of the Thomas Hardy to D.H. Lawrence. In between the work of Edward Carpenter, E.M. Forster and H.G. Wells display this characteristic, which can be seen in the respective fiction of this writers. But this kind of recognition by itself does not guarantee a novel its being called feministic fiction. In Hardy’s fiction it is possible to look at him as a destructive sensualist because the version of female sexuality evolved by these writers were strictly masculine ones. It is against this background we must see the evolving feminist

writer in Virginia Woolf. While considering the attempts by these others, it is compulsory to know that each of them had distinct feature for their men and women in their fiction. Wells created women, who combined intellect and strength of character with sexuality, largely for the benefit of the created character in his novels. Forster did not possess that kind of creativity because no one at that time was competent enough to write about female sexuality. It was also not that easy to define the new and emerging trends in the modern fiction, as the writers were yet to formulate and adopt these principles necessary to introduction these new trends. The women writers including Virginia Woolf were greatly confused as to what they should do to open up the new avenues in writing. The prevailing scenario in Britain was one of militant anti-sex attitude. The so called feminist writers of the day failed to support the cause of feminism. If and when their work tried to break free of the old stereotype, these propensities where not received with the expected reception from among the writers themselves. To write about sex-related matters

in the fiction of the day was considered a different one. In the case of Charlotte Brontë the fiction popularizing the new trend of feminism was done with indirect roles. George Egerton too wrote under a pen name, as she felt that it was not easy to write down her feeling about herself of her sexuality at a time when frigidity in women was still considered quite normal.

In case of Virginia Woolf too “telling the truth about my own experience as a body” was impossible. In her opinion before any bold attempt could be made, “she has still many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome”. The problem has been one of developing a ‘voice’, a style in which women can write unselfconsciously about sex. Egerton did not manage it, nor have very many women for portrayal. Though she came nearest to writing convincingly about women’s sexual feeling, hers was an unsupported voice. This feebleness on her part was not considered enough to tackle the new version of female sexuality that was coming into existence at the time. At the grass root level there was no real change either in the framework within the novel or in the general assumptions about them and their lives, which have shaped their literary image. As the women are the central focus of the emotional life, it is nature that they find their greatest satisfaction through their emotional sexual relationship. These issues are thought of as being in the background of a man’s life, but in the foreground of a woman’s life. It may be mentioned at this stage that the gradual sexualizing of women in the novel of the period has not made any difference at all to this kind of belief. Fictional relationship involving men and women have become more intense and more physical. But with the women at the center it is still viewed as the most important part of

her life. There are two important considerations, which put a break on the development of a truthful picture of women in contemporary fiction. These are first, dominance of male version of female sexuality and the second, the novel’s continuing indifference to the everyday role of women’s lives. D.H. Lawrence had his touching portrayal of women in his fiction. His belief in spontaneous and instinctive living led him to an enormous over emphasis on sexuality involving women. Apart from looking at the women in his fiction such as *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* as painter, teacher, and whatever they are, their real function must be seen as one belonging to the emotional and sexual cult.

Such tendencies also promoted the sort of aggressive feminism as is visible in the women of Virginia Woolf’s novels. It is she who has turned the English women as a responsible citizen. She stresses the importance to the male’s roles in society. We learn from the novels and the essay that what women should really be doing is capitulating before the Lawrencean super male. And there is something old-fashioned about her extreme feminism. It dates back to her suffragette youth of the 1910s, when men kissed girls to distract them from wanting the vote. By the 1930s she complained that though women today have won admission into the professions and trades they usually encounter male conspiracy when they try to get to the top. She felt herself to be not only a woman, but a lady and this gives further twist to her social outlook. Her snobbery has more courage than arrogance. It is connected with her insatiable honesty. It is more like the snobbery of Kitty when she goes to tea with the Robsons. We must remember that sympathy for her entailed a tremendous and exhausting process. It was adding the sorrow of

another to one's own. *A Room of One's Own* presents the basic premise of allowing the woman to live her femininity and learning to let others alone. She expects women to raise their consciousness to such a level so that they come to view other also with due respect and concern. They have to renew a sense of life in men and thereby protect them from their own instinctive lust for war and death. Man is asked to record his priorities and to remove the obstacles that

she finds in the way of female writes, such as their lack of education, the lack of privacy, the constant distractions and the interruptions attendant upon them.

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FEMINISM

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Abstract

Woman's rights are both a scholarly responsibility and a front that appears for equity for ladies and furthermore the finish of sexism out and out structures. Nonetheless, there are numerous different sorts of women's liberation. Women's activists differ about what sexism comprises, and what precisely should be done about it; they differ about being a girl or a private and what social and political ramifications sex has or need to have. Regardless, inspired by the search for social equity, women's activist request gives an enormous scope of points of view on friendly, social, and political marvels. Significant points for women's activist hypothesis and governmental issues include the body, class and work, inability, the family, globalization, basic freedoms, mainstream society, race and bigotry, generation, science, oneself, sex work, and sexuality. Broad ened conversation of these subjects is incorporated inside the sub-sections.

Keywords: *historical context, normative and descriptive components feminism and the diversity of women, feminism as anti-sexism*

Introduction

Woman's rights carry numerous things to reasoning including not just an assortment of specific good and political cases, yet methods of posing and noting inquiries investigate of standard philosophical perspectives and strategies, and new subjects of request. Women's activist commitments to and intercessions in standard philosophical discussions are canvassed in sections under "Woman's rights, mediations". Passages covered under the rubric "Woman's rights, themes" concern philosophical issues that emerge as women's activists articulate records of sexism, investigate chauvinist social and social practices, and foster elective dreams of a simple world. So, they are philosophical points that emerge inside women's liberation. In spite of the fact that there is a wide range of and at times clashing ways to deal with women's activist way of thinking, And thinking about a portion of the contentions over what women's liberation is

gives a springboard to perceiving how women's activist responsibilities create a large group of philosophical points, particularly as those responsibilities stand up to the world as far as we might be concerned.

What is Feminism?

Historical Context

The term 'Feminism' includes many different uses and its meanings are often contested, as an example of some writers use the term 'feminism' to ask a historically specific movement within the US and Europe; other writers use it to ask the idea that there are injustices against women, though there is no consensus on the precise list of these injustices. My goal here is getting to be to sketch a variety of the central uses of the term that are most relevant to those interested in contemporary feminist philosophy. For a summary of the history of feminist thought see: "Feminism, history of". The references I provide

below are only a little sample of the work available on the highest is in question; more complete bibliographies are available at the precise topical entries and also at the top of this entry.

During the 1800s the term 'women's freedom' was wont to suggest "the attributes of females", and it had been not until after the Vital Overall Women's affair in Paris in 1892 that the term, following the French articulation of feminism, was used reliably in English for trust in and support of identical rights for ladies subject to the prospect of the consistency of the sexes. a few ladies' activists follow the start stages of the articulation "lady's privileges" in English as found out within the advancement in Europe and therefore the US beginning with the enactment for a tribute during the late nineteenth and mid 20th century and imply this improvement as "First Wave" ladies' freedom. The people that use this arrangement of encounters routinely depict ladies' lobbyists as vanishing between the 2 general contentions, to be "re-established" within the last piece of the 1960s and mid-1970s as what they name "Second Wave" lady's privileges. Even more lately, changes of lady's privileges within the earlier decade are insinuated as "Third Wave" women's freedom.

Not with standing, other women's activist researchers object to recognizing woman's rights with these specific snapshots of political activism because doing so obscures the way that there has been protection from male mastery that need to be considered "women's activist" since the start and across societies: i.e., women's liberation isn't restricted to a few (White) ladies within the West over the previous century or thereabouts. Besides, in any event, brooding

about just moderately late endeavors to oppose male control in Europe and therefore the US, the accentuation on "First" and "Second" Wave woman's rights overlook the continual protection from male mastery between the 1920s and 1960s and therefore the opposition outside standard legislative issues, especially by ladies of shading and average ladies.

Normative and Descriptive Components

In a sizable amount of its structures, woman's rights appear to incorporate something like two cases, one regularizing and therefore the other clear. The regularizing guarantee concerns how ladies should (or should not) to be seen and treated and draws on a foundation origination of equity or wide upright position; the graphic case concerns how ladies are, indeed, seen and treated, asserting that they're not being treated as per the rules of equity or ethical quality conjured within the standardizing guarantee. Together the 2 cases give motivations to attempting to vary the state of affairs; subsequently, women's liberation isn't only a scholarly yet additionally a political development.

So, for instance, a Liberal approach of the type already mentioned might define feminism (rather simplistically here) in terms of two claims:

- i) (Normative) Men and ladies are entitled to equal rights and respect.
- ii) (Descriptive) Women are currently disadvantaged with reference to rights and respect, compared with men.

On this account, that ladies and men need to have equal rights and respect is that the normative claim; which women are denied equal rights and respect functions here because of the descriptive claim.

Disagreements within feminism can occur with regard to either the descriptive or normative claim, e.g., feminists differ on what would count as justice or injustice for girls (what counts as "equality," "oppression," "disadvantage"?), and what sorts of injustice women actually suffer (what aspects of women's current situation are harmful or unjust?). Disagreements between feminists and non-feminists can also occur with regard to both the normative and descriptive claims, e.g., some non-feminists accept as true with feminists on the ways women got to be viewed and treated, but don't see any problem with the way things currently are. With an end goal to recommend a schematic record of women's liberation, Susan James describes woman's rights as follows:

Woman's rights are grounded on the conviction that girls are mistreated or impeded by correlation with men which their abuse is somehow or another ill-conceived or outlandish. Under the umbrella of this overall portrayal, there are, notwithstanding, numerous understandings of girls and their abuse, so it's anything but a misstep to believe woman's rights a solitary philosophical convention, or as suggesting a concurred platform. (James 2000, 576)

James appears to be here to utilize the thoughts of "abuse" and "hindrance" as placeholders for more meaningful records of treachery (both regularizing and distinct) over which women's activists clash.

Some may wish to characterize women's liberation as far as a regularizing guarantee alone: women's activists are the individuals who accept that girls are qualified for equivalent rights or equivalent regard, or... (Fill within the clear with one's favored record of

shamefulness), and one isn't needed to simply accept that girls are at the present being addressed unfairly. Be that because it may, if we somehow happened to embrace this phrased show, it's more enthusiastically to differentiate some of the fascinating wellsprings of conflict both with and inside women's liberation, and therefore the term 'woman's rights' would lose quite little bit of its capability to hitch those whose worries and responsibilities reach out past their ethical convictions to their social understandings and political affiliations. Women's activists aren't just the individuals who are submitted on a basic level to equity for ladies; women's activists take themselves to possess motivations to realize social change for women's benefits.

Feminism and the Diversity of Women

To believe some of the varied methodologies for reacting to the marvel of multi facetedness, we should always revisit to the schematic cases that girls are mistreated and this persecution isn't right or unfair. Comprehensively, then, at that time, one may describe the target of women's liberation to finish the mistreatment of women. In any case, within the event that we likewise recognize that girls are mistreated by sexism, however from various perspectives, e.g., by inequity, homophobia, prejudice, ageism, ableism, then forth, then, at that time it's going to appear to be that the target of women's liberation is to finish all abuse that influences ladies. What's more, a couple of women's activists have received this translation. Woman's rights, as freedom battle, should exist separated from and as a bit of the larger battle to destroy mastery within the entirety of its structures. we should always comprehend that man-centric

mastery imparts a philosophical establishment to bigotry and differing types of gathering persecution, which there's no expectation that it tends to be killed while these frameworks stay unblemished. This information needs to reliably advise the course regarding women's activist hypothesis and practice. (Snares 1989, 22) . For snares, the characterizing trademark that recognizes woman's rights from other freedom battles is its anxiety with sexism:

In contrast to numerous women's activist confidants, I accept ladies and men should share a typical agreement - fundamental information on what woman's rights is- - on the off chance that it's at any point to be a tremendous mass-based political development. In Women's activist Hypothesis: from edge to focus, I propose that characterizing woman's rights comprehensively as "a development to finish sexism and chauvinist abuse" would empower us to possess a typical political objective... Sharing a shared objective does not imply that girls and men won't have fundamentally disparate points of view on how that objective could also be reached.

Feminism as Anti-Sexism

In any case, within the event that we seek after a pluralist system in understanding chauvinist persecution, what binds together all of the examples as cases of sexism? All things considered, we will not expect that the persecution being mentioned takes an identical structure in various settings, and that we can't accept that there's a hidden clarification of the varied ways it shows itself. So would we be ready to attempt to discuss there is a brought together arrangement of cases—something, a couple of women's activists would ask us to

perceive that there's never a methodical method to compile the varied occasions of sexism, and correspondingly, there's no efficient solidarity in what considers woman's rights: rather we should always see the rationale for women's activist solidarity in alliance building (Reagon 1983). Various gatherings work to battle various sorts of abuse; a couple of gatherings take persecution against ladies (as ladies) as an important concern. On the off chance that there's a reason for participation between some subset of those gatherings during a given setting, then, at that time finding that premise is an achievement, yet ought to not be underestimated.

Conclusion

Not with standing the wide selection of approaches, styles, social orders, and directions, women's activist rationalists' shared characteristics are more prominent than their disparities. Many will get uninhibitedly from each other and hunt those different directions increase their own work. Indeed, even the distinctions over sex and sexual orientation increase a much bigger discussion about the effect of culture and society on bodies, insight, and pathways for change.

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A FEMININE SAGA : RE- DEFINING URMILA'S SPACE IN KAVITHA KANE'S *SITA'S SISTER*

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Abstract

Myths and epic collectively create a magic spell of imagination through their unparalleled narratives and attain the level of sublimity through the juxtaposition of the heroic deeds. Retelling of the epics from the perspectives of the neglected voice has become a popular genre nowadays. But it always portrays the lives of heroes in a subtle manner. The condition of their female counterpart may or may not come to the forefront. The condition of other female characters are more negligible compared to the heroines. Their lives are hidden in the dark areas of the epic unknowingly. Ramayana, the first epic in the world, written by Valmiki portrays the struggles and triumphs of the hero 'Rama'. The whole story depicts the voyage of Rama or, in other words, the journey from darkness to light. Ramayana always juxtaposes the lives of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita. But there are some strong and courageous women who lay hidden in the dark corners of Ramayana like Urmila, Kaikeyi, Mandavi, Sunaina and so on. Kavitha Kane's "Sita's Sister" (2014) emphatically describes the strong and neglected character of Urmila. The name Urmila means enchantress. She is the wave of passion. But here Kane presents the strong, subtle and multifaceted genius Urmila instead of the marginalized and voiceless one portrayed by popular literature. The novel projects the view that Ramayana is not just a saga about the heroic deeds of Rama. But it's also about the tragic plight and revelations of female characters. From the perspective of "Sita's Sister", Ramayana become a book of preordained incidents. Without these women characters nothing will happen in Ramayana. So, these characters act as a catalyst to the whole action and undergo mental and physical transformation. Kaikeyi is the main cause of the exile of Rama, likewise Sita is the root cause of Rama - Ravana war and Urmila helps Lakshmana in killing Indrajith. Even Surpanakha plays a tremendous role in the initiation of war. This paper aims to spread light on the lives of female characters and the emergence of new woman in 'Ramayana'.

Keywords: myth, mythology, marginalization, new woman, suffering, and identity.

The magic wand named Imagination has the capability to transform a literary artefact into something immortal. Every work of art, which develops inside the magic spell of imagination, tremendously influences the society. Moreover, in one way or the other, it creates a strong bond with the culture of that land. Epic is one among them. It picturises the life and heroic deeds of a God, demi God and divine beings. Victory of the hero after long strife and struggle is the core subject of an epic, where the unparalleled narratives and incredible rendition of heroic

deeds make it subtle. Sometimes these works create a counter morality according to its themes.

Every epic has a base myth as its core story element and is known as my theme. It originates out of the culture and co-exists with that culture. It is either a folk tale or a narrative which tells the adventurous and spectacular stories related to gods, deities and extraordinary human beings which may or may not have a real base. Hillman states that, the power of myth, its reality, resides

precisely in its power to seize and influence psychic life.

The heroes of such epics are noble, virtuous and an embodiment of hyper humanism. So, People have a tendency to admire the epic heroes because of the fact that their deeds are incredible and unattainable to a common man. As far as its psychological implications are concerned, it imprints deeply in the psyche of common man. The style of writing also enchants the common man, as a result of that epic achieves a divine quality rather than a pure literary work.

Ramayana, written by Valmiki, and *Mahabharata* by Veda Vyasa are the two classical epics contributed by India, and has purely been adapted from myths. *Ramayana*, the *adikavya*, encompasses the voyage of Rama and the term 'Ramayana' means from darkness to light. Even though this work contains powerful and strong female characters, the center of action is misogynistic, and is told from the perspective of Rama and renders the incidents of Rama's life.

However it includes some powerful female characters but the female protagonist in *Ramayana* has lost her voice in the wilderness. Other than Sita, Sumitra, Kousalya, Kaikeyi, and all other female characters are either submissive or dumb mutes during the course of action. Even today people admire these male characters for their valor and victory and praise the female characters for their suffering and submissive nature.

In this scenario, the re-telling of a popular myth from the perspective of the neglected selves attains a novel implication. Contemporary literature shows a great affinity towards the re-telling of myths, because it provides different

perspectives of the original classics. It also helps the readers to know various perspectives of the saga and analyse them in an unbiased perspective. So the retelling of myths "is essential to broaden the narrative, to read the stories from inclusive perspectives and to start new conversations." (Aisiri).

In this realm, writers like Amish Tripathi, Devadutt Patnaik, Kavitha Kane enrich their literary casket with the retelling of myths. These stories retold from the perspective of other female characters like Urmila, Uruvi, and Ahalya make it more subtle. Marginalized and mute characters of the original epics metamorphose into strong powerful voices in their works, which not only shatter the misogynistic notion of the society, but also proclaims the immense power of those mutilated characters.

Kavitha Kane is a revolutionary female voice in the arena of mythical retelling who has always narrated the stories of the voiceless sheroes among the voiced heroes. She has portrayed her characters, especially female characters, with abundant potentiality and will power. They are mightier than the so called role models. But Kane through her works reasserts that "mythology can be a huge canvas for contemporary thought. It is not telling us some old tales, as so carelessly assumed, of Gods and Goddesses, but of man and his follies and fallacies." Her novels like *Karna's Wife: the Outcast Queen* (2013), *Sita's Sister* (2014), *Lanka's Princess* (2016), and *Ahalya's Awakening* (2019) juxtaposes the multi dimensional view of suffering and marginalization and the rise of the new woman.

Lisa Tuttle has defined feminist theory as asking "new questions of old texts" (Aisiri). In

Ramayana certain characters are forcefully excluded from the major arena of life especially some female characters. Urmila is one among them. *Sita's Sister* is a powerful rendering of *Ramayana* from the perspective of Urmila, Sita's sister. Even though the title has some elements of marginalization, Merriam Webster's online dictionary defines marginalization as "to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group". Thus the title is the combination of two sisters' name and their love is more sacred than wedding love. She is SITA'S SISTER not anyone else even though she is not her biological sister. Her love is spiritual not material, she is not ready to abandon her Sister for the sake of anything. What Rama is to Laxman is Sita to Urmila. However, unlike Laxman, she is not the shadow of Sita but is an individual with strong personality.

For Sita, Urmila is her lifeline and soul mate. From birth itself Urmila is discriminated against in the palace. Urmila reveals that: "I have always known what secondary is- I have grown up with it" (*Sita's Sister*, 136). In reality she is the biological daughter of Janaka and Sunaina, but instead of her, Sita is known as Janaki, the daughter of Janaka and Mythili, the princess of Mithila. The real ownership of these two titles belongs to Urmila. However, she has a better perspective about her life and it differentiates her from Sita. Her decision making power symbolizes her maturity level. "She is not the complaining, crying, pining, vulnerable woman who writes love poems while Laxman is away in exile. Urmi utilises the redundancy of a marital life by informing herself of various academic disciplines and earns the position of a

sage invited for an annual conference – almost entirely a male bastion." (Shubhraatha)

Even at the time of marriage, Sita attains a special status than Urmila as an element of divinity is always attributed with Sita's name. So if one wants to win the hands of Sita will have to perform an extraordinary deed: breaks the divine bow. Once Urmila says "it has to be an extraordinary man who can do that – and indeed, it is going to be an extra ordinary man who will marry Sita!" (*Sita's Sister*, 21). Urmila's marriage, however, takes place in a common manner as an offshoot of Sita's marriage. As Urmila says: "my marriage would be a lie, though an alluring one!" (*Sita's Sister*, 115).

The marriage between Laxman and Urmila happens only for the safe and secure life of Sita. But in reality, Laxman is not ready for a nuptial life. For him Rama is everything and without him Laxman has no identity. When Urmila feels a soft sympathy towards Laxman, he rejects her unkindly: "I am a torn man Mila, he said despairingly. I had no intentions of marrying ever. For me my life is being with my brother. He is my all. He is my friend, my teacher, my life, my soul. I cannot do without him- that's how I have grown up, that's how I have been made..." (*Sita's Sister*, 123). It asserts that even Urmila is inferior as a wife in front of Rama, the brother. Even though she is ready to sacrifice her life for the sake of her sister, she is ready to face the situation without fear.

Urmila's marital life turns to a tragedy after the departure of Laxman along with Rama and Sita. She has to wait for long fourteen years to rejoin with her Laxman. She was blessed with everything but enjoyed nothing. As Mandavi says: "you were entitled to everything but got

nothing” (*Sita’s Sister*, 490). However she accepts her fate calmly. In the words of Urmila “it is unjust.... Life always is. We are women, we are wives, and we are creatures of circumstances. We make choices we have no control over. You cannot change anything.” (*Sita’s Sister*, 433). She goes through severe trauma during this time because she has lost her sister and husband. When Urmila asks Lakshman to allow her to accompany them, he rejects her plea and abandons her in the palace. It shatters her emotionally: “Her heart sank. She turned back, walking slowly to her room, the world suddenly turning grey and dull. Urmila wanted to weep, more out of frustration” (*Sita’s Sister*, 229). She is mentally broken and physically collapses during their departure:

“Urmila’s first instinctive reaction had been a flood of hurt for being rejected by both her husband and sister, followed by a deep and bitter anger. They had not considered her at all, each intent on getting what they wanted. She felt betrayed left out and let down.” (*Sita’s Sister*, 264)

For Urmila, the absence of Lakshmana is a huge loss and she wanders through a skewed landscape in a state of agonized disorientation, lost and clueless. She becomes disoriented during the initial days of their departure. However, their relationship becomes more spiritual with time. The telepathic communication that happens between those two hearts reduces the distance between them. She can understand Laxman well even though he is far away from her.

But after all Kane states that her Urmila is not ready to be inactive throughout her life and she emerges as a new woman, who supports the family from a great collapse. She has abundant

will power and strong sense of personality. As in the words of Louisa May Alcott .” The emerging woman... will be strong minded, strong hearted, strong souled, strong- bodied... strength and beauty must go together” (Tushar). She overcomes the hindrances in a subtle way. She is not ready to trap herself in the four walls of palace instead of that she learns more about Vedas and uses her leisure time innovatively by drawing pictures and so on.

However Kane’s portrayal of Urmila creates a new awareness among public regarding the mute portrayal of hers in Ramayana. In adikavya her name is mentioned only in Urmilanidra. Where she is in an inactive sleep of fourteen years for the attainment of some special power to Laxman to defeat Indrajith. Hence it creates a toxic tendency among the public that, role of the wife is to sacrifice her happiness for the well-being of her husband. As a result of that, it has been worshipped and popularized by the patriarchal society in order to restrict the freedom of females. Often it acts as a touch stone to define the duties and responsibilities of a wife.” If women have not been portrayed in a proper light, it's because of misogyny and chauvinism which made us all myopic and did not allow us to see these women for their enormous strength and conviction. We need to return them into their original self by again using mythology as a tool to show what they originally were” (Aisiri)

More than a classical epic, Ramayana is a sacred book for Indians. So they have a toxic tendency to adapt certain things from it. Especially certain tendencies related to dharma. The patriarchal Society tries to restrict the empowerment of women by quoting these holy responsibilities. For instance, Valmiki’s Urmila

is a flat and dull character, her identity is vague and her voice is concealed. This triviality of presentation makes her less popular among the public. But Kane through her immortal pen portrays her as a strong and powerful character.

Kane's Urmila is powerful and emotionally mature. She is a diplomat and knows how to adapt herself to changing situations. She has a tendency to listen to the important and leave the unwanted. She has great power to understand her siblings. She is not ready to destroy her relationship with her siblings for the sake of anything. Even Manthara's crooked strategy and venomous words fail to impact. Manthara's opines that "That girl is real lucky! An orphan who was found by none other than the king of Mithila himself...and so a foundling grows up as a princess like you. But unlike you, by marrying Ram, she 'll become queen, smart girl." (*Sita's Sister*, 214). Such words have no effect on Urmi, because she has a good heart that understands the feeling of others. As the title mentions she is Sita's Sister, she knows Sita better rather than Rama.

Kane's "Urmila yearned for more; she wanted to see more places, places she had heard about through her growing years...." (*Sita's Sister*, 18). The name Urmila means enchantress or the wave of passion. She is a wanderlust, bibliophile and a multifaceted genius. Even though she is forcefully marginalized from the beginning itself, she accepts it and later on she molds herself as an undefeatable person. She has the will to build her own life. During the fourteen years of ascetic life Laxman transforms himself as the shadow of Rama but Urmila herself emerges as a new woman. She is not ready to spend her life in desperation. Kane presents Urmila with subtlety and nobility. "The

world of Urmi, Sita's sister – not Laxman's wife or Ram's sister-in-law – is one that in its very introduction, the cover of the book itself, discards the male heroic grandeur of the quasi-historical narrative. The book presents a layered representation of Urmi's identity as an intelligent, ambitious, uncomplicated and matter-of-fact woman who is capable not just of loving madly but also of defining her love with new meanings of intellectual achievements in the absence of her beloved. The character that rises according to situation. "Kavitha Kane's Urmila, the modern version of Urmila she is active not submissive. She tries to give a space for others and not ready to intrude in another person's space even if that person is her husband or her sister. In her conversation with Lakshmana she says:

"loving is also giving ; you are not ready to give yourself to me. But don't you see, I don't want your complete surrender. I love you but that does not mean I possess you, your beliefs and your loyalties. I assure you that I shall never come between your loyalty to your brothers and your family".(*Sita's Sister*,126)

Urmila is also portrayed as the embodiment of Vedic knowledge, the epitome of inner power and the paragon of responsibility. So that Mandavi says: "you are more the freethinker-who doesn't believe in rituals and rites" (*Sita's Sister*,33). Everyone respects her opinions; even Janaka, the father of Urmila, knows that she has sharp critical thinking and so he asks for her permission for her wedding with Laxman. For her, learning new things is far better than marriage: "marriage did not hold much interest for Urmila but it was a social discipline she would have to conform to. She would rather seek knowledge instead of a suitor" (*Sita's*

Sister, 19). Kane's Urmila is always active and stands for spiritual love and is entirely different from the rosy romantic love. "The re-telling shows that an inclusive space is crucial to address discrimination and to create ripples of change. The narrative can't be changed when stories are an echo chamber of men's voices".(Aisiri)

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INDIVIDUALISM AND INFIDELITY IN MANJU KAPUR'S *CUSTODY*

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Abstract

This article depicts the portrayal of the new woman, named Shagun in the novel Custody by Manju Kapur. Kapur explores how Shagun undergoes the restrictions and responsibilities in her family. In her early age, she sacrificed her vision of becoming a supermodel for the sake of her mother and family. But her dream comes true when she meets and fall for Ashok Khanna, her husband's boss. Literally, this succeed in broken marriage with Raman and finally Shagun and Raman fight for the legal battle in order to obtain the custody of the children. Along with this, Shagun is an aggressive and over ambitious woman, who does not consider the pain of others. Her self-assertive personality displays the continuous sense of dissatisfaction in her. Finally this nature of her lead the way to lose her daughter completely.

The term 'feminism' has its origin from the Latin word *lemin a*, which means 'woman'. It refers to the advocacy of women's rights, power and individuality with men on the pace of 'equality of sexes'. It also relates to the women should have the same social, political and economical rights as men. For a long period, the contribution of Women novelists in the field of Indian English Fiction remains limited. In present condition, women's deeper emotions, their thought processes and various unknown aspects of women's personality were discovered. It was mandatory for the women to against this male dominance over them. Women writers tried to expose their inner vision through their works. Feminists writers strived to engrave their authority in a male dominated society as possible as by them. The voice of New Indian Women writers through their writings published between 1980s to 1990s. In recent years, there were a series of novelists who belonged to the third generation o woman Indian English writers like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Manju Kapur, Gita Hariharan,

Anita Nair, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy.

Manju Kapur is the bestselling author of four novels and she won Commonwealth Writer's prize for her first novel, *Difficult Daughters* in 1999. *A Married Woman* and *Home* shortlisted for the Hutch Crossword Prize for Fiction and *The Immigrant* shortlisted for the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. The most dominant themes found in her fictions include marriage family relationship, separation and extramarital relationship. Kapur's latest novel is *Custody* deals about the globalization and economic liberation on Indian societies and families. This novels throws about the marriage, a bitter divorce, the helplessness and sufferings of the children. *Custody* has been adapted on several Indian television channels in various languages.

Manju Kapur's fifth novel *Custody* (2011) depicts the upper-middle-class families in Delhi in the mid-90s, and this fiction reveals the unimagined uncertainties of marriage, how the wives are suffocated in their life, and the constant loneliness filled the life of husband and

finally the continuous shifting of the children from father to mother and again mother to father. This novel narrates the story of the married couple, Raman and Shagun with two children, Arjun, eight-year old son and Roohi, three-year old daughter. Their relationship is sweet and wealthy until Shagun meets Ashok Khanna, the boss of Raman. Ashok, who falls in the beauty of Shagun and decided to own her at any cost. Subsequently, Shagun also melted in the words of Ashok. When Raman goes outstation for work, Shagun takes an advantage of visiting Ashok. While Raman discovers their extramarital affair, Shagun has to pick out what she really desires for. After a perplexity, Shagun plump for Ashok Khanna. Later, Raman refused to provide a divorce when she asked it for. This pressures Shagun to carry away their children from Raman. In the another part of the novel, the female lead, Ishita whose marriage life demolished because of her infertility. Though she had a loving husband, he quit their relationship because she cannot able to give birth. Eventually, she seek some satisfaction and a sense of identity in social work but she renounced it when she meets Raman and Roohi. Later Raman and Ishita gets married and she believes she can be happy as a step mother. In the next part of the novel, the story targets on the children's custody, the bitter legal battle and the result of freedom.

The novel *Custody* represents the two strong women characters in the different manner. Kapur shows hopes and inspiration to the readers through her female characters- Shagun and Ishita. They also undergone the pains of broken marriage and somehow managed to survive on remarrying the men of their choices. The novel begins with the lack of happiness in

the marriage life of Raman and Shagun. They both quarrel and blame for nothing. Shagun is extraordinarily beautiful whereas Raman is a man with brilliant prospects. But both of them failed to harmonize and tolerate their hard situations. Though Raman earning ample of money, he had spend less time with his family. Shagun conceived within a year of their marriage. The birth of boy child made Shagun to think that she fulfilled her duty of delivering a male heir to their family. Their life goes well till Arjun is almost eight-year old.

Suddenly, things get changed when Shagun finds of pregnant again. This time Shagun is unhappy yet she does not ready to tied all her time to a child as Arjun just becoming independent. The main reason for this discomfort is that Shagun is the one who gets married at her early age. Her aspiration is to become a successful supermodel in a society. But her loving mother refused it by stating to fulfill her desire after marriage. Eventually, her wedlock also does not provide her adequate space to fly in her dreams. Here the motivation for Shagun's disloyalty was the end of her ambitions and her suppressed emotions. Her marriage life brought her endless responsibilities like duty to her husband, family and friends, along with the maintenance of household chores, which probably seems to stuck in between and provide no scope for establishing her career. In such circumstances, family obligations appears as a interruption to one's own freedom. Shagun did not wish to lead a monotonous life of sacrificing her ambitions for family commitments. Consequently she forgot her duties as a wife and a mother. She accepted the acting offer in an advertisement suggested by Ashok. Shagun just wished to be exploratory to

recognize her individuality. Once she endured under adjustments and sacrifices usually expected from the women. But she bares to fly against the social norms to gain her passion, selfhood and individuality.

Manju Kapur illustrated Shagun as modern woman, and yet confused the concept of satisfaction. Even though she was with Ashok, she persistently undertaken a kind of frustration and dissatisfaction due to the absence of her children. Shagun wishes to conquest over Raman in all possible way. When she learns about Raman and Ishita's marriage, she gets irritated. Kapur represented Shagun as she wants everything like luxurious life, happiness, peace, her children. In this novel, Shagun portrayed as an over ambitious, whereas Ishita as affectionate and virtuous woman. However, both of them experienced with the pain of uncertainties of their life. Shagun's jealousy and aggressive nature makes her dejected and Ishita's problem of infertility and the constant fear of losing Roohi as she is her step-mother, makes her depressed. The frustration and uncertainties played a major role in their life. At last they both fight against their exasperation to discover their real happiness.

When Shagun demanded for divorce, Raman denied. This stimulated her to take away the children from him. This incidence shattered Raman. Subsequently she spots him as an enemy. She forgot her ten-year relationship just for her selfhood. Once Ashok Khanna received an offer from USA, Shagun requires divorce in order to marry Ashok. This hectic situation pressured her to withdrawn from the custody of their children. Roohi was just three-year old baby at the time of Shagun's departure. During the period of taking away the children from

Raman, Arjun started to feel solitude and he had endured the sense of humiliation. Finally, Raman could not digest his wife's infidelity, who even gave her an opportunity to be with him. Yet she abandoned him for the sake of another man. By this act, its understandable that how Shagun's behavior affects her surrounding.

The novel throws a light on the growth of individualism and integrity of women in the modern world. Everyone craves for their own happiness without bothering the social norms and ethics. In the modern world, the extramarital relationship turn out acceptable. This projected the importance of individualism rather than socialism. Throughout the novel, Shagun depicted as a self-centered, over ambitious lady, who finally lost her daughter. From above, Kapur tries to illustrate that being an affectionate and faithful will undoubtedly showers a real pleasure and peace rather than being an over ambitious. This article elaborates how the new woman character of Shagun evolve and affect the surrounding. Kapur finely described the infidelity of Shagun.

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ECOFEMINIST MUSINGS ON ABSTINENCE AND DIETARY RESISTANCE IN THE NOVEL “THE VEGETARIAN” BY HAN KANG

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Abstract

The sexual politics associated with meat eating is evident most cultures, especially in a male-dominated society like Korea. The novel “Vegetarian” by Han Kang revolves around the strange life of the protagonist Yeong-hye who chose abstinence as a form of resistance against patriarchy. Sexual exploitation and meat consumption which appears to be discrete forms of violence find a point of intersection in the silencing of the exploited. Yeong-hye desires a life away from humanity and disregards all forms of material pleasures to find solace in spiritual peace. Her non-conformism to the societal rules and regulations are not aggressive in nature but spiritual. Her rebellion is not understood by her parents or spouse and it upsets them to an extent where they force her to do things which she refuses to follow. As Yeong-hye thinks she is a plant, she quits eating meat and wearing clothes. She goes to an extent where she stops having sex with her partner and refuses the intake of food or water. The ecofeminist musings of the protagonist confirms the reader of the connections between a woman and nature and how exploited they are by men. Veganism, as proposed by some ecofeminists is justified in this novel. The author investigates how submissiveness caters to the growth of patriarchal system and how abstinence can be used as a form of resistance.

Keywords: *ecofeminism, sexual politics, meat eating, patriarchy, veganism, exploitation, victimization, dietary resistance, abstinence, spirituality and environmental consciousness.*

Ecofeminism argues that the values and believes of the patriarchal society encourages the exploitation and oppression of women and nature. They believe that a woman's relationship with the environment is more intimate than that of men. Ecofeminism expresses its intolerance to exploitation of all kinds, including the unbridled consumerism in society. Vegetarian ecofeminism came into being after the observation that the omitting of animals from ecofeminist analyses actually contradicts its principles as a feminist theory. One of the main arguments of ecofeminists is that the patriarchal system justifies their exploitation through certain binary oppositions which is legitimized through

religious constructs. Cultural ecofeminism, on the other hand, promotes an association between women and nature by focusing on the organic relationship between them. By the biology, women are considered as a part of the reproductive system of the natural world in the form of menstruation, pregnancy and lactation. Ecofeminism also invites our attention towards the expressions in our language that illustrates how women and nature are “feminized” as if they are essentially exploitable. The vegan ecofeminist Carol J. Adams, in her book “*The Sexual Politics of Meat Eating*” invites our attention towards the usages like “rape of Earth” in the ecological writings of 1970s. She also

recalls the instances where female rape victims describe their experiences with phrases like “I felt like a piece of meat” where the death experience of an animal acts to illustrate the lived experience of a woman. Women and nature become absent referents in the descriptions of violence they both face. They become symbols to represent other oppressions too.

Meat eaters like to believe that they are doing what complete vegetarians do—eating humanely—without actually doing what complete vegetarians do—not eating animal products. And so, images of animals living in freedom on a family farm abound when in fact the animals’ lives are nothing like the depictions. We believe both that we are being kind to the animals and that they like how we are treating them. Or we like to believe that the animals have no consciousness of suffering and that their plight should not affect us. To paraphrase Rousseau, everywhere animals are in chains, but we image them as free. This denial is very strong. To convey this sense of the animals’ freedom, patriarchal-cultural images draw upon cues about another supposed freedom: the consumption of women’s sexuality. Thus animals and women are not only depicted as free, though they are not, but as sexually free. The result is the sexual politics of meat. (Adams 19)

The vegetarian by Han Kang is one of the most internationally known Korean novels. It is a three-part novel which discusses a different perspective of life in its each section. It was first published in 2007 and was translated into English by the British translator Deborah Smith in 2015. Han Kang won the Man Booker International Prize for fiction in 2016 for “*The*

Vegetarian”. The protagonist of the novel is Yeong-hye, whose perspective remains a mystery throughout the novel. The first section of the novel titled “*The Vegetarian*” is narrated by Yeong-hye’s husband Mr Cheong. Initially he viewed his wife as an ordinary, below average woman who conforms to all the norms of family and society. But Mr Cheong is startled by his wife’s sudden decision to turn vegetarian. In a country famous for its love for meat, Yeong-hye’s decision shakes the entire family. Her father, the most patriarchal figure of the family feels threatened by his daughter’s refusal to eat meat. He tries to manipulate and force-feed her but all his efforts were in vain. Yeong-hye’s stubbornness hurt shimin two different ways. Firstly, she disobeyed him which he takes as an insult to his position in the family. Secondly, she breaks the long-established tradition of meat eating. The latter is the worst of all.

Power structures are not universally fixed; rather they have always changed and will continue to do so. Yet many patriarchs, continuing to perceive themselves as holding the power of representation and ultimate authority, still try to oppress other family members. This desire to exercise patriarchal authority to which other family members have not consented is causing conflict within the family. (Park11)

In Korea, now meat is even an acceptable gift as it represents luxury in their culture. It is said that there was a time when Korea was so poor that they were not able to afford meat items. The generation who suffered the absence of meat on their dining table made sure that their future generation was able to taste it. So the cultural importance of meat eating in Korea has its roots in family pride and how well you are

able to present yourself in the society. Being a carnistic society, the Korean culture considers vegetarianism as something abnormal. Yeong-hye's abstinence, refusal to wear a bra and the sudden freedom from all gender restrictions surprises Mr Cheong which ultimately culminates in their separation. Mr Cheong was initially attracted to the passive personality of Yeong-hye. According to him, "in keeping with my expectations, she (Yeong-hye) made for a completely ordinary wife who went about things without any distasteful frivolousness." (Kang 11) But as soon as she begins to develop a taste for independence, he finds it hard to accept her since he thinks it could question his masculinity. An independent woman is always seen as a threat to the patriarchal society.

The second part titled "*The Mongolian Mark*" is narrated by the husband of Yeong-hye's sister in the form of his thoughts and desire. Although his name is not mentioned in the novel, his profession is stated as "video artist". Some of the erotic descriptions of the protagonist are included in this section as he decides to record a video of the hand painted body of Yeong-hye. The video artist is mesmerised and sexually attracted to the birth mark on her body and eventually has sex with her. His wife In-hye accidentally watches the video and thinks that her sister and husband have become mentally unstable. The third and final section of the novel "*Flaming Trees*" introduce the readers to the perspective of In-hye who is described a "good woman". In other words, she is presented as a woman who conforms to all the patriarchal systems in society without even questioning its authenticity. In-hye's husband thinks his wife is a good woman; in fact she is too good that he finds her

"oppressive". He is guilt-ridden for disappointing and hurting In-hye by having sex with her sister Yeong-hye. But he can't help but feel admiration towards Yeong-hye for being the unique person she is. In-hye's husband is repelled by the docile attitude of his wife but he still likes her. Yeong-hye ceases to eat anything and is admitted to a hospital where In-hye regularly meets her. Yeong-hye begins to act more plant-like and hallucinates about growing roots and branches from her body. She also tells her sister that what she need is sunlight and water not food. It is believed that Han Kang wrote this novel from the inspiration she received from the works of Korean modernist poet Yi Sang who famously said "I believe that all humans should be plants". In-hye constantly worries about the condition of her sister and her child Ji-woo.

This pain and insomnia that, unbeknownst to others, now has In-hye in its grip—might Yeong-hye have passed through this same phase herself, a long time ago and more quickly than most people? Might Yeong-hye's current condition be the natural progression from what her sister has recently been experiencing? Perhaps, at some point, Yeong-hye had simply let fall the slender thread that had kept her connected with everyday life. During the past insomniac months, In-hye had sometimes felt as though she were living in a state of total chaos. If it hadn't been for Ji-woo—if it hadn't been for the sense of responsibility she felt toward him—perhaps she too might have relinquished her grip on that thread. (Kang 140)

Towards the end of the novel, In-hye starts to relate with her sister and stops the doctor from force feeding Yeong-hye. The novel ends when Yeong-hye is taken to another hospital by

ambulance and In-hye observes the trees as they pass by. Yeong-hye and In-hye are portrayed as two different victims of a patriarchal society where masculinity and meat consumption work together to establish a power hierarchy where men enjoys the supreme authority. Since Yeong-hye doesn't conform to this "authority" she is isolated from her family and society. In-hye's submissiveness on the other hand explains her fear for the "authority". The problem with patriarchy is that it believes in the notion of gender as a social attribute where behaving in a certain way is almost entirely an imposition. If you are a woman, submissiveness, obedience and politeness is supposed to come naturally to you. Any woman who is out of this circle is considered "mad". As Sara Mills points out, "politeness is often considered to be a woman's concern". The expression of a woman's vulnerability is considered as an expression of her modesty too. This popular concept of "good woman" is built upon the ideals of womanhood and gender stereotypes which institutionalize the submissive role she plays in her daily life.

Yeong-hye's dietary choice of vegetarianism is, above all things, an attempt to escape from the fundamental suffering inherent in our eating condition. She struggles to remove the animality within her own body and to embody the characteristics of plant in her body. The process proceeds in the order of no longer eating meat, adopting a vegetarian diet, becoming an anorexic, and finally, becoming like a plant. To remove animality, she first stops eating meat and then endeavours to erase the trace of meat eating stacked within her body. (Kim 7)

Meat eating is irrevocably attached to the patriarchal norms of the society and this is why its consumption fall on parallel lines with the

violence against women. Feminist theory logically contains veganism because it covertly challenges the patriarchy in society. In most societies, women are also deprived of nutritious food items as they are expected to feed all the good things to the male members of family. And sometimes women even engage themselves in deliberate self-deprivation in order to serve the best to their husbands, brothers, sons or fathers. Meat and masculinity is intersected at the point of hunt instinct in men. Hunt is seen as a male activity since primitive times. Meat consumption and distribution is still considered as the right of the male domain which is why animals become metaphors for describing violence faced by women. This explains that women are treated like animals, more like dead animals or meat. A dead animal/meat is deprived of emotions which makes them absent or invisible. This is one of the many sexual violences hidden behind meat eating. By becoming a "plant" Yeong-hye indirectly expresses that she is free and "alive". Yeong-hye teaches that sometimes resistance to exploitation is through non-conformism and complete abstinence from gender-responsibilities.

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FEMINIST TRENDS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY TAMIL NOVELS

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Abstract

Trends of Feminism change according to the timeline of the society. The perspective of feminism depends on socio-political factors. This article attempts to draw the ideas of feminism exhibited in the tamil novels of women writers and men writers in twentieth century. Most of the women writers create feminist characters who should live with traditional ethics as well as modern education. But men writers bring up the argument of independent choice in career and relationships through the women characters in their novels. The subject of this article is to present the journey of feminism in twentieth century Tamil novels and a comparative study of the definition of feminism pointed out in the novels of men writers and women writers.

Keywords: *women writers' feminism, men writers' rebel women, choice, economic independence, women's empowerment, sakthi, power, society, culture, norms, suffocating traditions, patience and endurance of women, me too movement.*

Theory of Feminism is a like an ocean; vast and deep. Feminism can be anything, but ruled by the society one lived in. Feminism in Western countries is totally different from that of Middle Eastern, Asian or African countries. Feminism of a country is decided by its culture and customs. Feminist writers follow the prevailing trend of the country they live in. Feminism in India aims mostly at educating women. A woman's economic independence depends on her educational qualifications. A woman should improve her status in the society by her education and economic growth. This was the feminist theory of India in post independence era. Evils like child marriage, cruel treatment of the widows and untouchability were the great perils faced by India even before independence. The writers of that era used their mighty pen to eradicate these evils in the society. Bharathiyar, Vedanayagam pillai, Madhavaiah, B. Rajam Iyer, Ku. Pa. Raja gopalan and Puthumaipitthan contributed to these causes to a great extent.

Bharathiyar's "Tulsi Bai", pioneer in a story which advocate three revolutionary principles, abolish sati, promote widow remarriage and inter religious marriage. Madhavaiah's "Muthu meenakshi" portrays the havoc caused by the childhood marriage and the pitiful conditions of the uneducated, ends with a stress on women's education and widow remarriage. Va. Ramasamy's "Kothai Theevu", written in 1945, tells a story of an utopian island ruled only by women. He hails women's emancipation. Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan's unfinished work, "Verottam" discussed the psychological approach to women's thought process.

Women's education grew, so does their empowerment. Extensive women's education paved the way to the discussion of gender inequalities. Fictions of the subsequent decades focused on this problem. The paths of Indian literature altered and Tamil writers leading in the front. Kalki. R. Krishna murthi is a master of portraying women characters. Tarini of "Alai Osai" is a finesse. The women characters of

Kalki are the perfect examples of an independent woman with social values. Akilan's "Chitra paavai" won him Gnapith award. Anandhi, the heroine, is an educated girl with traditional values. She cannot control her evil husband, finally leaves him. Divorce is common now, women can leave the bond of a marriage, but it was a very tough decision then. P. V. Ramanathan's "Manakolam's Jana handovers the husband immediately after marriage to the police for swindling money from the office. She plots an intelligent trick to do it She proves morally right ,but not a typical wife of the period.

Rajam krishnan is a prolific writer with agendas. Her novel, "Penn Kural" depicts the troubles faced by a woman in joint family system. "Malargal" is a story of a mentally ill teenage girl and her struggles. "Alaigal" provides a psychological picture of the turbulent life of an orphaned girl. "Kootukkunjugal" deals with child labour rampant in Sivakasi. "Suzhalil Midhakum Deepangal" vividly criticizes the patrachial oppression within the family. Rajam krishnan serves as a voice representing the positive choice that woman need to imbibe. Her characters break from the woman stereo types. The intimate portrait of the house wife, Girija would resemble well with today's home maker. Rajam krishnan stresses for the recognition of the house wife's work which is taken for granted always. The house wife's life is like living inside a golden cage with jewelry, clothes and material wealth in exchange for the life long service at home. Girija wants to break this cycle at least for her daughter. "Suzhalil methakum Deepangal " is front ally feminist in theme, treatment and language. The Indian irony is the celebration of woman as Sakthi, the Goddess at

temple, but giving a treatment of a slave at home.

T. Janaki Raman is eloquent in writing about free willed women. Ammini, Alangarathamma and Yamuna are rational and majestic. T. Janaki Raman's woman characters break all the established rules of the society ,but still admirable and ethical in their own way. T. Janakiraman's "Moga Mul" is a controversial love story of the period. Yamuna's wit and humour about her status of being unmarried for a long time, still reluctant on settling against her principles make her bold and admirable character.

Ammini of "Mara Pasu" is a revolutionary feminist character. Feminists today talk about freedom of a woman in having multiple relationships. T. Janakiraman created Ammini in 1975. Ammini is a fresh breeze. She wants to touch, hug and love all. Her sexual preferences are liberal. The argument with a foreigner in chapter 5, vividly portrays her character. Ammini knows no boundaries in love, but it is her choice to continue or break up any relationship She is like a wooden cow but she has life and soul inside As Gobali rightly puts it," she is stubborn and will not change herself for anyone, she will change it only if she honestly believes, she should change." Ammini herself declares, " why should we worry about security in life, life is natural without security, why should we afraid. I have no faith in God, but in me". The confidence and conviction in Ammini is a milestone in the development of feminist characters. Alangarathamma of "Amma Vandhal" Is an embodiment of dominant feminist. She breaks all the rules of family tradition. Writing such characters is indeed an attempt at modern feminism.

Jeyakandan's versatility lies in portraying women's struggle against all the norms of the society. "Sila nerangalil sila manidargal" gives a tight slap on the hypocrisy of the society. Ganga is a representative of the victimised woman in a situational mistake. Jeyakandan is a revolutionary in discussing the petty practices and beliefs of the society which subdued women and present solutions..

Bala kumaran's "Irumbu kuthiraigal" is feminist to the core. The title, "Irumbu Kuthiraigal" represents two iron like women and their power. His women characters evolve naturally to achieve the freedom in the end. They are stubborn with cut throat honesty. Bala kumaran glorified women's choice and freedom in his novels. He himself has declared in an interview, "I created strong women characters who did not compromise, I showed them in a right perspective. Bala Kumaran's women characters were not merely gendered cardboard cutouts, but fully sentient individuals. Women in Bala Kumaran's novels always carry an aura of independence and make it look like natural.

While the male novelists deal with the freedom of thought and passions, women novelists like Lakshmi, Anuradha ramanan, Indumathi, Vaasanthi, Kamala Sadagopan, Siva Sankari portray women as an embodiment of truth, honor, intelligence and morality. They have to rise above all the hardships of life with perseverance. Feminism in the novels of these writers is woman's education and economic independence. An ideal heroine of these writers helps and solves the problems of the family. If the husband is wayward, she should teach him a lesson and bring him to the right path. The problems of the in-laws should be dealt with. By facing a lot of struggles and toils, at last the

woman emerges victorious and hailed as 'Shakti'. The kind of picture these writers give of Feminism is—a woman is an embodiment of love, honour, knowledge, ethics, culture and tradition. The woman of the house have to carry a lot on their shoulders to prove herself successful. The burden looks very heavy and unbearable, but she carries with patience and smile.

In Lakshmi's "Penn Manam", "Mithila Vilas", "Mangalavin kanavan", "Nayakkar makkal", the heroines endure all the hardships in life and emerge victorious at the end. Her novel, "Oru Kaveriyai Pola" brings out the journey of a NRI woman coming to visit India, through her experience, Lakshmi portrayed myriad characters, good and bad. Her journey becomes an universal path for every woman. The novel is acclaimed as one of the best novels in Tamil literature. The artistic presentation of realism and deep insight into the life of tamil people make it a masterpiece. "Oru Kaveriyai Pola" won Sahitya Academy Award in 1984.

Sivasankari's "Nandu" discusses about the crisis in the family due to cancer and how the heroine fights till the end in vain. Indumathi's "Tharaiyil irankum Vimanangal" portrays a life of an intelligent, aspiring woman caught in the web of a middle class brahmin society. Chudamani's fictions are concerned about the contemporary human life. "Manaduku iniyaval", "Ullakadal", and "Punnagai Pungkothu" are the best illustrations. Ambai, the notable writer rightly observed, "Woman characters bracing the strong winds of life fighting and resisting and sometimes succumbing... by the lyrical and poetical language with which she painted them, which caught the subtlest of emotions with ease and dexterity". Chudamani is hailed as one of

the best woman writers of twentieth century Tamil literature.

C. S. Lakshmi with a pseudonym, Ambai considers herself as a “feminist who has lived without compromise” Her fiction, “Andhi Maalai” received the awards and acclaim. Her long short story, “Siragugal Muriyum is about a sensitive woman married to a cruel man and her suffocation in life. Ambai is experimental and her detailing and sense of irony is unique. Her stories celebrate ordinary women's intelligence, courage and empathy. Her feminism is very natural and down to earth. She tells the story of our mother, aunts and grandma. The readers can connect with Ambai's writing easily. She herself a researcher and has written a book on women writers, “Face Behind the Mask: Women in Tamil Literature “.

Ironically enough, more than women writers, men writers stress for the need of an independent woman with the choice in life. While the women writers glorify the woman for her sacrifice, endurance, honesty and forgiveness in the name of saving the family members. Subramanya Bharathiyar proclaimed, “Chastity should be the common quality for men and women “(karpu enbathai poduvil vaippom) . But almost all the women writers stress for woman's chastity and integrity as decided by the society and should always forgive the wayward husband. Making husband realise the worth of the wife is a task to be achieved by the woman. By leaving the husband or the suffocating traditions behind at the end of the story, the woman character becomes a feminist. Most of the novels of the women writers have this closure to their novels. Education and Earnings are women's empowerment in their novels.

Feminism today is totally different from where it started. The present day feminist writers put forward ideas not just stressing on women's education and economic independence. A woman should have a free will to do or decide what she wants with her life. Family burdens, relationship issues, professional protocols and pay checks, everywhere, a woman should have her wish. Rise of #MeToo movement have put women's freedom of sexual preference on the international community. It is the choice of the woman to choose between conservative feminism and modern feminism. Women have climbed all social ladders to enter the offices of Power. Kamala Harris is the first ever woman Vice President of United States of America declared, “I was raised to be an independent woman not the victim of anything

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READING BETWEEN THE GENDERED LINES: TAGORE'S *HOME AND THE WORLD* (1916) AND TASLIMA NASRIN'S *FRENCH LOVER* (2001)

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Abstract

My article titled 'Reading between the Gendered Lines' seeks to primarily interrogate the multifaceted portrayal of characters, both male and female and their relationships with each other, within the respective novels, French Lover, by Taslima Nasrin (2001) and Home and the World, by Rabindranath Tagore (1916). In discussing certain thematic concerns, a tenuous comparative framework shall be established to better illuminate the broader engagements of the chosen works. Excavating similarities, differences, and diversities in the texts' enmeshed representational matrices this argument hopes to orient the thriving critique around Bengali Literature to a newer discursive axis. As modern society runs the race of globalization, colonial exploitation takes new forms and the ideal situation of cross-culturalism and multi-culturalism becomes a far-fetched phenomenon

Keywords: bengali literature, gender, stereotypes, feminine-masculine, chivalrous, lesbian, homophobia, taslima nasrin, tagore

Marriage and its 'Indian' Vitality

The Indian wife is not only an embodiment of the conjugal affair between two individuals; she is and has been a concept of 'myth' and 'legend' for years now. Considered to be the backbone of a household, (not financially though, but as the executive of this institution of marriage- someone who would implement the stereotypical notions exploit her) an Indian woman is expected to take into consideration what the society expects of her, irrespective of her dearly choices. A girl's "womanhood" is considered to be completely achieved once she is married off.

This concept of 'womanhood' has reinstated the importance of marriage in an Indian context altogether. "Remaining single meant bringing disgrace to the woman's family. A woman who doesn't marry is regarded as an object that has no use. There was no place for her."¹ And Mithu, in *French Lover*, seems to have an

imprint of this pattern of principle in her mind when she says:

"Find me a man, anyone. You know I am four years older than you...Nila, you are married and you wouldn't know what a crime it is in this society to stay unmarried."²

Instances both from Literature and life have shown how the woman as a wife and as a mother imbricates each other. Another important aspect that follows this analysis is when 'Wifeness' as a myth in itself is succeeded by 'Motherhood'. This idea of 'motherhood' that comes within the institution of marriage in an Indian society is constantly questioned and rebelled against by Danielle, the lesbian lover in Taslima Nasrin's *French lover*.

'Danielle could do without men, but Nila wanted to ask if everyone became homosexual like her, how would the race continue? Nila cited the example of the animal world; almost all

animals felt attracted to the opposite sex, mate with them and that's how the species continued. Otherwise, all would be over. Finito.

Danielle said, 'These are rules created by men.'

Nila said, 'in that case, I will never be able to give birth to a child.'³

Nasrin was successful in painting Nila as a gullible Indian woman who was married to an equally 'Indian' man. This 'Indian-ness' in Nila's husband, Kishanlal is what he creates for himself. Kishanlal embodies everything patriarchal about the twenty first century Indian society. On the contrary, Tagore pictures Nikhil as an ideal husband who breaks this very Indian notion of patriarchy and pushes Bimala to read a little more and break her homebound limitations. Here, an ironical parallel could be brought between the 'Liberalist' ideas in the 20th century and that of 'Patriarchy' in the 21st century. And this would bring one to the question: Are we already moving backwards?

The Home and the World is significantly new in a way where it refigures the conjugal relationship that Nikhilesh attempts to establish between him and his wife. This attempt remains unrealizable because Bimala can only return to the old forms of loving her husband, a love that must exalt itself as worship.

"Nikhilesh's notion of companionate marriage on the other hand is strained beyond endurance to acknowledge and admit Bimala's adultery, rejection, duplicity and finally, her incompatibility."⁴

One could observe a constant struggle in the novels' central figures to come to terms with the experience of love, in their personal lives and prominently in the domestic boundaries created by the bonds of marriage. These central figures, individually, paint a contrast between their social history and their new set of feelings and emotions and eventually engage themselves to study the nature of intimacy. This could also be connoted to the formation of the self as a responsive social entity.

The novels open with a forthright speech where the authors attempt to label the 'ideal' Indian wife.

"The girl, with chapped lips, draped in a red silk sari with gold on her ears, nose and hands ... With a smudged bindi on her forehead and sindoor smeared in her hair..."⁵

"Mother, today there comes back to mind the vermilion mark at the parting of your hair, the sari which you used to wear, with its wide red border, and those wonderful eyes of yours, full of depth and peace."⁶

It is in disputable to state that Bimala attributes an 'ideal womanliness' to her mother: she identifies in her the kind of love she would herself want to embody in her married life. This ideal, for that matter, primarily focuses on complete devotion to one's husband.

Moving on from a woman's drapery and denoting it to be the 'ideal' of Indian-ness, the reader is forced to bring a parallel between how Nila and Bimala both are accustomed to this 'devotion' to the husband and kneeling down to

⁴ Sarkar, Tanika 'Many Faces of Love: Country, Woman and God in *The Home and the World*', Worldview Publications, Pg. 278

⁵ Nasrin, Taslima, *French Lover*, 'Dum dum to Charles de Guelle', Penguin Publications

⁶ Tagore, Rabindranath, *The Home and the World*, Bimala's story, Pg.1, Worldview publications

serve this deity of a man, as is expected and practiced within the domesticity of marriage.

‘Nila sat at his feet and untied his shoelaces with her slim fingers and took off his socks. Now she felt like the housemaid, a little like Chitra, who used to take everyone’s shoe off, just as she was doing.’⁷

‘I distinctly remember after my marriage, when, early in the morning, I would cautiously and silently get up and take the dust of my husband’s feet without waking him, at such moments I could feel the vermilion mark upon the forehead shining out like the morning star.’⁸

The two novels subjected in this paper are taken from the twentieth and the twenty first century, respectively. It is important to note here that despite the difference in the time period the novels are placed in, the matter of concern remains the same and ironically, the characters indulge in very similar ‘gendered’ exploitation adhering to the conjugal duty seen as an act of faith, even of piety: from such custom and ceremony.

“In its cultural and historical specificity this is the ideal of Hindu womanhood set out in the *Manusmriti*, represented here by the figure of the veiled Hindu wife with vermilion in her hair, serving her husband a plate of fruit or fanning him at mealtimes.”⁹

For the woman in whose being these values are personified, love is identical with devotion and self-submission: that self-submission which

in traditional forms is a source of power. As a matter of fact, the spiritual strength a chaste and devoted wife embodies is assumed to be a successful internalization of the Hindu patriarchy. These preconceived norms and the assumptions that come along with them are limited mostly to the womenfolk; the wife’s devotion and ‘purity’ are calculated as a constant: whether the husband is equally faithful or debauched, receptive to domestic care or neglectful and self-destructive is the merest trick of fortune.

This brings us to the part of the novel when Nikhilesh’s brothers have left their wives back at home, merely as widows (more or less, as lifeless bodies) purely because of the ‘debauchery’ they indulged in (as mentioned in Bimala’s narrative of the family). Furthermore, Kishanlal is pictured as one foolproof husband to Nila, at least through the lens of Anirban, who couldn’t make a good husband to Molina, himself. Notwithstanding what and how Kishanlal established a conjugal relationship with Nila, he wore a shining armor in a phallocentric world.

‘Anirban spoke in somber tones. “I spoke to Kishan the other day. He said, if you behave yourself, keep your husband happy like most women do, do as he says, then he’s prepared to forgive you and take you back. Otherwise he has no problems in ending the relationship legally. Nila, you have gone and upset this straight forward man.”’¹⁰

It is as if natural to Kishanlal to befoul a relationship and never take responsibility of it. It is justified in a sense that the wife has to

⁷ Nasrin, Taslima, *French Lover*, ‘Life at home’, Penguin Publications

⁸ Tagore, Rabindranath, *The Home and the World*, Bimala’s story, Pg.2

⁹ Chaudhuri, Supriya, “A Sentimental Education: Love and Marriage in *The Home and the World*”, *The Home and the World*, Worldview Publication

¹⁰ Nasrin, Taslima, ‘*Calcutta as usual*’, *French Lover*, Penguin publications

succumb to the call of subjection. Sadly, this is an instance very common in several Indian households even in the twenty first century. Before Nila happened to Kishanlal, he had engaged himself in a marital affair with a French lady, Immanuelle- an affair that made him a French citizen! (At the least, that is how Kishanlal advocates for that affair) And evidently, while married to Nila, he was benefited in one or the other way: with myriads of household services and that which quenched his sexual thirst. Love- being a prerequisite in marriage, naturally, went missing at various dimensions.

By contrast, Bimala's insistence on viewing marriage through an ideal image of the virtuous and devoted wife seems fraught with danger. What her narrative presents as a simple naturalization of the ideology of Hindu womanhood is, we realize, neither inevitable nor universal. Rather it is the product of her discontent, of her desire for a lost unity or integrity of being which she associates with the past, with her mother's life, with traditional modes of feeling projected as a refuge from the terrible emotional responsibilities Nikhilesh's love would impose on her. To the extent that Bimala's emotional history within the novel is predicated upon the sense of lack, it may be read as a history of desire, but a desire returning upon the self, not directed, towards husband or lover. Bimala wants exactly what she fears she will never have a state of completeness or rest in her own being which she confuses now with her mother's image, now with her husband's love, now with the material possessions, now with a lover's flattery. That this desire should remain unsatisfied is, Tagore implies, inexplicable condition of her modernity.

Having mentioned this mental tumult in one of our central characters, Bimala, one could examine a very similar explanation of Nila's condition in the novel too. This search for the self is confused with the search for love and a sense of 'equal role in bed' when analyzing Nila's life. On looking a little closer, and reading between these gendered lines, the reader could be a bystander to Nila's constant struggle to establish her own identity- something not defined by the Indian trinity of 'Husband-Brother-Father' and that of a protest against the mansplained life to her. This could be substantiated by intently looking at how Nila is a 'repetitive runaway' from her husband, Kishanlal, from her friends Sunil, Danielle and even from Benoir Dupont, the French lover she fascinated her love for. Accordingly, it could be said that Nila was clearly not curious for emotional or for that matter, sexual satisfaction. There was always something that charmed Nilato protest against that small world of patriarchy and sound arrogant to the reader. And this could be noted in the last chapter, *This is the End*.

'Nila laughed, "Does the truth hurt? Do you know something, Benoir? I have realized one thing by now: you are no different from my father anirban, my lover sushanta, my husband Kishanlall and that Sunil. Of course, you appear to be different from them, you speak sweet words of love, kiss me every now and then, you say "Ladies first" and make way for them or hand them a flower or two, help in the kitchen, push the pram on the road; but deep inside you all have something in common."¹¹

¹¹ Nasrin, Taslima, *This is the End, French Lover*, Penguin Publications

The kind of sentimental education of Bimala and Nila leads from a traditional model of womanhood to a state of radical incompleteness where the models they seek have disintegrated, leaving them in the confusion and uncertainty which Tagore and Nasrin have both seen in them as a characteristic of modernity. Even without the physical fact of adultery, Bimala's relationship with Nikhilesh progresses from innocence to experience Bimala's sexual and moral awakening is integral to her new sensibility, a sensibility which, at the end of the novel, is left open to the future. And methodically, this could be applied to the character and the story of Nilanjana Mandal, *French Lover*.

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ASPECTS OF FEMINISM IN “MARRIAGES ARE MADE”

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Abstract

Women are always considered the weakest sex and so they are expected to do the households and take care of the family. Men always think themselves superior to women and dominate them in all terms. Even now this condition exists because men always wanted to be the superior being and they all suppress women under the name of tradition and culture. Women are never let to study and live as per their wish, they are probably seen as the product of sex. Even in case of marriage women are checked for their qualities and defects like the products in the market whereas men have no certain quality check. Eunice de Souza brings forth what are checked for women in case of marriage in her work “Marriages are Made”.

Keywords: cultural norms, marriage, patriarchy, quality, tradition.

Introduction

Eunice de Souza explores the institution of marriage in her poem “Marriages Are Made”, especially the circumstances of arranged marriage. The poem was written in an ironical tone in order to bring out the psychological context of the patriarchal society. Women are always considered objective and inferior to men. Men are given all kind of justifications in life whereas women's lives are completely unfair. Even they were denied rights to speak up their opinions. Then there came the waves of feminism fighting for each right of women. In some countries women were praised as goddesses and some cultures are matriarchal, that means having women as the head of the family but they were denied their rights and treated menial.

The Poem

The poet tells that her cousin Elena was to get married. So the rituals of the marriage

began from checking the bride's financial status. The members of the family including the bride were examined for physical and mental health. The bride was not tall to match the height of the groom, so their children will grow up to the desired height. Even her skin complexion was checked to match the groom Francisco X. Noronha Prabhua pious Catholic.

Feminist Interpretation

This poem is written in an ironical context to describe how the society is patriarchal in the intuition of marriage. The poet had left the title incomplete purposely, the actual sentence is Marriages are made in heaven. But it questions the reality, are they really made in heaven? The poem questions the Indian custom of arranged marriage among the patriarchal society. The title is left incomplete because it is not a divinely rather a contract of men that shames the prospective of women or the bride. The poet

takes the event of her cousin Elena's marriage and brings out how the brides are treated in the name of marriage. In Indian weddings the brides are checked for all possible qualities that represents a typical daughter in law. The tradition humiliates the women and paves a way for gender inequality. Eunice de Souza voices this out and criticizes the marriages as the limit which is drawn out for women.

The women were treated as commodities that are sold in the market place. In the occasion of marriage women are the commodities that are sold from father to the husband with a substantial amount of sum. This becomes the first thing that comes under the qualifications that a bride should have. That is the family is checked for their financial status and their background for the bride to suit the groom. One thing that is more prominent in the weddings are the dowry. The grooms demand a vast amount of possessions from the bride. But the groom is asking for nothing from the bride. This is such a huge humiliation to the women, but they tolerate all those for their marriage. Because women were taught and made to believe that getting married and having children is their only aspect of femininity. So that they tolerate all kind of humiliations just to achieve a blessed state of matrimony. The bride and her family were not only checked for financial well-being and also their physical wellness. They were examined for all the possible diseases like T.B and the bride was also checked for mental sanity also the awful disease poverty.

"The formalities

have been completed:

her family history examined

for T.B. and madness

her father declared solvent." (de Souza 3-7)

Here the words "her father declared solvent", represents that the father was to lose more of his properties for the sake of his daughter's wedding. Each and every body parts were examined for the bride like "her eyes examined for squints her tooth for cavities". At this point it can be noticed that women are reduced to their physical bodies and checked for flaws. The poem reflects the disability of a women in the institution of marriage, here her part is mostly passive. Even her opinions were not given importance, Eunice de Souza points this out. Next the bride was checked for her height and skin complexion to match up the groom. It is considered that the bride must satisfy all the perceptions of a typical bride to suit the groom. These negotiations hold up to the principles of patriarchy and the imperfections of the bride are specified. The women were made to believe that they are inferior to men and the she was made objective by men. Because according to patriarchy the duties of women is to do households, cook food, take care of their husband and children. Their whole life was spent relied upon men, her father, her husband, and her son. At this case the individuality of women is been questioned.

When it comes to the groom, he was checked for nothing. The ritual of marriage promotes patriarchy by examining the bride for physical and mental health, also the wealth. The bride is checked whether she makes a perfect match for the groom, but

what about the groom? He is considered perfect at all cases because he is a man and a pious Catholic “good son of Mother Church” (de Souza 22). At this point, the conventional practice of marriage promotes patriarchal oppression, discrimination and gender inequality of women. The gender roles of the society are taught in an early age, the concept has been mistaught these days. Men are always taught to dominate whereas women are taught to tolerate the domination and depend upon the men for their whole life by serving them. These stereotypes have been successfully followed for years without any objections. While Elena was inspected for physical flaws and beauty, the groom was considered flawless. While the bride has to fulfill the criteria of physical and mental sanity, beauty and money, the groom was considered worthy of marriage without fulfilling any societal standards. The opinion of women are silenced which is never heard till last.

The poem stands an eminent example for cultural feminism, as it argues for equality for women, respect female values and equal power. It also puts up with the representations of gender identities in the society and the sexual difference as a main reason for women’s oppression. Cultural feminists believe that the only way to bring the political, economic and social status of women was by destroying cultural norms. Eunice de Souza in her poem “Marriages Are Made” gives a satirical overlook of the societal standards in the name of marriage. Because the concept of marriage is male-

centric that promotes patriarchy. She questions the biased cultural practices which expects the women to be perfect in all the ways to suit the groom or men but there is no such examinations for the men because they are considered perfect. Marriages must be an equal agreement for both the genders and not patriarchal to achieve stability in the society.

Conclusion

Eunice de Souza expresses her anger and frustration towards the society in the institution of marriage. She voices out the dominance of men over women and the patriarchy of the society. All the cultures and traditions are mostly women centric to suppress them in the name of that. Women were always subjective and depended on men in their whole life. They are oppressed through all possible characters like language, body, work, etc. Eunice de Souza uses the same language to make the people understand how a women should be treated. Whatever they are they need to be respected and have an individuality and freedom to express themselves and to do whatever they wish to.

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EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CLOTHES

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Abstract

Women find happiness in getting a cloth with a pocket, which is really rare. The article talks about the needed change in the area of clothing and mentality.

Keywords: clothes, empowerment, change, comfort, independent

Women take a lot of time to shop. Unlike men, women have a wide variety of clothes to choose from, but they rarely find what they want. When a woman shops, she is looking for a piece of clothing that makes her feel free, confident and comfortable. Men and women knowingly or unknowingly tend to express themselves through their clothing style, but women find it difficult as she does not find what defines her. Every variety of clothes that is available in the women's section may either be too loose, too short, too tight, too revealing, too long and extremely uncomfortable.

The sizes that they have for both men and women are body-shaming in a way. The large or x-large would be extremely body hugging for a person who is slightly overweight and this affects the person's mental health. They tend to think that they are fat and is not beautiful because they are not the beauty standards and the idea of plus-size is too domineering. Unlike clothes in the men's department, women's clothes are restricting and she would have difficulty to moving in those clothes and finds herself in the men's department. Women spend a lot on their clothes and bags because the clothes that have pockets in them would cost more and since not a lot of clothes have pockets, they purchase different kinds of bags to carry around their items. Phone, wallet are all necessary items that every human being needs. Men carry them

around in pockets and women find it difficult to carry around as there are no pockets and bags are easily displaceable and burden to most. Women often have trouble in finding their wallets in their handbags and would be rummaging through it to find it, it is not her fault that she does not have pockets to make things easier for her.

Women empowerment and independency are all common terms in the present times, but to make a woman feel free she needs to be able to walk around free without having to carry around an unnecessary weight. Women empowerment should begin with clothes that make women feel free, comfortable and independent. Empowering a woman through a basic necessity like clothes is a baby step in women empowerment, yet a highly influential one. Choosing the right kind of clothes that makes her feel confident and which gives her a sense of joy is a step for women empowerment. If a woman is confident in her look, that is a huge confidence booster. When she feels confident in her own skin, she would have the courage to stand up against the judgements made by both men and women and believe in herself. Shouldn't women empowerment begin with basic necessities like clothes? Shouldn't we make our women feel comfortable in her own skin? Shouldn't she be free and independent?

ANALYSIS OF THE TWO FEMINIST ICONS OF TAMIL LITERATURE: KANNAGI AND DRAUPATHI

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Abstract

The equality for women in social, economic and political platforms is termed as feminism. This paper discusses the major characteristics of feminism in two important feminist characters in Tamil literature. The main objective of this paper is to throw spotlight on the epic qualities of the two women protagonists – Kannagi from Silapathikaram and Draupathi from Mahabharata, who laid the principles and foundations for the perfect lifestyle of a woman. The principles laid by the two women are still followed in this modern day world. This paper talks how the historical principles are applicable and how they are reflected in this present generation. Each title further explains the one epic incident which made the women more popular and historical in Tamil literature. The researcher concludes this paper with positive views on the characters – Kannagi and Draupathi.

Keywords: feminism, tamil literature, kannagi, draupathi.

Introduction

Literature always colours our daily life beautiful and wonderful. It leads our survival with different theories and criticisms. The brilliant writers inspire many lives. Their choice of apt words best suits all occasions, right from past to present age. The poets of the past, influences the lives of present generation with their powerful words, suitable rhyme and tone. On speaking of the poets and writers, I would like to mention the greatness of the Tamil literary writers of the ancient period. One of the most popular literary writers is Ilango Adigal. The famous historical literary work *Silapathikaram* written by the Chera prince Ilango Adigal. He is a Jain monk who is believed to be the younger son of the Chera King Nedum Cheralatan. The writing style of Ilango Adigal made *Silapathikaram* one of the five great epics in Tamil literature. Another great writer of the 3rd millennium BCE is Vyasa, a rishi, who is known as the author of

Mahabharata, one of the two great epics of India. Vyasa portrayed his characters in a way that made all the characters of *Mahabharata* as the heroic characters. Though Ilango Adigal's period is 650 AD whereas Vyasa belong to 3rd millennium BCE, both have dedicated great literary works, which are known world-wide. The works belong to different time period but still they influence people and the principles of the works are followed by the Hindu people even today. Vyasa and Ilango Adigal portrayed their protagonists as the heroes of their period. Their works included the poems and hymns which are praised for their style and rhyme. Through their poetic knowledge, both Vyasa and Ilango Adigal highlighted the role of women too. Those days' women were treated, equal to goddess. They had their rights as equal as men. As days and generations passed, the place of women too passed. Still the women of ancient literature influences and rules the chastity and

power of being a woman, in present generation. The word power, will power, identity and individuality of women in Tamil literature are reflected in present generation too. The reason behind this kind of strong influence is the powerful words of writers of ancient Tamil literature. Ilango Adigal and Vyasa are two prominent writers to be mentioned for the influence, above mentioned.

Silapathikaram and Mahabharata: A Background Study

The most renowned and ancient language is Tamil. The writers and poets of Tamil literature went deep into the language and produced most famous literary works like, *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, *Silapathikaram*, *Manimegalai*, etc... The background study on *Silapathikaram* and *Mahabharata* lead to the deep analysis of the role of women in these epics. The main protagonist of the epic *Silapathikaram* is Kannagi. The title itself reveals the meaning of the epic, *the tale of an Anklet*. The epic is divided into three books as *The Book of Puhar*, *The Book of Madurai* and *The Book of Vanji*. The powerful use of words and phrases, the songs and the symbols made this literary work as epic. The most popular epic feature of this great literary work is the praising song in the beginning of the epic. Ilango Adigal has used the minute beauty of Tamil language to praise the nature as the beginning song of the epic. To add more glory to the epic, the prologue by *Seethalai Cathanar*, a poet, describes the ascendance of Kannagi to Heaven. The notable lines from the epic are the purpose of the epic. There are three main objectives which serve as the main purpose of the epic. The first purpose is, "For those who commit injustice in ruling, the justice

itself will turn as demon of death". The second purpose is, "Noble people adore chaste woman". The last purpose is, "The fate plays its hard role in one's life". These three objectives serve the purpose of life for Hindu people even today. The description of nature in this epic is one of the major features of epic. The portrayal of characters is simple, which reaches all class of people. The description of normal individuals Kannagi and Kovalan made the work more realistic. Ilango Adigal has depicted the power of a woman in society through powerful usage of language and through the character sketch of the protagonist Kannagi.

On the other hand, Vyasa has produced the great epic *Mahabharata* which talks about the reign of Pandavas and Kauravas. The majestic features of the period and the wars were portrayed in the epic. The characters are numerous in number, but only few have made this literary work epic, like *Bheeshmar*. The epic reveals the ego and greed for power between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. The beginning and the end of the epic starts with the role of a woman. The great and famous character Karna is a demigod in this epic, who is known for his generosity. The epic ends at the Kurukshetra war. This epic is considered as the longest poem written, which consists of about 1.8 million words. The principles of this epic are the foundation for all other principles and guidelines followed even today.

Both the epics, *Silapathikaram* and *Mahabharata*, portray women and their power. The will power and word power of women played major roles in the epics. Women in these epics raised voice against injustice and supported all virtues. The most spoken women of the epics are Kannagi from *Silapathikaram*

and Draupathi from *Mahabharata*. The fire in both these women made the literary work epic and great.

Kannagi – The Epitome of Chastity

Silapathikaram by Ilango Adigal reveals the hidden truth behind an anklet and thus it got its name, *A tale of an Anklet*. The epic poem consists of 5,730 lines. This great literary work is one of the five great epics in Tamil literature. It revolves around the tragic love story of a common couple, Kannagi and Kovalan. Kannagi and Kovalan are ordinary people, married to each other. They had blissful living, until Kovalan met Madhavi, a courtesan. Though Kovalan leaves Kannagi and moves with Madhavi, Kannagi waits for Kovalan with respect and chastity. After spending lavishly on Madhavi, Kovalan becomes helpless. Kovalan leaves Madhavi when he doubts her chaste. Then the couple, Kannagi and Kovalan moves to Madurai. Kannagi encourages Kovalan to rebuild their life. So she gives him her anklet and asks him to sell it for some money, with which they can live. Kovalan sells the anklet to a merchant. But the merchant falsely accuses Kovalan for stealing and selling the missing anklet of the Queen. Knowing this, the King Pandiyan arrests and executes Kovalan, without any judgements. This accident hits Kannagi. She walks to Madurai with anger and questions the King with all her anger and fire. She tells the King that. The anklet Kovalan had to sell was filled with rubies, whereas the lost anklet of the Queen was filled with pearls. Knowing the injustice, the King accepts his mistake and dies. Kannagi, unable to accept the injustice done to her husband, curses the Madurai city and thus the whole city is set on fire. On the fire, the

women with chaste and children are exempted and the rest of the city is burned.

The epic throws spotlight on the chastity of Kannagi. Even after knowing the extra marital affair of Kovalan, Kannagi stayed pure and waited for her husband to return to her. When Kovalan abandoned her by moving away with Madhavi, Kannagi had hope and she waited. When life turned dull and when Kovalan had lost almost everything to Madhavi, Kannagi helped him and encouraged him by staying with him and stood by his side. She never accused her husband's misdeeds. IlangoAdigal highlighted the chastity of Kannagi. She stands the epitome of chastity, even today. The respect, love and care she showered on her husband proves her truthfulness as a wife. Thus she is referred as the *Pattinei Deivam*.

Draupathi – Queen of Vow

Vyasa's *Mahabharata* is one of the two great epics in Tamil literature. All the characters stand for respect, bravery, will power and all the worldly powers can be seen reflected in *Mahabharata*. The major characters are the Pandavas and the Gouravas. But the main feminist character, renowned for her anger and challenge is Draupathi. In *Silapathikaram*, the ignition of Kannagi's anger is due to the injustice of the King. Similarly, in *Mahabharata*, the fire in Draupathi is ignited by the cunning and witty man, Saguni. The Pandavas once played dice along with the cunning Saguni. When they had to play by placing any property as bait, the Pandavas lose everything in their game, just like it happens in a gambling show. During their final check, the Pandavas, on the advice of Saguni, makes their wife Draupathi as bait for the witty game of

Saguni. The Pandavas lose the final game too. Draupathi is brought to the centre of the game hall and her saree has been undraped by the Saguni men. She is devotee of Lord Krishna. Her prayers saved her by covering her with saree as her old saree has been taken. Until the men got tired, Lord Krishna offered her saree and saved her in front all the men.

This cowardly act of her five husbands, the Pandavas (Yudhishtira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva), invoked the anger in her. She untied her long and beautiful hair and she showered all her anger by making a vow against Duriyothana, who played along with Saguni. She begins her vow by promising to the supreme power, the Mother of Creation. She insists in her vow that, she remains with her hair loosened until she bathes it with the blood of two sinful men Dhutchadhana and Duryodhana. she also insists that the oil should be the blood of those sinful swines and the comb should be made of their chest bones. She also mentions that until they die, she never ties her hair. This powerful vow made her the epitome of Vow.

Influence of Kannagi and Draupathi

The powerful words used by Ilango Adigal and Vyasa made both the epics great. The plot though had its own integrity, the writings of IlangoAdigal and Vyasa reflected the practicality and reality of life. Even today, to praise one woman's purity and chastity, Kannagi acts as the archetype. Without her act, the truthfulness and loyalty towards husband would have loosened its meaning. Reference of Kannagi's chastity is reflected in many novels

and movies. When one woman is compared to Kannagi, she is meant to be the purest form of woman, with all honesty, loyalty, chastity and truthfulness. On the other hand, the vigorous vow of Draupathi can be seen in today's law and judgement system. Her vow is because of the outrage of her modesty. This has become a law under IPC Section 354, for outraging a woman or for assaulting or using criminal forces against a woman.

By analysing both the powerful women characters, present day classrooms should follow the rules and principles and feminism. The theory of feminism in Tamil literature emerged from the male writers. But they penned the power and strength of women in those days, which serves the principles of women even today. On considering feminism as a tool for social reform, the powerful and witty women characters from Tamil literature serves the perfect archetypes. Since feminism is a fight for equal rights, the incidents Kannagi and Draupathi revolves around the fight for their modesty and chastity, which are the prime characteristics of a woman. As a conclusion, this paper titled *Analysis of the two feminist icons of Tamil literature* satisfies the need for using feminism as a tool for social reform.

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FEMINISM IN MARGRET ATWOOD'S *THE EDIBLE WOMEN*

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Abstract

This article attempts to pinpoint the Feminism in Margret Atwood's The Edible Women. Women are compelled to be in secondary place in a male-dominated society. Feminist everywhere on the world are endeavouring to amend the social mishaps, to destroy the gender bias and to get equal rights in the society. This article brings out one such feminist novel The Edible Woman composed by the famous writer Margaret Atwood, which hypothesizes the dominating women's activist issues like loss of character, subjection of lady in the male-dominated, male-chauvinistic society, women striving to set up her very own personality, and her being exploited in the consumer society where lady's body is treated as a toy, as a consumable thing an symbolic portrayal of consumerism and consumer issues predominant in the modern society.

Keywords: feminism, margretatwood, marian macalpin, peter, edible women.

The term Feminism refers to the power, rights, and equality of women. The Feminist movement or Feminism or Women's movement was originated in the Western World in the year 1798. There are many writers wrote about the needs of female and the equality of female among the male dominant society such as Christine de Pizan's *Treasures of the City of Ladies*, Mary Astell's *Reflections on Marriage*, Olympe de Gouge's *Declaration of the Rights of Women* in 1793, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Man* in 1790 and Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* a pamphlet in 1799. The main goal of the feminist movement is to have freedom from the dominating society. The term feminism had its origination from the Latin word *Femina* and the French word *Feminisme* which means women. For many females, enfranchisement and equality of education were the two fundamental variables to accomplish their own liberation. By having the equality in the education female can equally work with men and they can be financially independent which

make the women to be free from the male financial domination. *Modern System of Female Education* by Hannah More in 1799 was about female education. Before Industrialisation, both males and females were worked together in fields, farms, and workshops but the men have a high salary and the women have a low salary so the females began to chafe against this in the late eighteenth century.

In 1919 the National Union of Women's suffrage Societies became the National Union of Societies for Equal citizenship (NUSEC) under the leadership of Eleanor Rathbone. Its declared aim was 'to obtain all such reforms as are necessary to secure real equality of liberties, status and opportunities between men and women'. The NUSEC set out a six programme which consisted of equal voting rights with men; an equal moral standard; the promotion of women candidates as MPs; equal pay for equal work and equal employment opportunities; windows' pensions and equal guardianship, and support of the League of Nations, which had been set up after the First World War. Under

Eleanor Rathbone's leadership the organisation turned its attentions towards educating women for citizenship. (Osborne, 23)

In America, Feminist movement was started in the year 1848 which was organised by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. During the second world war 1914 to 1918, women did the jobs of men in many fields and many pages were appeared in *The Times* and *Guardian* which were based on women's problems, childcare and the equality of females and many radio programs also conducted. During this time Simone de Beauvoir published *The Second Sex* and Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1954. Feminism was an effort to examine how and why Femininity or the Feminine expression, Feminine experience, Feminine sensibility different from Masculinity or Masculine expression and experience. The term 'Femaleness' alludes to the biological and physical difference between women and men and the term 'Femininity' alludes to the qualities regarded as characteristics of females and the term 'Feminism' alludes to the promotion of female privileges on the ground of the uniformity of the genders.

Many of Margret Atwood's novels encompass feminist themes such as the relationship that women have with food in *The Edible Women* or the sensational treatment of a murderess by newspaper in the nineteenth century is *Alias Grace*, but *The Handmaid's Tale* is generally considered to be her most explicitly feminist novel. (Osborne, 53)

Margret Eleanor Atwood is popularly known as Margret Atwood. She was born on November 18, 1939, in Ottawa, Canada and she joined Victoria College, the University of Toronto in 1957 where she completed her

bachelor's degree and she took her master degree from Radcliffe College in United States of America. In 1961 she joined Ph.D. in Harvard but she does not complete her studies. She married James Polk in 1967 but her married life was not good so she got a divorce in 1973. She was a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Margret Atwood was the most popular Canadian writer, she had written twenty-five novels, eighty-six short stories, and one hundred and four poems. Her novels include *The Edible Women* in 1969, *Surfacing* in 1972, *Lady Oracle* in 1976, *Life before Man* in 1979, *Bodily Harm* in 1981, *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1985, *Cat's Eye* in 1988, *The Robber Bride* in 1993, *Alias Grace* in 1996, *The Blind Assassin* in 2000, *Oryx and Crake* in 2003. Her Children's books include *Up in the Tree* in 1978, *Anna's pet* in 1980, *For the Birds* in 1990, *Princess Prunella and the Purple Peanut* in 1995, *Rude Ramsay and the Roaring Radishes* in 2003, and *Bashful Bob and Doleful Dorinda* in 2006. Her edited anthologies were *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse* in 1982, *The Canlit Food book* in 1987, *The Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English* in 1988, *The Best American Short Stories* in 1989, *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English* in 1989 and her non-fictional works were *Survival: A thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* in 1972 and *Days of the Rebels 1815 -1840* in 1977.

One measure of her critical and commercial appeal is that she has won a diverse range of honours, from Ms. Magazine's Women of the Year to the Norwegian Order of Literary Merit. Atwood has also Booker Prize, The Giller Prize, and The Governor General's Award, and holds honorary doctorates from several universities including, fittingly, Harvard, as well as

Cambridge, Toronto, and the University de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris. (Slettedahl, 2)

Marian MacAlpin was the protagonist of this novel. Marian MacAlpin shares her apartment room with Ainsley and she works in the marketing research company 'Seymour Surveys' and Ainsley was a tester of defective electric toothbrushes working in the electric toothbrush company. Marian MacAlpin was getting ready to work meanwhile Ainsley said about the party which she attended the previous day. Then Marian went to her company and she applied for a pension plan because she used to worry about her future every day and she went to drink coffee with Emmy, Lucy and Millie, who was called as office virgins by Ainsley and she got a call from her boyfriend, Peter, he said about the marriage of his friend Trigger and they planned to have a dinner but it was cancelled and her friend Clara invited Marian and Ainsley for dinner where Clara said about Len Slank, an old college friend. When Marian went to the home, she calls Len Slank and they planned to meet in the evening and Len Slank asked about Peter, so Marian said that the relationship between them is not serious and Ainsley said to her that she wants to have a child but she does not want a husband. Marian does not like that because the child will suffer but later, she thought that she should not interfere in Ainsley's personal life. The next day she went for interviewing people where she meets a twenty-six old man named Duncan, who was living in a furnished apartment with three huge easy chairs and a bookcase. After completing the interviews Marian went to her home to make a refreshment and then she went to Peter's house, in the evening both went out to meet Len Slank at the Park Plaza, a rooftop hotel bar in the city and

later Ainsley also joined them. Peter tells a hunting story to Len but he said to Marian that he never killed anything and both talked about self-portraits and the bar is getting closed so Len invited them to his place for another drink Peter accepted but Marian ran away from that place but Peter finds her and both went to Len Slank's apartment where she feels uncomfortable so she went down but later she was found out, then Peter pickup Marian to drop in her house, during that time Peter proposed her. Peter came to Marian's house the next morning and said her that he had not planned what happened last night and he said that without knowing it and he asked her when shall they get married but she does not reply to that. Peter leaves and she takes the bus where she meets Duncan and he tells her about the fondness for ironing and later both made a kiss and went away in opposite direction. Marian went to her house and lying on her bed and think about the events that happened in past four days. Two months passed Marian was sitting listlessly in her office and he cannot get involved or interested in anything and he had her lunch without Emmy, Lucy, and Millie. Clara's husband called her and informed them that Clara delivered a baby so she visited her, where Marian asked about herself to Clara so she replied that she was abnormal but that was a symptom of bridal nerves and it will soon get over. As the wedding date was near Peter wished to arrange a party so he brought her a new dress. At the party, while taking group photo she ran away from there while she sees Duncan and they spend the night together in a hotel and the next morning she was unable to eat and has no choice but to confront her problems and in the afternoon Marian prepared a cake which is iced and decorated beautifully, when Peter came to

her house she asked him to consider her as a cake but he quickly left the place without eating. Finally, the wedding is get stopped then she became normal like before.

A male-dominated or patriarchal society believes that women should not work because their fundamental concern ought to satisfy their jobs as wife to the husband and mother to the child. However, if women wished to work, they will be sent to work with low wages. This can be clearly seen in the novel that the protagonist Marian MacAlpin was also oppressed by society because she was a female and she is doing a job at Seymour surveys with low wages. In the patriarchal society, men treat women lower to them in all the places which can be clearly seen in Margret Atwood's novel *The Edible women*, in the Seymour Surveys building in which Marian MacAlpin works shows the symbol of patriarchy because the building is allocated the topmost floor for the men and the down floor for women workers.

The company is layered like an ice-cream sandwich, with three floors: the upper crust, the lower crust, and our department, the gooey layer in the middle. On the floor above are the executives and the psychologist – referred to as the men upstairs, since they are all men – who arranges things with the clients; I've caught glimpses of their offices, which have carpets and expensive furniture and silk-screen reprints of Group of Seven paintings on the walls. Below us are the machines – mimeo machines, I.B.M, machines for counting and sorting and tabulating the information. (10)

Marian MacAlpin became abnormal and lose control over her life and she made a cake for Peter to eat instead of making her normal, she says that she was different from other

females because she is sensible and Peter considered that females should assume control of men's lives once, they are married. Peter sees how he affects Marian MacAlpin's life and he has no issues in assuming control over Marian MacAlpin's life. Peter's point of view of sensibility is considered as a form of weakness and accommodation, rather they should follow up men's desires.

"When do you want to get married?" he asked, almost gruffly.

My first impulse was to answer, with the evasive flippancy I'd always used before when he'd asked me serious question about myself, "What about Groundhog Day?" but instead I heard as soft flannelly voice I barely recognized saying, "I'd rather have you decide that. I'd rather leave the big decisions up to you". I was astounded at myself. I'd never said anything remotely like that to him before, the funny thing was I really meant it. (84)

Marian MacAlpin always discusses with Peter, when she makes a big decision because he does not allow her to make her decision by her own choice. While Peter and Marian's wedding date was near, Peter arranged for a party. During that time, he asked Marian MacAlpin to buy a new dress of his choice and he asked her to buy a red dress in a small size which she does not really like, and her makeup and hairstyle were also done according to Peter's wish. Here Men's dominance over women can be clearly seen.

All at once it was the day of Peter's final party. Marian has spent the afternoon at the hairdresser's; Peter had suggested that she might have something done with her hair. He has also hinted that perhaps she should buy a dress that was, as he put it, "not quite so mousy" as any she already owned, and she had duly bought

one. It was short, red, and sequinned. She didn't think it was really her, but the saleslady did. "It's you, dear," she had said, her voice positive. (206)

In the Seymour surveys where Marian MacAlpin works have a rule that if a female gets pregnant, she should leave her place of employment and they thought that was a traitorousness for the company because there are no rights for the one who were working there. "Marian," she said with a sigh of resignation, "I'm afraid Mrs. Dodge in Kamloops will have to be removed. She is pregnant." Mrs. Bogue frowned sightly: she regards pregnancy as an act of disloyalty to the company. (34)

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