



# **BODHI**

## **International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science**

---

**An Online, Peer Reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal**

**Vol: 3**

**Special Issue: 2**

**January 2019**

**E-ISSN: 2456-5571**



**CENTRE FOR RESOURCE, RESEARCH &  
PUBLICATION SERVICES (CRRPS)**

**[www.crrps.in](http://www.crrps.in) | [www.bodhijournals.com](http://www.bodhijournals.com)**



## **BODHI**

**BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science** (E-ISSN: 2456-5571) is online, peer reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal, which is powered & published by **Center for Resource, Research and Publication Services, (CRRPS)** India. It is committed to bring together academicians, research scholars and students from all over the world who work professionally to upgrade status of academic career and society by their ideas and aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of humanities, arts and science.

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Research should be at the core and must be instrumental in generating a major interface with the academic world. It must provide a new theoretical frame work that enable reassessment and refinement of current practices and thinking. This may result in a fundamental discovery and an extension of the knowledge acquired. Research is meant to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous works, solve new or existing problems, support theorems; or develop new theorems. It empowers the faculty and students for an in-depth approach in research. It has the potential to enhance the consultancy capabilities of the researcher. In short, conceptually and thematically an active attempt to provide these types of common platforms on educational reformations through research has become the main objective of this Journal.

**Dr. S. Balakrishnan**

Publisher and Editor - in - Chief

**bodhijournal@gmail.com**

**www.bodhijournals.com**





# **BODHI INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE (BIJRHAS)**

An Online, Peer reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal

## **EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS**

### **Publisher and Editor-in-Chief**

**Dr. S. Balakrishnan**

Executive Director,  
Centre for Resource, Research and Publication Services (CRRPS)  
Tamil Nadu, India

### **Vice Editor-in-Chiefs**

**Dr. Manimangai Mani**

Senior Lecturer, Department of English,  
Faculty of Modern Languages and  
Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia,  
Selangor, Malaysia

**Dr. Mamta Brahmabhatt**

Associate Professor of Management,  
B.K. School of Business Management,  
Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India

**Pradeep D. Waghmare**

Assistant Professor of History,  
Ramnarain Ruia College,  
Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**Dr. B. Jeyanthi**

Assistant Professor & HOD of English,  
Anna University, Tirunelveli Region,  
Tamil Nadu, India

**Dr. T. Marx**

Professor of English  
Pondicherry University  
Puducherry, India

**Mr. B.P. Pereira**

Visiting Professor of English in Journalism,  
Madurai Kamaraj University,  
Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India

### **Editorial / Review Board**

**Dr. Sunil S. Narwade**

Professor, Dept. of Economics,  
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada  
University, Aurnagabad, Maharashtra, India

**Dr. V.N. Kendre**

Assistant Professor of Sociology,  
University of Mumbai, Mumbai,  
Maharashtra, India

**Dr. Nana Pradhan**

Assistant Professor of Physics,  
Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai,  
Maharashtra, India

**Dr. Prasenjit Panda**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English & Foreign  
Languages, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya,  
Koni, Chattisgarh, India

**Dr. H.S. Rakesh**

Assistant Professor of History,  
Davangere University, Karnataka, India

**Dr. Indira Banerji**

Assistant Professor of English, Yogoda Satsanga  
Mahavidyalaya, Ranchi University, Ranchi,  
Jharkhand, India

**Dr. Punam Pandey**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English & Modern  
European Languages, JR Handicapped  
University, Chitrakoot, UP, India

**Dr. Harshad Bhosale**

Assistant Professor of Political Science,  
Kirti College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**Dr. H.M. Kantharaj**

Assistant Co-ordinator of Education,  
Davangere University, Karnataka, India

**Dr. Vipin Kumar Pandey**

Associate Professor of English & Other Foreign  
Language, DSM National Rehabilitation  
University, Lucknow, UP, India

**Dr. B.V. Dhananjaya Murthy**

Assistant Professor of Political Science,  
Davangere University, Karnataka, India

**Dr. Vijaykumar Chavan**

Assistant Professor of Chemistry,  
Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai,  
Maharashtra, India

**Dr. Vijay Shankar Sharma**

Assistant Professor of Special Education,  
DSM National Rehabilitation University,  
Lucknow, UP, India

**Dr. Sunil Shankadarwar**

Assistant Professor of Botany,  
Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai,  
Maharashtra, India

**Mr. Amit Agnihotri**

Assistant Professor & Head of Information  
Technology, JR Handicapped University,  
Chitrakoot, UP, India

**Dr. Vaishali Pusate**

Assistant Professor of Zoology,  
Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai,  
Maharashtra, India

**Dr. P.V. Mahalinge**

Assistant Professor of Hindi,  
Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai,  
Maharashtra, India

**Dr. Neelkanth Bankar**

Associate Professor of Psychology,  
University of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**Dr. Rajeshwar Andhale**

Associate Professor of Mathematics,  
Ramnarain Ruia College, Mumbai,  
Maharashtra, India

**Dr. Anupama Mujumdar**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy,  
Ruparel College, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**Dr. Parvez Shamim**

Assistant Professor of Physical Education &  
Sports, Government P.G. College, Noida,  
G.B. Nagar, UP, India

## **AUTHOR GUIDELINES**

BODHI International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Science is an online, Peer reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal (ISSN: 2456-5571), which is powered & published by Center for Resource, Research and Publication Services (CRRPS), India. It is committed to bring together academicians, research scholars and students from all over the world who work professionally to upgrade status of academic career and society by their ideas and aims to promote interdisciplinary studies in the fields of humanities, arts and science.

### **Subjects for Papers**

The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science, agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

### **Call for Papers**

The journal invites balanced mix of theoretical or empirical, conceptual papers to publish including research articles, case studies, review papers, comparative studies, dissertation chapters, reports of projects in progress, analytical and simulation models, technical notes, and book reviews, leading academicians, business peoples, corporate sectors, researcher scholars and students from academic institutions, research organizations, non – governmental organizations (NGOs), corporate sectors, civil societies, industries, and others from India and abroad.

### **Procedure of Submission**

- The papers should be research based or related, original and comprise previously unpublished material.
- Writers must send an abstract of the paper not exceeding 300 words, all manuscripts must be in font style of Times New Roman, size: 12, line spacing: double spaced and submitted only in MS Word 2003/ 2007 version.
- All manuscripts should follow the MLA or APA style manual. The full paper must not exceed 3000 words, including tables and references.
- The manuscript should be organized to have Title page, Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Material & Methods, Findings & Results, Interpretation & Discussion and Conclusion.
- All quoted, reproduced material should be categorically referenced.
- Other than this, all contents should be original – authors' own words, ideas, findings and arguments.
- Tables and figures should appear in the document near / after where they are referenced in the text.

- Photographs must be sharp, and exhibit good contrast.
- All figures and tables must have a caption that is intelligible without reference to the text.
- Correct and complete referencing of quoted and reproduced material is the obligation of the author. In the text, references should be inserted in parentheses in full.
- Authors should submit manuscript through e-mail attachment to the review committee and a manuscript number will be mailed to the corresponding author within two days.
- Articles should be mailed to [bodhijournal@gmail.com](mailto:bodhijournal@gmail.com)

### **Plagiarism Alert & Disclaimer**

Contributors are advised to be strict in academic ethics with respect to acknowledgment of the original ideas borrowed from others. The Publisher & editors will not be held responsible for any such lapse of the contributor regarding plagiarism and unwarranted quotations in their manuscripts. All submissions should be original and must be accompanied by a declaration stating your research paper as an original work and has not been published anywhere else. It will be your sole responsibility for such lapses, if any on legal bindings and ethical code of publication.

While the information contained within the site is periodically updated, no guarantee is given that the information provided in this Web site is correct, complete, and up-to-date. BODHI journal may contain links to web sites operated by other parties. These links are provided purely for academic practice. Such links do not imply BODHI journal endorsement of material on any other site and BODHI journal disclaims all liability with regard to your access of such linked web sites.

### **Peer Review Policy**

The BODHI Journal abides by a double-blind peer review process such that the journal does not disclose the identity of the reviewer to the author and does not disclose the identity of the author to the reviewer. All papers will be first assessed by editorial board. All the accepted papers are published online soon after final acceptance. The copy editing work is done by editorial board Members. The articles are reviewed and accepted only after positive opinion from editorial board Members.

### **Date of Paper Submission**

S. No	Month of Issue	Last Date of Paper Submission
1	October	September 25 <sup>th</sup>
2	January	December 25 <sup>th</sup>
3	April	March 25 <sup>th</sup>
4	July	June 25 <sup>th</sup>

### **Article Submission**

- Soft copy of the papers should be mailed to [bodhijournal@gmail.com](mailto:bodhijournal@gmail.com) (No need to send hardcopy).
- Authors are kindly advised to send manuscripts along with registration & copyright forms. (Duly filled-in Registration form is mandatory with the paper for acceptance)





**Dr. Sr. M. HELEN**

*Principal, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

## **PRINCIPAL'S DESK**

I feel extremely happy to be a part of this forum on gender studies, when the need of such a sensibility has become very acute today. A sense of identity in an individual springs right from infancy and develops into a strong force through the various factors of gender, caste, class, religion, culture and education. Depending on this constructed identity, one not only performs varied roles in life, but even judges everybody with that preconceived perception. Hence the role of man, woman and that of a transgender gets treated by a number of visible as well as invisible factors exercising their strong influence on one's personality. In a multi-cultural diversity of globalization, it has become imperative that we reconsider these tendencies at an individual, social, psychological, political and economic level to build a harmonious society.

This ardent move of the Dept. of English to organize a national level conference and publish research papers on gender sensibility will surely provide a platform to discuss such emerging issues, ensure the right and just perspective, integrate gender concerns in programmes of social welfare, reconsider and redefine one's ideologies and beliefs and spread awareness of its significance across the academicians, students and educational institutions who hold the potential to sculpture and shape the human mind. The objective of this programme is to celebrate through the vast wings of literature, the different facets of all great aspirants. This bold and ennobling step to welcome such a major change in such huge numbers of enthusiastic responses from the academic fraternity, is really appreciable and commendable. I am happy to acknowledge that Nirmala College for Women has always worked towards promoting such a desirable change to communicate and motivate these benevolent ideologies and habits. I wish the Conference peer- team a huge success.

*Thank You*





**Dr. R. ASEFA FATIMA**

*The Convener, Head and Assistant Professor of English  
Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

### **CONVENER'S DESK**

Malala Yousafzai has well said that “One book, one pen, one child, and one teacher can change the world.” With this inspiration, taking the initiative to organize a National Seminar on “Gender Sensibility: An Exploration through Literature” and getting research papers on this topic published has been an enlightening experience for the Research Department of English, Nirmala College for Women. I, as the Head of this Department and Convenor of this Social Welfare programme, am pleased and privileged to acknowledge the tremendous contribution of the Resource persons, Ms. Kalki Subramaniam, Social Activist, Entrepreneur and a poet; Dr. Maria Josephine Aruna, Assistant Professor of English, Kanchi Mamunivar Center for Post Graduate Studies, Puducherry and Mrs. Shobana Rajakumari, Retd. Head and Associate Professor of English, Providence College, Coonur for the success of this noble endeavour.

So far, men and women were considered as the only two sides of the coin of the society. But through evolution and development of our civilization and psyche, we identify that the two sides have to pay way to the third sect, transgender also. Despite all progress in art, literature, governance and Science and Technology, Gender discrimination is still an uphill task. It fuels violence and result in power imbalance. Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perception of individuals based on their gender. It arises from differences of society constructed gender roles. Discrimination based on gender is a common civil rights violation that takes many forms – Sexual harassment, pregnancy – discrimination, unequal pay for the women who do the same job as men and discrimination in employment and education. To overcome gender inequality, we need to have gender sensitive society. A critical awareness is necessary to clarify issues about gender issues and disparities. Our education system needs to be gender sensitive and gender friendly and the possibilities are to promote gender awareness at all levels of society.

All of us invariably feel the need to appreciate the role and contribution of all kinds of genders in the realization of their rights so that they feel accepted in the society and contribute actively and fulfillingly in a nation's development process. In this ongoing programme, Interpersonal and facilitation skills and respect for diversity in people and cultures would be an added asset. Every gender has equal rights in terms of education, employment, social, economic and political leadership. We are in need of a gender- sensitive, gender- responsive people who are aware of several issues such as inequality in education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care, protection, honour, child marriage and women abuse among others. We are in need of mutual respect for all-irrespective of their sex, caste, socio-economic status, religion, region, and educational status-a core value which should get grass rooted and ingrained in young minds to build a resilient, empowered, and motivated generation.

This initiative is focused on these lines to promote such a desirable change through the literary Contributions of research scholars, academicians and the student fraternity. May God bless us with His blessings of Success. Thank You.



**Mrs. R. STEFFI**

*Organizing Secretary, Assistant Professor of English  
Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

## **ORGANIZING SECRETARY'S DESK**

The term 'gender' is subjected to many controversies down the years. But the most accepted definition says, "Gender is socially constructed". Every culture in this world has marked a niche for every gender and breaking it, is considered to be an outlaw. And now it is time to relax the rigidity that has been there for centuries together. This attempt to encourage scholars to present their research papers in this field, is socially committed to sensitize the learned community in making a leap from being sensitive to becoming sensible towards gender. Gender sensitivity encompasses the ability to detect or become aware of the existing gender differences, issues and inequalities. This forum will be of great help to the participants to get a panoramic view of gender issues.

Gender is a complex interrelationship between three dimensions: Body, identity and expression. This conference, indeed, will help us discuss the complexities of such topics. Right from our childhood, we are taught by the society to conform to the gender binary system. Norms around gender expression change across societies and over time. This is an effort to build a society where a child freely discloses her identity confidently. At this juncture, we understand the need of literature which helps in building a better tomorrow. Literature is always a representational front to discuss any pressing concern in the society in the form of a biography, memoir, poetry or a play. Literature now is seen as an agency which frontlines the rights and issues of minorities rather than just serving as a piece of entertainment. This conference gives a platform to express views and opinions on the various topics related to this theme of Gender Sensibility and introduces the writings of gender minorities which are though less investigated, get emergence as an important scope for research. One message that echoes forth from this conference is that all human beings have rights to determine their gender and deserve rights to be heard and accepted. Hence, it is important to imbibe mutual unconditional respect, equality, and opportunity among all to lay a strong foundation for a gender-equal society. Let this vision of ours attain fruition in the near future.

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". ---Galatians 3:28.*



## EDITOR'S PAGE

Greetings Dear Readers! I am happy to introduce the theme of this collection, ***Gender Sensibility: An Exploration through Literature***. "Writing a perfect paper is a lot like a military operation. It takes discipline, foresight, research, strategy, and, if done right, ends in total victory" - These words of Ryan Holiday are very relevant in summing up an ardent effort of a seeker of knowledge and change. Research is indeed a gateway to knowledge which leads to new and efficient solutions for the society. A National Level Seminar conducted by the Research Department of English of Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, on the theme "Gender Sensibility: An Exploration Through Literature" has encouraged many academic aspirants to carry out extensive research and helped the literature community to discuss, present and publish valuable papers on this subject. I am sure this altruistic project of pooling in research papers on gender sensibility will create an awareness in the public and enlighten them on the sensitivity of the issue at large and help in building a considerate, just and a harmonious society. On behalf of the Conference Peer team, I express a humble note of gratitude to all the research contributors.

### Chief Editor



**Ms. HARSHA M. PANDIYA**

*Assistant Professor of English,  
Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

### Co-Editors

**Dr. MARY NEENA M, Dr. DIVYA C, Dr. RATHIKA R.G  
Mrs. KANIMOZHI B, Dr. ANITHA B, Dr. ANIN LEEMA B, Sr. VINCY SHOBANA**

*Assistant Professors of English, Research Department of English,  
Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*





---

---

**BODHI**  
**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SCIENCE**  
An Online, Peer-reviewed, Refereed and Quarterly Journal with Impact Factor

---

---

**Vol: 3**

**Special Issue 2**

**January 2019**

**E-ISSN: 2456-5571**

---

---

**Aim & Objectives**

Academic Excellence in research is continued promoting in research support for young Scholars. Multidisciplinary of research is motivating all aspects of encounters across disciplines and research fields in an multidisciplinary views, by assembling research groups and consequently projects, supporting publications with this inclination and organizing programmes. Internationalization of research work is the unit seeks to develop its scholarly profile in research through quality of publications. And visibility of research is creating sustainable platforms for research and publication, such as series of Books; motivating dissemination of research results for people and society.

**Disclaimer**

Contributors are advised to be strict in academic ethics with respect to acknowledgment of the original ideas borrowed from others. The Publisher & editors will not be held responsible for any such lapse of the contributor regarding plagiarism and unwarranted quotations in their manuscripts. All submissions should be original and must be accompanied by a declaration stating your research paper as an original work and has not been published anywhere else. It will be the sole responsibility of the authors for such lapses, if any on legal bindings and ethical code of publication.

**Communication**

Papers should be Mailed to  
bodhijournal@gmail.com

---

**CONTENTS**

---

S. No	Title	Page No.
1	A Mother's Scuffle for Survival in <i>Abandon</i> by Sangeeta Bandyopadhyay <b>P. Lincy</b>	1
2	Gender Problem Faced by the Characters of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni <b>Mrs.J. Prabha Kanagamani</b>	4
3	Psychoanalytical Study of Gender in the Selected Short Stories of Charlotte Perkins Gilman <b>S. Balatharani</b>	8
4	Girish Karnad's <i>Yayati</i> : A Study in Feministic Approach <b>Dr.G. Ramana Reddy</b>	11
5	East Asian Effeminacy and Changing Gender Ideologies <b>Arsha Subbi</b>	15
6	Evolution of Self: A Study of Barbara Kingsolver's Novels <b>Ms.P. Aarthi</b>	18
7	The Dynamic Facets of Women as Proliferated in Malayalam Literature with Special Reference to <i>Chilappathikaram</i> <b>Dr.D. Rejikumar</b>	20
8	Gender Crises in the Two Novels of Shashi Deshpande: <i>The Dark Holds No Terrors</i> and <i>The Binding Vine</i> <b>D. Anandhi</b>	24

9	DungriGarasiya Folklore and Female Identity: "First there was Woman" and Other Stories <b>Ms. Rehana Gaffar Vadgama</b>	28	21	Woman Protecting Nature: An Ecofeministic Study of the Select Novels of Barbara Kingsolver <b>Evangeline Maria Fernando &amp; Dr.R. Aseda Fatima</b>	65
10	Exploration of Self – Quest for Identity in Audrey Thomas' "The Princess and The Zucchini" <b>S. Bhuvaneswari</b>	32	22	From Lust to Love: Tracing the Changing Discourse on Homosexual Relationships in India Through the Works of IsmatChughtai and Mahesh Dattani <b>Susmita Mukherjee</b>	68
11	Social Isolation and Confusion in James Baldwin's <i>Giovanni's Room</i> <b>Mrs.R. Sharon Rose &amp; Dr.C. Divya</b>	36	23	Depiction of Women and Femininity in K.R Meera's Selected Works: <i>Hangwoman</i> and <i>The Poison of Love</i> <b>U. Greeshma</b>	71
12	Resetting the Patriarchal Paradigm: An Analysis of Meenakandasamy's Poetry <b>T.P. Misha &amp; Dr.B.Anitha</b>	39	24	Scanning Lies and Gossips in Lillian Hellman's <i>The Children's Hour</i> <b>S. Karpagajothi</b>	75
13	A Study of the State of Struggle of the Transgender in "A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi" <b>Pattam Chakma</b>	42	25	Quest for Identity in Margaret Atwood's Novel, <i>The Edible Woman</i> <b>C.J. Ancy Rose</b>	78
14	Psychoanalytic Exposition of Florens in Toni Morrison's <i>A Mercy</i> <b>S. Lourdes Veena</b>	46	26	The Matic Study of Gender Crisis in Indian Writing in English <b>S. Vijayalakshmi</b>	80
15	Gender Patriarchy in Shashi Deshpande's <i>The Dark Holds No Terror</i> <b>S. Rini</b>	49	27	Chetan Bhagat's Radhika: A Symbol of Disconcert Femininity in the Snobbish Patriarchal Society <b>Dayana Mathew</b>	83
16	Gender Accessibility in Francine Rivers' <i>Unshaken</i> <b>M. Mary Velanganni &amp; Dr.R.G. Radhika</b>	52	28	Kunti and Ghandari As Resolute Characters in Irawati Karve's <i>Yuganta</i> <b>T.V. Kushma Kumari</b>	86
17	<i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i> by Khaled Hosseini as A Novel of Gender Crisis <b>R. Rathika</b>	54	29	The Seething Fire: <i>Roots and Shadows</i> <b>Dr.Honey Walia</b>	89
18	Exploring Gender Inequality: A Study of Khaled Hosseini's <i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i> <b>Ms.V. Helen Mary</b>	56	30	Woman: A Predominant Force in Nature as Described in Subhadra Sen Gupta's <i>Jahanara: A Princess's Diary</i> <b>R. Matangi</b>	92
19	Delving into the Psyche of Lili Elbe in David Ebershoff's <i>The Danish Girl</i> <b>G. Liliane Maria Yvette</b>	58	31	Self - Representation of Women: A Feminist Reading of Maya Angelou's "Woman Work" <b>D. Anusha</b>	94
20	A Feminist Stereotype of Lesbianism as Gender Aberration in John O'hara's Novella <i>Lovey Childs: A Philadelphian's Story</i> <b>V. Gayathri</b>	61	32	Role of Advertisements in Breaking Gender Stereotypes <b>K. Yemuna &amp; Dr.M. Mary Neena</b>	97

33	Gender Crisis and Harbinger of Solidarity in Pearl S. Buck's East Wind: West Wind and Peony <b>Ms.H. Monica Sherly</b>	100	47	Gender Politics in Pakistani Literature: <i>The Pakistani Bride</i> by Bapsisidhwa <b>T. Josephine Sneha</b>	144
34	Women at Liberty in the Novels - <i>The English Patient</i> and <i>Anil's Ghost</i> by Michael Ondaatje <b>Josepheena John</b>	102	48	The Juxtaposition of Gender and Queer in R. Raj rao's <i>The Boyfriend</i> <b>Dona Mathew</b>	147
35	The Enfranchisement Revisited <b>D. Ram Prakash</b>	105	49	Silent Scream: Unheard Voices of Hijras in <i>Seven Steps Around The Fire</i> By Mahesh Dattani <b>S. Merumesenaka</b>	151
36	Retribution and Gender Implications in Manju Kapur's "Chocolate" <b>D. Sharon Stephy</b>	108	50	The Urgency for Intersectional Feminism in India <b>D. Raichel Priyadharshuni</b>	154
37	Ritualistic Expectations of Indian Social Context in Abha Dawesar's <i>Babyji</i> <b>P.V. Rajlakshmi</b>	110	51	Gender Sensibility in Stephen King's <i>The Shining</i> <b>P. Nithya</b>	157
38	Journey towards Transformation and Identity in <i>Speak</i> <b>V. Hemavibhushini</b>	113			
39	Struggle of the Transgender in <i>if I Was Your Girl</i> by Meredith Russo <b>R. Rajalaxmi</b>	116			
40	Superman Syndrome Over Cinderella Effect: Changing Trends in Feminism through Modern Fantasy Fiction <b>S. Preethika</b>	118			
41	The Winking Eyes: Male Gaze in Malayalam Horror Movies <b>Pooja Prasad</b>	122			
42	Gender-A Synonym to Sex in Khaled Hosseini's <i>A Thousand Splendid Suns</i> <b>K. Angel Vinoliya</b>	124			
43	Sexual Harassment of Women- A Concern for Gender Sensitization <b>Pritirupa Saikia</b>	126			
44	Problems of The LGBT <b>Mrs.Rashmita Borah &amp; Dr.Abhimanyu Sethi</b>	133			
45	Portending the Present and the Future in Margaret Atwood's "This is a Photograph of me" <b>K. RamyaKalaivani</b>	136			
46	Feminism in English Literature <b>Dr.G. Sujatha</b>	139			



## A MOTHER'S SCUFFLE FOR SURVIVAL IN *ABANDON* BY SANGEETA BANDYOPADHYAY

**P.Lincy**

*Assistant Professor of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

"Forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverb 6). According to the verse, mother is the supreme light in everyone's home. The light that makes everyone's life glow. Mother is the soul bearer of everyone's happiness. She guides us through our hard times, mother is the epitome of courage, strength and hope. Meanwhile if the mother is living on her own abandoning her family then she is caught in the web of the malicious society. She risks her life each day for her survival. She inspite of the evil eyes, evil thoughts and evil tongues around her, she struggles to live a meaningful life. She turns to be a heroic image for her child as she fulfills the place of the father also.

Abandon, the story of a woman who desires to become an author, travels alone abandoning her family and running away from the restraints of the society. The author skillfully voices the narration with two divergent personalities. She narrates as a third person fictional character Ishwari and first person narrator as the author herself. The plot of the author expresses the passion for art and literature. The thrust to live her life without boundaries and restriction but Ishwari's plot narrates from a mothers perspective filled with emotions and as a symbol of sacrifice and selflessness. "And I struggle to find my place in this dark novel. I yearn for passion and despair- for that is what makes good literature- while Ishwari seeks a life of joy for herself and her son" (Bandyopadhyay, *Abandon*16).

Ishwari as a teenager fell in love and was naturally left with a baby, but she neglected the baby as she thought it would be a hindrance to her enjoyment in life. But the motherhood in her

kindled the emotions and made her to accept the baby. Ishwari and her son Roo loitered around the streets for shelter, on getting a terrace to stay she managed to survive there. As a woman even getting a place in terrace was not a cake walk for her, she was supported by a taxi driver, argued with the mansion staff and out of mercy she got a place to stay.

I see the young taxi driver whirl around without protest and walk back to the taxi. I am forced to return to the taxi. I am forced to return to the taxi too, holding Roo's hand. This taxi is now my real refuge. Roo is walking with his eyes shut... That's when I see the old man pause and turn. He raises his arms. First one, then both together. 'Just a minute,' he shouts. Ishwari practically leapt in the air. 'He's calling us, he's calling us...' she screamed, jumping out of the taxi. (*Abandon* 16)

The society does not provide helping arms to the one who suffers, instead pester them for money and physique wherethey become the victim of unemployment and harassment. Ishwari also underwent similar hitches in her life but managed to get a warden job for boarding school girls, that happiness was temporary as she could not submit her certificates and lost the work. She searched for countless number of works but profited none. Atlast she got a work as a caretaker to a handsome and a depressed man Bibaswan who was exasperated about the death of his beloved. Her work was to get him out of the disheartened state.

As the novel progresses the readers can find change that prevails between Ishwari and

Bibaswan only because of art and literature. They discussed about many works, paintings, carvings especially songs played pivotal role in change of the characters. The author introduces the concept of age factor where both Ishwari and Bibaswan are living an isolated life. Music made them grow closer to each other and this made Bibaswan fall in love with Ishwari, even she had fascination towards him but sealed it within her. Gradually she expressed her love towards him as he was the perfect match for her taste and passion. She thought that being with him enriched her knowledge and she was being herself when staying with him. Ishwari believed that "literature was the only key that could help me escape from the locked room" (*Abandon* 21). The only hindrance to follow her passions and self-identity is her son Roo but she never considered him as an obstacle as loved him so much as every mother does.

The relationship between Roo and Ishwari is a compassionate, well understanding and adjusting love. When the novel started the author had elucidated the agony both mother and son endured but still could see the understanding between them "She smothered Roo in kisses. Holding him, she tried to cross the endless desert in her soul, babbling. It'll never happen again, Roo, I'll never leave you and go off-we won't be separated any more. You'll forget, you'll forget all those days" (*Abandon* 22).

As Ishwari goes to work she recruited a maid named Preethi and paid a meager amount, Sukul the taxi driver took care of Roo along with her. Roo also understood the pain Ishwari undergoes and did not give any torture to anyone. Eventhough being a child, Roo was matured enough to judge the situation. From morning till Ishwari's arrival Roo was bed ridden, once when he sees his mother he craves for the warm hug and tender love. Roo sleeps on Ishwari's chest a warm place of every child and sleeping with mother is always the best medicine for every problems and disease.

Gradually Roo started to fall sick because of no proper food, he was diagnosed as malnutrition.

Inspite of many difficulties she took Roo to hospital but the pity fact was that he was very weak and bed ridden always. Where ever she was, she manages to hit back home at night, even at work she had Roo's thoughts and because of Roo's problem arose between Ishwari and Bibaswan. Bibaswan wanted Ishwari to stay with him forever and so they could go about on researching arts. If Ishwari agreed she would have got her desired, passionate and sophisticated life. Ishwari was in a dilemma and was almost to agree to go on with Bibaswan. However as Bibaswan wanted Ishwari alone and failed to accept Roo, Ishwari let go of her passionate life and was by Roo's side.

Ishwari encounters men who are good in art and literature who show empathy and love towards her but not to her sick child Roo. Ishwari suggests that the choice is often one between compassion and self-realization. Eventhough finding the life she wanted Ishwari sacrificed only for her son Roo whom she wanted to be with her even if she lives a travail life. The reader can find that the protagonist was trying to balance between two poles but lastly she fell for the love of her son burying all the worries within her. The plot of the author articulates that if she was Ishwari, she would have given up on Roo for Bibaswan and passionate life. Ishwari was ready to give up on her self-identity as she thought Roo gave her identity as a mother which was more divine than any, as she could find the indepth love and true relationship. From one quote the readers can understand the difference in both the narrators' mentality. "I did nothing because I was in the grips of the strongest rage. I had written the novel- surely Ishwari could have battled with the flames to save it. But Ishwari does not know how to fight, Ishwari surrenders in advance" (*Abandon* 21). For a mother nothing stands as important as her child. Before her

love, care, compassion towards her child every little ego, jealousy, wants, desires and even self-identity vanish.

#### Works Cited

1. Bandyopadhyay, Sangeeta. *Abandon*. New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2013. Print.
2. *Holy Bible*. New Delhi: The Gideons International in India, 1980. Print.
3. Huang, Darren. "In Sangeeta Bandyopadhyay's 'Abandon,' a Destitute Woman's Desire to Write Clashes with Motherhood." *Words without Borders*. N.P., Jan. 2018. Web. 9 Oct. 2018.

## **GENDER PROBLEM FACED BY THE CHARACTERS OF CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI**

**Mrs.J.Prabha Kanagamani**

*Assistant Professor of English, Sarah Tucker College, Tirunelveli*

Internationally, gender inequality is prevalent in many areas of life, including education, employment, medical care, law and violence. There are overt examples of inequality. The differences shown in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. Gender is created by every socializing agent and force in society: parents, teachers, religion, media and so on. Violence and gender are intricately related since time immemorial. The different roles and behaviors of females and males, children as well as adults, are shaped and reinforced by gender norms within society. These are social expectations that define appropriate behavior for women and men.

In India a woman's identity is through her father at the time of birth, through husband after marriage and through son in old age. She is not allowed to act free as per her own desire. This desire to act free and break the shackles of orthodox society, that views male and female through different yard sticks has been beautifully delineated by Indo American author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. She has depicted education as a force which could free female from the chains of subordination and slavery. This desire to achieve freedom for self is expressed beautifully in Divakaruni's work *Mistress of Spices* through the character of Lalita. Lalita is a simple, docile Indian girl who was married through deceit to a much older man living in America and she has to honor this marriage because of family obligation. Lalita tries her best to mould herself according to her husband but her emotions and wishes were mutilated at every step. She was so suppressed and tortured that she forgot about her creativity

and started expressing herself through her husband's vision which was very negative. She knows the art of stitching.

The writings of Chitra Banerjee are an articulation of silence that has permeated the lives of females. As is seen in case of Lalita in 'Mistress of Spices' Tilo expresses, 'I would like to call her by it, but how can I while she thinks of herself only as a wife'. The male chauvinism is clearly evident in Lalita's case that has to follow the social norm of a wife's identity through her husband. Ahuja refuses that his women (Lalita) should work. "Aren't I man enough man enough man enough." (*Mistress of Spices* 15)

Differences in gender roles and behaviors often create inequalities, whereby one gender becomes empowered to the disadvantage of the other. Thus, in many societies, women are viewed as subordinate to men and have a lower social status, allowing men to have control over, and greater decision-making power than, women. Inequality in gender leads to violence by men against women. In 'Silver Payment Golden Roof', the husband is a mechanic and is dissatisfied with his condition. He empties his entire frustration on his wife who tolerates it silently. Her condition is further deteriorated by her alienation in a foreign country with no one to empathize with her. She keeps herself under house arrest as her husband has strictly instructed her not to step out of house. Similar was the case of Lalita from *Mistress of Spices*, who was also under strict vigilance of her husband. Lalita's husband has told her not to talk to anyone or move out without her husband's approval. Even her personal letters to



her parents were proof read by her husband. 'Recently, the rules. No going out. No talking on the phone. Every penny I spend to be accounted for .He should read my letters before he mails them.' (*Mistress of Spices*103).

This is a situation quite commonly faced by most women and they suffer the situation silently under the dual impact of dilemma and shock. This even curbs the ability of affected women to seek protection. In some cases it even impairs the affected women from thinking logically and she can go into bouts of depression leading to fatal consequences. As is seen in '*The Maid Servant's Story*' the wife returns after the delivery of her child. She comes to know of the illegitimate relationship of her husband with the maid but stays silent. It was suffocating to continue with her husband but at the same time she could not leave her husband as this would give a bad name to her daughter and will also spoil the prospect of a good marriage in future. Thus a woman's action is paralyzed not only because of her own inability to decide but also because of consequences of her action on persons associated with her. So promoting gender equality is a critical part of violence prevention as it will balance the society by equally distributing rights and duties, bringing back the old concept of 'ardhnarishwar' and will fetch equal respect for women in the society.

In India violence against women is pandemic. Rape, kidnapping, sexual harassment, trafficking, molestation, the ravages of cruelty on the part of husbands and relatives, and dowry-related suicide have become a common part of life of most Indian women. We get the image of these Indian women in character of Lalita from *Mistress of Spices*'

Lalita was taught in India that a husband's prestige and happiness is of paramount importance to a wife and she surrenders herself to that rule dissolving her identity. But the behavior of her husband grows beyond tolerance such that she was prepared to barter

even her life for her freedom. She utters.... 'Mataji, I used to be afraid of death. I'd hear of women who killed themselves and think how could they. Now I know'. (*Mistress of Spices* 103)

In addition to this violence, Indian women suffer broader and more prevalent forms of gender discrimination, undermining women's access to basic human and civil rights such as education, sanitation and healthcare. As Divakaruni is born and brought up in India, she is well aware of curse of illiteracy to women and therefore emphasized the importance of education and has presented educated women in her novel to serve as role model. Today people talk of India shining and India rising but despite so much advancement, the desire for male child to carry forward the lineage is still a common feature of Indian thinking. This leads to frequent female feticide as a girl is considered a burden in most Indian homes that have to arrange for her dowry. Wrap her in old cloth, lay her face down on the floor. What does she bring to the family except a dowry debt. (*Mistress of Spices* 7) In Indian culture sexuality is repressed, male-dominated, and most often seen as a negative aspect of female identity. Regardless of sexual orientation; Indian culture perceives sexuality itself as dangerous to the values of the traditional Indian family, thus within the home it remains, as much does, under the control of the patriarch. Divakaruni examines the complicated issue of sexuality in the story "Clothes," in which sex is portrayed as the duty of a wife in her marriage, regardless of whether she desires to engage in it of her own volition. Sumita has been trained (as traditional Indian culture instructs young women) to view sex as a demand that husbands make upon their wives, a command that women must obey so as not to fail in the fulfillment of their marital responsibilities. Same is the case of the characters of *Sister of my Heart*. They face much more problems in their life because of their gender.

The close relationship between the individual and the community in Indian culture is based upon the communal nature of marriage as a social contract, not between two people, but rather two entire families. "A distinct perception of self and society is contained in Indian notions of family and community. Whereas the 'self' in American society is an individualized unit that creates a new relationship when two such persons contract marriage, in India persons are embedded in social relationships and communal identities that exist both before and after marriage. As people behave according to their community affiliation, religion, caste, class, and gender, it is more society based and society is controlled by male. Men's attitudes and behaviors lie at the root of the problem. And yet, men remain largely absent from efforts to find solutions. Chitra Banerjee through her work has presented the male who are considerate and emphasize on female education so that they may become independent and can decide on their own.

Hamida was deserted by her husband because she could not get him a male hire for his family. Her brother comes to her rescue and inspires her to become self dependent. When I get here he says Bahen, why not you stay with me and go to college, get a good job, stand on your own two feet. (*Mistress of spices* 227)

Despite their education, acquired independence, and increasing self-confidence, they are not completely free from nagging doubts of cultural transgression. The novelist transmits a particular message to her readers. She uses her stories as a means to empower women, to encourage them to be themselves. She shows how personal choice is the birth right of all humans, men and women, Indians or Americans and that tradition can frequently hamper more than inspire. Patriarchy definitely bears a large share of responsibility for the low status that women have in India. In *Meeting Mrinal*, Sumita and Mrinal are childhood competitor and friends. Mrinal always has the

upper hand but when Sunita gets a chance of early marriage, she feels that she has defeated Mrinal in the final race of life. When they happen to meet after a long interval, Sunita did not want Mrinal to know that Sunita's husband has deserted her for another woman as that would mean that Mrinal has defeated her again. After meeting she realizes that Mrinal too is alone like her and is dissatisfied with life. Even in the story 'Bats' The protagonists husband beats and ill treats his wife and his girl child as well. The wife along with her child runs away from her husband many times but returns back each time because of social obligations feeling that society will give a bad name to her and her girl child. In both the above cases, it is evident how the dual standard of society makes females vulnerable and they are always at the receiving end. A male is given a free will to do whatever he likes, behave in the manner which pleases him and can associate with anyone he likes but if a woman even steps out of home to save herself and have a respectable life for self and her child she has to face the questioning eye of society which keeps pinching her making her feel that she has committed an unpardonable crime by thinking about her self-respect. As is seen in *Vine of desire*, when Sudha's in-laws discover that she is carrying a girl child, she was asked to abort the child. Sudha, who has compromised with the situation so far, revolts when it comes to her child. Feeling of motherhood gives her a special courage to renounce every relation and custom as the safety of her unborn child is of paramount importance to her. Lack of group worth among middle class women and constant deference to male approval are to be blamed for women's pathetic condition. Demanding their rightful position in the family and becoming the architect of their own fate will lead to real working of female consciousness. All the stories selected for discussion have grounding in social realism. The novelist through her work has created subtle images of women's anguish

netted in terrible relationship and social customs and also trying to resolve it with patience and pride.

**Bibliography**

1. Divakaruni.B.Chitra, Mistress of Spices, Black Swan Books, 2005.
2. Divakaruni.B.Chitra, Sister of My Heart.
3. Divakaruni.B.Chitra, Arranged Marriage.

## PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY OF GENDER IN THE SELECTED SHORT STORIES OF CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN

**S. Balatharani**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Sigmund Freud, the forefather of psychoanalysis, believed that people could be cured by making conscious their unconscious thoughts and motivations, thus gaining insight. The aim of psychoanalysis therapy is to release repressed emotions and experiences, i.e., make the unconscious conscious.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was born on July 3, 1860 in Connecticut. She was a prominent American sociologist, novelist, poet, writer of short stories and nonfiction, and a lecturer for social reform. She dedicated herself to feminism and social reform, and believed that a purely domestic environment oppressed women and that motherhood should not prohibit a woman from working outside the home.

Gilman married Charles Stetson, an artist, in 1884. She experienced a severe depression during her decade-long marriage to Stetson and underwent a series of unusual treatments for it. Her depression, possibly post-partum, and nervous breakdown affected her for years to come. She went to a sanatorium in Philadelphia in 1887 where she was treated by Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell, who is the doctor in *The Yellow Wallpaper*. His 'rest cure' included no physical or intellectual stimulation and he roundly forbade Gilman to write, suggesting she 'live as domestic a life as possible'. This experience is believed to have inspired her best-known short story "The Yellow Wall-Paper" (1892).

The stories in the collection *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories* reflect Gilman's attitude toward what was the accepted place of women in society. Most of them are humorous and most deal with relationships between men and women. The short story *The Yellow Wall-*

*Paper* is about a woman's descent into madness, a condition that almost devastated Gilman herself after the birth of her daughter. In this story, a woman is confined to an upper room in a summer house where rest and solitude is supposed to cure her of her depression. The narrator trusts her husband John who loves her, but in her boredom she begins to see women moving around in the hideous yellow wallpaper that covers the room she is in. The mental constraints placed upon the narrator, even more so than the physical ones, ultimately drives her insane in the end of the story.

The narrator is a woman who is treated for depression but, her loving husband John never believes that she is depressed. He assures the family and their friends that his wife is healthy and only needs to rest for some time to regain her strength. This attitude of John hurts his wife more than her condition, "He does not believe I am sick! . . . one's own husband assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing . . . but temporary nervous depression" (1).

John and his sister Jennie persuade the narrator to stay in her room and rest all day. She is not encouraged to write because John hates it, "He hates to have me write a word" (3). The narrator is confined physically to her room and by prohibiting her writing she is confined mentally. This confinement leads to her delusional thoughts about the yellow wallpaper in her room, "There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is that it changes as the light changes. . . it becomes bars!" (9-10).

The narrator longs for her husband's understanding. Though John loves her, he

refuses to believe her and understand her condition. As a doctor himself, John believes that his wife will regain her health if she takes proper rest and blindly refuses to believe otherwise, "John does not know how much I really suffer. He knows there is no *reason* to suffer, and that satisfies him." (3).

In this story Gilman criticizes the position of women within the institution of marriage, especially as practiced by the respectable classes of her time. For Gilman, the conventional nineteenth-century middle-class marriage, with its rigid distinction between the domestic functions of the female and the active work of the male, ensured that women remained second-class citizens. John's assumption of his own superior wisdom and maturity leads him to misjudge, patronize, and dominate his wife in the name of helping her, "He said . . . I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well." (9).

The narrator has no say in even the smallest details of her life, and she retreats into her obsessive fantasy, the only place she can retain some control and exercise the power of her mind. She is forced to hide her anxieties and fears in order to preserve the facade of a happy marriage and to make it seem as though she is winning the fight against her depression. The narrator's eventual insanity is a product of the repression of her imaginative power, not the expression of it. She is constantly longing for an emotional and intellectual outlet, even going so far as to keep a secret journal, which she describes more than once as a relief to her mind.

*Turned* is a bittersweet story about a woman who finds that her husband has been unfaithful. In this story an upper class marriage of over 28 years has been ruined by the accidental discovery by Marion Marroner, of the husband's infidelity with the couple's young housekeeper, Gerta Petersen. But after her initial shock and pain, she realizes that the young and naive girl whom he has impregnated has been wronged just as badly as herself. So Marion leaves her

husband and takes the poor girl Gerta with her. She changes her name to her maiden name and starts a new life in the new place.

The significance of the word *turned* goes hand in hand with the chain of events of the story. The happy married life of Marion Marroner is turned by her husband's infidelity with the couple's housekeeper, Gerta. Mr. Marroner's perfect life is turned when his wife, whom he loves so much, finds the truth and leaves him.

Gerta is a young girl of eighteen years who works as a housekeeper for the Mr. and Mrs. Marroner. She is a sweet, obedient, innocent and childish girl who is loved by everyone in the house, "The helpless sweetness of the face; the defenceless, unformed character; the docility and habit of obedience which made her so attractive—and so easily a victim." (44)

When Mrs. Marroner found the truth, she initially blamed Gerta for ruining her happy marriage and asked her to leave the house. But when realized that her husband was the one who took advantage of a poor girl, her anger changed towards her husband. Rather than accusing poor maid Gerta, she condemned her husband for his betrayal, "A sense of measureless condemnation for the man who had done this thing. He knew. He understood. He could fully foresee and measure the consequences of his act." (45).

The heartbreak and sadness she underwent transformed into pity for the helpless girl Gerta. Her husband ruined the life of a sweet innocent girl and robbed her of her happiness:

Mrs. Marroner's sense of pity and outrage for herself, the wife, now spread suddenly into a perception of pity and outrage for the girl. All that splendid, clean young beauty, the hope of a happy life, with marriage and motherhood, honorable independence, even—these were nothing to that man. For his own pleasure he had chosen to rob her [Gerta] of her life's best joys. (45)

Marion was a woman from a well respected family in Boston. She secured a Ph.D and had been a faculty of a college which was considered far superior in her period and she was respected for that. It was the wisdom which she gained from her studies that helped her in the most shocking moment of her life, "The independent growth which she had made formed a very different background for grief from that in Gerta's mind." (44).

As a loving wife, Marion cared for her husband deeply and trusted him. When she found about her husband's betrayal she was devastated severely. But she made a robust decision that proved how independent she was. Marion left the home which her husband gave her and found a new one. Marion refused to live by these rules her society imposed on her and she broke herself free from its chains. And by changing her name from Mrs. Marroner to her maiden name Ms. Wheeling, she gained control of her life.

Feminists have argued for decades that gender is socially constructed – a fabrication designed to grant men dominion over women.

The feminist movement advocates the liberation of all women from all forms of oppression i.e. mental as well as physical. Through her short stories, Gilman depicts the mental conflicts of women when they try to battle the oppression induced by the stereotypical concepts of society. She remains a fascinating figure in literary world because of her arguments that women need independence economically and socially remain relevant today.

### Works Cited

1. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman Biography*. A&E Television Networks, 2 Apr. 2014. Web. 7 Oct. 2018.  
<<https://www.biography.com/people/charlotte-perkins-gilman-9311669>>
2. Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Stories*. Newburyport: Dover Publications, 2012. Print.
3. McLeod, Saul. *Psychoanalysis*. Simply psychology, 2007. Web. 7 Oct. 2018.  
<<https://www.simplypsychology.org/psychoanalysis.html>>

## GIRISH KARNAD'S YAYATI: A STUDY IN FEMINISTIC APPROACH

**Dr.G.Ramana Reddy**

Assistant Professor of English, Shahir Annabhau Sathe Mahavidyalaya  
Mukhed, District Nanded, (Maharashtra)

There are only two genders in the world, one is male and the other is female. Feminism talks about equal rights of. Feminism is a term derived from Latin word 'Femina' meaning 'woman' and was first used for women's rights. According to Simone de Beauvoir women are considered secondary in relation to men from the ancient time. Thus Feminism is a term emerged and women started questioning for their status and demanding their rights. Feminist criticism advocates equal rights for women in political, economic, social, psychological, personal and aesthetic sense. Though many humanists and sociologists have been spoken for the equal rights for women, but till now the goal of equal status of women has not been achieved yet. Women always have been dominated by the men in the Patriarchal society where men are the head of the household and the rule makers. Men are the supreme authority and women are the followers. When we hear these things, even in the 21 century it is not the new or surprising things because it is still being practiced in our society. Women have been crushed in the name of patriarchal rules at their home and in their society. The present paper focuses on Girish Karnad's concern for women's rights and their suppression.

Girish Karnad is one of the well known personalities in contemporary India. He is a leading playwright, a director and an actor. He has written many plays in Kannada and himself has translated his plays from Kannada to English Language. His plays *Hayavadana*, *Bali*, *The Sacrifice*, *Yayati*, *Tuglaq* and *Nagmandala* are based on the theme of Indian Mythology and History. His first play *Yayati* was published in

1961. In this play the dramatist establishes the concept of the plight of the women in Indian society and enough attention has been focused on the oppression of women by the patriarchal order in Indian society.

Indian society, which has accepted the laws of Manu, denies women's education and thus declines her social status and her mental growth. Manu says women have no right to study the Vedas. But in modern India, women are allowed to be educated, so that they become sophisticated slaves. Her father protects her in childhood, her husband in the middle age and the children at her old age. This is a reality; No one has genuine interest in the welfare of a woman except in their speeches. She is considered 'inferior' not to be 'independent'. Though Karnad's women are full of desires and dreams, they cannot lead a life of their choice happily because they are denied their right to live with a man of their choice. Indian house wives are quiet submissive, faithful, honouring their husbands even under the most unpleasant circumstances. In the Play *Yayati* Devayani, the Queen has to endure every sort of humiliation and becomes insane; Swarnlatha is tortured by her husband's unfounded doubts of infidelity, insults and finally deserted; Sharmishtha is an easy prey of Yayati's filthy sexual gratification. Thus Karnad has presented the sufferings of woman in this play. B.YadavaRaju expresses his views on the play that "A very significant portion of the play is devoted to the study of the decisions of the patriarchal society that depicts women to surrender to the will of male decisions without protest".

In the play *Yayati* Karnad portrays the sufferings undergone by a young girl Chitrlekha whose husband Pooru sacrifices his youth whole-heartedly, but foolishly for the sake of his father without consulting her. King Yayati and his son Pooru never concerned of the life of newly wedded wife Chitrlekha's future. Her desires and her rights have not given importance in the patriarchal family of King Yayati. This is the pitiable situation of women in the patriarchal society. C.N.Ramachandran says that "the worst sufferers are women... who are caught up in a whirlpool of Hindu Patriarchy. The pitiable condition of the woman in the present society is skilfully depicted in this play. The dramatist portrays the selfless nature and the helpless plight of the Indian women who, by willingly sacrificing their lives, make the members of their family to realize their nobility. It is pathetic that King Yayati and his son Pooru realize their evil deeds only at the cost of a life, Chitrlekha.

Chitrlekha is unable to tolerate scarification of pooru's youth and she raises her voice, but her father-in-law controls her. In a patriarchal society all important decisions are taken by the head of the family especially a male member only. Other female members in the family are neglected in the process of decision taking opportunities. Chitrlekha does not give in to Yayati's persuasion to accept her husband's old age nonchalantly, and stands unmoved and unconvinced. Then Yayati exercises his authority as king and as a head of the whole family and orders her to accept her decrepit husband and also advises her to behave as the daughter-in-law of the Bharatha family. Yayati says: "This is no time for recriminations.....Now act in the manner a worthy of an Anga princess and Bharata queen. Act so that generations to come may sing your glory and Pooru's". (Yayati, 61).

Being an Indian woman, she doesn't have any other alternative than to depend on him. She pleads her to husband to reconsider his

decision but he doesn't pay heed to her words. Her father-in-law, a self-centered person, failed to think about the life of the young maiden and just he consoles her and asks her to not to shed tears as she is sensible. Then he orders her to follow Pooru, whether it is home or forest. We can observe the Schism between the behaviour expected of a man and a woman in a traditional society surfaces up. While king Yayati flouts the rules of morality with ease, develops illicit relationship with Sharmista and he even boldly tells his wife that he would marry another woman, on the other hand the newly married Chitrlekha is expected to exhibit devotion and morality and remain a dutiful wife. Such a situation as this embodies the pathetic state of Indian women. Having no alternative choice she commits suicide at the end of the play. In a patriarchal society women are not given liberty even to express their feelings. Even Chitrlekha, though she is a daughter-in-law of a king has not an exception. A woman is compelled to tolerate all the evil deeds right from the ancients' days to till the present with certain exceptions, the situation remained the same. Chitrlekha is not an Individual, but she represents the Indian Woman.

There is another character Swarnalatha a maid servant who suffered in the male dominated society. When her husband came to know the truth a Brahmin boy used to visit her house to each read and write, he suspects her and leaves her. B.Yadava Raju's comments "Swarnalatha's narrative once again emphasizes the patriarchal norms of the society that expects a woman to prove her innocence. Chastity is a word, confined exclusively to women only.

Girish Karnad portrays the problems faced by the women in the Indian family. Yayati, the protagonist of the play, under some niceties of dharma, marries a lowborn girl, Sharmista. No Indian woman would tolerate to see her husband with some other woman. When Yayati's first wife Devayani, came to know the fact, she become furious and brings the curse of



old age on him. Extra-marital enjoyment is a taboo only for women even in this age of women's liberation. There is another character Swarnalatha a maid servant who suffered in the male dominated society. When her husband came to know the truth a Brahmin boy used to visit her house to teach read and write, he suspects her and leaves her. Chastity is a word, confined exclusively to women only.

Devayani throughout the play wants to prove her superiority, but ironically like a common woman in a male dominated Indian society, she is not allowed inclusive freedom and a life of her own which finally lead herself alienation. The same is the case with Chitrlekha. She marries Pooru because of his youth and dynamism, but the Pooru sacrifices his youth to his father. With disillusionment she commits suicide. Swarnalatha though she is alive, she is forced to live herself alone in the world of full human beings. And she became mad with her discontentment.

Girish Karnad on one side had skilfully portrayed the female characters in this play Yayati as the sufferers and are oppressed and humiliated in the male dominated society, their desire are crushed and have lost their rights on the other hand he exposed them as rebellious, fighting for their rights thus projected them as a threat for patriarchal society. All the female characters in the play are described as a symbol of female liberation. Women must be saved by themselves only. Nobody has a genuine interest in the welfare of the women. So they should fight for their injustice. Karnad rightly also concentrated in this aspect. Devayani, the wife of Yayati, revolts against her husband when she came to know the fact that Yayati has married Sharmista. No woman could accept her husband marrying another woman. Indian woman worships her husband. She is quite submissive, faithful, and self effacing, honouring her husband even under the most unpleasant circumstances. She never thinks of harming her husband even in her dreams. If her

husband marries a second wife, though it can't be tolerated or accepted for her, she could not question her husband. But in this play Devayani questioned her husband. She says: Why? Why do you want her? (Yayati: 30). When Yayati did not pay a heed to her words, she tears the marriage thread, throws away the marriage pendant and goes to her father, the sage Sukracharya and brings a curse upon him.

We should appreciate Swarnalatha a minor character of the play for her challenge for society. When her husband leaves her, she did not remain silent. B. Yadava Raju comments that "Swarnalatha's narrative once again emphasizes the patriarchal norms of the society that expects a woman to prove her innocence. But Swarnalatha did not lose her hope. She never attempted suicide. She stood a challenge for the society. She has stepped out from the marital bond and claimed her right to live woman as an independent. She settled as a maid servant in the palace and gives moral support to Devayani and Chitrlekha who are also victims of the society. Generally in Indian society, a wife who is abandoned by her husband leads a wrathful life. But it is not the case with Swarnalatha. She is seen never repented to her deeds. She encountered the problems and stood as symbol for all divorced women.

Chitrlekha rebels against the unjust and strictures prevailed in the Indian Patriarchal society. Indian society fails to accept woman as a human being with natural desires. She cannot win people's hearts with love but only by performing miracles and being goddess. So is the case with Chitrlekha who is expected to forgo all her desires, her needs-emotional and sexual, and become a *devi* of supreme sacrifice. But Chitrlekha crosses the boundaries of all the so-called "morality" and hypocrisy and claims directly for her sexual rights. Aparna Bhargva Dharwadker rightly comments: "the most remarkable feature of *Yayati*...is its quartet of sentient, articulate, embittered women, all of whom are subject in varying degrees to the

whims of men, but succeed in subverting the male world through an assertion of their rights and privileges". Though Chitrlekha also faces similar conditions, she emerges as a new woman who boldly challenges the decision of Pooru and false rhetoric of Yayati. She doesn't allow Pooru to enter into her bedroom that who had accepted the curse of his father for his moral transgression and becomes old: "I will not let my husband step back into my bedroom unless he returns a young man" (61) and frankly elaborates the reason of her marriage to Pooru: "I married him for his youth. For his potential to implant the seed of the Bharatas in my womb. He has lost that potency now. He doesn't possess any of the qualities for which I married him. But you do" (65-66). Yayati abuses her for these piercing words, "whore" (66). She defies everything i.e. kingdom and high reputation of Bharat dynasty and wants "room" for herself. She says that since Yayati has taken her husband's youth, he should also take his place in her life. This would ensure that she would bear the child of the Brahmin family. She declares that in choosing puru, she "had chosen his youth....the qualities I had chosen in him are not present in him any longer.....instead, you possess those qualities now...." (Yayati,85)

Chitrlekha, Devayani and Swarnalatha fought for rights in the male dominated society, of course more often such a direct encounter with patriarchy leads the woman to death or disaster. Chitrlekha and Swarnalatha are the best example of this. They revolted against the society which tried to suppress them but they were helpless. Though Chitrlekha finally ends up committing suicide, she becomes a vehicle to demand the right of a woman, which is crushed in the patriarchal society. Every woman character in the play *Yayati* was crushed by the male dominated society but they tried their level best to thrash the patriarchal norms to claim their rights. Though Chitrlekha died and Swarnalatha became mad, they revolted against the male

dominated society. Thus, Girish Karnad showed the women characters in his play *Yayatis* rebellious in nature, a threat to patriarchal society if they are suppressed by the patriarchal norms.

Karnad had borrowed the story from the ancient story *Adiparva* of *Mahabharata*, he took liberty with the myth and weaves complex dimensions in to the plot borrowed from the *Mahabharata*. To the mythical story of *Yayati*, he adds a new character and alters the story-line, so as to deepen its connotative richness which gives its contemporary appeal. Karnad seems to have used myth with a view to exposing the absurdity of life with all its eternal passion and conflicts, and also to ridicule the patriarchal society. Thus it seems the dramatist has skilfully portrayed in this play the themes like gender discrimination, social problems, politics, human behaviour and nature, societal codes and corruptions besides the women's sufferings in the contemporary patriarchal society, which may serve as a better criticism of the contemporary life. Karnad has intentionally emphasized the duty, acceptability and responsibility of modern man towards the society where he is born in. He also emphasises on the behavioural nature of man in patriarchal society. At the same time he ridicules the patriarchal society for its foolish norms and codes.

## References

1. Girish Karnad, *Yayati*, Oxford University Press, 2008.
2. Raju, B.Yadhava. *Race and Gender in Yayati*, Girish Karnad's Plays Performance.ed. Mikherjee. New Delhi: Penguin, 2008.
3. Ramachandran C.N, "Girish Karnad: The Playwright in Search of Metaphors, " *The Journal of Indian writing in English*, 22.2: 1999.
4. Dharwadker, Aparna Bhargava, ed. With an Introduction *Collected Plays*.Vol. On. New-Delhi: O.U.P. 2008.

## **EAST ASIAN EFFEMINACY AND CHANGING GENDER IDEOLOGIES**

**Arsha Subbi**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Kochi*

Man is generally seen as the embodiment of courage and chivalry. They are expected to play rough on every aspect of their lives. Oftentimes gender theories and associated theoretical discussions limit to the analysis and criticisms of demands that enmesh the lives of women alone. Little do these discussions consider the levels of subjugation faced by male characters, especially of those who decide to step beyond the stereotypical boundaries prescribed to their gender. Men, rendered with the characteristic attribute of effeminacy are often at the receiving end of stereotypical oppressive subjugation. They often face oppression at several levels. They are often ignored in conversations pertaining to gender partiality or related issues. Philosophers argue that humans are actually a constellation of both masculine and feminine traits. Male effeminacy is seen as harmful and out of the box, the 'box' being the stereotypical precinct prescribed to an individual, one that specifies the characteristic features of an ideal male figure. Once they decide to step beyond these boundaries, they are branded illicit. Male effeminacy gets often confused with homosexuality. Effeminacy is rather a situation where the male character breaks free from the stereotypical clutches and decides to be open in expressing their emotions, which includes sadness, fear and vulnerability, often emotions expected to be possessed by women alone. Men are only anticipated to be masculine and virile in nature, which this feature of effeminacy rewrites. Effeminacy is also when these male characters render special importance to personal grooming and looks.

The fundamentals of society are governed by certain hegemonic enterprises that employ a direct control over the social functioning of

human civilization. Every single mortal being is expected to delve with the boundaries set by certain patriarchal paradigms. These patriarchal paradigms often act in accordance with the age old stereotypes infused at the very core of society. Little do the individuals realize the extent to which their cognitive processes get regulated, which ultimately results in disparities. Disparities lead to binaries and binaries later pave way for inequity and bigotry. The mankind at its very core is governed by binaries. These binaries would seem innocuous at first, but they possess the ability to circumscribe an entire society thereby wielding its control and influence over every single individual member in this society.

Oftentimes gender scrutiny and related studies get limited to the irregularities and atrocities faced by women community alone. The idea of 'Hegemonic masculinity' (Connell 71) was developed only a few years back, but has considerably contributed to the growing theories of men's studies and related gender notions. Certain categories of male sex are overlooked and ignored in the concepts and theories pertaining to conventional feminism and gender studies. Hegemonic masculinity was a concept first introduced by R. W. Connell in his findings based on gender order theory. Hegemonic masculinity originally gains its roots from Antonio Gramsci and his findings on cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony analyses the hierarchies and order existent within the society that renders a particular group of individuals a certain kind of power and authority. Every society is evidently encapsulated within this complex structure of ideologies that act as governing predicaments for each and every individual. Society is never

devoid of these widespread regulatory bodies. Each and every society differs in many ways and aren't devoid of variations. These variations are governed by the extensive disparities found in respective geographical and cultural backgrounds.

They are still strongly existent within the very base of cultural perceptions possessed by every single individual. These patterns develop as an end result of boundaries and binaries; moreover reinforce them more strongly thereby setting various other patterns of distinctions within the society. One of the most identifiable and discernible binaries strongly existent within the existing social order is the gender binary. The uneven set of ideologies for these separate biological forms could be identified as one of the many driving factors which has lead the society to its current stereotypical situation. Stereotypes are generally regulated by patriarchal structures. Men in countries like Korea, Japan and China are now choosing the "pretty boy" look as opposed to the stereotypical male 'perfection' demanding tough looking men. Thus it is very important to identify and draw attention to these changing ideologies, which emphasize the demand for adequate revisal of thoughts pertaining to gender binaries, because no matter what the end result of these regulations is the subjugation of either one group or the other.

Initially 'Hegemonic masculinity', directly or indirectly reinforced the existing ideologies and stereotypical concepts related to conventional manhood and idealized male principles. The overtly female oriented studies on gender inequality concentrate on the stereotypically entangled lives of women alone. Men are equally strained to adhere to certain archetypal roles, forced to fit in to the pattern set by the society. He is expected to compress his emotions like fear, anxiety, grief etc, because an 'ideal' man, from his very childhood is taught to delve within his compacted emotions, devoid of any liberty to express them freely. It

has been an age old notion that men aren't supposed to cry, neither are they allowed to penetrate into the boundaries of emotional qualities usually possessed by his female counterpart. A serious evaluation of the gender oriented ideologies inculcated into the young minds of children during their early growing period points to the horror that it later leads to, situations where bias and prejudice arise. Early literature often set a pattern for the 'hero' figures, which was later imbibed and followed by future writers. Early heroes were depicted as brutal and violent and were often excluded from the characteristic features like gentleness and compassion. Thus these stereotypical boundaries unnecessarily compel the male kind to arrive at the emotionally unstable situation they often reach at the end.

In addition to the psychological and emotional categorization patterns set for men, they are also forced to adhere to certain prototypal physical features. Men are expected to possess the rugged masculine stature and appearance. East Asian effeminacy is one of those growing trends that has the ability to redo the whole model of idealism related to men and their stereotyped features of perfection.

According to the concepts propounded by Hegemonic masculinity, masculinity deviates into several different hierarchies of variations. Masculinity can be differentiated based on the historical, geographical and psychological disparities among people. These complexities have given rise to the several male divisions. It is often argued that hegemonic masculinity could also be used in analyzing gender theories, education, criminology, the representations of masculinity in the mass communications media, the health of men and women, and the functional structure of organizations (Connell 19). Thus theoretically 'Hegemonic masculinity', studies those factors that slowly give rise to a state where there is clear dominance and authority shown by one faction over the other. Often the 'other' in these situations surrender to

these age old ideologies and notions allowing themselves to be marginalized in various fronts.

Associated studies in this area have augmented certain new concepts in theories related to men's studies, archetypal convictions related men and patriarchal norms governing the rights and wrongs of individuals. Most of the concepts in this area stems from feminist theories addressing the issues within patriarchal power structures and gender hierarchies.

Behavioral patterns of every individual depend upon the cognitive evolution they undergo. The history of a particular country or an ethnic group greatly influences the attitude and temperament of the inhabitants. These factors also influence the stereotypical perceptions they adorn themselves with. The tag of ideal masculinity is often attributed to western male standards. The association of 'masculine' to the west and 'feminine' to the east is not a new phenomenon, but something that slithered into the colonized conditioning process devised by the colonizers themselves. East Asian countries and their history define a varied kind of experience which evidently reflects into their standard thought processes and viewpoints.

Thus East Asian concepts of masculinity differ extensively from western concepts of masculinity in many ways due to differences in their spiritual and psychological history. Western ideologies pertaining to masculinity gave additional importance to war and rogue battles. While East Asian gender concepts were mostly associated with rationality and intellectual capabilities of male figures thus giving little importance to the conventional male ideals of rogue physicality and a callous personality. Thus East Asian views on masculinity have evidently arisen from the historical figures and the wide-ranging geographical chronology of these nations.

'Pan-East Asian soft masculinity' is a new concept that relates masculinity and scholastic capabilities. For example, 'wen' masculinity in

China is determined by the literary attainments of an individual, and something that is considered as the greatest achievement or '*seonbi*' masculinity in Korean history referring to the scholastic officials in the country. Masculinity and gender ideologies are gradually shifting and are slowly evolving to be a more hybridized. Though effeminacy is generally associated to homosexual behavioral patterns, they hardly have any connections with the sexual orientations of an individual. Effeminacy is an attribute also associated with soft, nurturing and sensitive men. The 'Warm Man' concept in South Korea (*nuan nan*) and the 'Herbivore man' in China are considerable examples of the new trends spreading across these Asian countries. In addition to the 'pretty' image, they are also associated to various other features, for instance these characters are considered to be more understanding and sensible. Thus depiction of these characters in literature and popular culture are setting new set of specifications adopted by female audience in determining the desirability rate of these individuals. The collective consciousness and personal experiences influences every evolved stereotype withheld and propagated by a specific community.

## References

1. Connell, R.W. *Masculinities*. University of California. 2005.
2. Donaldson, Mike. "What is Hegemonic Masculinities?" Springer. 1993.
3. Connell, R.W. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society*. 2005.
4. Tamaru, Christina Akiko. *The Herbivorous Men of Japan: Negotiating New Masculinities*. MAThesis. Whitman College, 2012.
5. Herdt, Gilbert.H. *Third sex, third gender: beyond sexual dimorphism in culture and history*. Zone Books, 1996.

## EVOLUTION OF SELF: A STUDY OF BARBARA KINGSOLVER'S NOVELS

**Ms.P.Aarthi**

*Assistant Professor of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Ecocriticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyze the environment and break through possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation. Ecocriticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works, both published in the mid-1990s

Barbara Kingsolver emerged in the American literary scenario during the 1980. Through out the three decades of her literary career, she has followed the progressive social conscience of her times. The thematic concerns in her writings include feminism, environmentalism and post colonialism. The importance and timeliness of the themes, the sensitivity to women's experience and the way she captures the interpersonal dynamics among rural and working classes make Kingsolver unique in her writings.

Barbara Kingsolver was born on April 8, 1955, in Annapolis, Maryland. She began writing for science journals in graduate school. Her first novel, *The Bean Trees*, was published in 1988. In 1998, Kingsolver published *The Poisonwood Bible*, which was short-listed for the Pulitzer Prize. She established and funds the Bellwether Prize for Fiction, awarded to unpublished writers whose works support social change

*Evolution of Self: A Study of Barbara Kingsolver's Novels* is devoted to an individual examination of female protagonists in the first four novels of Barbara Kingsolver. The study involves a feminist perspective of analyzing the evolving female self in the select novels. It focuses on the environmental and social aspects

rather than the psychological examination of individual characters.

Feminism in fiction can take a number of forms. Mostly, it is based on the equality of women with men and feminist writers portray the discrimination of women in the society. Indeed a feminist novel may illustrate the capabilities of women. Barbara Kingsolver portray how women undergo significant personal growth and transformation, moving from weakness and Victimization to strength, feminist novelist have made significant use of a reworked version of the Bildungsroman.

Kingsolver's works also participate in the genre of the female Bildungsroman. It is not solely a search for identity but rather an exploration and articulation of the process leading to a purposeful awakening of the female protagonist.

Kingsolver's female protagonists are the fictional representation of the evolving female self. All the select novels celebrate the bonding that women must develop in their struggle to achieve self-hood. Kingsolver's novels expand the feminist thought of sisterhood and communal bonding that bring changes. Rejecting the self-interested autonomous individual self, a social view of more independent, collective and co-operative model of social relations is described in the novels. All the protagonists seek a bond to enhance the quality of life.

*The Bean Trees* and its sequel *Pigs in Heaven* focus on the development of Taylor Greer, the female protagonist in both the novels. In her journey of realization of self, Taylor provokes motherhood from which she makes an escape and later joins with the matriarchal community

in Tucson. Taylor understands the strength and bondage of community living and becomes politically enlightened. The other resilient female characters whose supplement Taylor's personal evolution are also evaluated.

In *Animal Dreams*, protagonist Codi Noline's journey towards self understanding is analyzed. Her lack of sense of belongingness and her miscarriage contribute to her crisis. Her decision to return to her home town serves as a catalyst for her awakening. Codi Noline's weakness at the beginning combined with her self evaluation and gradual maturation is analysed in detail.

In the novel *The Poisonwood Bible*, the protagonist Leah Price moves from an idealist, carrying the western and personal arrogance of her father to African Congo transforms into an earnest activist with the influence of the character Anatole, an African. The multiple perspectives of female characters and their response to patriarchy have been analyzed.

The female self is not static and unchanging, but it undergoes fundamental changes when comes to understand the social world. Kingsolver's resilient women impel their fellow women to take up the responsibility of shaping their destiny which is based on their own decisions. The protagonists successfully undergo experiences and make a clear understanding and assimilation with situations that enable the development of Inherent power. Their self undergoes an evolution. This evolution signifies transitions.

#### Works Cited

1. Kingsolver, Barbara. *Animal dreams: a novel*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1991. Print.
2. Kingsolver, Barbara. *The Bean Trees*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992. Print.

## THE DYNAMIC FACETS OF WOMEN AS PROLIFERATED IN MALAYALAM LITERATURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *CHILAPPATHIKARAM*

**Dr.D.Rejikumar**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Languages, M.E.S. College, Nedumkandam, Idukki, Kerala*

### Introduction

Women empowerment has been an inevitable part of any convergent society. Though the process had begun long before, the basic set of mind against the women as pertained to any society worldwide could no longer be changed much. Hence relentless efforts for the welfare and empowerment of women also have been going on in parallel. Literature has greater part to enhance this venture and is already proven since the earlier times. The medium of literature could ever convey the ideas concerned in quite effective manner and it can plunge into the minds of the readers like trident and thereby develop gradually a positive culture in both the individual and society. The Research Paper is an endeavor to analyze and evaluate the responses of brave women idols in literature against the exploiter societies from time to time.

### *Kannaki in Chilappathikaram*

Kovalan - Kannaki couples in the ancient Tamil legendary poem *Chilappathikaram* comes into prime importance because of the responsive nature of *Kannaki* at the critical and crucial moment of her life. Kovalan and Kannaki enjoyed quite a happy married life. Then, Kovalan who got infatuated by the enchanted beauty of a dancer called Madhavi, lived with her for a pretty long time and later returned to Kannaki realizing his mistake. Kannaki could not make any difference even then and they decided to leave the place and live in Madurai for the rest of their calm life. Since Kovalan had lost all the money he had with Madhavi and they had no means to live

on, Kannaki gives him her anklet (*Chilambu*) to sell it in the market, where he was caught by the King's servants suspecting that he had stolen the anklet of the queen and was chopped off by head. When Kannaki knew about this outrageous punishment for her innocent husband she proved that her husband was innocent and in extreme wrath, she plucked one of her breasts, threw it at the earth so that the whole Madurai was burnt into ashes.<sup>1</sup>

Though the story was envisaged as a legend, there is a matter of fact about the patience of the consecrated wife, Kannaki all throughout her life. She did not respond to the illegal and immoral life of her husband with the dancer Madhavi. But even after they had begun a new life and lost him forever by mistake of the authority, she bursts out. Within that time she had experienced all difficulties of a wife who had nothing to expect from a husband, who was not at all interested in her. The stress she had in mind might be getting little bit relieved when she got him back from the clutches of Madhavi. Like every patient woman she too expected that the rest of the life would at least be meaningful. But the ill fate in terms of the Madurai king shattered her dreams which might have aroused a strong thought of vengeance not only towards the King, but also towards the whole of Madurai. Kannaki, out of her extreme wrath, grief and despair responds wildly towards the people responsible for her life to be in doom. She was down to earth till her last resort of expectation was drained out. Like any patient woman, [women are more patient than men in common] she leads a life without any complaint to anyone even when her husband abandons



her for a better choice. But at the same time when she realizes that she has nothing left in this world, responds strongly and when it happened, the result was little bit severe about the whole land. The wrath of Kannaki which burnt Madurai into ashes as depicted in the legend is more or less a story but emphasizes the need of women to respond against any unjust approaches towards them, but on time.

### ***Devi in Pandavapuram***

Devi in Pandavapuram is a school teacher. Her husband Kunjikuttan abandoned her one night for no reason after she had a child.<sup>2</sup>Hence she tries to find out some reason for the same or in other words the descent of her husband. This smashed her mindset in such a way that she started thinking and doing everything in quite a frantic manner. The story of Devi in the novel progresses through her confused thoughts.

After the descent of Kunjikuttan, Devi has been waiting at the platform of the railway station regularly in search of someone to come. She only knows that she is waiting for her *Jaran* (means a womanizer). She is trying to evoke him from Pandavapuram which is actually a city in her hallucinations. But when he comes to her and lives in her house for some days she does not seem to identify him or accept him as *Jaran*. The young man tries to reveal his identity and make her believe that he is from Pandavapuram. But she denies everything. At last when the time comes she appears herself in the attire of Durga and defeats him by saying that she had been evoking him<sup>3</sup> from Pandavapuram to defeat him in all respects to satisfy herself. The psychological transition of Devi into Draupathi and Durga enlivens the novel.

The whimsical thoughts of Devi take the root cause from her husband Kunjikuttan who abandoned her for baseless doubts regarding her chastity. The innocence and extreme grief in this regard upsets her mind and takes to her own world of fantasy in which she tries to gain

something out of the total loss. She wanted to find out some reason for the deed of her husband. She assumed herself to be in an imaginary city called Pandavapuram with her husband where a number of womanizers (*Jaran*) move about. She assumes to evoke one among them to defeat physically and mentally in retaliation to the suspicious husband. She is in disguise of Durga as worn in red silk sari, blouse with red dot and vermilion at the temple<sup>4</sup> when she 'defeats the *Jaran* physically'.

The story of Draupathi in Mahabharatha is improvised in the novel to a contemporary level. The new Draupathi also gets five husbands, though she liked to marry only the third one of the five brothers. However when they started to quarrel each other upon her, she abandons them saying that she hate them like waste or rather, worms. She moves to the top of the hill nearby and starts meditation and becomes Durga Devi with a temple around later. For any human being, irrespective of whether a husband or wife, mental calmness is a basic requirement. Hence the descent of Draupathi may not be blamed in any respect. However since the story of Draupathi<sup>5</sup> is depicted in the novel, as it is told by the *Jaran* to Raghu and Shyamala, an element of incredibility lies in it.

Quite Psychologically, Devi was shattered mentally by her husband's abandonment for no reason. Since she tries to make up her mind, finds a way to balance the loss of her husband with the help of an imaginary womanizer from an imaginary place. Her wrath and vengeance towards the irresponsible husband is revealed through the attire of Durga, who says that she wants to defeat him, her husband and all men in the world sexually, physically and mentally. If the husband had left her for mere doubt about her chastity, she also becomes ready to receive more than one man in place of him. In order to rectify the deed, she seeks the best idol Draupathi who had five husbands at a time. Besides, Draupathi in the novel moves ahead of

the one in Mahabharatha. She abandons all the five husbands when she realized that her life among them would be in doom.<sup>6</sup>This forms a clear warning for the world of men that they will be rewarded with the same coin. In short, Devi who 'defeats a womanizer' though in dream and Draupathi who left her five husbands and became Durga, (one of the most powerful goddess), represent the empowered woman of the time. The idol Durga devi who represents the vigor becomes an apt character in the novel in addition.

### Eco- Feminist Approaches in Contemporary Malayalam Poems

Contemporary Malayalam poems render great importance to eco-feminism. The concern towards nature in terms of feminism has two aspects. One is that nature is equated with the mother. The other is the exhortation to preserve nature. When the mankind can consider nature as the mother of the whole world, the prompting element of personification of nature urges to protect her towards the welfare of all living things. This forms the basis of all eco-conscious literary works all over the world from time to time or otherwise, all eco-conscious literary works have been more or less eco-feminist in nature. Besides, as far as such eco-feminist works are concerned, they also include the realities of all cruelties and exploitations against women just as to Nature. This double edged sword has helped a lot to draw the attention of the readers and inculcate a cultural transformation against such unjust attitude of the mankind, which had ever been male centered.

The ever loving poet of Malayalam, Prof. O.N.V. Kurup in one of his poems, '*Bhoomikkoru Charama Geetham*' (A tribute to the Earth) reveals the best example for the statement. He considers the earth as the mother of the world and whose children exploit her so as to put her near to death. The plundering of earthly resources by the greedy people without any

control is criticized by the poet. He pays tribute to the mother earth lamenting that her own children stripe off her, and drink the blood that oozes out of her heart.<sup>7</sup>The heart rending verse of the poet is against the reckless exploitations of the earth which ultimately changes even the entire climate. The infringement towards nature at the same time represents the attacks against any woman who should be respected and protected, but it is not being done. Just like Nature, the protection of women becomes a necessity for the preservation of the mankind.

The poet Sugathakumari is yet another pioneer of environmental protection as well as that of women. Her poems in general reside in the lap of nature. In one of her poems, *Thulavarshappacha*, (The greenery after the rain in the Malayalam month *Thulam*) she rejoices with the natural beauty of *Attappady* in Wayanad district after a ten days' rain there. She compares the place to a bride dressed in green silk<sup>8</sup> and fully ornamented. When there was no rain for a long time in *Attappady*, it was like a desert; which soon changed into greenery with the rain in *Thulam*. The personification of nature here also is depicted as on behalf of a young woman who had been starving out of food and water and when it was obtained became active again.

Many poems of Murukan Kattakada assume the eco-feminist structure. In the poem *Thirike Yathra* (The return journey), the river assuming herself as the Ganges asks Bhageerathan to take her back to heaven.<sup>9</sup>It was Bhageerathan who had brought her to the Earth. Since the lofty people have plundered her shores and sand, the extinction of the river has been imminent. The river realizes that she will be left for mere name sake not so longer. The poet appears in place of river and makes a plea to Bageerathan to save her from this world.

### Conclusion

Feminism in literature has long been a tool for the transformation into a new culture which

can eradicate the inequalities and injustice against the women worldwide. The process is a slow one and though it doesn't solve the immediate problems concerned, it has certain implications in the contemporary world. Anyway, the campaigns far and wide in this regard led by the women community may be a positive result of the enlightenment of the womanhood. Literature still encourages the society to be with them for want of their almost complete equality with the men in all ways.

### References

1. Adikal Ilango, *Chilappathikaram*, Ramesan Nair S., (Translated), Current Books, Kottayam, 1978. P.322-324.
2. Sethu, *Pandavapuram*, D.C. Books, Kottayam. 1979. P.24
3. Ibid, p.90-91
4. Ibid, p.86.
5. Ibid, p. 74-75.
6. Ibid, p.75.
7. Kurup O.N.V. (Prof.), *Bhoomikkoru Charamageetham*, [http://kavithwam.blogspot.com/2011/10/blog-post\\_13.html](http://kavithwam.blogspot.com/2011/10/blog-post_13.html) accessed on 13/10/2018.
8. Sugathakumari, *Thulavarshappacha*, D.C. Books, Kottayam, 1990. P.18.
9. Kattakada Murugan, *Murukan Kattakadayude Kavithakal*, D.C. Books, Kottayam. 2010. P.21.

## **GENDER CRISES IN THE TWO NOVELS OF SHASHI DESHPANDE: THE DARK HOLDS NO TERROR AND THE BINDING VINE**

**D. Anandhi**

*Assistant Professor of English, PSG College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore*

### **Introduction**

Shashi Deshpande has gained reputation as a serious writer with tremendous potential. Most of Deshpande's protagonists are women who are educated and exposed to western ideas. The emotional unrest in the minds of these women and their reactions to various issues related to women, caught between tradition and modernity, are liable to be treated from a feminist angle.

The woman of today stands self-possessed on the door sill of social change in an uncravable position. She is deeply aware of the injustice piled on her and unlike her counterpart a generation ago; she does not believe that woman is an inferior being who must remain passive and submissive. The awakening of the woman's consciousness as depicted by Shashi Deshpande in her novels deserve a close study to value the range of representation of a woman's point of view. This has also made the researcher to undertake a study of her novels from a feminist point of view.

A close study of Shashi Deshpande's two novels *The Dark Holds No Terror* and *The Binding Vine* reveal her enormous sympathy for women. She gives us a peep into the state and condition of the present-day woman, who is intelligent and is, aware of her capabilities, but thwarted under the weight of male chauvinism. Women are the products of a painful period of transition in society where they have great share of responsibilities than their predecessors.

Saru of *The Dark Holds No Terror* is a representative of middle class working women in modern India, rebelling against traditions but ultimately trying to compromise with existing

reality. When her professional success has cast a shadow on her married life, she undergoes a trauma, but eventually stands up to the situation. She realizes that escapism is never a solution and that she is her own refuge. She succeeds in realizing her selfhood through her profession and proves to the world that economically independent women like her can bring change in the society and that women as individuals can have some significant control over their relationships and her professions. Her promise of reconciliation with her husband is not her defeat or submission but her newfound confidence to confront reality. Thus she achieves freedom and harmony in life without compromising on her obligations and responsibilities.

Urmila of *The Binding Vine* is ahead of Saru by her endeavours to help other women- the poor and the downtrodden. She strongly believes that women should have the courage to express themselves and expose the evils of the society fearlessly. She is indignant at the uncomplaining attitude of the victims in the name of family honour. Accordingly, she exhibits interest and capacity to purge the society of its evils. She is an independent individual from the beginning with an identity of her own. She draws the society's attention to the inequality of sexes and there is less agony in attempting to change societal roles and attitudes. In spite of all this, she does not rebel against the established system because things are improving gradually but surely, though at a slow pace.

As analyzed in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *The Binding Vine* - Shashi Deshpande

succinctly presents the inequalities and injustice on women because of their subordinate status. The Gender discrimination is aptly presented in these two novels. Sarita is always neglected and ignored in favour of her brother. She is not given any importance; no parental love is showered upon her even on her birthdays. When her brother gets drowned, she is blamed for it. The same thing happens to Vanaa of *The Binding Vine* whose father never takes notice of her. Her father cares more about Kishore rather than about Vanaa. Vanaa herself realizes this and says so to Urmila.

Shashi Deshpande has successfully presented the inequalities and injustice on women because of their subordinate status. Saru's husband, Manohar in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, is a glaring example of men with fragile egos, who find it difficult to accept the superior status of their wives in the society. Deshpande also holds society responsible for the disastrous condition of Saru's marriage. Manu, who already suffers from an inferiority complex, is further humiliated by the cruel remark of his colleague's wife and those of the girl who interviews Saru.

In *The Binding Vine* Deshpande make a bold attempt to tackle the subject of marital rape. Through the character of Mira, she focuses attention on all those women who are doomed to suffer silently night assaults of their husbands because the very idea of a woman protesting against her husband's sexual advances is unheard of in our society. Deshpande also hints at the lack of compatibility in Urmil's marriage even though hers is a love marriage. Through the character of Shakutai, Deshpande shows how at the lower level of society, marital vows are flouted most casually by men like Shakutai's husband. He is a good-for-nothing drunkard who leaves his wife and three children to fend for themselves and hankers after another woman. But this physical torture is presented in another point of view in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. When Saru

becomes a doctor, Manu feels proud of being the husband of a 'lady doctor', he is responsible for the disintegration of Saru into a 'terrified - trapped animal'. Saru's married life crumbles as she attains heights in her professional career and Manu fails to become a famous poet. Due to the inferiority complex and inability to accept his failure, Manu manifests his frustrations in the form of sexual sadist attacks by the night.

The monogamous nature of women is hinted in these two works of Deshpande. The protagonists share a greater level of compatibility with men other than their husbands. This compatibility often leads towards crossing of the boundary of platonic friendship and progresses towards physical attraction. But Deshpande's women do not overstep the limits of propriety in these two novels. In *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Saru meets her former class-mate Padmakar Rao and renewal of their friendship seems to border on an affair. Padmakar Rao reveals dissatisfaction with his wife, tries to lure Saru into a relationship. Vulnerable though she is, with the horrifying nocturnal attacks by her husband, Saru refuses to accept the advances made by him. She is however not averse to being flaunted around by Boozie who, she is aware, is using her as a cover to his homosexuality.

Similarly, Urmil's association with Dr. Bhaskar in *The Binding Vine* develops into more than a platonic relationship. Urmil, whose husband is a Naval Officer and for many months in a year is away from house, yearns at times for physical gratification. Dr. Bhaskar's self-admitted interest in her and her own attraction towards him offer her an opportunity to indulge in a physical union. But she refuses to let herself be enticed into an extra-marital affair.

Though these two protagonists suffer humiliation in this tradition bound, male dominated society, they never want to go against the existing system of family. They are realists to the core. They are against the rigid

codes and customs practiced in conventional society, Saru faces sexual harassment and physical torture. At last she compromises to the existing situation and to Manu. She has come to feel with the spirit of compassion that she shall take pity on Manohar who is also a patient and who deserves treatment. Similarly in 'The Binding Vine' Urmila realizes that Anu has gone but she still has her son Karthick. Urmila realizes that however burdensome one's ties are, however painful one's experiences are, one can never give up.

Hence from a detailed study of these two novels, one can come to the conclusion that Shashi Deshpande appears to believe that the women have to blame themselves for victimization. She, therefore, suggests that they themselves have to break the shackles that have kept them in the shackles in a state of captivity for several centuries. Finding themselves trapped in the roles assigned to them by society, her women attempt to assert their individuality, and confront their husbands in search of freedom. They try to redefine human relationship without rejecting outright the cultural and social background. They realize the need to live in the family but reject the roles prescribed to them by the society. They try to achieve self-identity and independence within the confines of marriage. Thus they manage to extricate themselves from male dominance. At the same time, they are not willing to forgo the security marriage offers them. In short, Shashi Deshpande's women want the best of both the worlds.

Her heroines are against the rigid traditional codes and conventional morality. Her protagonists are middle class working women. They have strong will power and protest against male dominated society. She presents women characters in a realistic way; they are not mere exaggeration or imaginary characters. In her novels, she presents all types of women characters, educated, illiterate, working, and non-working. But all suffer

subjugation in this society. The heroines strive hard to be liberated from the conventional codes. But they never try to ape the western feminist's way of life. They want freedom only in this tradition bound family system. They do not like to go against the existing system of family.

A detailed study of these two novels has shown the real predicament of women in Indian society. Women want to protest against the male chauvinistic society. Even though they are educated and have a good profession, they suffer in this tradition bound society. They suffer to cope up with double duties, the domestic and the official. This has been clearly presented through the characters of Sarita and Urmila. They suffer not only physically but also psychologically.

The study of these two novels makes one understand the trials and tribulations of Indian women in general. Shashi Deshpande does not make one feel pessimistic but on the other hand, presents the view point that there is always hope at the end of the tunnel and the women have the guts to face life courageously.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

1. Deshpande, Shashi. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1990.
2. Deshpande, Shashi. *The Binding Vine*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1993.

### Secondary Sources

1. Awasthi, A.K. "The Quest for Identity in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande", *Quest for Identity in Indian English Writing Part I: Fiction*. Pathak.R.S (ed.) New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1992. P.P.95-111.
2. Bhatt, Indira. "Shashi Deshpande's 'The Dark Holds No Terrors: A Study in Guilt Consciousness'", *Indian Women Novelists: Set III: Vol.4*. Dhawan.R.K. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1995, P.P 41-50.

3. Deshpande, Shashi. "The Dilemma of a Women Writer", *The Literary Criterion*, Vol.20, No. 4, 1985, P .33.
4. Deshpande, Shashi. "Of Concerns, of Anxieties," *Indian Literature*, Vol. XXXIX, No.5, Sep – Oct, 1996, P. 107.
5. Dwivedi, Shubha. "To Be or Not to be:" The Question of Profession Women in Shashi Deshpande's 'The Dark Holds No Terrors,' *Indian Writing in English: A Critical Study*. Agarwarl, K.A.(ed.) New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributers, 2003, P.P. VIII, P. 232-235.
6. Indira, S. "A Bond or Burden?: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's "The Binding Vine", *Indian Women Novelists III*: Vol.6.Dhawan.R.K. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1995, P.P.21-27.
7. --- Conclusion. A Feminist Perspective on Novels of Shashi Deshpande. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2001. P.P.160. P.146-160.
8. Sandhu, Sarabjit. "The Image of Woman in "The Dark Holds No Terrors", *Indian Women Novelists III*: Vol.V. Dhawan.R.K. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1991, P.P. 82-89.
9. Sree, S. Prassana, "The Binding Vine", *Women in The Novels of Shashi Deshpande: A Study*, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2003. P.P. XVIII. P. 89-106.
10. --- Conclusion. Women in The Novels of Shashi Deshpande: A Study, New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2003. P.P. XVIII, P.120-124.

## **DUNGRI GARASIYA FOLKLORE AND FEMALE IDENTITY: “FIRST THERE WAS WOMAN” AND OTHER STORIES**

**Ms.Rehana Gaffar Vadgama**

*Assistant Professor of English, Maharashtra College of Arts, Science and Commerce*

### **Introduction**

India is one of the richest sources of oral literature which includes folktales, folklore, proverbs, riddles, songs, stories, etc. In recent times, folklore studies has gained impetus as it provides an opportunity to see and understand life and cultures from various perspectives. Folklore tends to communicate what people think and feel but are unable to express in their day-to-day conversation. Hence, to understand folklore as an expressive outlet, one needs to understand the cultural values, taboos, anxieties, and beliefs of the community in which the tradition-bearers operate in everyday life.

### **Literature Review**

Tribal Literature may consist of folklore, folktale, myth and legend. These terms are often used interchangeably since all of them were transmitted orally; however, it is a misconception. Although these terms serve to explain many ambiguities of human existence, they differ from each other not only in terms of meaning but also in terms of the experience they impart to the reader.

Folklore refers to the verbal compositions that have been transferred from one generation to another orally. According to M.H.Abrams, folklore includes

legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, spells, and nursery rhymes; pseudoscientific lore about the weather, plants and animals; customary activities at birth, marriages and deaths; and traditional dances and forms of drama performed on holidays or at communal gatherings.[105]

Bernard W. Bell defines folklore as

Symbolic representation of crucial life situations that are shared by a people, residually oral[...]myths that are moral as well as speculative, stories that are archetypal in pattern and ethnic in content. They explain the origin of things, activities of gods, and historical human dilemmas. They are therefore generally a fusion of myth and legend that are concerned with the founders of an ethnic group or lineage and that justify the taboos and authority of the group or lineage. [23]

Subsequently, folklore facilitates the tribes in expressing what they think in their own words. Alan Dundes argued that in folklore, more than in other forms of human evidence, 'one finds a people's own unselfconscious picture of themselves.' [xi] Thus, in tribal cultures, folklore serves as an instrument of creating a cultural identity. It enables the marginalized cultures to critique and eventually subvert the values and practices of the majority culture.

### **Folklore and Gender**

Feminist theories and approaches have been extremely important to the development of folklore. Feminist folklorists have delved deep into the women's experience and the expressions of their experiences through folklore to understand and examine the lives of the women in different cultures. Contemporary folklorists believe that folklore is used as a means of socializing members of a community and assigning them their gendered roles. Mary Ellen B. Lewis states:



The feminist attack has been largely centered on beliefs and sayings that tend to support and maintain the stereotypes, because these are major, although subtle, ways of inculcating values and enculturating members of society. They have validated and justified woman's role by referring to the past, thus seeking to maintain her role and cultural stability in the present and into the future. [85]

The marginalized woman is forced to remain submissive and voiceless. In a patriarchal society, female identity can be defined and articulated only in relation to man. Judith Lorber (1994) maintains that

Gender inequality – the devaluation of “women” and the social domination of “men” – has social functions and social history... the continuing purpose of gender as a modern social institution is to construct women as a group to be subordinate to men as a group[143]

However, it is through folklore, that the women contest and question the existing gender roles. Myths based on ancient matriarchal societies exist in different parts of the world. According to Adrienne Rich:

Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction is for women more than a chapter in cultural history. It is an act of survival.[18]

The act of re-vision enables the women to deconstruct the traditional narratives and enables them to bring women to the center. This helps them to construct a favourable and assertive female identity in a patriarchal culture that strives to undermine the individual identities of women.

### About the Author

Marija Sreš was a religious sister from Yugoslavia who strove for the upliftment and empowerment of the women of the Dungri Garasiya adivasis in Sabarkantha district of

North Gujarat who were the victims of a feudal and patriarchal society. Her conversations with the tribal women enabled her to understand ‘their hopes and fears, their desires and efforts, their struggles and joys.’[xxviii] During her literacy classes, some of the tribal women complained: ‘We don’t like those Hindu stories...they are not like our stories! ... Please write some stories for us; you know, “our” kind of story.’[xxxiv] This incident inspired her to record the incidents and narratives of the Dungri Garasiya women and give voice to their uniqueness and individuality.

Marija's first collection of short stories, “*Girasma ek Dungri*” (“To Survive and to Prevail”) was awarded the second prize in 1994 by the Gujarat Sahitya Akademi while the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad proclaimed it to be one of the ‘hundred most significant books in Gujarati literature’ [ix]. Manubhai Pancholi ‘Darshak’ appreciated her efforts in the following words:

...you, a foreign *ben*, have done what none of us ever dared to do – you have brought the tribal into literature, and the tribal woman into our literary consciousness. And for this, we will always be grateful to you, Marijaben. [xxxiv]

Her other works include “*Kavita Sathe Samvaad*” (“Talking with Young Women”), “*Home is where my Heart is*” (2004) and her autobiographical essay, “*Woman of Sabarkantha*”.

### First there was Woman and Other Stories

As in many tribal cultures, the Dungri Garasiyas use story-telling as a tool to transfer their history, religion, custom, traditions, etc. from one generation to another. It not only served as a means of transmitting their culture but also helped them in keeping their tribal language alive through songs, music, and poetry. This entertaining method of educating their tribe helps them to share, preserve and pass the legacy of their rich heritage to their future generations.

Mythology plays a key role in the lives of the Dungri Garasiyas. The unique feature of their range of mythologies is their Creation myth – the story that explained not only how their tribe came into being but also the origin of the entire humanity, which is entirely different from the one proposed by the West. The story of Genesis is rewritten through the story, “First There Was Woman”.

Most of the Creation myths emphasize how woman was relegated to the secondary status. However, the unique myth of the Dungri Garasiya traces the origin of humanity in the ‘first woman’ – not only does their existence begins with a woman but the process of procreation occurs in the absence of a man. The all-encompassing Kudrat (Nature) first creates Pruthvi (Earth) – a female entity. Kudrat endows Pruthvi with innumerable gifts to beautify her. Kudrat decorates her with mountains, all sorts of trees, bushes and creepers. Kudrat goes on to create animals and birds to amuse Pruthvi. Then, on the eve of the ‘*aamli-melo*’, Kudrat takes some soil and carves a beautiful *murti*: ‘this was the first living human being, the most beautiful shape Kudrat could think of – and it was a Woman.’[15]

He decides to call her Sati i.e. whole, intact and perfect. Soon, Sati feels lonely and desires for someone of her own species. She fulfils her urge to procreate with the help of a Sapsi (serpent) and later gives birth to a son:

‘so this is how man came into the world. He came to be, because Woman wanted it so and because Kudrat loved her so... and she must never forget that first it was Woman’s Kingdom.’[17]

Myth plays an important role in shaping the cultural heritage of a nation and/or community. The subversion of the Creation myth serves to demystify the Western, patriarchal myth of origin. The reinterpretation of the creation myth from a feminist perspective helped to subvert mythical stereotyped images of women. Thus, in the words of Monica Khanna,

‘there is a “remythification” which includes the idea of “demythification” of the original myth – that is to say, a reconstruction of the “original” myth, and the creation, in its place, of a new myth which subverts, demystifies and deconstructs the original myth.’

This myth is considered sacred by the Dungri Garasiya and thus, they respect women. In most of these stories, women are portrayed to be stronger, faster, and sharper than man. These women succeed by virtue of their cleverness, their guile and their wisdom. According to the Dungri Garasiyas, there was no gender divide at the dawn of creation. And hence, girls were as desired as the sons. Marija recollects how Sanjuben, their neighbour, who in spite of having six sons, prayed desperately for a girl child: ‘Oh, how she prayed that at least this one, whom she knew would be the last, should be a baby girl.’ [xxix]

The story ‘How Kava Deceived Kavi’ is based on the legendary characters Kava and Kavi, who survived the great deluge. This legend underscores the manner in which the vibrant and energetic Kavi who was, in all aspects, far more superior to Kava, was tricked into subordination by the deceitful Kava. Deva, the dark side of Kudrat, complicates the love relationship between Kava and Kavi for his amusement. Deva corrupts the mind of Kava to relegate Kavi to the secondary status either by strength or by trickery. Deva organizes a “*spardha*” to enforce male superiority and provides the tools necessary for digressing and deceiving Kavi during the running competition. The first digression comes in the form of dazzling silver earrings followed by a nose-ring and bangles, and a necklace which slowed her down. On the last day of the competition, Kava presented Kavi with a golden breastplate studded with precious stones and a pair of golden “*payal*”. Kavi, crushed under the weight of these ornaments, was no longer as fast and vivacious as she used to be:

'Ever since, men have used gifts, little and big, to distract women, and to make them to their bidding. Women, like Kavi, are happy to receive gifts, not realizing that like this they often lose their freedom.'[10]

Simone de Beauvoir, rightly said that: 'one is not born but rather becomes a woman...it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature.'[301] These 'controlling images'(Patricia Hill Collin's coinage) of women as being passive, weak, silent, and polite serve to objectify and oppress women. This legend, thus, critiques the conventional definitions of gender and the patriarchal notions of inferiority and superiority. It not only draws attention to the fact that the women of the Dungri Garasiya tribe must conform to their social roles, but also highlights the fact that through devaluation, these women became more and more vulnerable to violence of all kinds.

### Conclusion

Oral traditions have existed everywhere alongside the institutionalized and literate cultures of the world. One of the goals of folkloristic feminism is to clarify the role of women in oral literatures as the folklore of a community not only reflects the gender concepts of its time but also examines and justifies the prevailing roles and relations between the genders. It is, hence, necessary to document, examine, and study them to enrich our literature. Although some of these works have been rendered into recognized Indian languages, English renderings of these works would provide them an international coverage.

### References

1. Abrams M.H., Geoffrey Galt Harpham, "A Glossary of Literary Terms", Thomson Wadsworth, 2005.
2. Beauvoir Simone de, "The Second Sex", New York:Vintage Books, 1973
3. Bell Bernard W., "The Afro - American Novel and its Tradition", University of Massachusetts Press, 1989.
4. Dundes Alan, Preface to "Analytical Essays in Folklore" (1975), The Hague: Mouton, "The Meaning of Folklore: Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes" (2007) edited and introduced by Simon J. Bronner, Utah State University; All USU Press Publications. [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/usupress\\_pubs/53](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/usupress_pubs/53)
5. Khanna Monica, "Reinterpretation and Subversion of Mythical Stereotypes in Indian Literature", "fortell - A Journal of Teaching English Language and Literature" URL: [www.fortell.org/content/reinterpretation-and-subversion-mythical-stereotypes-indian-literature](http://www.fortell.org/content/reinterpretation-and-subversion-mythical-stereotypes-indian-literature).
6. Lewis, Mary Ellen B., "The Feminists Have Done It: Applied Folklore", "Journal of American Folklore", Vol.87, No. 343, 1974.
7. Lorber Judith, "The Social Construction of Gender" (1994), "The Inequality Reader: Contemporary and Foundational Readings in Race, Class, and Gender", Second edition, edited by David B. Grusky and Szonja Szelenyi, 2011, Boulder: Westview Press.
8. Rich, Adrienne, "When we Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision", "College English", Vol. 34, No. 1, "Women, Writing and Teaching", 1972, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/375215>
9. Sreš Marija, "First there was Woman and Other Stories: Folktales of the Dungri Garasiya Bhils"selected and retold by Marija Sreš, Zubaan an imprint of Kali for Women, 2007.

## **EXPLORATION OF SELF – QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN AUDREY THOMAS' "THE PRINCESS AND THE ZUCCHINI"**

**S.Bhuvaneswari**

*Assistant Professor of English, Christ Academy, Institute for Advanced Studies, Bangalore*

Over the last few decades, the concept of "gender", and 'identity' has received growing attention in nearly every field of academic study. Gender has become an important analytical tool in many disciplines because of the insight it gives into the cultural orders underlying representations. Theories of subjectivity have illustrated that identity is not something achieved and possessed but something individuals must consistently reestablish in various social contexts. This paper attempts to trace the growth of the self in the woman protagonist of Audrey Thomas's short story "The Princess and the Zucchini" who is in an eternal search for her identity (self).

Literary tradition has portrayed woman as weak, passive, gentle and modest, "the proper woman in male texts has been the selfless, self-effacing, docile, acquiescent, mute and submissive one, an angel in the house who accepts without demur the gender defined role assigned to her by the patriarchal society" (Asnani 84). But Audrey Thomas' women have turned away from the catchword consolations of patriarchy, security, marriage, property etc., and have arrived at self-articulation, gender based vision of an alternative organizing of life through self-assertiveness.

Audrey Thomas's stories record the saga of self-discovery of her female characters and track the heroine's journey towards female selfhood through her consciousness. Her stories deal with women's experiences in a male dominated culture. Her women are caught in oppressive stereotypes from which they struggle to create a female space for themselves. The woman protagonist, Zona in "The Princess and the

Zucchini," embarks in the process of her quest and aspires towards a progressive future by establishing her self and identity. She establishes her identity by not succumbing to the requests of the male lot.

"The Princess and the Zucchini" is a slyly wicked modern day fairy tale about the encounter between a young princess, Zona and a prince who has been turned into a zucchini. Like all princess in traditional fairy tales, Zona is also very beautiful. One night, walking through the garden she trips and stubs her toe on a large zucchini and suddenly she hears a deep voice. The voice makes Zona tremble in fear for there is nobody in sight. Being a princess, she tries to muster up her courage and questions as to who it is and what it wants. The voice answers with a deep groan and sighs that it is the zucchini that she earlier stubbed her toe against and that it can come back to its original form only if the princess kisses it. The voice alleges that it is truly a handsome young prince who has been cast under a wicked spell. But this, Zona is not ready to believe. Bewildered, she wonders:

"Who ever heard of a prince being turned into a zucchini! A bear, yes; a swan, certainly; even a frog, although personally I find that one a little hard to swallow. But a vegetable! That's utterly ridiculous. Somebody's pulling my leg."

[Goodbye Harold Good Luck 166]

The 'so-called' prince explicates his part of the story. He says that he comes from a very far away land across the sea and that he fell in love with her name even before seeing her portrait. He has travelled a year and a half to get there,

and all through the way he has been muttering her name “Zona, Zona, Zona” to keep up his courage (166). Standing in that garden, and gazing up at the light in her little window, he has tried to sing a song that he has composed about her beauty, when all of a sudden he has felt strange and the next thing he knew he has been turned into a tiny zucchini. He has been growing bigger everyday and now he is afraid that he might burst anytime because of his rapid growth.

In a usual fairy tale, all that the princess has to do is to kiss the zucchini to turn it back into a prince and the story will end with them getting married and living happily ever after. But Thomas offers a feminist twist to the theme of the captive prince. Zona does not want to kiss him. Instead she oppugns the credibility of his story. She questions him as to how he is so sure that only her kiss would turn him back into a prince and not anybody else's. When he replies that it is her name ‘Zona’, starting with the letter ‘z’ and he, being turned into a ‘zucchini’ also starting with ‘z’, she does not give in to his whims.

Unconvinced of his answers she says that it is not a name that she chose for her. Just like all the women in her family, she too has been named ‘Zona’. Although she doesn't like it, she has been forced to keep it. So to establish her identity, she decides to change her name to ‘Suzanne’, once she reaches a particular age. She does not believe in the ‘happily ever after’ concept of the prince. Contradicting him, she states: “Love doesn't really conquer all and, even if it did, I'm not in love with you, it's the other way around” (167). To her, even the very idea of kissing a zucchini sounds bizarre and repulsive. Not giving in to the postulations of the zucchini, she discards his pleas on the pretext of feeling sleepy and retires to her room leaving him imploring, “Oh please Zona . . . Just one little kiss. . . . I may have burst by then” (167). She wards off his accusation of being cruel, by explicating that she is being practical.

Every evening she meets the zucchini and listens to his stories about the distant land he comes from. She even starts enjoying his deep, thrilling voice and looks forward eagerly to hear his stories of adventures. But she will not kiss him. In that she is inexorable. She finds it ignoble to kiss a zucchini. When he cites the story of the Frog Prince being kissed by a princess, she disregards it saying that it is “another story and another princess; it's nothing to do with me.” (168), thereby reinforcing her identity once again.

One night sitting at her dressing table and brushing her long golden hair, Zona tries to imagine the young prince before he had been changed into a zucchini. She tries to imagine “happily ever after” (169). She stares at herself in the mirror and ascertains her beauty as has been told by her father, her mother and the zucchini. Looking at herself in the mirror she understands who the real ‘she’ is.

“But who is the ‘I’ who is so beautiful,” she thought. “Who is she? I will be fifteen next month. That's a lot of Ever After.” (169)

Now that she is fifteen and all matured, she realizes that it is time to change her name to ‘Suzanne’. She also realizes that she no longer should allow others to design her life. She manifests women's liberty to choose the man of her choice. So she decides to dismiss the idea of turning the zucchini into a prince and ultimately swallows the zucchini (quite literally), instead of “swallowing” his story of “happily ever after.”

The feminist implications are very much complex and the interpretation of this story subverts old themes and constructs new meanings. Patriarchal solemnity is disrupted in the story where all the traditional fairy tale expectations are set up and then subverted. Zona ascertains her feminist freedom and maintains her individuality by choosing not to kiss the zucchini, even if that would end up in the dangerous bursting of it. In the story's final paragraph, the princess cooks dinner for her

parents, and tells them its ratatouille – “I found the recipe in *The Joy of Cooking*” (170). The story ends with Zona serving her parents the food that she has prepared. While this ending is equally as final and conclusive as the traditional one – perhaps even more final – Thomas still voices her distrust of the fairy tale tradition. Or, more accurately, she articulates Zona’s misgivings about the fairy-tale ending, thereby establishing an identity for herself.

Audrey Thomas in this short story rejects inherited myths, undercut traditional romance structures, and begins to re-envision the love story. She creates new versions of romance which clarify her differing social visions. Thomas rests on the island of self. The deep-rootedness of her gender identities pushes her towards an affirmation of a woman’s experiential difference, and to the need for new versions of structure more appropriate to a heroine’s journey.

Bossanne, in her essay “Audrey Thomas and Lewis Carroll: Two Sides of the Looking Glass,” asserts that in Thomas’s writing, “one is forced to conclude that the path to order passes by the recognition of chaos (deconstructed fairy-tale), and constitutes the author’s deliberate ‘paradox’” (232). According to Bossanne, Thomas’s protagonists ultimately establish a clear definition of reality, going through a “corrective journey. . . in order to clear the character’s doubts as to the nature of reality” (218). Bossanne further suggests that Thomas’s ultimate intent is to present an image of harmony and order and in order for Thomas to perceive any such structure for reality, she would have to be external to the structure herself.

Thomas searches for scripts which validate the experience of her women characters. The traditional love story continues to be a script she envisions darkly, and Thomas often ironically creates a ‘romance noir’ version of such a script. She forsakes the traditional male quest for the apparent aimlessness of the heroine’s journey.

Hence she introduces direct or indirect fairy-tale allusions and parodies it by overturning their conventional implications. Narrative and patriarchal solemnity are both disrupted in “The Princess and the Zucchini” which parodies the traditional “The Princess and the Pea.” The conventional fairy tale expectations are set and are then subverted. As in the fairy tale, Thomas makes references to the thunderstorms, lightning and heavy rain. In the original tale the princess, in a completely worn out state, goes to the prince’s kingdom in want of a shelter, and claims herself to be a princess and is later put to test by the queen to prove that she is a real princess. In Thomas’s story, the roles are reversed; it is the prince who comes to the princess’s kingdom to woo her. When he is turned into a Zucchini by a witch’s curse, he struggles to prove the princess that he is a real prince. Contrary to the fairy tale, the princess here has a name, ‘Zona’ and thereby an identity to establish herself. The traditional sexual symbolism is reversed as Zona, refusing to believe the happily ever after story of the prince, cooks him for dinner, thus voicing the incredulity of the fairytale tradition.

Thus Thomas’s women reject the traditional ‘happily ever after’ of fairy tales, the domination of men over their lives, and the masculine code of behaviour for women, in favour of their own fantasies. They shatter female stereotypes and emphasize women’s competence and independence. Her protagonists posit themselves in a world of independence, which provides alternative definition of what it means to be a female. Her woman protagonists free themselves from the desire of what women must become and achieve the desirable feminist synthesis, exploring and exposing the heroic possibilities in them. They cease to swing in the ancient orbits and embrace new orbits of definition and define themselves in relation to artistic values other than those of male superiority stressed by patriarchy.

**Works Cited**

1. Asnani, Shyam. "The Female Identity." *Sunday Tribune* 13 Dec. 1992. Print.
2. Bossanne, Brigitte G. "Audrey Thomas and Lewis Carroll: Two Sides of the Looking Glass." *North Dakota Quarterly* 52.3, 1984. Print.
3. Thomas, Audrey. *Goodbye Harold Good Luck*. Toronto: Viking Books, 1986. Print.

## SOCIAL ISOLATION AND CONFUSION IN JAMES BALDWIN'S *GIOVANNI'S ROOM*

**Mrs.R.Sharon Rose**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore  
and*

**Dr. C. Divya**

*Assistant Professor of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Literature is one of the fine art that employs language as a medium of expression. It is essentially an expression of human feelings, emotions sufferings and ambitions. Fiction being the utmost characteristic and powerful form of literary expression, has acquired a prestigious position in the African American Literature. As a distinct literary form, the novel is certainly of recent birth. It is, in fact the latest of literary forms to be evolved and the most dominant in twentieth century.

James Arthur "Jimmy" Baldwin was an African American, an author, a fierce civil and social rights critic, and also a gay rights inspirationalist. While growing up in Harlem, in his teen years (early 1940's) Baldwin realized that he was gay and began to feel repressed by being both an African American and a gay man in a racist - homophobic.

In 1948, at the age of 24, Baldwin decided to move to France to escape the racism and homophobia of the American society. In France, Baldwin became an passionate writer and poet. As a novelist, he confronted social aspects, and complexities blacks, gays, and bisexual men had to face at the time, and also the internal struggles that these groups faced for acceptance.

In his book, *Giovanni's Room* (1956), he paints an interpretation of the life of an American living in Paris, and goes on about the feelings and frustrations he has about the relationships he's having with other men in his life; particularly, the feelings for an Italian bartender whom he met at a gay bar in Paris.

When Baldwin's American publisher refused to release this work in fear that the gay subplots would set against his audience, Baldwin published it in England instead.

While speaking about the decriminalization of homosexuality and the prejudice against homosexuals, Baldwin says, "Love is where you find it," and goes on to say, "No one has a right to try to tell another human being whom he or she can or should love." Baldwin asserts, "I was not born to be what someone said I was. I was not born to be defined by someone else, but by myself and myself only."

As one can find the artist in their work, one can also mark out the author in their work, their lives have a considerable effect on their written work. One can perceive this clearly in Baldwin's novel *Giovanni's Room*, while searching for the similarities between Baldwin's life and his novel. At the age of twenty-four, Baldwin moved to Paris, where he would soon meet and fall in love with a young Swiss artist. This occurrence can be seen paralleled in the novel as David also moves to Paris to escape his life in America and falls in love with another guy, Giovanni from Italy.

Few incidents from the novel explains that the story line came from Baldwin's own experiences in Paris. In an interview in 1980's, Baldwin states that he used some people he met in Paris as models for the characters in his story. Baldwin is quoted as saying "We all met in a bar, there was a blond French guy sitting at a table, he bought us drinks. And, two or three



days later, I saw his face in the headlines of a Paris paper. He had been arrested and was later guillotined . . . I saw him in the headlines, which reminded me that I was already working on him without knowing it". Anyone can see the similarity between this French man that Baldwin met and the plot of *Giovanni*. While these similarities are clear, they do not provide a form of autobiographical elements in Baldwin's novel.

Despite being a homosexual and African-American author Baldwin claims that neither of these topics are core in his novel. Mainly, none of the main characters in *Giovanni's room* are black. Baldwin states that this is for the reason that he feels "[he] certainly could not possibly have—not at that point in my life—handled the other great weight, the 'Negro problem.' The sexual-moral light was a hard thing to deal with. I could not handle both propositions in the same book. There was no room for it". Baldwin also declares that *Giovanni's room* is "not so much about homosexuality, it is what happens if you are so afraid that you finally cannot love anybody". The novel tells the story of not about what homosexual love is like, but rather what the fear of love can cause.

The reader meet the narrator, David as from the south of France, but most of the story is set in Paris. The novel develops as the story of a young American involved both with a woman and with another man, the man being the Giovanni of the title. When he had to make a choice, David choose the woman, Hella. In the novel, David narrates the story on a single night, the night before Giovanni is to be guillotined as a murderer. He speaks of his life in Giovanni's room, of leaving Giovanni for Hella and of making plans to marry her, and also of the effect of this on Giovanni, and of the effect of Giovanni's precarious situation on his own relations with Hella.

David struggles hard to accept himself as who he is, seeks to learn how to live as a homosexual man, but fails due to his confusion

whereas he lies to his friends but also to himself. It is not just society and social conventions which keep him pretending to be someone else; it's rather his fear of rejection from the society and social isolation. According to Jasmine DeGout, in *Giovanni's Room*, "the positive depiction of homoerotic love conveys the tragic theme of self-denial and that this positive depiction is deconstructed [...] to reveal the tragic failure of a society which produces deviant behavior" (426).

Throughout the whole story David keeps lying to his friends due to his confusion of his own sexuality. For instances, when he postpones telling Giovanni about his girlfriend Hella, and, on the contrary, lies to her about Giovanni. "I wrote to Hella, telling her nothing, or I wrote to my father asking for money. And no matter what I was doing, another me sat in my belly, absolutely cold with terror over the question of my life" (83).

After his first encounter with his homosexual relationship with Joey, David leaves him out of fear: "*But Joey is a boy.* [...] I was ashamed. [...] I was afraid. I could have cried, cried for shame and terror, cried for not understanding how this could have happened to me [...] And I made my decision" (9). David is ashamed of himself, and in the attempt to act as if nothing has happened he leaves Joey behind without saying one word. In order to protect his self-image he even goes so far as to be very mean to Joey the last time both met again sometime after their hook-up.

David realizes that he has a problem and his confusion in search for his identity, his way leads him to Paris: "I think now that if I had had any intimation that the self I was going to find would turn out to be only the same self from which I had spent so much time in flight, I would have stayed home. But again, I think I knew, at the very bottom of my heart, exactly what I was doing when I went to France" (21). David wants to go away from himself, and from everything that tells him who he really is.

In David's first meeting with Giovanni, he denies his appeal for him since he has become "assimilated the homophobic attitudes of mainstream society" (426). In fright of social isolation, he considers leaving Giovanni and going back home to America; he tries to find a get away by looking for a prostitute and then by having a sexual relationship with Sue in order to convince himself of being *normal*. David eventually decides to escape from himself – from his feelings – by planning the marriage with Hella. However, when he sees that he cannot deceive himself, he stumbles on asylum in alcohol and runs away from Hella into the homosexual customers and sees other men, like the sailor for example (427).

At the end, Jacques foretells that David will "end up trapped in [his] own dirty body" (57) if he doesn't "play it safe long enough" (57), which means if he does not permit Giovanni to love him and stay with Hella or any other girl for that matter just because it is *safer*, will come true. David's confusion of his own sexuality is responsible for his guilt he feels about Giovanni's execution at the end. Having left alone and broken up with him in order to restore his own idyllic world, David let Giovanni down; he knows he would never forget him regardless of his wrong decision: "I scarcely know how to describe that room. It became, in a way, every room I had ever been in and every room I find myself in hereafter will remind me of Giovanni's room" (85). In keeping with the theme of social isolation and confusion,

this novel also explores the topics of origin and identity. As Valerie Rohy elucidates,

Questions of origin and identity are central to James Baldwin's *Giovanni's Room*, a text which not only participates in the tradition of the American expatriate novel exemplified by Stein and, especially, by Henry James but which does so in relation to the African American idiom of passing and the genre of the passing novel. As such, *Giovanni's Room* poses questions of nationalism, nostalgia, and the constitution of racial and sexual subjects in terms that are especially resonant for contemporary identity politics. (218- 32)

### Works Cited

1. Baldwin, James. *Giovanni's Room*. New York: Vintage Books. 2013. Print
2. DeGout, Yasmin. "Dividing the Mind: Contradictory Portraits of Homoerotic Love in *Giovanni's Room*". *African American Review*. Vol. 26, No. 3, Autumn 1992: 425-427. JSTOR. Web. 18 Oct. 2014
3. "Queer Black History: James Baldwin." ROMEO, 27 Sept. 2018, [www.planetromeo.com/en/blog/queer-black-history-james-baldwin/](http://www.planetromeo.com/en/blog/queer-black-history-james-baldwin/).
4. Valerie Rohy, "Displacing Desire: Passing, Nostalgia, and *Giovanni's Room*." In *Passing and the Fictions of Identity*, ed. by Elaine K. Ginsberg. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.

## RESETTING THE PATRIARCHAL PARADIGM: AN ANALYSIS OF MEENAKANDASAMY'S POETRY

**T.P.Misha**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore  
and*

**Dr.B.Anitha**

*Assistant Professor of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Poetry as an art and sociological critique has a long history that dates back to the Vedic times in India. Indian epics and mythology are verse narratives written in classical languages like Sanskrit. However, the genre prevailed against the European colonization and poetry continues to be the most revered literary genre even after the advent of colonizer's language. Indian English poetry, over the years, has appropriated the foreign language to tell the unique cultural experiences in 'Indianized' English. Nissim Ezekiel's poetry marks the beginning of the modern age in Indian English poetry post-independence. His use of artless, conversational style of language to communicate the mundane personal and societal events has inspired and influenced a horde of poets that followed him. Contemporary Indian poetry follows the social mobility, changes and the upheavals that arise in the nation. MeenaKandasamy's poems stand out among the common expressions which are usually the voice of the urban middle class, for she represents the Dalit feminist voice in modern-day India.

MeenaKandasamy is a Chennai-based Indian writer whose poems, novels, translations and activism focus on the multi-layered forces of oppression being played by the normative structures in a society. She addresses the subaltern issues of the backward caste community and Dalit women in the patriarchal paradigm with fierce revolutionist fervour. Kandasamy has penned two novels, two books of poetry and a few essays on this theme. Her

first collection of poetry *Touch* (2006) was written at a very young age and it garnered attention right from its publication, for its foreword is written by Kamala Das, appraising her poetic vision. It is a collection of eighty-four poems divided into seven categories: "Bring him up to worship you", "Touch", "Add some spice", "To that more congenial spot", "Lines of control", "Slander in a slaughterhouse", and "Their daughters". And the second collection of poetry *Ms. Militancy* (2010) has forty poems in it.

Kandasamy's poems challenge the established systems of a patriarchal society through a feminist lens. She breathes fire into her words transforming them as tools for re-visioning the dogmas. Her anger against the stringent systems imposing values of the privileged is expressed as raw and harsh in a language that is "dark and dangerous and desperate in its eagerness to slaughter (the) myths" (Kandasamy *Ms. Militancy*9). It articulates a compelling sense of urgency instigating the readers to resist and rebel against all atrocities rather than fretting upon one's fate.

This paper makes an attempt to examine how MeenaKandasamy subverts the stereotypical images of women and endows them a new identity which is assertive and empowering, in poems in the two collections. Human perception differs from person to person as they are formed by many factors like one's age, gender, culture, religion, class and many more. But most of the perceptions are

learned ones that were passed on to generations without taking into consideration the changes and developments in the country. Indian society has always glorified the image of woman and motherhood to the status of Goddess which has gradually shaped her consciousness to internalise such values which unconsciously dictate the society's expectations on her. By consecrating her on an upper pedestal, certain norms of motherhood and femininity are conditioned upon her and any violation would brand her as debauch. The underlying trauma of a woman who is abandoned and betrayed becomes obscure when her losses get equated with her mystic powers. "Dead Woman Walking" reveals the inner recesses of the mind of a legendary figure in early Tamil literature, Karaikal Ammaiyar. The original version of the story where the woman gets pigeonholed as a mystic for her selfless devotion towards Lord Shiva, in spite of serving the duties of a wife and loving her husband sincerely, the poem speaks for her unrecognized emotions. The woman in the poem gains confidence and speaks for herself; her life in the 'land of living dead' (Kandasamy Ms. *Militancy* 17). When society exalts her to the status of Ammaiyar, meaning revered mother, with no regard for the injustices brought upon her, the woman is left to deal with her emotions in hiding. What reduced her to 'hollow cheeks that offset bulging eyes/with welts on (her) wrists, with creasing skin' (ibid) goes unnoticed. Devastated by the pain of husband's betrayal and abandonment she cries, wails and walk on head to God, however, enforcing a pseudo-honour covers up everything. Meena Kandasamy takes a step further in "Firewalkers" depicting the image of a ferocious and murderous female goddess in sharp contrast to the compassionate ones. Maari with a 'manic soul' and a 'heart of stone' (Kandasamy Ms. *Militancy* 22) crushes down the conventional image of femininity, although the poet intends to paint a Dalit oppressor.

Sita, of the eulogized *Ramayana*, with her devotion, tolerance, and self-sacrifice had set standards for an ideal woman. "Princess-in-Exile" shatters the deified image of Sita and presents her as a new-age woman who chooses to walkout when her husband tries to win her back. As opposed to the epic version which accredits the ordeals she goes through in proving her chastity, Kandasamy's Sita seems to be confident about her self and self-sufficient. In "Random Access Man" the theme is further extended to depict the darker side of Sita who is an unsatisfied wife. Disheartened at her husband's empty words and lack of intimacy, she takes the initiative in sending him to hunt 'the testicle of a golden deer' to 'rouse (his) manhood' (Kandasamy Ms. *Militancy* 46). Sita, the embodiment of chastity is deconstructed and delivered with an image of a desirous woman seeking sexual pleasure with another man who explores her sexual side.

Kannaki, the heroine of the Tamil Classic *Silappathikaram* receives justice in Ms. *Militancy*, that the patriarchal readings failed to offer. In a context where her dedication and love towards her infidel husband is glorified, Kandasamy gives Kannaki the image of a strong woman who is her own agency. The initial images of a deteriorating woman 'floundering at forty' (Kandasamy Ms. *Militancy* 36), who decides to take back her unfaithful husband when he falters, in a sense, shows the contrasting images of a man who is impulsive and fails miserably with that of a woman who is capable of taking him to task, as revealed in the latter part, yet chooses to forgive him. Choosing to forgive a man in repentance and exacting revenge on a king who fails to deliver justice displays her ways of confronting the patriarchal structures. Kannaki here is no more a battered wife but an independent woman sure of herself.

Nalayani is yet another figure from *Mahabharata* epitomized in the Thirukkural for her unflinching loyalty and undeniable devotion towards her husband. "Six Hours of

Chastity" sets her free from the debilitating image of a faithful wife who overlooks her husband's infidelity. Her transformation is from a woman who 'carries the basket-case of her husband to his favourite prostitute's place' (Kandasamy *Ms. Militancy* 49) to a woman who takes 'six men, one for every hour of night' (ibid). The poet deconstructs the mythical image of Nalayani, 'a waiting angel' to a trailblazer who lightens her burden appealing the sexual desires of six men. By subverting the image of a chaste wife to a radical revolutionary, Kandasamy challenges the patriarchal hegemony. Similarly "Mascara" expresses the agony of the women belonging to the devadasi community. Prostitution is not something they chose but enforced on them by birth. 'Sex clings to her devadasi skin/... Deliverance doesn't arrive' (Kandasamy *Touch* 129). There were times when the devadasis had high social status and were central to temple worship. The poem probes their inner feelings; 'that long buried/ hazy dreams/ of a virgin soul' (Kandasamy *Touch* 128). The pseudo-honour stifles her true feelings and in her fear to obliterate the social order she broods over silently on the lack of a meaningful stable relationship and having to play a puppet in the hands of the elite. The poem speaks for their long-suppressed resentment exposing the essentializing of femininity and the hidden structures of patriarchy.

It is not just the de-mythifying of women characters in patriarchal texts that the poet performs, also she subverts the conventional characteristics that define a woman. Kandasamy replaces docile and gentle women with angry, rebellious women celebrating their body. "A Cunning Stunt" describes a sexual act with raw visual imagery exposing her disgust on women's sexuality being tied to her honour. And in "Backstreet Girls" she brazenly asserts: There will be no blood on our bridal beds/ We

are not the ones you will choose for wives/ We are not the ones you can sentence for life (Kandasamy *Ms. Militancy* 14). The poem tries to break the chastity myth and celebrates female bonding. In "Passion becomes Piety" the pious Andal becomes 'a rape romantic' (Kandasamy *Ms. Militancy* 42) who doesn't shun away from openly expressing her passionate feelings to her Lord.

Kandasamy shows her denial to fit into the patriarchal paradigm, by writing body and being open about female desires. In a context where any voice that questioned the patriarchy or anything that seemed like a threat was immediately hushed and branded as witchcraft, she moves beyond the reductionist views to de-essentialize the gender roles. She liberates Sita from her angelic role in "Random Access Man" and Surpanaka from her demonic role in "Traitor". "Narration" tries to efface the prejudices on the Dalit women who are perceived as having loose morals. The double oppression she experiences as a low caste woman silences her and her helplessness is exploited.

To conclude, Meena Kandasamy's poems are scathing remarks on the hegemonic patriarchal forces that marginalize and essentialise women. She deconstructs the stereotypical images of femininity and presents it in a new light that is empowering and promising. It is a call for the women to shed their passive, submissive nature and with a militant spirit, to assert their real self; questioning the injustices and atrocities committed against her. She uses a language that is raw and unforgiving, she writes body and female desires, she subverts the patriarchal norms and re-sets the patriarchal paradigm.

### Works Cited

1. Kandasamy, Meena. *Ms. Militancy*, Navayana Publishing, 2010.
2. ---. *Touch*, Peacock Books, 2006.

## A STUDY OF THE STATE OF STRUGGLE OF THE TRANSGENDER IN “A GIFT OF GODDESS LAKSHMI”

**Pattam Chakma**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Dr.N.G.P. Arts and Science College, Coimbatore*

Human beings are born and brought up in a society where they take predefined roles assigned to them based on their sexes. Sex and gender shouldn't be mistaken as the same because sex refers to the biological status of a person and gender often refers to the nature one feels about oneself. Even though transgenders are recognized as the third gender next to male and female, they are not accepted widely in societies. They are still struggling for the basic human rights and needs and their acceptance is still at stake. There are certain problems that transgenders are struggling with for their very existence in the society. The main problem of being a transgender is that, they are not being welcomed in public places like educational institutions, hospitals, workplace, hotels, malls, restaurants, theatres, dance floor, etc. Even if they are welcomed, they are looked down and disrespected by onlookers. Let us discuss some of the struggles that transgenders had to go through in order to survive the society with reference to the biography *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* by Manobi Bandyopadhyay and Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey.

*A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* is the candid biography of India's first third-gender, Dr. Manobi Bandyopadhyay, who is currently the college principal of Krishnagar Women's College, Nadia, West Bengal. She is also the vice chairperson of the West Bengal Transgender Development Board, Government of West Bengal, and executive council member of Kalyani University. Like many other transgenders, Manobi too was born in a normal family and she had a normal life until she started to feel and act like her opposite gender.

She had to go through the trauma like every other transgender. However, her story is different than that of many others because she is bold enough to stand and fight against the sophisticated society for her rights and justice.

According to science, a person with such mentality is born due to the misplacement of certain brain-structures in the hypothalamus that takes place during early pregnancy. Probably such a person starts behaving like the opposite gender mentally and physically during their adolescence. "I don't remember exactly when I started realizing that I was different" (52) wrote Manobi. During the transition, they start facing rejection and ignorance from family and friends. Transgender are often discriminated and abused. Most of the time, while going through emotional and psychological pain, they are compelled to live in the streets than with their families. Manobi thus writes:

"The ridicule that I was facing at home and in the neighbourhood continued unabated, as I started taking bolder steps of wearing my sister's petticoats as skirts and their nighties as dresses...This behaviour- actively seeking to be who I was- only invited more insults. The hypocrisy around hurt me. People took every opportunity to call me hijra, to ridicule my sexual identity and yet when they found me alone, they never missed an opportunity to take me to a dark corner and have a go at me". (423,432)

One of the most serious social problems that the transgenders had to face is that of unemployment. When unemployment prevails, poverty thus follows. Finding a job or seeking

higher promotion in various factors is a dream for most of them. A person with repulsive complexion or from a lower caste might find a job according to the qualification he/she holds. However, that opportunity is not given to the transgenders. As a result, they are compelled to beg or demand money from shopkeepers and from people around. This very instinct becomes their source of earning. Thus, Manobi writes: "Such acceptance is unthinkable in our conservative society where hijras are considered beggars, sex workers, and irritants, who come home to dance and extort money when babies are born" (902). Some manage to get job by hiding their true identity. Otherwise they have to face certain discrimination and harassment sometimes they are even fired from the job. Another such problem is the difficulty of finding a rental house. As we live in a sophisticated society, it is hard for people to accept transgender in a society. So when transgenders seek for rental houses, they are often denied. They are restricted to every public places. In fact, they cannot enjoy the rights that a normal citizen does. Once they step out of their homes, their appearances become a joke to the people around. In today's judgmental society, even a common man is being criticize based of the colour, caste, and so on. But transgenders are the worst victim among them. Once a transgender reveals his/her identity, he/she is threatened or even abused which make him/her hide their true identity. But this instinct he/she had to suffer mentally and emotionally for not being able to disclose it to others. Even if they do, they are sometimes disowned or killed by their families and dear ones.

In a way or the other, all of us are equally responsible for all the problems that transgenders had to go through, because we all are a part of that very society that do not accept them for who they are. Education is the strongest weapon to build a good nation. However, lack of education is one major factor

for the unemployment of transgenders. At the very beginning, they are forced to leave school due to rejection either from the institution's authority or due to some other factors like harassment and mockery from other inmates and so on. Even if they manage to get education, finding a job becomes a difficult task. As a matter of fact, they end up indulging themselves in anti-social activities or even worse becoming sex workers. They become vulnerable to either customers or the police. Manobi tells: "I sent shock waves across the college on the first day. Students simply stood and gaped at this good-looking youth, in a long *kurta* and *salwar*, who, with a woman's gait and disposition, was headed towards the Bengali department. I definitely defied definition. Words had got out that a hijra had entered the college in the garb of a student!" (469).

Our sophisticated society had always dissociated and alienated people who had not adopted and complied with its norms. Transgenders are one among them. Living a life with uncertainty, they had no hope for a better future. But once they are neglected by the society socially and culturally and by their very own families, there came a need to construct their own community in order to support themselves for all their needs. They had been denied basic human rights and are discriminated on the grounds of insurance, medical support, legal recognition, and so on. They are also abused by the media. Transgenders are also prone to physical abuses. Sometimes they also become victims of rape and molestation. They had been in the society from time immemorial. Like many other countries, India also did not approved homosexuality. Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was introduced in 1861 during the British rule of India which was to criminalize sexual activities "against the order of nature". However, after many prayers and battles from the LGBTQ community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer), the Supreme Court of India decriminalised homosexuality on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

There are male-trans and female-trans. Some of them take hormones and others go through surgeries as part of their transition risking their lives. Some identifies themselves to be transgender and while others hide. One of the serious issues about male transgender is that of MSM. The term is meant for male who have sex with male. As a result, they are easily prone to HIV AIDS. Most of them belong to lower economical background and are lacking knowledge about the safety of sexuality. Transgender are also abused in hospitals when they go for treatment by those whom we so called "an angel of god". Even in India, the state of transgender is no different than the other nations. In India, they are called 'hijra' and many other names varying the region and community. However, comparing to other nation's transgender, in India they enjoy some privileges like they are called when a baby is born in a Hindu family to give blessing and also to marriages for 'sangit' and to bless the newly-wed couple. And except these, they are treated as lowly and are considered downtrodden. Some of the problems that they have to struggle with in India are discrimination, rejection, lack of educational facilities, disrespect, human trafficking, social exclusion, citizenship rights, lack of security, prostitution, restriction in public places, unemployment, poverty, eve teasing, molestation, verbal and physical abuse, and so on. As concern of humanity, we need to understand the existence of transgender and try to understand their community which is incredibly diverse. There are many transgender who aspire to have a normal life, like getting married and have their own families. But due to their unusual nature, they find it rather difficult in finding a faithful partner. Thus Manobi tells: "Deep inside I was very lonely and I yearned for a partner, a boyfriend on whose strong shoulder I could rest my tired head" (663-672)

Though their nature could be different, yet they are so much like that of a normal human being. They too aspires many good things in life

like family, friends, security, education, equal rights and so on. However, at their very early step to such achievement, their aspirations are shattered like ashes by the very society they live in. Manobi stated: "We are slightly different outwardly, but we are humans just as you are and have the same needs- physical and emotional- just as you have" (1992). Manobi bestowed a deep message for her community, "Education: If we learn, all our problems will be solved". Her very message provides a panacea to all mankind. Her determination and fight against all odd in society is highly inspiring and encouraging. Her life story from Somnath Bandyopadhyay to Manobi Bandyopadhyay set an example to every human being that all are equal in the eyes of god and the law.

It is the responsible of the government to look after the betterment of the third gender. They should be given equal rights and justice. They should be facilitated with every possible initiative to increase their literacy rate. Above all, people need to change their mindset. Awareness campaign should spread out throughout media in order to educate and change the mindset of the people. Manobi stated: "Every so often a transgender film is released in mainstream cinema and people, especially the youth, are accepting of the trend" (1244). They should be able to be accepted and treated as normal. They should be given every opportunity to progress themselves socially, economically and culturally in order to fit themselves into the society and lead a good life like any other normal human being.

### Work Cited

1. Bandhopadhyay, Manobi and Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey. *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*. Kindle ed., Penguin, 2017
2. Datta, Durjoy. *Our Impossible Love*, India: Penguin, 2016
3. Rajagopal, Krishnadas. "SC decriminalises homosexuality." *The Hindu Coimbatore* 7th Sept. 2018



4. Abbott, Traci B. "Teaching Transgender Literature at a Business College." *Race, Gender & Class*, vol. 16, no. 1/2, 2009, pp. 152-169. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/41658865](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41658865).
5. Arenas, Alberto, et al. "7 Reasons for Accommodating Transgender Students at School." *The Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 98, no. 1, 2016, pp. 20-24., [www.jstor.org/stable/24893302](http://www.jstor.org/stable/24893302).
6. Rohy, Valerie. "Hemingway, Literalism, and Transgender Reading." *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 57, no. 2, 2011, pp. 148-179. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/41698740](http://www.jstor.org/stable/41698740).
7. Newfield, Emily, et al. "Female-to-Male Transgender Quality of Life." *Quality of Life Research*, vol. 15, no. 9, 2006, pp. 1447-1457. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/27641222](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27641222).
8. Zunner, Brian P., and Pamela J. Grace. "ETHICAL ISSUES: The Ethical Nursing Care of Transgender Patients." *The American Journal of Nursing*, vol. 112, no. 12, 2012, pp. 61-64. JSTOR, JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/23461203](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23461203).

## PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPOSITION OF FLORENS IN TONI MORRISON'S *A MERCY*

**S.Lourdes Veena**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

*"Literature adds to reality, it does not simply  
describe it"*

- C.S Lewis

African American Literature flourishes in United States by the writers of African descendants. African American oral culture is rich in poetry, which includes spiritual, gospels, music, blues and rap. It begins with slave trade where the slaves from Africa were dispatched to America. The first writings of African American are autobiographical named Slave Narratives. It speaks about their inmost emotions and feelings. As time passes, they started numerous movements like Harlem Renaissance, Black Arts movements to express their situations, retrieve all their past notions and culture, and to kindle their National spirit. Many writers have bloomed to turn the whole world to their country. Since the issues of racism and identity prevail in the society, they started to concentrate on the writings with the major theme of racism and identity crisis.

One such prominent writer of African American Literature is Toni Morrison. She is the first black woman to receive Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. She has the unique style of writing a work of art, especially novels. She widely uses lyrical prose and blends poetic style along with the prose writings of fiction. *A Mercy* is the ninth novel of Toni Morrison which deals with the sufferings and problems faced by a young girl, Florens. It portrays the journey of a young slave girl who becomes a prey for the emotional taboos. The novel not only depicts the psychology of a young girl, but also a mother's psychology.

As Morrison is the feminist writer, she depicts all her ideas through the feministic point- of view. She also displayed certain conditions of the mother- daughter relationship which seems to be the fundamental one, including the uses of the mother's psychology. The psychological aspects of mother's mind portray the dilemmas faced in the mind of women since the time of separation from her daughter. She targets on the mother- daughter relationship in order to explain certain components of women's psychology and development of female. The role of mother has widespread connotation on the development of women's personality, identity and psyche structure.

*A Mercy* brings into limelight the sufferings of a slave mother which becomes the prime motive for the mother-child bond. It is about the thoughts of a slave black mother a *minha mae* who wishes to safeguard her daughter Florens from all the evils in the plantation and also about the misconception of Florens who develops an hatred towards the mother for her act. The prime narrator of the novel is Florens who undergoes numerous psychological changes right from her very young age.

Florens is a daughter of a *minha mae* who lives in a plantation of D'Ortega. The mother character is referred not by the name but as a *minha mae* meaning 'my mother' in Portuguese. This shows that there is no identity for black women in the discriminated society. To protect her daughter from the evil eyes, a *minha mae* sends her daughter as a partial payment of D'Ortega to Jacob Vaark who is so compassionate and kind-hearted. Though she

appears to be a hard-hearted and loveless person by nature, she has a great love, care and concern for Florens. This willing decision of her mother affects the psyche of Florens where she starts thinking bad about her mother.

Her mother believes that she will be in the safe hands of Jacob. So she pleads him to take her daughter rather than her. Florens's mind becomes very sick on seeing her mother who pleads him by showing her son. This incident reflected in the mind of her as she thinks that her mother doesn't have any love towards her. "Please. Senhor. Not me. Take her. Take my daughter" (24).

The act of the mother made Florens to think that her mother doesn't have any kind of affection and care towards her where she always thinks that all the time she has been fully obsessed with the thoughts of her younger brother. She develops a kind of hatred towards her brother who always sat on the hip of her mother. Envisaging her brother as a hindrance, her inner mind always believes that her brother is responsible for the separation from her mother.

The truth is beyond reality. The mother knows the plight of women without protection. She doesn't want her daughter to be the object of sexual exploitation.

The mind of Florens is quite distinctive. She often visualizes primordial scene of rejecting her and her mother pleading with Vaark to take Florens away, but still holding the hand of Florens's younger brother, which affects every action in her life. She urges to taste the love of the mother whom she thinks that she has love only towards the little boy and not to her. The rejection made her life as well as her attitude to be awful. Although the life in the farm of Vaark is quite harmonious, she could not overcome the absence of her mother. She desperately searches for the love that she lacks to taste from her mother. Her inner quest mirrors in her words too. "Is that what my mother knows? Why she chooses me to live without" (112-113).

Morrison explains about children who do not receive too much of care and nurture never develop the genuine selfhood. She champions their growing to be a psychologically wounded adults. With the nostalgia to regain the lost love, Florens goes in search of blacksmith whom she kept in the place of mother. She becomes a slave of passion for blacksmith. Though she encounters numerous toils and adversities in her journey, she never gives up her journey at any cause. Her mind is fixed to attain her lost love from blacksmith. She constantly longs for the maternal love.

Florens wandering is a kind of nostalgic search for her lost mother. She seeks to substitute for the loss of maternal love through the complete surrender of the self and craving desire to possess maternal love through the love of blacksmith. But the same rejection from the blacksmith made her mind to lose its control. She believes that the small boy Malaik in the house of blacksmith becomes a threat to herself. Her psyche has compared him with that of her own brother whom she believes as responsible for her separation from mother. It is more to be noted that the desire which she had in her mind is not sexual. It is beyond sexuality. It is to recover all the love she loses in life from her childhood. Because of all the lost love, she undergoes traumatic experiences in life. An animalistic quality of her also appears vividly when she finds a young boy to be a competitor to attain the love and care of the blacksmith. Her outcome of anger is reflected in the words followed:

Seeing the boy returns to screaming and that is when I clutch him. I am trying to stop him not hurt him. That is why I pull his arm. To make him stop.... And yes I do hear the shoulder crack but the sound is small, no more than the crack a wing of roast grouse makes when you tear it, warm and tender, from its breast. He screams screams then faints. (137-38)

Attachment is more important between a mother and her daughter. A minha mae fails to be with her daughter which rattled the attachment and bondage between them. So, the disrupted attachment leads to create emotional problems in Florens. With the attachment disorders, she appears to be more aggressive, disruptive and violent. Terry M. Levy states that the disruption of attachment causes "Affectionless psychopathy which means the inability to form meaningful emotional relationships coupled with chronic anger, poor impulse control and a lack of remorse" (18). Hence the same prevails in the character of Florens.

The selfless love of mother makes Florens to undergo traumatic and psychological disorders. The word trauma literally means a wound or an injury to a body. As Cathy Caruth comments in the book *Unclaimed Experiences. Trauma, Narrative and History*, "It is a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (3). So Florens becomes evidence to the traumatic experience of a girl who lacks in mother's love and care. The separation is something very constructive in the view of a minha mae. But Florens fails to comprehend the act of her mother. Finally she is able to recognize the parts

of herself, the animal 'within' and person without, taking ownership of her wildness.

Morrison traces a trauma of an adolescent girl who longs for mother's love. Her desire to taste the love from blacksmith reveals her shadow side. The lack of mother-daughter relationship is the ultimate reason for the unpleasant experience of Florens. Her continuous sufferings and rejections made her to lose self-identity. Though the reason for the separation is acceptable, a child's psyche fails to understand the reasons and it is quite natural too. So it is fixed in the psyche of Florens that her mother totally refused and abandoned her only for her younger brother. The psychological troubles of her can only be altered by the love of her mother, which has an ability to rebuild the life of any person.

### Works Cited

1. Caruth, Cathy. "The Wound and the Voice". *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. John Hopkins University, 1996.
2. Levy, Terry M. and Michael Orlans. Introduction. *Attachment, Trauma and Healing*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1998.
3. Morrison, Toni. *A Mercy*. Vintage Books, 2008.

## **GENDER PATRIARCHY IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THE DARK HOLDS NO TERROR***

**S.Rini**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Shashi Deshpande, an eminent Indian writer born in Dharwad in 1938. Shashi Deshpande graduated from The University of Bombay in 1956. She studied Diploma in Journalism in 1970. Deshpande completed her M.A in English Literature in the year 1970 in the University of Mysore, Karnataka. Some of her notable works are *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Vine* (1994) and *Small Remedies* (2000). Deshpande received awards namely Raugammal prize in 1984, Nanjangud Tirumalamba award in 1989, Sahitya Academy award in 1990.

The research article focuses on the authority of patriarchal society in Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terror*. Shashi Deshpande explains the position of women and their psyche in the patriarchal society. The writer Shashi Deshpande touches the issues relating to man-woman relationship and parent-child relationship. In *The Dark Holds No Terror* Shashi Deshpande portrays the various aspects of life of human in the patriarchal society.

In this novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* Shashi Deshpande depicts the life of Saritha, the protagonist who wants to present herself as a typical human being. Saritha undergoes many hardships in her life to represent herself as a successful human being in the patriarchal society. Society reminds her of gender role and that itself becomes a hardship to become an individual in the society.

It is strange that, the first hardship that she faces is from her own parents. Saritha's mother ill treats her only because of her gender. Saritha's mother becomes strict and she treats her daughter strict in the society that is filled

with men. Saritha's mother teaches Saritha to be humble, being inferior to man and to remain quiet within the four walls of the house. Saritha's mother did not love her but she uses various techniques to improve her daughter.

Deshpande describes the mother's bad treatment to her daughter and she describes the mother as a victimizer in the patriarchal society. A woman plays an important role in their children's life and teaches her daughter to be inferior to men and son to be superior over woman.

The responsibility of mother increases with the birth of daughter. The prime responsibility of the mother is to teach the lesson of life to the children. Saritha's mother teaches the hardship of being a girl in the male dominated society. Mother feels unhappy for becoming the mother of a girl. For instance, after the death of her son, the mother says that she has one and only son who is no more. The mother prefers her son and hates her own daughter. After the death of Saritha's brother, the mother tells, "Why did not you die? Why are you alive, when he is dead?" (Deshpande 29-30). The Mother thinks that the daughter is responsible for her son's death.

The girl is made-up to do the work given by others in the family and she is denied to express her views and wishes to her family members. When Saritha, the protagonist expresses her longing to study medicine, her mother criticizes her. "Mothers, being women, were themselves conditioned by their mothers first and the society at large next. Mothers consider it as a duty to train their girl child for the expectations of the patriarchal society. The sooner the

process is begun, the better it is for the daughter" (Choubey113).

Later in the novel when Saru expresses her desire to marry Manu, a low caste man her mother strictly opposes her. In patriarchal society, the mother's love for her daughter is completely washed away. Mother hates her daughter and man hates her woman.

Mother treats her daughter Saru badly and her psyche is affected. Saru envies her brother in the family. G.Dominic Savio says that, "Dhruva's demise had always been her subconscious desire and there is a very thin demarcation between her wish and fulfilment". (610). The behaviour of Saru affects her relationship with others like father, brother, husband and children.

Saru's mother teaches Saru the various things like being beautiful, submissiveness, being an ideal. But Saru proves that being beautiful and being inferior is not necessary for a girl's success. Saru works hard to get admission in the medical college, Bombay. Saru with the help of her father goes to Bombay to study medicine. Saru marries Manu, a man from low caste and says that she wants only love. Saru gets rid of the role of daughter and enters into a married life as wife with great hope. In this novel *The Dark Holds No Terror* Shashi Deshpande describes the relationship of man-woman in detail.

Saru as a married woman in the society experiences hardships and she experiences that professional woman cannot become a successful wife in the patriarchal society. Shashi Deshpande through the character Manu, describes that man also feels being caught by the society. The society demands the man to play a superior role over woman. Manu understands his wife's individuality but he could not let his ego.

Through Manu, Deshpande shows that education could not change the male's psyche. Saru after becoming doctor gains inner identity but she fails to become an ideal wife to her

traditional husband. Shashi Deshpande describes the meaning of marriage in the novel. Manu uses his right to dominate his wife. But Saru seeks to find the solution in marriage from her traditional parents and gender based discrimination. Saru sees marriage as the foundation of love.

Manu like other men in the society dominates Saru. At one moment Saru decides to leave her profession. Manu does not allow Saru to do so and this shows the psyche of Manu who wants his wife to be submissive. On hearing the news of Saru's mother's death she goes to her parents' house. At first Saru's father does not accept her and then slowly Saru develops a relationship with her father only after the absence of her mother. Saru becomes self independent and in the end of the novel Saru agrees to go to her husband's house to solve her problems.

To conclude Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terror* describes the life of humans in two ways that is parent-child relationship and man-woman relationship. Deshpande portrays the life of humans both traditionally and with a modern outlook in the male dominated society. Deshpande mainly portrays the issues of woman's education, marriage and profession in the patriarchal society. Education plays a main role between parent-child relationships, because education is given by parents to children. Traditional parents show favouritism between the son's education and daughter's education. Next important part in human life is marriage. Woman seeks emotional bonding in marriage, but man seeks his authority in marriage. Profession is a part of man's life and Deshpande's modern professional character Saru suffers in the patriarchal society. Thus Deshpande gives the patriarchal construction of the imbalanced human life.

**Works Cited**

1. Choubey, Asha. *Mothers and Daughters: A Comparative Critique of Fasting Feasting and Difficult Daughters*. Indian Writing in English. Ed. Rama Kundu. vol. 1. New Delhi: Atlantic, 2003. Print.
2. Deshpande, Shashi. *The Dark Holds No Terror*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1990. Print.
3. Savio, G. Dominic. *A Woman's Heritage of the Commonwealth: A study of The Dark Holds No Terror*. Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande. Ed. Suman Bala. New Delhi: Khosla, 2001. Print.

## GENDER ACCESSIBILITY IN FRANCINE RIVERS' *UNSHAKEN*

**M.Mary Velanganni**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

and

**Dr.R.G.Radhika**

*Assistant Professor of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Francine Sandra Rivers an award winning writer was born on 12 May 1947, an American author of fiction with Christian themes and romance. Francine was graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno, where she began her literary career during 1976 to 1985. Francine Rivers works were awarded and nominated for numerous awards and prizes.

New York Times top of the line writer Francine Rivers keeps on winning both industry approval and peruse unwaveringness around the world. Her various hits incorporate Redeeming Love, A Voice in the Wind, and Bridge to Haven, and her work has been converted into in excess of thirty unique dialects.

The book belongs to the series "Linage of grace". This is biblical fiction based on the life of Ruth and Boaz, ancestors of Jesus. The novel *Unshaken* (2001) by Francine Rivers is a retelling story of Ruth, who is later blessed to be the ancestor of Jesus Christ. The novel deals with the background of the Bible chapters headed Ruth. The novel deals with love and care between mother-in-law Naomi and her daughter-in-laws Ruth and Orpah.

Elimelech and Naomi moves from Bethlehem-judah to Moab due to famine in their country. Later after the death of Elimelech, Naomi was left alone with her sons Chilion and Mahlon. Chilion took Oprah as his wife and Ruth was taken as wife by Mahlon. Ruth is portrayed asa dutiful daughter-in-law to Naomi. Ruth takes up a decision after losing her

husband. When she was urged by Naomi to return to her mother land and have a new beginning to remarry since she was youthful. "And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me". (Ruth 1: 8) Her sister-in-law, Orpah lost her significant when Naomi decided return to her country. She cleared out to return to her motherland, however Ruth was resolved and unyielding about running with her relative, Naomi. Naomi cautioned her about their traditions and religion which they were illegal to love some other god, Ruth concurred that she'd revere her god, Ruth was mentally strong while taking decision to move with Naomi and she decided to be with Naomi till the end and also take up the God whom Naomi worshipped.

And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou logest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. (Ruth: 1 16-17)

Ruth stays with Naomi, turning her back on her family, country and religion. They walk in a difficult hard road but they happily take it up. Naomi along with Ruth reached Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest. They were forced to live in a cave and Ruth goes to the fields gleaning the edges of fields for them to survive. After being treated badly at one field



she ends up gleaning at Boaz's field. When Boaz enquires about Ruth to his servants they answered him stating that she came with Naomi out of the country Moab. He treats her very well, Boaz asks her not to go to glean in another field, and he also asked his servants to spill some corn so that she can take it home. "Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she make glean them, and rebuke her not". (Ruth 2: 15-16)

When Naomi finds Ruth suffering along with her she gave her guidance in developing a relationship with Boaz. Ruth was strong enough to take the words of her mother-in-law. Boaz was a near kinsman of Ruth who had the next right to marry her. There was another man who was also a near kinsman of Ruth. Ruth went to Boaz and did as instructed by her mother in law. Boaz promised her that if the other man rejects her then he would marry her.

The kinsman refuses the proposal and also asks Boaz to inherit it. "And the Kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself: for I lest I mar mine own inheritance redeem thou my right to thyself: for I cannot redeem it". (Ruth: 4 6) Boaz accepts Ruth to be his wife with all the elders to be the witness

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among the gate of his place: you are witness this day. And all the people that were in

the gate, and the elders, said, We are witness. The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephrathah, and be famous in Bethlehem (Ruth 4 10-11).

Ruth is an astounding motivational character who takes up right decision and walks in the path boldly. She is magnificently depicted as a high-minded woman who forfeits all to think about her mother-in law. The consideration she gives to Naomi is a genuine case of somebody who adores reliably and is focused on making the wisest decision, notwithstanding when it could cost everything.

Francine Rivers pulls out the character Ruth from the Bible to show about a woman who was mentally strong to take up a right decision, for example, the expense to leave home and risky adventure back to Naomi's country. Since Ruth was a nonnative, individuals most likely rejected her, overlooked her, or treated her inadequately but still Ruth faced things and lived with Naomi. Ruth's devotion and persistence are portrayed perfectly by Rivers in *Unshaken*.

## References

1. Rivers, Sandra, Francine. *Unshaken*, Tyndale House Publishers, 01-Mar-2001 Publication name; 2001. Print.
2. The Holy Bible, King James Version, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, Print.

## ***ATHOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS BY KHALED HOSSEINI AS A NOVEL OF GENDER CRISIS***

**R.Rathika**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

The genders have to face the consequences for their own actions and deeds. Both men and women should free to be sensitive. Both men and women should feel free to be strong... it is time that we all perceive gender on a spectrum not as two opposing sets of ideas.-Emma Watson.

On considering gender crisis men and women goes hand in hand, on facing their difficulties; dangers and obstacles. In the time of immemorial as men and women were create by god they start to face the crisis. Different situation and incidents influence them to face the obstacles and insecurity in life. Talking a note on creation of gender it starts from Adam and Eve. They were influenced by evil and face the consequences for their act. The gender crisis is to be traced by the force of incidents, situations, influences, unawareness, and domination etc.,

In present scenario both male and female experience the crisis. The genders have been tied by the difficulties and dangers they face in life. All over the world gender crisis prevails in different ways. In order to avoid crisis preventing measures can be put forth to the knowledge of male and female. On considering literature contribution can be through of writing novels, short stories, and fiction etc., On the other hand prevention can be of through camping, social media, talk shows and magazines etc., it solved by the revolutionary one among men and women to avoid their dangers and difficulties.

Though gender crisis prevails all over the world, the writers from different part contribute through their works. The writers life Virgina

Woolf, Mahesh Dattani, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Vijay Tendulkar, Shashi Deshpande, Henrik Ibsen etc., One of the most prominent writer who touches on gender crisis in Khaled Hosseini. The writer is Afghan born American. The writer's work A Thousand Splendid Suns focuses on various issues on most prominently on gender crisis.

The writer's set the novel based on the crisis faced by Afghan women and men in their society. The story bring out the major issues like inequality, child marriage, betrayal, and poor education etc., The women in Afghan are oppressed and considered subordinate in the Afghan society .By twenty and twenty first century still after the Taliban war women are subordinated. Until the Afghan women raise voice for themselves liberate from oppression to live their life they deserve. Here on considering Afghan women they consider themselves to be a subordinate as it was found to be in their roots of culture and tradition. The work revolves around Afghan women and men facing their challenges in the novel A Thousand Splendid Suns.

The author makes a revolutionary note through the character Mariam and Laila, who portrays Afghan women. The novel is divided into four parts: first part it focuses on life of Mariam, second part focuses on life of Laila, third deals with friendship between Mariam and Laila and fourth part as a revolutionary note to the reader's deals with Laila's bright life with Tariq. The novel is set at a place on the outskirts of Herat at Kabul. The writer brings to the note, the incidents in the novel takes place during Taliban war. Taliban came to power in

1996, during this period women suffered lot and they were prisoned inside the house. Women were not seen in public. On the other side male were forced to believe that women have to be under the control of man and obey what man says. Women started to face the crisis like no education, no work, to cover up full body with veils, forbidden to use make up products etc., Women were punished for disobeying males, they were punished like stoning and raping. Men start to lose their traditionalist and were force to obey Taliban rules to rule woman rather than respecting or making gender equality. The presenter views some force makes male and female to face the crisis.

The writer portrays heart breaking reality of women in Afghanistan through the character Mariam and Laila. On considering life of Mariam, she lives with mother Nana. She is a woman who undergoes unfortunate incidents with Jalil and she begot Mariam and she attempted suicide Mariam spoke "I'll die if you go. I'll just die" (36). Here is a great shift in Mariam life. She is force to marry forty year old man named Rasheed. He is a shoe maker. On considering life of Nana and Mariam it is to note that women were under the control of decision taken by men rather than by themselves. Through this incident there is a loss of identity and freedom. Under Taliban period women were refused to send to schools and they do not have their basic education. On the note of Nana and Mariam they were not educated and unaware of the outside society. Nana teaches Mariam just to survive and endure. The education does not pass to generations. Women in Afghan were suppressed and prisoned in the house. Lack of education creates and misleads girls and paves way for child marriage. The second part of the novel deals with the life of Laila. Her father and mother supports for women education. Laila's father insists her to learn and advice her that marriage can wait but education cannot "society has no chance of success if its women are

uneducated, Laila" (103). Laila's father supports her to do the schooling. One of the biggest assets Laila earn was her education. Under so many restrictions and obstacles Laila did her education the saddest part of her was to lose her brother and family in Taliban war. At the age of sixteen she was adopted by Rasheed and Laila. Due to bareness of Mariam, Rasheed was interested in Laila and he had a relationship with her. Laila begot Aziza and she comes to know by a stranger that Tariq is dead. With her love she still lives with Rasheed and begot Zalmai. By heavy war and loss of property Aziza was left in orphanage.

Mariam and Laila shares good friendly relationships. They plan to escape from Rasheed but they fail to achieve it. Their plan would be unsuccessful and they face the consequences for escaping themselves from Rasheed. Domination of man was very high towards women. On the contrary note Bubi gives Laila a proper education and knows that women can change the society and work towards the development of society. Tariq, lover of Laila come years back. Tariq is noted to be a true man, who respects women and come back to her for love rather than lust. By realization of love, Mariam kills Rasheed for his act of threatening Tariq to leave Laila. Mariam plays a major role of revolutionary character by killing Rasheed. By the character of Zalmai, he gains education it's noted that male are given education. On considering *A Thousand Splendid Suns* gender crisis prevails between male and female in Afghan society. The writer concludes the work by reunion of two lovers and their come back to Afghan from Kabul after so many years. The novel ends with the optimistic note and women progress in Afghan society.

## References

1. Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. United States, 2007.
2. Sjoberg, Laura. *Gender and crisis in Global politics*. New York, 2017.

## EXPLORING GENDER INEQUALITY: A STUDY OF KHALED HOSSEINI'S *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS*

**Ms.V.Helen Mary**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Gender is a social construct which refers to the "behavioural, social and psychological characteristics of male and female" (Sen 2). The patriarchal social institution never ceases to exert its superior power over women. Writers seek equality and justice for the oppressed women in their writings. One of the most persistent problems of mankind throughout the ages has been the problem of equality between men and women. It has been viewed in different ways at different times. When the question of equality arises, men who desire for power and control refer to the dogmas of the society which says, that women are always subordinate to men. In spite of the contributions made by Scriptures and Literature through the ages, men fail to understand the notion behind the empowerment of women.

Literature has become a platform for writers to vehemently confront the ideologies which bring down the status of women in all aspects. Among the growing number of significant contemporary novelists, Khaled Hosseini also gained popularity through his contribution to Literature. This paper sheds light on the neglected aspects of life where the victims endure suffering till the end. It thereby creates awareness for resisting the trials and tribulations foisted upon the women community.

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan born American novelist whose works have earned him name and fame across the globe. His father was a diplomat and his mother, a school teacher in Kabul. He earned his M.D from the University of California. He practised medicine till the release of his first novel *The Kite Runner*.

It was published in the year 2003. The novel is attempted to portray the agonised Afghans who have lost everything that belong to them in the war, including their identity in their own motherland. Living in America, Khaled tries to find his roots in the country where he originally belongs to. He established his literary career with the success of his novel.

In 2007, Khaled founded The Khaled Hosseini Foundation to help the refugees in Afghanistan by providing the basic necessities to the people. He is hailed for his well crafted second novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* which appeared in the same year. The novel is set in Afghanistan and focuses mainly on Mariam and Laila, the two protagonists of the novel. This novel explores the feelings of two women in the cruel hands of Rasheed. Though Mariam is considered to be an illegitimate daughter, her longing for her father's love and affection made a twist in her life. She becomes a victim in an attempt to shape her own destiny. Los Angeles Times records the fame of the novel thus, "What keeps this novel vivid and compelling are Hosseini's eye for the textures of daily life and his ability to portray a full range of human emotions" (2).

Nana, the mother of Mariam was sexually exploited by Jalil. Nana was left hopeless and lived on the outskirts of Gul Daman. Having deceived by Jalil, She takes a firm decision, not to send Mariam with Jalil. She says, "Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter. Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always, You remember that, Mariam" (7). After her mother's death, Mariam sought Jalil's help but

she was not treated properly by him. She reminisce the words of her mother and realises her mistake of trusting Jalil. She was left with "Tears of grief, of anger, and of disillusionment. But mainly tears of a deep, deep shame at how foolishly she had given herself over to Jalil... walking all the way here, refusing to leave, sleeping on the street like a stray dog..." (35) Jalil arranges Mariam's wedding with the man called Rasheed who was thirty years older than her. This sadistic man forces sex upon her. When she cannot give birth to a child, Rasheed becomes frustrated and manifests his anger in the form of violence against Mariam.

War separated Laila from Tariq. Rasheed later learns of Laila's relationship with Tariq and in order to marry her, Rasheed deceives her by making her believe of Tariq's death. Laila therefore, carried an impression that Tariq is no more and married Rasheed. She learns that she is pregnant with Tariq's child and considers that it is better to have an identity as a wife of an elderly man, than to be raped by the soldiers. His marriage with Laila baffles Mariam to further extent. Situation becomes worse when Laila gave birth to Aziza. He did not like girl child, therefore Rasheed sent her to an orphanage. He harrowed both Mariam and Laila.

In order to save their own life, they try to escape from the brutal hands of their husband Rasheed. All their attempts would end in failure and turn their situation even worse than before. "Ever since the failed escape, Mariam knew that she and Laila had become one and the same being to him, equally wretched, equally deserving of his distrust, his disdain and disregard" (267). One day Tariq appears before Laila at the doorstep. Although, She was filled with joy at the sight of Tariq, she could not believe his presence. When Zalmai, Rasheed's son with Laila told him of Tariq's arrival, he agonised both the women brutally and went to an extent of killing Laila. Seeing this, Mariam killed him with a shovel. To Mariam, taking revenge against Rasheed is the only way

available to rescue her life and she considers it as right.

*A Thousand Splendid Suns* stands as a witness to show the life of Afghan women who always live under constant pressure of fear. Though Khaled brings out the wickedness of war, gender conflict, exploitation of women in his work of art, yet he did not fail to highlight the courage and moral strength of the people who are being oppressed.

On the whole, Khaled talks about the goodness of man in times of suffering and it is pointed by Mullah Faizullah thus, "Behind every trail and every sorrow that He makes us shoulder, God has a reason" (38). In times of frustration, Mariam and Laila did not fail to dream their destiny. Their husband's cruel deeds and the suffering they both underwent have taught them endurance. In the face of adversity, both fought courageously till the end. Equalizing and empowering women in the society cannot be made possible, unless each individual takes a decisive conquest of life's basic difficulties. For this reason, Khaled had always a task laid upon him in bringing out the endless difficulties and complexes invariably faced by every woman in the Afghan society. He also assures that present situation is pregnant with great possibilities to turn out the worst situation for the betterment of the lives of the oppressed.

### Work Cited

1. Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.
2. Luebering, J.E., and Richard Pallardy. "Khaled Hosseini." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,
3. *Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.*, 20 Sept. 2018, [www.britannica.com/biography/Khaled-Hosseini](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Khaled-Hosseini)
4. Sen, Sujata. Ed. *Gender Studies*. Pearson, 2012. Print.
5. "The Khaled Hosseini Foundation." *The Khaled Hosseini Foundation*,
6. <https://www.khaledhosseinifoundation.org/blog>

## **DELVING INTO THE PSYCHE OF LILI ELBE IN DAVID EBERSHOFF'S *THE DANISH GIRL***

**G.Liliane Maria Yvette**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Transgender have been an invisible part of the society since a very long period of time. Throughout the historical timeline, transgender people have been existent and have been called by different names. During the era of kings, these sets of diverse individuals were called eunuchs, and were used as the royal court's servers. The only difference between the transgender of the ancient era and the modern era is that, during the former period, transgenderism was a forced act, whereas in the latter period it has become an optional act pertaining to the psyche of an individual.

In 1965, the term 'Transgender' was coined and introduced by the psychiatrist John F. Oliven of Columbia University in his medical text *Sexual Hygiene and Pathology*. He stated that these unique people were wrongly called 'Transsexuals'. His words on transsexualism reflects, "The term is misleading; actually, 'transgenderism' is meant, because sexuality is not a major factor in primary transvestism." (514)

The transgender community were a set of individuals who feel that the body, they are born into, is not their own and that it is an extra weight they carry around and try to change and become the opposite sex. The modern society took its own time in recognizing these individuals and accepting them. Till day, there is not much assurance that these people have been accepted completely. They have been constantly mistreated and mostly used as 'sex workers'. Sadly, throughout the years, these individuals accepted this dark fate and lived with it.

Later when suppression was at its peak and no one could take it any longer, they started to fight back and gained certain ethical rights for themselves to live as a free sect of individuals. The transgender were at first considered scientifically as mentally deranged people. This notion had been innately imbibed into the minds of people all around the world. Parents all over the world refused to accept their children when they identified themselves to be a transgender. According to the news source *Blade* the article *Denmark no longer considers transgender people mentally ill* by Maximilian Sycamore states that, "Denmark on Sunday became the first country in the world to officially remove transgender identities from its list of mental health disorders"

While, throughout the years, transgender people have been used as minor characters in many literary works, writers such as Severo Sarduy, Leslie Feinberg, Kate Bornstein, Jane County, Patrick Califia, Viviane K Namaste, Julia Serano and Susan Stryker have given the lead role to transgender in their works. Severo Sarduy's *Cobra* published in 1972 being the first novel of its kind attempts to let transgender take the prominent role and voices out the struggles the transgender face in their day to day life. Being the first ever of its kind, the book became a notable outlet of the so far invisible lives. Leslie Feinberg's 1993 novel, *Stone Butch Blues* is more of a biographical fiction which deals with the writer's struggle towards understanding and proving his identity. Gender identity being a novel and peculiar subject has been brought out by the author. The hidden truths and inconveniences are expressed in a personal but

fictional manner. Written by Kate Bronstein in 1994, *Gender Outlaw* speaks about the LGBT community which is a controversial and sensitive topic of today. The writer boldly brings out her own experiences faced in day to day life. *Man Enough to be a Woman* by Jayne County published in 1995 is a mixture of politics and LGBT riots that brought about a lot of changes in the societal setup. The story is told in the form of memoirs to make it more effective and interesting.

David Ebershoff being one of the prominent writers of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) genre, tried his hand at explaining the life of Lili Elbe who was one of the first people to undergo sex reassignment surgery in a fictionalised form. With *The Danish Girl* as his debut novel in 2000, the American writer proved his writing skill to a great extent. The novel was made into a major motion picture in 2015 and won the Academy Award the very year.

*The Danish Girl* portrays the life of transgender Lili Elbe and the psychological struggles she faces through her transformation. Lili Elbe, born Einar Wegener, lives life just as any other normal man. He falls in love with Greta Waud an American girl who hails from Pasadena, California and marries her. Both shower unconditional love over each other. Greta is a woman who is capable of giving excess love without expecting anything in return. Einar and Greta are both painters and as a married couple understand and love one another a lot.

All goes downhill when Einar's wife asks him to pose as a female model, to complete Anna's portrait. Anna Fonsmark is an opera singer and a good friend of the Wegeners. Einar feels comfortable with the dress he wears and identifies himself as a woman rather than a man. As the story proceeds, the so far controlled and suppressed female desires of Einar begin to surface. Einar is called Lili Elbe by Greta. Einar

likes being Lili and poses for many of his wife's paintings as this fictitious female character.

Just as Einar was about to beg them to leave the studio, to let him change out of the dress in peace, Greta said, her voice soft and careful and unfamiliar, "why don't we call you Lili?" (chap 1)

As painters Einar and Greta are invited to annual artist's ball. Greta asks Einar to dress as Lili to the ball. Einar who has never refused anything that Greta asks agrees to go to the ball as Lili. There he meets Henrik Sandahl and instantly falls for him. Henrik is very much taken up by Lili and finds her attractive in a unique way unlike other woman. However this relationship does not last long and both Lili and Henrik part ways.

The unseemly relationship between Henrik and Lili, hurts Greta. "Not once before –and not even tonight with Henrik's hand sweating in his palm– did Einar ever consider himself abnormal, or off the mark" (chap 5). Einar tells his wife how he exactly feels. He expresses to her that he is trapped in a body that does not belong to him. The frustrated Greta out of her unconditional love for her husband understands his uneasiness and accompanies him to many psychologists, suggested by her twin brother Carlisle Waud.

Carlisle is exactly like his sister in expressing love and expecting nothing in return. He is against the fact that his brother-in-law wants to transform himself to the opposite sex. Carlisle who loves his sister and cannot stand his sister getting mentally hurt by her husband's desires, introduces the couple to many quack psychologists. This leads Einar into depression, as he is unaware of his own identity. He is constantly caught in a trap between being Einar and Lili.

As the traumatic family condition continues Greta meets Doctor Alfred Bolk, who takes interest in helping Einar become Lili. Greta accompanies Einar to Dresden where Einar is educated on what kind of operation will be

done on him. Einar accepts all the procedures and they proceed with the sex reassignment surgery. According to the surgery the male sex organs are removed and replaced with the female sex organs.

Finally Einar Wegener becomes Lili Elbe, which he feels is the only solution to his depression. "Am I really a woman now?" (chap 22) Once Einar loses his male shell and becomes female, his depression disappears as well. As soon as the surgery ends Lili and Greta return to Denmark where they part ways. Greta moves ahead in life with Hans who asks her to leave with him to America. Henrik on the other hand proposes to Lili and when life seemed to be moving at a steady pace, Lili gets a call from Doctor Bolk stating that she could have the chances of becoming a mother if a uterus is been placed in her body.

Lili wanting to be a complete woman, accepts to this deed of implanting a uterus into her body. Greta is dead against this decision Lili has made and does not accompany her to Dresden. Carlisle, Greta's brother on the other hand accompanies Lili, who gets the surgery. Eventually towards the end Lili is diagnosed to have an infection in the operated area.

The novel is open ended, leaving the reader in a puzzled state as to whether Lili survived or passed away. Einar's desperation to become Lili led him through loop holes in life, leaving nothing but shattered characters throughout. Ultimately Einar manages to become Lili shedding the uncomfortable shell he was born in. Einar's will power and strength alongside his wife Greta's persistent love and understanding helped him overcome the depression he underwent. Towards the end of

the novel his want for more leads him to unnecessary problems, whether Lili survived or not is left up to the reader, but overcoming all the odds and creating an identity for herself was Lili's greatest strength.

The character Lili Elbe is an eye-opener, to the yet to be deeply explored truths of the human mind and body. She stands as an icon of controversy to the world and to herself as well. The protagonist battles through various scenarios in life that is not applicable to a gender sensible person. Lili stands as an example of all the transgender struggles both mentally and physically. The novel proves to be the voice of a voiceless sect of people who patiently wait their chance to get through in life. The author has done justice in putting forth the problematic phase of a transgender's life through the eyes of Einar, who in the end confidently becomes Lili Elbe.

### Works Cited

1. Ebershoff, David. *The Danish Girl*. US: Viking Press, 2000. Print.
2. Jacques, Juliet. (2015, Oct 21) "Top 10 transgender books." *The Guardian*. Web. [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)
3. Oliven, F. John. *Sexual Hygiene and Pathology: a manual for the physician and the professions*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Lippincott Pub., University of California, 1965. Print.
4. Stryker, Susan. *Transgender History*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2008. Print.
5. Sycamore, Maximilian. (2017, Jan 4) "Denmark no longer considers transgender people mentally ill." *Washington blade America's LGBT News Source*. Web. [www.washingtonblade.com](http://www.washingtonblade.com)



## **A FEMINIST STEREOTYPE OF LESBIANISM AS GENDER ABERRATION IN JOHN O'HARA'S NOVELLA *LOVEY CHILDS: A PHILADELPHIAN'S STORY***

**V.Gayathri**

*Assistant Professor of English, Sri Krishna Arts and Science College, Coimbatore*

John O'Hara was born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, in 1905. O'Hara remains one of the American important writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He seems to be a highly hard-core naturalistic writer. The photographic setting of "region" plays a vital role in the novels of O'Hara. The fictional "sense of place" in John O'Hara novels is pictured through the "Gibbsville region". Gibbsville" is the fictional name given to "Pottsville", the birth place of O'Hara. The human nature has an unyielding convergence to the "Region" in the fiction of John O'Hara. The Region is widely known as "O'Hara's country". His Novella "Lovey Childs: A Philadelphian's Story" (1976) also reflects his huge accustom to sense of place.

O'Hara has been in an accurate vision of his observance of place and people by minute description of the age and life of Philadelphia people. He is been ignored unfairly for his relentless vision and bleak limitations and trying to depict himself to mean to characterize people, than trying to depict the truth of what stops us being ourselves. His open-ended nature of writing has made him an unusual man in literature.

The perspective of this paper focuses not on the ideals of human living, but rather an irrational treatment of self by being so natural in an unnatural ambience of life. The term "Lesbianism" found its stamp through "Sappho of Lesbos", which demonstrates about the daily lives of Women, their relationships and rituals. It also focused on the beauty of women and proclaimed her love for girls. Koppelman Sain stating on Lesbian, "I recognize these stories as

stories about women loving women in the variety of Romantic ways that we wouldn't even have to struggle to define if we were talking about man and women loving each other".

The varied authors involved in this stream of Lesbian oriented writing could be found in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market" in 1862, which was widely read as a narrative of Lesbianism even though it attempts to paint itself as a sisterly love. In Wilkie Collin's novel "The Woman in White", the character Marian Halcombe is described as masculine and unattractive and her motivation throughout the story is her love for her half-sister, Laurre Fairlie. "Shirley and Vilette" by Charlotte Bronte in which the characters engage in obsessive relationships with other women. The 19<sup>th</sup> century poet Emily Dickinson is pondered to be in love with her sister-in-law Susan Gilbert.

The restricted code of living is been broken by these people, not because they misrule the ethics but they have a fond consideration for themselves. Although the gay-rights and lesbian-rights have been historically coincided, the Lesbianism has never been afforded with same rights in literature. The Lesbianism is been treated as caricature in literature for the unwilling American writers, who have corresponded much to the male homosexuals. The feministic point of view has been repulsed in literature through this gender aberration of Lesbianism. But O'Hara has not demeaned the feminist ideal of Lesbianism in his novella "Lovey Childs: A Philadelphian's Story". He

was a genuine narrator of the various consequences of life in his time. He was unaware of the craftsman of strategically pointing the refinement of his age in his writing.

O'Hara has heralded the social historian in the true sense of his candid observations of the people of Philadelphia. The novella "Lovey Childs: A Philadelphian's Story" is an explicit narrative of the social strata and the diseased aberration of sexuality. The people were categorized with the class distinction, which had a major bankruptcy of their life. The World War II had been a promising tumult for the behavioral changes of men and Women. The theme of Lesbianism as treated by O'Hara in this novella seems to be the highlight of the serious delusions underwent by the people of Philadelphia as the post war consequences.

The plot of the novella revolves around the young girl Charlotte Lewis, known as "Lovey" is anxious to come of age, adapt to the adult age of Philadelphia. But her dreams were thwarted by the serious uncouth lesbian relationship of her mother Dorothy Lewis with Lovey's friend Marcy Bancroft. The unsatisfied life of Lovey with her first husband Sky Childs ends with a divorce and thereby with her second marriage was only a compensation of shelter from facing the storms of life. The sinister shadow of lesbianism stretches almost across the novel. Though the concept of lesbianism is a tabooed realistic controversy, O'Hara treatment of lesbianism is embarrassing. He was ironically criticized by many critics for his frank treatment of sex and lesbianism in the novella. But refraining from the major critics, Mathew J. Bruccoli calls O'Hara's interest in Lesbianism simply "A perplexing aspect of O'Hara's last phase" (348) and moreover it is been a snide consensus of "seemed to be competing with Yale for his attention" (350).

The novella describes four Lesbian relationships, the possibility of these relationships in the upper-middle-class American society between the World Wars. The

fascination of extravagances brought by the tradition stands tall to narrate the vulnerability of the people in such a volatile era. The feminine exaltation of the Philadelphia County has been degraded by their familial and societal norms. The female living in the main line society Pennsylvania had certain things to be adapted and forge themselves to get accustomed to the society.

As Mrs. Williams, the wife of Lawyer of Lovey's family proclaims it to be "false sophistication" (122). She encounters an embarrassing situation on her voyage in ship with a group of girls, who tempts her with lesbian ways; she shrinks from her ignorance to bind with these girls and indulges in lesbianism. At the social outcast, she was anxious to ridicule her own identity that she tried to project with the girls in the ship's cabin. It also fosters her helplessness and her feelings of loneliness which makes her to unconsciously submit to this nature through the words, "I'm telling you this awful story because I want you to know that I've had some experience with women like that" (122) and further she recalls with revulsion:

That was the worst week I ever spent in my entire life. I pretend I was sea-sick but that didn't do any good. They just went on, paying no attention to me, but quarreling and making love among themselves.....A whole week of it. I could never tell you all that went on in that tiny stateroom. I've never told anyone, not even my husband. (122)

The lesbian affair of Dorothy Lewis and Marcy Bancroft dominates the first half of the novel, which is the most important event that dominates Lovey's adolescence and has serious repercussions on her life till Dorothy dies. O'Hara has highlighted with such sensational details, which predominates the readers to think more eccentric than complex. He pinpoints the originality of most lives which are interesting because their courses have been influenced by

the ambience of the society and unable to predict, to escape or to understand. O'Hara presents paradoxically the characters Lovey and her mother, who are not able to balance their own self identity and integrate their private and public identities to maintain a self respect for themselves.

The death of Billy, Lovey's father was the initial cause for the trauma of consequences that happens in her life. Dorothy becomes unbalanced in her views and moving with the social circle without her husband. Dorothy regularly has appointments with their family lawyer Grafton Williams to stabilize her financial difficulties. They had been selling bit by bit of their acreage in order to sustain an upper class life in main line society.

But this high order of living in the O'Hara Protectorate novels is the main reason that his characters to live in delusions. Moreover, this social stratum of living disrupts the female state of mind more prone to be sexually precocious. Their carnal desire for a unified living with their husbands has been forbidden due to the social snobbery of the age, this deviates them to sustain a relationship for them by thinking out of the box to have lesbian mannerisms. As Frank MacShane discusses about O'Hara's interest in lesbianism in his work "The Life of John O'Hara" stating:

His interest in Lesbianism, expressed mainly in the novel Lovey Childs, seems also an effort to explore another possible solution to human misery. Criticized for this interest, O'Hara responded that Lesbianism was a common phenomenon and therefore a legitimate subject. In his stories, however, Lesbianism is presented as unnatural, a dangerous and predatory habit women fall into only when disappointed in love with men. But he is too understanding to make an absolute judgement." (232)

Marcy Bancroft was termed as an amateur by O'Hara through her varied relationships and understanding of the world. She sneaks into the

bed of her Godfather, so that she would be facilitated with gifts and money. Her separation from the family and living in a world of snobbery influences Marcy to deflate with her sexual affinities to compensate her emotional imbalances of isolation and inferiority. Her naïve attitude had bewildered with the sexual teasing of Wharton Zabriski, the son of one of the families of the Lewis circle, might lead her marrying him and tagged as the wife of "Princeton Millionaire". In order to obtain the social status, Marcy also gets deluded with the extravagant influences about Zabriski and to become wealthy. Dorothy had been instigating the emotional uproar of Marcy to become rich and obtaining the Lewis circle identity, by offering to help her with the match by musing, "I think you'd be good for him. He's rather like my husband when he that age" (75)

Marcy seems to be a corrupted feminine offshoot of the Jazz Age, who encounters with varied relationships, so that she could obtain a status in the main line society. Her psychological predominance with the Philadelphia has made her to be so uneven in her mutual relationships in life. She does not care with whom or where she abides, but steps ahead to be a semi-product of the Philadelphia society.

Thus the feministic stereotype of lesbianism has been explicated so naturally by John O'Hara's "Lovey Childs: A Philadelphian Story". The "rat race" to mint money and status unleashing the morality of life is the feminine characters of O'Hara. He has been a conventional observer of the "JAZZ AGE", which reflects in his novella with life style of his people, which surmounts to be an age of indifference in many aspects of life. The effects of World War II had serious consequences of mental instability on the people of America. The Post War experiences of delusions and delinquency on the part of the people, who have not set a clear vision on their life.

These incongruities in the ambience of the American life led to gender aberration on sex. O'Hara as a member of the Hardcore Naturalistic movement recognizes the anarchic sexual violence as a salient feature of the century. He has fairly treated about this imbalance activities of revulsion in his novella, which upholds the irrational culture of the people of Philadelphia.

#### Works Cited

1. O'Hara, John. *Lovey Childs: A Philadelphian's Story*. New York: Random. Bantam Paper back Edition. 1969. Print.
2. Long, Robert Emmet. *John O'Hara*. New York. 1983. Print.
3. MacShane, Frank. *The Life of John O'Hara*. NewYork: E.P. Dutton, 1980. Print.
4. Kich, Martin. *Everyone Goes Around Acting Crazy: A study of Recent Hard Core Naturalists*. Leigh University. 1988. Print.
5. Yannella, Philip. *American Literature in Context after 1929*. Blackwell publishing. 2011. Print.
6. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sappho>.

## WOMAN PROTECTING NATURE: AN ECOFEMINISTIC STUDY OF THE SELECT NOVELS OF BARBARA KINGSOLVER

**Evangeline Maria Fernando**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore  
and*

**Dr. R. Aseda Fatima**

*Head and Assistant Professor, Department of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Literature is an art that influences and enrich the lives and experiences of people across the globe. American Literature makes an impact with its significance in its lofty themes, indispensable works and distinctive writers. Like the other national literature, the Literature of America was shaped by the culture and the history of the country. It involves the analysis of various kinds of materials which also includes fiction, non-fiction, drama, poetry and novels. South Western American Literature consists of the writers who portray their unique cultures and landscape of the Southwest. Some of the most popular themes of the South Western American Literature includes feminism, fertility, environmentalism, human relationships and moral values.

Barbara Kingsolver is an American environmental novelist, poet and scientist. Barbara Kingsolver lives in South Western Virginia. Most of her works portray vivid and colourful imagery of nature and the non-human world. She was made the best-selling novelist in the New York Times Best Seller's List since 1993. She has also established The Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction for young writers.

Barbara Kingsolver's novels include unification of past and present, spirituality, fictional locales, unanticipated humour, social justice, human-nature survival, politics, motherhood, landscapes and native American cultures with a rich and intense language. She won the National Humanities Award in 2000. Her novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*

(1998), won the National Book Prize of South Africa. It was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize award and the PEN/Faulkner Award. *The Lacuna* (2009), won the Orange Prize for Fiction in 2010.

Most of her novels contain weighty themes of Ecofeminism and human-nature connections. Kingsolver never fails to render her love and commitment towards nature. The two main novels focused for the study is the *Prodigal Summer* (2000) and *Flight Behaviour* (2012). These two novels carry themes of love, loss, family relations, environmentalism, climate change and reinvention of one self.

*Prodigal Summer* is a beautiful novel portrayed in three subsequent stories of third-person narratives. The protagonists in each story have deep connections with nature. *Flight Behaviour* has its plot woven around the life of Dellarobia Turnbow, who encounters a host of beautiful Monarch butterflies that changes her life by inspiring her to live her dreams. In both the novels, Kingsolver portrays the importance of the natural world for the survival of Humans as well as nature. In most of Kingsolver's novels, the main roles are played by female characters. Women take up the initiative to solve the issues faced by the society or the natural world.

Ecocriticism is denoted as "A new subfield of literary and cultural enquiry that emerged in 1980s and 1990s, devoted to the investigation of relations between Literature and the natural world" (Baldick 101). A Special variety of literature under this field is "Ecofeminist

Criticism". Ecofeminism is also a branch of Feminism that deals with the bond that women share with nature. It also shows how the experiences and circumstances of the lives of women and nature coincide in the perspective of considering the oppression of the same.

The term "Ecofeminism" was introduced by the French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. This concept evolves around the similar tenets of Feminism that includes the equity between genders, enhancing non-patriarchal structures in the perspective that compliments the biological paths of the natural world. It strongly portrays the holistic connections made between women and nature.

In the novel *Prodigal Summer*, Deanna finds solitude amidst the tress in the Zebulon Forest. As a forest ranger, she has a strong affection towards coyotes and the other living creatures in the forest. She shares an intimate bond with nature and tries her best to protect the coyotes from being killed by Eddie, her boyfriend. Nannie, Deanna's father's girlfriend, protects her beloved plants from Garnett's herbicides and pesticides. In the novel *Flight Behaviour*, Dellarobia's life is transformed with the monarch butterflies. She studies and tend to develop an affection towards them. This helps her live her dreams and save the butterflies from Bear Turnbow, her father-in-law.

Barbara Kingsolver is an ecologist having a strong commitment towards the environment. Her novels deal with ecological and humanitarian themes that embraces life with hope and optimism. The mainly focused theme of her novels involve the evolution of self where the identity of the female characters and the non-human world merge. The struggles faced by the female protagonists in the novel *Prodigal Summer* and *Flight Behaviour* go hand in hand with the difficulties faced by the non-human world. Women in the novel take the first step in saving nature for human survival.

Rosemary Ruether, who is also an ecofeminist of the 1980s, insisted that women should work together to end the problems faced by nature or the environment. By doing

this, women will find a liberation for themselves in their life's experiences. Her ideas on ecofeminism forced women to work together to emancipate or protect the natural world from oppression by culture. Ecofeminism can be of two main types, radical ecofeminism and the cultural ecofeminism. Kingsolver's views of ecofeminism can be placed under the cultural Ecofeministic perspective. Cultural Ecofeminism speaks of the intimate bond that women and nature shares. They also share the same characteristics and life's experiences associated with female gender roles that are parallel to the environmental tapestry explained in the novel. For example, the gender roles as a family nurturer, being subjugated, reproductive aspects and some more feministic characteristics are found in nature and the non-human world.

Most of Kingsolver's novels portray the female protagonists as self-determined single mothers or as sisters sharing unending bonds. In the novel *Prodigal Summer*, the characteristics of the women and nature lie parallel to each other. Kingsolver uses the non-human or the natural world as subtle symbols representing the life of the female characters. A detailed view of the Coyotes and Phoebes are portrayed as a symbol of motherhood and sisterhood in the novel. "a coyote family was mostly females, sisters led by an alpha female, all bent on one member's reproduction." (Kingsolver 20). This denotes the sense of motherhood and sisterhood seen in the novel in two different perspectives, namely, the characters, Deanna and Lusa and the non-human world of Coyotes.

In addition, it also showcases the oppression of the patriarchal systems. Just as how the female coyotes are abandoned by the male coyote once the pups are born, Deanna experiences the same situation in her life. Eddie leaves her and towards the end of the novel she discovers that she is pregnant. She makes a will to tell people that a coyote had impregnated her. On the other hand, Lusa adopts her sister-in-law's children, Lowell and Crystal. The Coyotes also symbolize the sisterhood shared between Lusa and Jewel. The female characters

in the novel, *Prodigal Summer* demonstrate a matriarchal structure that reflects the Coyote family. The male characters in the novel are the hunters of Coyotes, while the women, tend to protect them. Deanna tries her best to hide the coyotes from Eddie. She is frustrated by the fact that she could not explain the beauty of these little pups to anybody.

In the novel *Flight Behaviour*, Dellarobia wishes to become that "perfect female" who "can go out and start a new colony by herself" (Kingsolver 196). She shares a unique bond with the Monarch butterflies on the Turnbow property. Having an unsatisfied married life with Cub, Dellarobia looks up to the butterflies for inspiration and encouragement. She learns more about the Butterflies with the help of Ovid. Being the female protagonist, she takes the first step to protect these butterflies from the hands of Bear Turnbow. She becomes the saviour of the butterflies and the butterflies stand as a symbol of a new life in the novel.

Dellarobia is the mother of two at a very young age, as a mother, she has the seamless affection towards her kids. This aspect is also seen in the Monarch butterflies, they fly in swarms from one place to another. Towards the end of the novel, the huge mountain storm destroys almost all the butterflies leaving behind the caterpillars starting a new life that mirrors the life of Dellarobia. She makes up her mind to leave Cub and live an independent new life with the kids.

Another main Ecofeministic aspect in both the novel shows the intimate relationship that women share with nature than with a man. Women stay as the backbone in supporting and protecting the natural world, whereas, the male character tends to destroy or harm them. Barbara Kingsolver as an ecofeminist herself, portrays her affection and commitment towards nature. Each of her female characters in the novels *Prodigal Summer* and *Flight Behaviour* relay on nature for solace, motherly love, inspiration and consolation.

All the female characters in the novel *Flight Behaviour* work to protect or save the natural

world for human survival. Dellarobia develops a close relationship with the Monarch butterflies and saves them from the hands of Bear Turnbow. She saves the trees and the forest as well, like the Chipko movement. Juliet, the wife of Ovid seems to have more knowledge regarding the monarch butterflies, this can be the result of her zeal and liking towards nature.

In the novel, *Prodigal Summer* the female protagonists seem to have deep interconnections with nature. Deanna's love for the forest, birds and wild animals increases every day. Eddie could not offer her the true love and concern that nature brought to her. She felt the forests to be her home of paradise. As an entomologist, Lusa loved insects, especially moths. She often compared her life to the moth. Nannie Rawley was determined to protect her plants from Garnett's pesticides.

In conclusion, ecofeminism shows how women and nature are not only connected but also share the same lives experiences at a certain point in time. Both are interdependent on each other and look up to each other for survival. Kingsolver beautifully portrays the predicament and reinvention of the female characters and nature in these novels.

### Works Cited

1. Baldick, Chris. *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990. Print.
2. Dickstein, Morris, Giles, James.R et al. *American Literature*. 17 Aug. 2018. Web. 1 Oct. 2018.  
<https://www.britannica.com/art/American-literature>
3. Kingsolver, Barbara. *Flight Behaviour*. US: Harper Collins, 2012. Print.
4. Kingsolver, Barbara. *Prodigal Summer*. USA: Harper Collins, 2000. Print.
5. Miles, Kathryn. *Ecofeminism: Sociology and Environmentalism*. Web. 2 Oct. 2018.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/ecofeminism>

## FROM LUST TO LOVE: TRACING THE CHANGING DISCOURSE ON HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS IN INDIA THROUGH THE WORKS OF ISMAT CHUGTAI AND MAHESH DATTANI

**Susmita Mukherjee**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore*

### Introduction

The historic verdict of the Supreme Court of India on September 6, 2018, said "LGBT Community has same rights as of any ordinary citizen. Respect for each others rights, and others are supreme humanity. Criminalising gay sex is irrational and indefensible." However, the fight for effacing the taboo associated with homosexuality has been a long one and the fight continues even today. Literature has paid a vital role in giving a voice to the LGBT community through the ages. In fact it was literature that brought homosexuality to the forefront and attempted to make the concept mainstream. The earliest example of this is *Lifaaf* (The Quilt), a 1942 Urdu short story by Ismat Chughtai which was published in the Urdu literary journal *Adab-i-Litaf*. The controversial work led Chughtai to an obscenity trial. However, she won the case and escaped censorship as her style of writing was euphemistic and did not imply directly to any homosexual relationship. Chughtai wrote extensively on the themes of female sexuality and femininity and was thus considered one of the most significant voices of Urdu literature in the twentieth century. Her other well known works include *Angaarey* and *The Crooked Line*. However, *Lihaaf* remains the most popular story by Chughtai. Her works have been adapted into films and stage plays, the most famous among them being Deepa Mehta's 1996 film *Fire* which was loosely based on *Lihaaf*.

After *Lihaaf* the presence of homosexuality in Indian literature was seen again only during the 1980s in the works of Marathi playwright Vijay

Tendulkar. His play *Mitrachi Ghoshta*, was considered revolutionary because of its lesbian protagonist. Subsequently, Tendulkar's contemporaries Vikram Seth and Mahesh Dattani began to write widely on homosexuality thereby bringing it into limelight. While other writers like Tendulkar had one or two works in their oeuvre discussing homosexuality, most of Dattani's works dealt with the lives and issues of the LGBT community. His works like *Seven Steps Around the Fire*, *Dance like a Man*, *Bravely fought the Queen* and *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* are a testimony to this fact. This makes Mahesh Dattani one of the most revolutionary writers of the twenty-first century. Dattani's stories have paved way for a plethora of other works revolving around homosexuality in recent times such as R. Raja Rao's *The Boyfriend*, Neel Mukherjee's *A Life Apart*, and Sachin Kundalkar's *Cobalt Blue* to name a few. LGBT literature in India has evolved enormously from the times of Ismat Chughtai. Today homosexuality is treated much more explicitly without having the fear of being censored or prosecuted the way Ismat Chughtai was for *Lihaaf*. The following section traces this transition in detail by analysing Ismat Chughtai's pre-independence work *Lihaaf* and Mahesh Dattani's late twentieth century play *On A Muggy Night in Mumbai*.

### Representation of Homosexual Relationships in Ismat Chughtai's *Lihaaf* and Mahesh Dattani's *On A Muggy Night in Mumbai*

*Lihaaf* is a flashback account of an incident that took place in the life of the narrator when she was a young girl. It is a story of a girl who



goes to stay with her aunt, Begum Jaan, for a few days and is unable to comprehend the seemingly queer relationship between Begum Jaan and her maid Rabbu. Towards the end of the story the narrator finally understands the homosexual nature their relationship and is left stunned and horrified. Even though the narrator recounts her experience as a young girl, it can be traced in her narration that she has not come to terms with what she witnessed. She says, "I am not going to regale you with any romantic tale...It's hardly a subject for romance" (1). The protagonist, Begum Jaan is a neglected wife who leads a very lonely life. Her husband Nawab Saheb, "kept an open house for students- young, fair and slender- waisted boys whose expenses were borne by him." , thereby suggesting that he is a gay man. Begum Jaan tries her best to win the heart of her husband but fails miserably and is thus forced to lead a secluded life. However, Begum Jaan's life changes dramatically after she is introduced to Rabbu, her maid. After meeting Rabbu, Begum Jaan "started living and lived her life to the full" (2).

Both Begum Jaan and her husband are portrayed as homosexuals. However, the nature of the relationship that each maintains is lustful and perverse. Begum Jaan and Rabbu's relationship is merely erotic. The narrator describes how each night she saw the "quilt shaking vigorously as though an elephant was struggling inside" (3). The perversion of Begum Jaan is further revealed when she molests the narrator. The narrator was too young at that time to realise what had actually happened to her. She writes, "I wanted to run away, but she held me tightly. I tried to wriggle out and Begum Jaan began to laugh loudly...She was pressing me as though I were a clay doll and the odour of her warm body made me almost throw up. But she was like one possessed" (5). Similarly, her husband is also a child molester who preyed on "young, fair and slender-waisted boys...chasing gossamer shirts." (1).

Moreover, the story reflects the thought that Begum Jaan's sexual advances towards women is a result of her husband's rejection of her. The narrator tries to figure out the reason behind Begum Jaan's sexuality and speculates thus, "Did it start when she gave up on amulets, talismans, black magic and other ways of retaining the love of her starying husband?" (1). It is seen that Begum Jaan is heartbroken with the Nawab's behaviour and tries in vain to distract herself with books. She passes sleepless nights and yearns for love. The narrator says, "It was Rabbu who rescued her from the fall" (2). Rabbu is thus a person who comes in as a substitute for Nawab Saheb in order to fulfill Begum Jaan's carnal desires. There is no genuine compassion or love between Begum Jaan and Rabbu and this is seen even in Rabbu's attitude towards Begum Jaan and vice versa. Begum Jaan is portrayed as a sexually frustrated person and that is why she molests the young narrator when Rabbu goes out of town. The narration of *Lihaa* implies that homosexuality is a perversion that arises when a heterosexual love is lacking. *Lihaa* turns out to be a story dealing with homoeroticism and does not consider homosexual love as a possibility.

Mahesh Dattani's play *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* revolves around seven friends who gather in an apartment one evening. The story goes on to expose complex homosexual relationships and the struggles homosexual couples face in order to survive in a largely heterosexual society. Deepali and Tina are lesbians who have been together for many years. Similarly, Ranjit is a gay man who has been in a relationship for over ten years. The central plot of the story is a love triangle involving Kamlesh, Sharad and Ed Prakash. Kamlesh and Ed had been lovers but the relationship became complicated when Ed decided to lead a 'normal' life by trying to become a heterosexual. Sharad on the other hand has been devoted to Kamlesh and loves him dearly. Except Ed and Bunny, the rest of the

characters are openly homosexual and are involved in healthy relationships. Like *Lihaaf*, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* discusses the taboo and stigma attached to homosexual relationships. However, Chughtai's perspective refuses to believe that true love can exist between homosexuals. Whereas, Dattani's play shows truly romantic homosexual relationships. The relationship between Sharad and Kamlesh brings out the tension and friction which is existent even in heterosexual relationships. Dattani shows that there is no difference in the dynamics of a romantic relationship between heterosexuals and homosexuals. The constant bickering between Kamlesh and Sharad stemming out of Sharad's jealousy of Ed justifies this,

Sharad: I wish you would acknowledge the fact, in front of our mutual friends - that I did live here not so long ago. I designed your kitchen cabinet !

Kamlesh: I wish you would stop rubbing it in people's faces that you were once my lover...(20)

It is moving when towards the end of the play Kamlesh lets go of Ed and realises his love for Sharad, "You are funny! Sharad, you are wonderful. I don't know why I didn't see it before . I love you...I know now that I have been chasing an illusion. Perhaps the man I love does not exist. But you do. And I love you. (90-91)

By contrasting *Lihaaf* and *On A Muggy Night in Mumbai* it can be seen that homosexual relationships have evolved and are now perceived as something genuine rather than a perversion.

## Conclusion

In her memoir, *A Life in Words*, Ismat Chughtai mentions that people in her time had a vague idea of what homosexuality was. It was talked of in hushed voices and was a subject that was strictly forbidden. This explains the erotic prism through which homosexuality is viewed in her short story *Lihaaf*. Yet *Lihaaf* remains a pioneering work in LGBT literature and is lauded as one of the boldest works of the pre- independence era. Over the years, however, representation of homosexual relationships in literature has matured. Dattani's *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* reflects this transformation. Nevertheless, LGBT themes hold a niche place in literature and its intricacies are being continuously explored by emerging writers.

## Works Cited

1. Chughtai, Ismat. *A Life in Words: Memoirs*. Trans. M. Assaduddin. New Delhi: PenguinBooks India, 2013.
2. ---. *The Quilt and Other Stories*. Trans. M. Assaduddin. New York: Sheep Meadow Press, 1994.
3. Dattani, Mahesh. *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai: A Stage Play*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2000.
4. Roy, Nilanjana S. "Homosexuality in India: A Literary History." *The New York Times* 24 Feb (2012).
5. Sengupta, Ishita. "Decoding the 'feminist' in Ismat Chughtai's most (in) famous short story, *Lihaaf*." *The Indian Express* 18 Sep (2018).

## **DEPICTION OF WOMEN AND FEMININITY IN K.R MEERA'S SELECTED WORKS: *HANGWOMAN* AND *THE POISON OF LOVE***

**U.Greeshma**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Kochi*

To be Indian in thought and feeling, and emotion and experience, yet also to court the graces and submit to the discipline of English for expression, is a novel experiment in creative mutation. There are successes as well as failures, and failures are perhaps more numerous than the successes. All the same there are men and women (necessarily few) who have bravely run the race and reached the goal and they deserve due recognition. How, then, about Indian creative writing in English? Of Course, it is Indian literature, even as the work of a Thoreau or a Hemingway is American literature. But Indian literature comprises of several literatures – Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kannada, Maithili, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu – and Indian literature is but one of the voices in which India speaks. Malayalam literature is the body of writing expressed in regional language, Malayalam, which is spoken in Kerala, southern state of India. Malayalam language is profound with numerous writers. Twentieth century Malayalam literature witnessed many changes. It includes the active and strong participation of women, for the women and by the women.

Many new women writers of fiction and poetry have begun to publish their books, and their works are characterized by gender consciousness and the politics of desire. They are also conscious of the meta-fictionality of their work. They put in writing about the missing women, the silent, unseen and unsung voices, and the invisible women, all have had any number of explanations, but the way it has been portrayed is not an easy one.

This paper focus on the selected works of a promising Malayalam writer, K.R. Meera who is

accoladed with many awards including Kerala Sahitya Academy Award (2013), Odakkuzhal Award (2013), Vayalar Award (2014) and Kendra Sahitya Academy Award (2015).

K.R. Meera, multi-award-winning writer and journalist, has published short stories, novels and essays. She won Kendra Sahitya Academy award for her scrupulous work *Aarachar*, which widely acclaimed as a contemporary classic all over India and published by Penguin Books India as *Hangwoman*. She has written many works about women and their plights in social, political and economic realm. Her focus is to establish the strands of women in patriarchal roads of Indian society. K.R. Meera's works are highly prolific in thoughts, her language is vivid and lyrical. She readily transports the reader to the lush forests and picturesque riversides of Kerala through the sheer audacity of her narrative logic.

This paper titled **Depiction of women and femininity in K.R. Meera's selected works: *Hangwoman* and *The Poison of Love*** studies how the author presented two women in two different works. Meera is at her best when she examines the lives of women characters. *Hangwoman* opens the panoramic sweep of its canvas for its irrelevant play with the paradoxes of life- love and death. It is a striking novel includes within its majestic sweep the enigmas of human mental conditions. Stunning images bring out the depth and intensity of central character Chetana's spiritual development and stand testimony to the author's consummate writing style. This book heaves with violence, is lush with metaphor and shocks with details. The reader can only gasp at surgical precision

with which the author describes the act of hanging. Meera echoes one of the strongest voices in contemporary Malayalam literature through Chetana. She plays with the reader's anticipation efficiently. The novel is extremely atmospheric.

*The Poison of Love* is K.R. Meera's fifth book daring to transcend the boundaries of Malayalam language. Originally titled, Meerasadhu, this novel has attracted many readers, mostly women, of all age groups. They have come in search of the author in to public meetings, literature festivals, and wherever she might come, just to tell how much this book tore at their hearts. Each woman claimed that Tulsi, the protagonist's experience mirrored her own.

K.R. Meera closely analyses the emotional nature of women around her and portrayed as characters in her works. For her Feminism means, understanding the equal existence of women along with men folks. *Handwoman* is a grand tale about a family of executioners who have been in the trade since 450 BC. The unique style of narration through the blending of the real history of West Bengal with the intense emotions of the characters in the novel. The focus is on the two strong women characters in the novel- Chetana Grndha Mullick and Dhakkuma. In *The Poison of Love*, she centralized the life of a woman, Tulsi and her emotional changes in behavior after marriage with a man named Madhav. Stereotypical picture of a married lady from ancestral Kerala family is represented through Tulsi. She was pathetically eaten by the ants for which Meera implies to the corpse-eaters. For *The Poison of Love* Meera gives the definition, love is highly venomous as a serpent, with the passage of time, it sours, splits and becomes poison.

The representation of women in literature, then was felt to be one of the most important forms of socialization since it provided the role models which indicated to women and men what constituted acceptable versions of the 'feminine' and legitimate feminine goals and

aspirations. Feminists pointed out, for example, that in nineteenth-century fiction very few women work for a living, unless they are driven to it by dire necessity. Instead, the focus of interest is on the heroine's choice of marriage partner, which will decide her ultimate social position and exclusively determine her happiness and fulfilment in life, or her lack of these.

It is impossible to define a feminine practice of writing, and this is an impossibility which will remain, for this practice can never be theorized, enclosed, code..it will always surpass the discourse that regulates the phallogocentric (male-dominated) system; it does and will take place in areas other than those subordinated to philosophic-theoretical domination. It will be conceived of by subjects who are breakers of automatisms, by peripheral figures that no authority can ever subjugate.

Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes and rhetoric's, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word 'silence...Such is the strength of women that, sweeping away syntax, breaking that famous thread which acts for men as a surgical umbilical cord.

Women characters of Meera in these two works exhibit severe disparity. The protagonist Chetana who as the title suggests is the Aarachar in the novel. Chetana, who is the youngest girl of the family, is destined to be the next Aarachar. From the beginning of the novel, Chetana shows great maturity for a twenty-two-year-old lower middle class. For a reader, the very thought of a female executioner brings in a variety of emotions especially since she is the first woman to be an executioner. The long tradition of executioners in the family affects the thoughts and actions of the characters in the novel. She is consumed and influenced by the

history of their family. The fact that Chetana passed her higher secondary education with distinction shows how the character possess mental strength and self-confidence even in the teenage. Meera in her interview, after winning the Sahitya Award for *Aarachar*, says that it was this news about the execution that brought in the idea of a female executioner. Meera says that she wrote the novel through the eyes of both an author and a reader which helped in both writing and criticizing at the same time. The novel is a compound and detailed narration of a woman who breaks free from the arms of her patriarchal family, overpowers the manipulation of the man she both loves and despises, and comes to her self.

Death is the overpowering theme and emotion which binds the novel together. The novel starts with the verdict in the case of a man who is sentenced to death. Since the number of people executed gradually decreased through time, the Mullicks, Chetana's family were thrilled to hear this since their main income depended on the executions. The novel is set in the old cremation ground of Nimthala Ghat on the banks of Ganga. Even though the primary source of income of the family is through executions, they also have a tea shop where the relatives of the dead come after the cremation. So, one can say that the Mullick family depends on the dead to survive.

Chetana says that the art of making the noose was innate even in the babies who were born into the Mullick family. Even before the babies learned to walk, they learned how to tie the noose. Chetana says that even before she was born, she used to tie knots with the veins and the umbilical cord in the womb. The noose is an imagery used throughout the novel to denote a variety of emotions. This indicates how mentally this female character is strong when compared to Tulsi, the protagonist in *The Poison of Love*.

Meera brilliantly figured two contrasting characters in the two works. In *The Poison of*

*Love*, the protagonist Tulsi, later became Meerasadhu. She tortured herself for being fallen in love with a man who is a womanizer. Tulsi was born in a reputed Nair family in Trivandrum, the capital city of Kerala. She was an IIT Topper. When Madhav, a journalist approached her with his love request, she became blind for his charm and caressive nature. She became a silly romantic. The novel begins with a scene in Dharmasala. Tulsi after being betrayed by her man of love decides to sacrifice all the material pleasures of life and live the rest of her life like a widow who begs for food and existence. She devoted her life as a Bhakt Meera, the devotee of Lord Krishna who wrote Meera bhajans. She prepared herself mentally and physically to become a Meerasadhu. She tonsured her head and considered her body is the raw material for both love and devotion. It was a shocking revelation that her husband Madhav was a man for many women. There were twenty-seven lovers who had been a part of his life.

Meera portrayed Tulsi as a compassionate, sincere wife who believes in fidelity. She decides to forgive him for all the past deeds and equip herself with unconditional love for her husband. In her life, many men had approached her with the intention of having sexual pleasure and family goals. But she strictly rejected all and adhered her self to the idol of husband. Tulsi is very sensitive woman who sees her present, past and future in a man who became her husband and the father of her child. Her subsistence shattered into pieces on the moment when Madhav revealed his past relationships. It indicates how frivolous she is. She has succumbed her entire world in the feet of her husband. At this juncture, one can easily trace the differences between Chetana and Tulsi. Both characters are consented by the same author in extremely different frames of mind. Chetana stands for strong femininity. She is mentally and physically strong to perform execution. Her

executing ability in the early stages of life has caused the death of an innocent child in her.

The novel ends with Chetana's satisfaction in fulfillment of her dream. The novel is filled with emotions between Yethindranath Banerjee, the sentenced convict and Chetana the executioner. Chetana draws the courage to execute him. They have a chat which calms her mind and gives her the strength and the willpower to pull the lever. When she is about to cover his face, she asks him for forgiveness since her act is nothing but her family tradition. They have a moment of silence after which she pulls the lever.

K.R. Meera is unravelling the deep, dark secrets of a twisted marriage in *The Poison of Love*. It is a strange story of a woman's emotion, that looks into its very depth and comes out with a deep, dark tale. In *Hangwoman*, Meera

depicts the role of women and tormented relationships. The unusual and courageous portrayal of women made it a coming-of-age novel of a different kind. Chetana becomes a symbol of women's empowerment. She holds up the power and dignity of all women.

### References

1. Barry. Peter, *Beginning Theory*.2018
2. Eagleton, Terry, *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2008.
3. Iyengar, Srinivasa Iyengar. K.R, *Indian Writing in English*. 2013.
4. Marks and de Courtivron, *New French Feminisms* Harvester. 1981.
5. Meera, K. R. *Hangwoman*. Penguin Random House. 2014.
6. Meera, K.R. *The Poison of Love*. Penguin Random House.2017.

## **SCANNING LIES AND GOSSIPS IN LILLIAN HELLMAN'S THE CHILDREN'S HOUR**

**S.Karpagajothi**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Lillian Hellman has written the play *The Children's Hour* in 1934. The play is a huge hit with the Broadway run of 691 performances. The play focuses on the lives of two women Martha Dobie and Karen Wright. They are friends from college and plan to start a school. They assign Martha's Aunt, Mrs. Mortar as the elocution teacher. Mrs. Mortar's incompetency in teaching makes the Headmistresses to send her away to London. When Martha suggests her aunt to go for a trip to London, Mrs. Mortar gets angry and shouts at Martha that her feelings towards Karen is unnatural; she is jealous of Joseph, and so she acts insane towards Mrs. Mortar.

Unfortunately, two students overhear Martha and Mrs. Mortar's conversation and gossips with their friend Mary Tilford. Mary goes to her grandmother's house and tells Mrs. Mortar's accusation about Martha's unnatural feeling towards Karen. She whispers many lies to her grandmother Mrs. Amelia Tilford. Grandmother believes Mary and makes other students to withdraw from the school immediately.

Martha files a lawsuit against Mrs. Amelia Tilford for falsely accusing Martha and Karen as lovers. Mrs. Mortar, who is the witness, does not come to court and testify. The teachers lose the case. Eight days after the losing the case, Joseph tells Karen and Martha that they can start a new life in Vienna. Karen feels Joseph is acting strange for some days. When she inquires him, Joseph questions whether Karen really has an unnatural relationship with Martha. She denies and breaks up their relationship.

When Martha comes from the kitchen, Karen informs her that she has ended her relationship with Joseph. Martha realizes that she has destroyed her own life as well as Karen's. A sudden revelation strikes Martha's mind. She confesses her love to Karen, but Karen did not listen to her and insist Martha should sleep for some time. Martha agrees, goes to her room and shoots herself. Amelia Tilford arrives and informs Karen that the accusation is false and she is ready to apologize. Amelia insists that Karen must let her to help. Looking at the guilty stricken face of Amelia, Karen agrees to accept her offer. They hope for a new dawn.

Hellman highlights the problems of single, working-women in this play. When Karen informs that she is going to marry Joseph Cardin, Martha does not seem to be happy. Martha feels that Karen will leave the job right after her marriage. Even after Karen gives assurance that, she will continue to work after marriage with the support of Joseph, Martha does not look satisfied.

During the discussion between Martha and Karen, about Karen-Joseph Cardin's marriage, Martha tells her friend:

I don't understand you. It's been so damned hard building this thing up, slaving and going without things to make ends meet — think of having a winter coat without holes in the lining again! — and now when we're getting on our feet, you're all ready to let it go to hell. (19)

For eight years, Martha and Karen have worked to develop their dream school. They have sacrificed their youth for this school.

However, if Karen gets married before they become economically independent; all their toil would end in vain. Moreover, it would become hard for Martha to manage the school alone. Martha strongly believes that her friend should give up her goals. At the same time, the society is not ready to accept two women being single and shares a same room. The people easily get suspicious about the single woman's behaviour.

Mrs. Tilford tries to persuade Joseph Cardin that Karen and Martha are lovers. Mrs. Tilford, who does not know about Mrs. Mortar's behaviour, thinks that Mortar is a good woman. Mrs. Tilford assumes that someone has guessed the teachers relationship and so Karen is rushing to get married as soon as possible. Her doubt becomes clear when Mrs. Tilford finds out that Karen and Martha are sending Mrs. Mortar to England. She presumes that Mrs. Mortar is aware of the teachers' relationship. Mrs. Tilford tries to manipulate Cardin also, saying, "Don't you find it odd, Joseph, that they want so much to get rid of that silly, harmless woman?" (65).

Karen and Martha, who are already twenty-eight years of age, are still single. When Karen decides to get married, the rumor about the teachers' unnatural relationship spreads quickly. Therefore, everyone thinks that Karen is rushing to marry soon just to put an end to the gossip. Sally Burke in *American Feminist Playwrights: A Critical History* tells that the two teachers' age is a "fact that may have fueled the suspicions of the members of the ladies clubs, leading them to wish, subconsciously perhaps, to punish the transgressors who stepped out of their proper roles" (111). Therefore, the society has a wrong perception about working-women.

In the case of the two teachers, Karen and Martha work hard to start a school of their own. They are the Headmistresses of Wright-Dobie School. Two middle-class single women, earning respect from the society, becoming the Headmistresses is an achievement. At the same time, the society ignores women who are falsely

accused as lesbians like Karen and Martha. When Karen gets frustrated to live a life inside four walls, she asks Martha to pack their things and to move to some other place. She thinks that they can easily get a job at other towns and live happily once again. However, the reality is different. They cannot live without money. In Martha's question, Hellman stresses the importance of money. Martha asks her, "A job? Money?" (102). Karen and Martha do not own a house. They do not have money or a job to support them. They do not have to suffer if they are economically independent.

An important issue Hellman deals with in this play is the charge of lesbianism. Karen and Martha undergo several problems once they are accused of having an unnatural relationship. When Karen and Martha go to Amelia's house and question her, Amelia does not want them to enter into her house. Amelia says as, "I shall not call you names, and I will not allow you to call me names" (68). Amelia is not even ready to call them by their names. She does not want them to call her name. She feels disgust to have a conversation with lesbians. In Amelia's view, the teachers have committed a terrible sin and no one will forgive them. Therefore, Amelia who thinks herself as an upright woman feels that the two teachers must not enter her house. They will pollute Amelia's house with their sin.

When Martha and Karen demand an explanation from Amelia, she refuses to speak with them. Martha asks why everyone is trying to corner them with a false accusation; Amelia replies, "This can't do any of us any good, Miss. Dobie" (68). Amelia thinks that there is nothing to argue with them. In her mind, she thinks that lesbians cannot do anything good for the society. Women like Amelia, who think they are virtuous believes that people having an unnatural relationship must be wiped out from the society.

Martha's aunt does not come to testify the next day and so the teachers lose the case. Therefore, the court declares that the teachers



have committed a sin. Eight days after losing the case, Mrs. Mortar comes to the house to give an explanation, "I didn't think of it that way Martha. It couldn't have done any good for all of us to get mixed up in that unpleasant" (92).

From Mrs. Mortar's speech, Hellman explains how people do not like to involve themselves in cases like accusation of lesbianism. Mrs. Mortar is the person who speaks ill about Martha in the beginning. The teachers have lost everything because of Mrs. Mortar's statement. She knows the charge is not true. Still, she does not show up.

The teachers stay inside their farmhouse for eight days. When Karen decides to leave that place, Martha refuses to join; she is aware of their situation. When Karen asks to move, Martha tells her that in a big town, many people know them and in a small town, everyone knows them. In small towns, gossips spread in air. They have no place to hide except their home. They will not get a job either in a small town or in a big city. Karen and Martha are famous throughout the country for a false charge. They cannot prove their innocence in any way. By including lesbianism in her play, Hellman explains how the victim is treated in the society.

Through this play, Hellman points out how the lies and gossips spoil two innocents' lives.

One can think that a lies and gossips do not affect others in any way. Some people may feel comfortable in at telling lies to escape from a situation. Some people likes to gossip about others, which gives them pleasure and grabs others' attention. However, a simple lie and gossip have the power to destroy a person's life. The false charge of lesbianism on women reveals the society's attitude towards lesbianism. Through his play, Hellman exposes the mind-set of a society that considers itself as virtuous and blameless. The people do not have time to investigate the truth behind such a big issue. The society accuses Karen and Martha as sinners, but the people are the real sinners to speak wrong about two innocents and ultimately demolished their lives. The play has been an eye-opener to the society. *The Children's Hour* is a tragedy, but it has changed the views on the accusation of lesbianism; women's need for economic independence and the problems a single working-class woman faces in the society.

### Works Cited

1. Burke, Sally. "Anticipating the Second Wave." *American Feminist Playwrights: A Critical History*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996. Print.
2. Hellman, Lillian. *The Children's Hour*. Middle Town: BN Publishing, 2008. Print.

## QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S NOVEL *THE EDIBLE WOMAN*

**C.J.Ancy Rose**

*I M.A. English Literature, PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore*

Women in our society suffer many crisis, one among that is the identity crisis. They find it hard to come out and pursue what they actually want. They are forced to play different roles and were always considered to be the weaker sex in the society. They fall a prey to the exploitation and clutches of men and the society. This creates a thought of inferiority to the opposite gender. The innate thought of suppression and exploitation makes the woman weak and sick on their identity. This paper analysis the protagonist of the novel, "*The Edible Woman*" by Margaret Atwood. It focuses on her struggle to overcome the clutches of the society and to find herself.

Margaret Atwood was a Canadian poet, novelist, critic, essayist, inventor, teacher, and environmental activist. She has published over 17 books of poetry, 16 novels, 10 books of non-fiction, 8 collection of short fiction and many children's books and editions of poetry. She explores a woman's journey with all the situations thrown to her with many psychological aspects. In this work she portrays the struggle of a woman to attain her own self. She won many awards and honors like the Booker Prize, Governor General's Award, Peace Prize of German Book Trade and Dan David Prize. The works of Atwood encompasses a variety of themes like power of language, gender and identity, religion and myth, power and politics.

*The Edible Woman* is the first published novel by Margaret Atwood which established her as a prose writer. The story revolves around the protagonist who earns for gender identity and sensibility. This novel is considered to be a

protofeminist one rather than a feministic work. The novel revolves around the main theme of gender roles and identity. It selflessly portrays the culture and habits of the 60's.

The novel begins with the protagonist Marian graduated from college and works in a Public Opinion Company. She does Market research, questioning and sampling products. She is betrothed to a perfectionist, Peter. Ainsley, Marian's roommate does not believe in marriage but wants to bear a child. Len, also a friend of Marian believes in Ainsley's thought process. Ainsley sets her sight on Len. The plot moves towards Marian where she is at work on a research. She meets a graduate student Duncan. She shares an unexpected liking for Duncan. The plot gears up where Marian goes out for a dinner with Len and Peter. There Marian's psychological disorder of not being able to consume anything is witnessed. Ainsley accompanies Marian to make her plan a successful one. Marian is unstable. She is not able to make any decisions about her marriage venue and its preparations. She gives Peter all the liberty to decide on everything. Slowly she loses her complete ability to eat any food. There is a party arranged and Marian gets herself dressed according to Peter's choice of wearing red colored dress and red makeover which she doesn't prefer at all. Duncan leaves the place as he is not pleased. Marian follows him, and stays together in a motel that night.

Marion really thinks that Peter is metaphorically consuming her and is afraid of the future with him. She tests and torments him by making a woman shaped cake and asks him to consume it. He tastes it but later denies and

leaves the place disappointed. Marion is content and happy for this. The next day she gives it to Duncan. He tastes it and utters, "Delicious".

Atwood in the novel has the supreme concept of discussing gender identity. Marian longs to find herself. Meanwhile Peter creates his own false idea of what Marian is. Atwood justifies the behavior of Marian as means of psychological discontentment. The novel symbolizes the culture that prevailed those days with characters in the plot. Marian loses control over herself and nodes to whatever said by Peter. Marian says, "I was astounded at myself. I'd never said anything remotely like that to him before. The funny thing was I really meant it". Peter has a different outlook on Marian. At the end Marian bakes a woman shaped cake which can otherwise be called as "fake Marian". She is content and eats the cake after tormenting Peter. This symbolizes that she has broken free from the need to find herself and has achieved it. Food symbolism is very important here. This keenly explains the distancing and the revival that Marian undergoes with herself.

The story is narrative consisting three parts. The first part is the first person, the second part is in the third person and the final part comes back to the first person narrative. These pronouns play an important role in the movement of the psychological mindset of Marian herself. She rejects food as she rejects herself. The theory inculcated completely is

psychological where Marion yearns for her self-identification.

The author finally describes the evolution of a laymen's character. *The Edible Woman* is as relevant today as it was in the 60's. The author weaves the plot and the characters with her intelligent and witty style. Metaphorical Cannibalism is used by the author to depict the psychological changes in Marian's behavior.

Though this book was written in 1969, gender equality and identity is predominant. It is displayed through Marian's role played in the novel and the relationship with Peter. Peter was allowed to make all the decisions of choosing the color of the dress, her activities. This is highly relevant to today's society. The novels end makes merry by the revival of Marian becoming independent. There are many Marians and Peters who consume the goodness of the human relationship and identity as such. Marian throughout the novel proceeds with the quest for identity, finally she attains one. The title "*The Edible Woman*" is highly relevant and justified as she assumes the cake to be herself. Symbolically Marian's character portrays the fact of woman being consumed by the needs of the society and the men in it.

### Works Cited

1. Atwood, Margaret. *The Edible Woman*. Great Britain: Virago Press, 2009. Print.

## THEMATIC STUDY OF GENDER CRISIS IN INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

S.Vijayalakshmi

Assistant Professor of English, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts and Science, Nava India, Coimbatore

### Introduction

The term feminism is derived from the Latin word 'Femina' which means women. This term is used to describe various moments like cultural political and economic that aims to provide equal rights for both men and women. The 19th century is an important milestone for feminism in India.

This period witnessed the emergence of a group of educated and intelligent women in western countries with new ideologies. They started questioning many gender issues like partiality, suppression and oppression of women in patriarchal society. They wanted more women to join in the movement and write their problems they face. Many women started expressing their feelings and emotions through writing.

In India many women writers emerged after independence which brought change in the attitude, theme and use of language. Women writers explored the lives of housewife and condemned their exploitation.

Rashmi Bajaj makes the following statement on the recent works of Indian women writers in English:

We have here increased social consciousness, a strong awareness of identity as woman, championing of women's cause, problems of alienation and identity crisis, daring portrayal of sex and emphasis on the study of personal relationships. (Women Indo Anglian Poets: A Critique, 28)

All the feminist perspective came into prominence in the novels of Anita Desai, Nayanthara Sahgal, Shobha De, Shashi Deshpande and Kamala Das. Anita Desai in her

novels depicts married women who uplift themselves from being suppressed women to brave individuals. Her novel *Cry, the Peacock* is the story of a young girl Maya who is obsessed by a childhood prophecy of disaster. This novel also deals with marital disharmony. Anita probes into the inner consciousness of Maya. She undergoes great mental trauma born of her marriage to a much older Gautama. He wants his wife to follow the traditional customs of Indian society and be traditional, tolerant, submissive and promising. In the beginning she tries to fulfill all his desires but later she finds that he is numb towards her emotions and feelings, becomes silent and passive. At the end to get rid of that relationship, she kills her husband in a detached mood. His death would not matter much because he had never lived and never would. The theme of marriage and love is deeply rooted in the novels of Anita Desai. H.S. Mahale exactly says,

... the marriages in India and various complexities involved with them. Her worldliness and down – to – earth approach to life keeps her detached and makes her art a delightful experience for the people. (Mahale 50)

In *Voices in the City* Monisha is married into a family which is different from hers, lead a unhappy life with Jiban. She hopes for free life in Darjeeling but all her efforts to compromise with life fail and her life becomes meaningless. Desai's novels are thus a reflection of the disturbed psyche of women who are victims of alienation and gender bias.

As a writer with feminist concerns, Nayanthara Sahgal is a descendant of the tradition, where in power it is defined as

goddess Saki a female symbol. In her novels *Storm in Chandigarh* and a *Situation in New Delhi*, she explored the ill treatment of women characters in the patriarchal society. The society which the author portrays in this novel fails to protect a woman even in the University Campus in the capital city of country as Madhu, a student of Delhi University is raped in the registrar office. Lydia and Nell try to move out of the conjugal walls in order to escape ill treatment. In *Storm in Chandigarh* Inder considers Saroj as his property and insult her thinking that he has got all the rights to do it. Inder loves power. He makes Saroj sleep on the floor, showed his violent behaviour throughout the story. The entire life of Inder -Saroj is a portrayal of the pathetic state of women in a patriarchal society. Shobha De explores and portrays a variety of women from the traditional, subjugated and marginalized to the extremely modern and liberated women. In one of her novels *Socialite Evenings*, the portrayal of the protagonist Karuna is the best example of the misery of women in India. She suffers due to non responsiveness of her husband towards her due to which she loses her identity. She also presents another character Anjali a young socialite who suffers due to her husband's oppressive attitude. She condemns the system that causes women's subordination, and marginalisation. In her another novel *Second Thoughts*, she portrays the suffering of marital disharmony in the life of the protagonist Maya who is not considered as a wife by her husband he treats her as a mere object and never gives Liberty to his wife to work part time.

Shashi Deshpande was fascinated by women characters and highlighted the sufferings of women in her novels *That Long Silence*, *Dark Holds No Terror* and *A Matter of Time*. The novel *That Long Silence* speaks about Jaya and Mohan relationship and the reflection of sufferings of an Indian woman in the dogmatic social milieu. It also portrays how woman suffers deeply and bear all the

humiliations of male silently. The author depicts how women live and lead a miserable life in middle- class families between tradition and modernity.

Jaya had dreamt about her marital life, but mechanical relationship and artificial love were the result of her marriage. So she lost interest in her sexual life. She had not expressed her feeling and emotions freely to her husband Mohan. Her feelings of love and sex were oppressed as she says,

In any case, whatever my feelings had been then, I had never spoken of them to him. In fact, we had never spoken of sex at all. It had been as if the experience was erased each time after it happened, it never existed in words. The only words between us had been his question, 'Did I hurt you?' and my answer, 'No' (*That Long Silence*: 95)

Women depicted in the novels of Shashi Deshpande are not mere victims of circumstance, of family and society. In course of period they come out as self empowered women.

### Conclusion

The different style of writing by Indian writers give different aspects of feminism. The varied writing styles of each writer give us different perspectives of feminism. While Kamala Das explores women exploitation in India and the world, writers like Shashi Deshpande make characters who can blame their own egotism for their pathetic condition. The Indian literature is a field which represents feminism in the hands of remarkable writers. Hence all these writings have given a change in the outlook and attitude of women in modern society.

**Work Cited**

1. Deshpande, Shashi. *That Long Silence*. Noida: Penguin Books India Ltd., 1989.
2. Rashmi Bajaj, *Women Indo-Anglian Poets: A Critique*, Asian Publication Services New Delhi, 1996.
3. Mahale, H. S., *Indo – Anglian Fiction*, New Delhi: Jamson, 1985.

## **CHETAN BHAGAT'S RADHIKA: A SYMBOL OF DISCONCERT FEMININITY IN THE SNOBBISH PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY**

**Dayana Mathew**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

In the twenty first century no one may find the word "Gender Equality for Woman" as an extraordinary expression. People find it oddly a taboo for woman to be treated superior though a woman is as empowered as a man. In reality, an Indian woman is not really as empowered and independent as everyone portrays her. It is true that majority of Indian women are given an opportunity as equal to men in education, income, employment, social security and even financial independence. The patriarchal society may wonder what more than this a woman needs since she is treated equal to man.

It may appear peripherally that women have achieved their freedom from the clutches of the patriarchs and empowered enough to stand on her own. She plays a number of roles like a mother, a wife, a daughter, a cook, a nurse, a bread winner, a manager and so on. Today's women are more miserable, confused and unhappy even though the menfolk say that she needs no more empowerment since she could work mainstream along with men in the society.

Women are bombarded with new issues which no one really cares about. All the patriarchs just wanted to pinpoint bitterly that women are more free and self-assured now than in the past. With the multitasking role she has to play in the society, she has to face new physical and psychological changes.

A mother who used to take care of her husband and children and spend her spare time in gossiping and watching serials has now changed to a mother who has to take care of her family, has to report to the office on time, has to take care of a sick family member throughout night and not avail leave the next day in the

office, has to listen to the complaints of the boss as well as family, has to run to school whenever the parents meeting is conducted, has to teach children and so on. People do not really care about these physical and psychological changes a woman has to face with her new position in the society.

An average Indian woman is still chained to the perspective a man has about her. Women are still portrayed as timid, impulsive, delicate and incapable of taking a decision by the men. The men assume as gentlemen in order to take care of these delicate women who cannot handle themselves on their own. It is contradictory for a woman to be treated as a mere delicate object when she is completely capable enough to play multi roles in the society.

Though women have achieved so many milestones in the society and could stand equal or even sometimes even higher to the position of men in the society, men are still ashamed to be associated with any feminine quality and they shamelessly call a woman as a "Manly Woman" whenever she accomplishes something great. This shows the true color of the Hippocratic nature of the patriarchal society.

The patriarchal society can hardly understand the dreams and necessities of a woman. From the day a man is born, he is given priority in everything and his ego is fed by the society as a man is always superior to woman and these women are there to take care of him. A woman could never be free from this patriarchal rule until the society does not change its outlook about her. The men of the household never really understand the feelings

of women no more than a landlord understand his servant's needs.

The dream of every Indian boy is to marry a white, beautiful woman with lots of jewels, who takes care of his needs and his family's. They expect a woman who is submissive to him and never talks back or complains but only suffer silently. If anyone is to walk a little differently, then she is branded as bad. If a man marries many times and has many wives it is "manly" but if a woman does so, then she is a "seductress".

In the novel *One Indian Girl* by Chetan Bhagat, the writer presents an unconventional, immoral and have a say in everything girl in the eyes of the typical, conventional moralistic Indian Society. The narrator of the novel is an Indian girl named Radhika Mehta. The narrator begins the novel by giving an introduction about her as:

Hi, I am Radhika Mehta and I am getting married this week. I am twenty-seven years old. I grew up in Delhi. I now work in London, at Goldman Sachs, an investment bank. I am a vice president in the Distressed Debt Group. Thank you for reading my story. However, let me warn you. You may not like me too much. One, I make a lot of money. Two, I have an opinion on everything. Three, I've had sex. Now if I was a guy you would be okay with all of this. But since I am a girl these three things do they?(7)

In the eyes of an Indian, Radhika may be spoiled woman who does not have any respect for her culture. Yet in western countries like Scandinavia free sex before marriage is not something illegal. To make it more clearly, it is not in the culture that one upholds so much but in the perspective that one has about the culture. If it is not wrong for a man to have sex before marriage or to have extra marital relationships, then it is not wrong in the case of Radhika too. But the society looks down on Radhika because she is a woman. This proves

that it is not the custom that society values but the gender who is involved is more significant. Thus Radhika's behavior is justified. No one can regard her as a bad woman just because the society is prejudiced to deny the pleasures a man enjoys for a woman.

Radhika was efficacious beyond anyone of her age. Yet her sister and mother were concerned about finding a groom since she is way too successful in her career and also in her educational level. No one encouraged her to study further or even appreciate her highly paid job. When Radhika informs her mother about her new job where she was paid four lakh per month all her mother able to reply was "How will I ever find a boy for you?"(9).

The job Radhika secured in Goldman Sachs was beyond anyone's reach of her age and background. Yet all her mother was concerned about finding a groom for her. This itself shows how cowardly and prejudiced the Indian society is. The Indian men do not want a woman who earns more than their income. They want their woman to be submissive in everything and completely relied on them.

If the husband has a high-status job compared to his wife, a better education than his wife or more organisational and management skills, then he will have more power in decision making in the family" Men enjoy more liberty; they are free to do whatever they feel like; they do not need anyone's consent. (10)

The men know very well that women are capable enough to stand beside him not behind him. If women are given financial freedom, they are afraid that woman would have the upper hand in the society which no man would like and accept. They may say theoretically that woman has to be successful and treated equally to men. By equal they mean a position which is not threatening to man and their authority in the society.

Debashish Sen called as Debu with whom Radhika eventually falls in love with in New



York, praises her as “Goldman Sachs, eh? That’s a big deal” (35) when they met for the first time in a party. Debu always preached about there is nothing that a woman cannot achieve in this world. He always supported the idea of woman to be independent and to be treated equally in the society when he talked to Radhika.

The same Debu who were proud of Radhika’s job in Goldman Sach could not bear the idea of her getting bonus of 270,000 dollars where as he has got 80,000 compensation even after his promotion. Debu was able to appreciate Radhika and her job when she was just a person he met in one of the parties. But he could not appreciate her success after she became his girlfriend. He broke up with her saying that “it’s what I have seen growing up. I go to work, make money, wife takes care of the home. Simple needs, happy family(99)”.

If Debu left Radhika because he does not need a wife who is superior to his manhood, Neel left Radhika because he does not want Radhika to be a mere household material. After she broke up with Debu, Radhika left New York and went to Hong Kong and Neel was her boss in there. Radhika had never initiated any relationship with Neel in the first hand. It was Neel who finds a partner, a younger self of himself in Radhika though he was a married man.

The first time when Radhika and Neel made love, she was ashamed about her actions that she tried to avoid meeting with Neel. It was Neel who convinces Radhika that he needs her and it does not affect his family life at all. It may be because of the change in the moral perspectives of the man and woman. Radhika feels bad about her relationship because of moral perception as a woman she was taught to not to covet or desire another woman’s man. However this does not seems to be a big deal to Neel. It is accepted to have extra marital affairs for man, rightly justified as having a nagging wife or tension at work.

Like every other woman Radhika too had the maternal instincts in her. Though she knew very well that it is not going to work between Neel and her and yet she hoped to have more between them. When she discussed about this to Neel he replied, “it’s just I never thought of you as a maternal type. I don’t know if you were even meant to be a mother”(209). Hearing this from Neel had shocked Radhka. She felt betrayed for believing him and let her be a stupid.

Debu leaves Radhika because he could not handle the idea that his girlfriend is independent and earns more than him. And Neel did not want a wife material but a person with whom he can spend his intellectual lifewithout causing any conflicts. It clearly shows that both men were not concerned about Radika’s welfare but about their wistful life; a representation of the hypocritical patriarchs.

The ideal treatment Radhika wants is simply the respect. She wants her peer men to treat her with the knowledge that she too does have feelings. She wants her talent to be recognized and to realize that she is capable for many things that aren’t just related to men. A millennial woman is more tortured psychologically rather than physically. She needs men to accept her as who she is rather than look at her from the traditional outset of a woman.

She never hates society nor blames anyone for her fate. She is blessed to be independent at least in her career which she considered as her best destiny.

### Works Cited

1. Bhagat, Chetan. *One Indian Girl*. New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt.Ltd. 2005. Print.
2. Manikandan. *Feminist Elements in Chetan Bhagat’s One Indian Girl*. 2017. Web.
3. Soni, Jasprit. *Women Empowerment*. India: Authors Press Delhi Pvt. Ltd., 2006. Print.

## KUNTI AND GHANDARI AS RESOLUTE CHARACTERS IN IRAWATI KARVE'S YUGANTA

**T.V.Kushma Kumari**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education, Coimbatore*

Indian mythology has a great impact on the culture and tradition of the people from ancient times till date. The retellings of the great epics make the modern readers understand the mythical characters to a great extent. This paper explores the two great self-assertive Queens of Hastinapur Kunti and Ghandari. Both these characters are strong-willed women and also best samples to discuss womanism. Irawati Karve, the first Indian female anthropologist, in her book "Yuganta: The end of an epoch" has analyzed both the characters in an unbiased manner, which prompts the reader to consider those characters as being resolute. This obstinacy of theirs is what leads to the vanquish of Kunti's sons 'Pandavas' and the demise of Ghandari's sons 'Kauravas'. Women in the ancient times are depicted as passive protesters and their right was completely enjoyed without any restriction. The paper presents how the Queens of Hastinapur rejoiced the right as being women and also served as ideal resolute mothers of two clans.

*Irawati karve* (1905-1970) was born and educated in Pune. She wrote in English and Marathi, on academic subjects as well as general topics. Karve was interested in the characters and the society which were depicted in the great epic Mahabharata, and she wrote '*Yuganta: The End of Epoch*'. It is a critical analysis of Mahabharata. It was first written in Marathi and was later translated into English by W. Norman Brown. Her notable other works are *Hindu Society- an interpretation* (1961), *Maharashtra-Land and People* (1968).

This book is a study on the main characters of Mahabharata. According to Irawati Karve, Mahabharata is not a myth, but it is a real

historical event which took place in ancient India around 300 B.C and 300 A.D. This book is a picturization of the socio-political events in Mahabharata and also deals with the important characters like Krishna, Karna, Kunti, Ghandhari and Draupadi.

Pritha was the daughter of king Shurasena, who later was given to Kuntibhojan in the adoption ceremony and from then on she was called kunti. She was the mother of Pandavas (Dharma, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and sahadeva). Throughout her life sadness surrounded her in various ways, at first she was separated from her biological father and was adopted by Kuntibhojan. Later she was married off to an impotent King of Hastinapur, Pandu.

At the same time, Ghandari, Princess of Ghandara, experienced the same kind of fate like Kunti's with a little difference. Ghandari was married to a blind man Dhritarashtra, the elder brother of King Pandu. She was the mother to Duryodhana and 100 others. Ghandari passively protested against the injustice done to her by binding her eyes with a cloth and shut herself from seeing the world. She was adamant to the extent that she even refused to see her sons. Both Kunti and Ghandari ended up as the Queens of Hastinapur.

Women were not given any chance to express their feelings and were not given any chance to choose their life partners. Kunti and Ghandari are the best examples. Kunti can be seen as a woman who accepted life as it came to her. Instead of weeping for the injustice happened to her, Kunti made her life a colorful one and rejoiced her status of being a queen. In spite of all these hardships both Kunti and

Ghandari are seen as the most celebrated Queens of Hastinapur. Both the queens fought for the rights to take part in the political affairs and became the advisors in country's politics. Kunti acted as a role model for the modern Indian woman as she protested for her right even during the ancient era.

The two strong characters are seen resolute when it came to their sons. Kunti was more self-centered than Ghandari; she could go to any extent to save her sons from hardships. One such instance was when Kunti, in order to save her sons and herself from the Kuru clan murderers, she sent a low caste lady along with her five sons and left them dying in the hut instead of them. Kunti did not care for other people's lives, for she wanted her sons to be safe. "The tribal woman and her sons had to die". (52)

Once Pandavas were exiled to a small town, though Ghandari was feeling pity for them, on the other side she was feeling relieved that her son's way is clear, "Good now my children's way is clear"..."Inwardly I was telling if they fought, the Kinship of Hastinapur would remain with my son" (33). Ghandari wished for her sons to win the war. Kunti is more resolute when compared to Ghandari. She only wants her sons to be at ease.

Ghandari not only protested for herself but she acted as a representative to the other females during that period and even now. She accepted the life which was offered by fate to her, yet modified it according to her wish. Women of that period were not forced in any way. They did not possess any power to work against the injustice happened to them yet they protested in their own way. They beautified their way of living even though that was not wished by them.

Kunti ignited the minds of Pandavas to take revenge towards the Kauravas. Kunti goes on pouring out about Kshatriya dharma, and questions their love towards her. She says, "A Love which is weak and undemanding is like

the love of female donkey" (57). She offers wealth for war, instills the taste of revenge in each son's heart which results in the great Kurukshetra war.

If Kunti had been more concerned about society and the cultural norms, she would not have revealed the truth about her son Karna during the war. In this situation she pleaded Karna to join the Pandava clan, by tempting him that he will gain kshatriyahood if he joins his brothers. From childhood Karna was left for humiliation suddenly just to safeguard her other five sons Kunti ask for his help. But Karna refused to join them, which shows his loyalty towards Duryodhana. "Oh high-born lady, I believe what you say. You have committed the sin of destroying the foundation of my name and fame. Even though born as Kshatriya, I did not receive the sacrament of the kshatriya ... whatever I have in this world I owe to the sons of Dhritarastra" (58).

As a result of the war Kunti loses her own grandson Abhimanyu and her son from her son Karna. "Your secret has destroyed all of us- the Kurus and the Panchalas are no more. Draupadi's sons and Abhimanyu are dead. If you had told us at that time that Karna belonged to us, there would have been no war" (60). Because of her selfish notion Ghandari was left with no son and the whole Hastinapur was left with very few youngsters. Unlike any other character in the ancient myth Kunti was not a passive woman who forgave and forgot the harm done to her sons and the humiliation done to her daughter-in-law. She constantly wanted to fight back and reimburse the Kauravas.

After the Kurukshetra war, in spite of knowing that Kunti's sons were the reason for the demise of her sons, Ghandari treats Kunti with the same respect and love. Ghandari's true devotional character is felt by the end when she unbinds the cloth from her eyes when Dhritarastra requests her to do so. At first she tied to show her unwillingness towards the life with him but years later by unbinding, her true love

towards him is seen. Ghandari forgives her husband and forgets about the injustice happened to her. She never wanted to take revenge on anyone. The great epic portrays two extreme types of characters Kunti being vengeful and Ghandari being compassionate. Ghandari was an acceptor than a decider. All that happened in her life was decided by someone else; she doesn't reject nor give her opinion she just accepts with others.

This kind of obstinate characters in the ancient texts depicts the power of a women in that era wielded. Both Ghandhari and Kunti are powerful characters with independent identities. They come across as women who make firm and resolute decisions. These women from the ancient epics not only reflect the ways

of that era but also set examples for modern day women thus proving the universality of these texts.

### References

1. Karve, Irawati. *Yuganta: the end of epoch*. Orient Blackswan private limited, 2008.
2. Mishra, Suchi Smita. *Women Identity and Self-Assertion: A Study of Two Contemporary Retellings of Mahabharata*, 2005.  
<http://ethesis.nitrkl.ac.in/6737/>
3. Rajankar, Pallavi. *Tracing Gender roles in Mahabhratam*.  
[http://www.academia.edu/30312978/Tracing\\_the\\_Gender\\_Roles\\_in\\_The\\_Mahabharata](http://www.academia.edu/30312978/Tracing_the_Gender_Roles_in_The_Mahabharata)

## THE SEETHING FIRE: ROOTS AND SHADOWS

**Dr.Honey Walia**

*Assistant Professor of English, Khalsa College for Women, Ludhiana*

Today when I call myself a feminist, I believe that the female of the species has the same right to be born and survive, to fulfill herself and shape her life according to her needs and the potential that she has within her as the males have. I believe that the women are neither inferior nor subordinate human beings but one half of the human race.(Naik 14).

ShashiDeshpandeprobes into the female psyche voicing the agonising denials and frustration that characterize womanhood and heralding the educated woman stranded at the crossroads of change breathing whiff of modernity. Her concept of feminism places the thrust on self-realization and defining women as individual beings. Her novels dwell on the three phases mapped by Elaine Showalter in the growth of feminist tradition i.e limitations, protest and self-discovery. Her novels journeythrough the silenced slice of life of the female protagonists, presenting the need to challenge the traditioncircumscribed roles and acknowledging the throbbing of authentic selfhood.*Roots and Shadows* projects a woman's attempt to assert her individuality in the male dominated set-up .The novelist through the character of Indu, delineates the inner turmoil of a woman, her desire for self expression and the freedom from socio- cultural fetters.

Indu is projected against set of women as Akka, Narmada, Sumitra Kaki, Kamla Kaki, Atya who conformto the traditional role of a wife and mother that a woman is supposed to fit into and not to look beyond. Such women ungrudgingly, dissolved their identity, shedding 'I', losing their identity in their husbands. Nurturedin a society which perpetuates inequalities, Indu resents the same.

The mundane drudgery that women are subjected to is scoffed at by Indu:' It disgusted me to see the strewn plates, the scattered remnants. And yet for a whole lifetime women patiently cleared up the mess with their bare hands after each meal. And women like Kaki even ate off the same dirtyplate their husbands had eaten in earlier. Martyr, heroines or just stupid fools"(75).The nullity of such tasks is articulated by Simone de Beauvoir, "Few tasks are more like the torture of Sisyphus than housework, with its endless repetition; the clean becomes soiled ,the soiled is made clean over and over, day after day. The housewife wears herself out marking time. She makes nothing, simply perpetuates the present" (Beauvoir 470). The truth of women being pushed to the peripheral existence is thrown to Indu's face. She had been told that a woman's life was not marked with choices. She had seen "the truth of this" at her house. "The women had no choice but to submit, to accept. And I had often wondered.... Have they been born without wills, or have their wills atrophied through a lifetime of disuse?" (6) The assertive male has silenced the hearts and the very lives of the women which they never really get to know. Woman is expected to push herself to the background and foreground the pleasures and needs of others in the canvas of her life. Indu was trained as a child not to question and to be obedient. By virtue of being a girl she was to be meek and submissive. WhenInduhad questioned the justification of such a conduct she was told, "Because you are a female you must accept everything, even defeat with grace because you are a girl" (158).

Indu defies the traditional role she is expected to play and seeks fulfillment in education and career. Working as a journalist for a woman's magazine, women centric problems nudge her: "women, women, women..... I got sick of it. There was nothing else. It was kind of narcissism. And as if we had locked ourselves in a cage and thrown away the key. I wouldn't go on" (78). She seeks a different environment and by marrying Jayant, a man of different caste, she asserts her way. Indu, who had ridiculed the idea of not calling out husband's name believing it would lessen his life, sees herself as defining through her husband. Jayant becomes the fulcrum of her life and she is circumscribed to "always what he wants, what he would like, what would please him. And I can't blame him..... It's the way I want to be..... Have I become fluid, with no shape, no form of my own: (54). She realizes that she has submitted before Jayant's masculinity. Surrendering to the expectations of matrimonial bond and sensing suppression of her feminine instinct she notes "But my marriage had taught me this too. I had found in myself an immense capacity for deception. I had learnt to reveal to Jayant nothing but what he wanted to hear. I had my responses and emotions as if they were bits of garbage" (38). Indu perceives herself to be of independent temperament and of analytical disposition but marriage demands of her to fit into the mould of submissive Indian woman. She comes to believe that there was something shameful in total commitment. Jayant is 'shocked' to 'find' passion in a woman. The passionate wife admits, "when I'm like that he turns away from me..... and so I pretend. I'm passive and unresponsive" (83). Indu realizes that her passion for Jayant is unwelcome and all the same her complete surrender is frightening. She is afraid that she too is becoming one of the typical Indian wives complying with her husband's wishes. Toying with the idea of deserting her husband for she is ashamed of her 'too much' love for her husband and her dependence on him, she ponders, "Sometimes I wonder if I will leave him one day

and live by myself. The only way in which I can be myself, my whole self again" (88-89).

Nevertheless, Indu holds onto her marriage for it is a marriage of choice and she wants to prove to the world that she has not failed. Consequently, she maintains semblance of a happy married life but in reality she perceives herself as a shadow of the female self, a negative and an object. Indu's walled-in-life torments her and her desire of giving expression to her creative self is vehemently opposed by Jayant and she is commanded not to make a "spectacle of yourself with futile gestures" (17) and demands of her to focus onto practicality of life and the money quotient.

Trapped in the web of her husband's desires and interests Indu believes she has been "endlessly chained" (18). Consequently, isolation and total disorientation befriend her. Dust, bareness and dark room signify her loneliness "..... it is a dusty, a totally barren place..... I am alone and move along people I don't know..... I had pulled in my boundaries.... I am alone" (10). Indu realizes that family bonds are the roots of one's life and we might adopt evasive perspective towards the same but significantly we are "pinioned to it by little things" (34).

The society provides no option to a woman if she is to survive and Indu too is a product of such a society governed by corrosive mindsets. She had resolved not to pretend what she is not but cannot be an exception and is fettered in the trap where she is expected to kill herself gradually. Marriage is understandably then considered 'a trap', 'a cage' by her. "... a cage with two trapped animals glaring hatred at each other". The pertinent question is asked, "But what animal would cage itself?" (159) In fact Mini, Indu's cousin views marriage as a compromise. She is willing to get married to any man who would consent to marry her. She has been reduced to a commodity. All those who come to 'see' Mini fire all kinds of questions at her and hurl humiliation by pronouncing that she is "too short", "too tall", "too dark", "not modern enough" or "too fashionable for us". It

seems criminal to her to be a girl and she is willing to endure and adjust with whomsoever she is married off. She declares, "Once we are married and he becomes my husband, none of his flaws will matter" (126). Mini voices the passive acceptance that is expected of an Indian woman-- negation of the self for the well being of all.

The patriarchal social setup subjects woman to humiliation and ill treatment. A woman who loses her husband is compelled to observe certain set of rules failing which she faces ostracisation. Widowed women are forced to get their head tonsured further delimiting their womanhood. Whether a woman sees herself through the needs of others or is made to follow dictates of society, she essentially experiences loss to her sense of individuality, her singular identity if there could ever be one. Even women like Indu are suppressed and compromised at the hands of subjugating society. Indu continued to "shed bits of" herself along the way and resents doing so. She begrudges the role imposed upon women as it dawns upon her that she exists not for herself but for Jayant. She believes that a girl is never claimed and voices her concern over the bleak scenario not promising any change. "are we doomed to live meaningless futile lives? Is there no escape? I, am afraid..." (160)

Eventually, Indu realizes that she can create meaning in life and it will come through involvement and not attachment. She decides to go back to her roots- Jayant and her home and throw away the shadows of Narin. As she takes a decision she makes a claim to her individuality. Maria Mies comments on the non compromising conduct of women that they "want to see that the right to an individual life and the right to development of their individual capabilities are realized in their own lives" (Mies 29). Indu resigns from the job and decides that she would do the kind of writing that she always wanted to do. As she cuts of the "unnecessary, uneven edges," she guided by the light of self discovery determines to lead a meaningful life with her husband. Her decision

regarding not to mention about her act of adultery and using her discretion pertaining to how to use money and property bequeathed by Akka validates herself-assertion. Swain observes, "The meek. Docile and humble Indu of the early days, finally emerges as a bold, challenging, conscious and rebellious woman. She resigns her job, thus defying male authority, hierarchy and the irony of woman's marked existence...she is able to discover her roots as an independent woman, a daughter, a mother and a commercial writer" (Swain 95). She assigns meaning to her life and by defying male authority mirrors the upsurge of defiance to patriarchal set-up, unleashing reign of individuality of women.

### Works Cited

1. Bala, Suman. *Women In The Novels Of Shashi Deshpande*. New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House, 2001. Print.
2. Beauvoir De Simone. *The Second Sex*. London: Pan Brooks Limited, 1988. Print.
3. Deshpande, Shashi. *Roots and Shadows*. Hyderabad: Orient Longman. 1983. Print.
4. Mies, Maria. *Indian Women and Patriarchy, Conflicts & Dilemmas of Students and Working Women*. New Delhi: Concept, 1980. Print.
5. Naik, Chanchala. *Writing Difference: The Novel of Shashi Deshpande*. Delhi: Pencraft International, 2005. Print.
6. Ranjita, H. *The Changing Image of women In The Novels Of Shashi Deshpande*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2011. Print.
7. Sandhu, Sarabjit. *The Novels of Shashi Deshpande*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2010. Print.
8. Sree, Prasanna. *Women In The Novels Of Shashi Deshpande: A Study*. New Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2010. Print.
9. Swain, S.P. "Roots and Shadows. A Feminist Study". Ed R.S Pathak. *The Fiction of Shashi Deshpande*. New Delhi: Creative Brooks. 1996. Print.

## WOMAN: A PREDOMINANT FORCE IN NATURE AS DESCRIBED IN SUBHADRA SEN GUPTA'S *JAHANARA: A PRINCESS'S DIARY*

**R.Matangi**

PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Peelamedu, Coimbatore

When women were so called "imprisoned" and "suppressed" by men, one woman ruled a whole empire from behind her burqa. An example of such a woman was Nurjahan, the last and youngest wife of Jahangir, who ruled the kingdom when the Emperor was suffering from bouts of illnesses owing to continuous opium consumption.

Subhadra Sen Gupta is a contemporary writer who is well known for her stories for children. She has retold the life of the Mughals in a way suitable for children to read. She has written over 40 books like *Children's History of India*, *Let's go time travelling*, all pertaining to children's fiction as she feels children are better readers.

Woman is the basic force of nature. She is the axle of each family. She is the flame which can either "light the way to fame or destroy the entire clan" (Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee, 136). That is why this paper is titled as "A Woman: A Predominant Force in Nature" where the woman referred is Nurjahan.

*Jahanara: A Princess's diary* was written in the year 2001 and it speaks of the traumas faced by Shah Jahan and his family when he chose to rebel against his father. It is a common practice amongst the Mughals- Fathers chasing sons and Sons imprisoning fathers. Here, this book starts with Shah Jahan suing for peace with his father Jahangir. Of course, it is left to Nurjahan to decide what to do. The plot involves clever moves of Nurjahan, but, she fails at the end. The book ends with the coronation of Shah Jahan, much against Nurjahan's plans.

There are several instances in the book where Nurjahan's dexterity is revealed:

"My great aunt created this special type of embroidery...She cooks, does embroidery, sings, writes poetry, paints and even goes hunting with my grandfather" (Subhadra Sen Gupta, 54)- Nothing escapes her prowess.

"The most fabulous parties were those organized by Nurjahan" (Subhadra Sen Gupta, 74)

She sometimes behaves ruthlessly too, a quality attributed only to men:

"I may not sit in the throne of Diwan-i-Aam but I know everything that is happening in this kingdom of Jahangir" (Subhadra Sen Gupta, 24)

"You do not displease Nurjahan and go unpunished" (Subhadra Sen Gupta, 70)

"To ensure that such an act of rebellion is not contemplated again, I order Prince Khurram to send of his sons to join me at my court in Lahore." (Subhadra Sen Gupta, 32)

Though the *Farman* (the royal order) is signed by Jahangir, it is Nurjahan who is the mastermind of the whole idea of holding the young princes as captive.

Even when Mahabat Khan abducts the Emperor and holds him captive, it is Nurjahan's thoughtfulness which rescues them both.

"The second condition is that my daughter, Laadli, will wed your son and your heir" (Tanushree Podder, 141)

"It all began when Nurjahan arranged the marriage of her daughter Laadli Begum with Prince Shahriyar. So, Nurjahan was once again arranging a dynastic match" (Subhadra Sen Gupta, 20)

She could foresee things and make plans to ensure her position even after Jahangir's death, that is, through her daughter and son-in-law.

The author applies feminism to the character of Nurjahan by portraying her as a



powerful woman who over rides the general sex role typing.

Royal women do not always need a “Prince Charming” to rescue them. Some like Nurjahan can look out for their own selves. Mumtaz Mahal may be known all over the world through Shah Jahan’s monument of love for her but, Nurjahan made herself known to the world through her own efforts and intelligence.

#### Works Cited

1. Sen Gupta, Subhadra. *Jahanara: A Princess's Diary*, Gurgaon: Scholastic India (Private) Limited, 2001. Print.
2. Podder, Tanushree. *Nur Jahan's daughter*, New Delhi: Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd., 2005. Print.
3. Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *The Palace of Illusions*, New York: The Doubleday Broadway Publishing group.2008. Print.

## SELF -REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN: A FEMINIST READING OF MAYA ANGELOU'S "WOMAN WORK"

**D.Anusha**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

### Introduction

The word self- representation echoes the vision of totality, wholeness and original perfection of the Self. Woman has defined themselves in different ways through history. Woman was given superfluous identities in various literary forms like poem, novel, short story, essay and so on. Among the many other women writers, Maya Angelou, through her different works of art like poems and essays has raised the women's voice and represented them and made them to apprehend of their self-identity.

Maya Angelou started her career as a freelance writer and feature writer. Later in the mid-1960s she got a job as a lecturer at the University of California and started acting career along with this. She earned a living as a freelance writer and feature editor. Returning to the United States in the mid-1960s, Angelou took a position as a lecturer at the University of California in Los Angeles and continued acting. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* continues to be the most famous autobiographical work published in 1968. Her contribution in poetry is also much appraised when she first published her first collection of poems named *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'fore I Die* in 1971 which earned a Pulitzer Prize nomination and was followed by two more volumes that decade, the second of which was *And Still I Rise* (1978), in which "Woman Work" appears. She was also an active civil rights activist apart from a writer actor and a lecturer. She was invited to compose and read a poem at President Bill Clinton's inauguration in 1993 and also given a seat on two presidential committees. Angelou's work

and efforts have been honored with countless awards. Angelou credits her self-directed education for empowering her to stimulate change.

Chris Weedon opines in her book *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* about feminism as "Feminism is a politics. It is a politics directed at changing existing power relations between women and men in society. These power relations structure all areas of life, the family, education and welfare, the worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure. They determine who does what and for whom, what we are and what we become".

As per Weedon, The term patriarchal refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. These power relations take many forms like from the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity according to which a woman live. In patriarchal discourse, the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to a norm that is male. When one relates these ideas given by different theoreticians with this poem one can see that a woman does all the household work. Women are considered in the society only to perform duties like raise up children, caring every family member, and other household activities. It shows that Men need not bother about home or children. It is destined to be for women.

Angelou apprehended the supremacy of poetry as a valuable form of expression and a means to realize oneself. In *Woman Work* she echoes the voice of a woman who feels tired and searches for herself-identity. Angelou presents

the reader with particulars of her speaker's work a day world, a world in which each day is like the last, and liberation is achieved merely in conversing with nature. Angelou represents any woman whose daily life is dedicated to caring for others.

"Woman Work" was published in a decade when poetry was more mainstream than it is in the twenty-first century. The 1970s were years of self-exploration for women but also for young people in general. This was a transitional decade marked by the end of the controversial Vietnam War, the increasing momentum of the Feminist Movement, and a shift in how Americans considered themselves and their place in society as social norms and values changed. The cultural focus became one of individualism, and the increased interest in self-analysis and understanding manifested in a surge of self-help books and self-awareness discussion groups.

Poetry was the ideal literary form for the decade since a poem could with or without a structure or rhyme or it could be specific or general. In other words, poetry was a personal expression that could take virtually any shape and still be a legitimate literary form. People who might not write an essay or an article could express themselves in poetry. And so, poetry in the 1970s was used as a vehicle to explore one's self in relation to the world. "Woman Work" does this representation and explores the role of women who always confines herself with the busy routine of her household works.

To understand this poem better, one must understand what self-realization is. Helen Cixous mentions that woman must shed her silence and repression and "write her self" in order to assert "... her own rights, in every symbolic terms, in every political processes." Only then, woman can reject the submissive self, created artificially by "the militant male" and affirm her autonomy and dignity ("The Laugh of the Medusa" 347).

The first fourteen lines of the poem *Woman Work* suggests that she comments on the life of any woman in general, it is clear that Angelou is committing to print her thoughts on what it means to be a woman. A Woman at home has to do all the work looking after the children, cooking washing clothes cleaning the floor, feed her animals, weed off her garden, bathing the baby and iron her children's dress. This proves that she does not have any material comforts in her life, and lives in an impoverished condition. Therefore, she works in the fields picking cotton and cutting cane to provide for her children. Apart from this she has to take care of the elders at home. This shows that how a woman face a lot of challenges because of the existence of the patriarchal society, child bearing and family care roles, deep rooted cultural norms. This is the problem of women in general because of their domestic responsibilities, cultural and social specific roles.

The woman is constantly reminding herself of how much she has to do in the day, and listing the chores in her head so that she doesn't forget to do any of them. Thus she gives the description in the life of any hardworking woman in a domestic situation. So here she works and works like a machine from morning till night but no one respects her or praise her for the work she has done. She passes through the thorns of life and no one listens to her or consoles her. It is here that she realizes herself. She feels now stronger.

She works for others in majority of her lifetime taking care of the family than a man. She takes the responsibility and burdens of a family as her other part. It is only the courage and her perseverance which helps her to balance everything and move forward in her life. This game of being a leader at home gives her a strong identity. In this way she shows a greater maturity by being firm but gentle, stiff and full of empathy.

It is a general notion within the society that women are weak, sensitive and depends on men for everything whereas a man is always strong, active and independent. It is these false notions which gave the man a higher position in the society. Here in "Woman Work" one can see a single mother who takes all the responsibilities on her head and has proven her identity. Thus "Woman Work" becomes an exploration of the Woman in knowing or realizing her identity and what she does.

The remaining part of the poem echoes the voice of a liberated self. The poet through the woman character creates an appropriate medium for the expression of the female self. In the first stanza it was clearly evident that no one was helping or was willing to listen to her complaints or her worries that she was talking to herself. She never gets an answer from others, so gradually she turns and points to the objects of nature and evokes the objects of nature to soothe and comfort her. Realizing that she has to overcome the greater mental and physical strain, she adopts to take rest in the lap of nature which helped her and was highly effective to restore her sense of calm and well-being.

This gives her a new rejuvenated spirit gaining a huge amount of strength and confidence - a renewed sense of her own place in the world. She trusts the sun and rain. The sunshine can show her a clear path in her life with its illuminating light. The dewdrops can cool her stressed body. She is dispossessed of no one in the world to console her and to pat her shoulders so it can only be comforted by the soft rhythm of dewdrops.

She calls the fiercest wind to blow her so that she can float across the sky as this will help to build her resilience to stress and also deepen her connection with healing nature. Thus she regained a great deal of calm and balance back

into her life. In the beginning of the poem the woman complains that she has to do all the work alone with one to support or console her. Now she has overcome that pain because of the help that she got from the natural elements present in nature. The natural elements like sun, rain, wind dewdrops sky and snowflakes distracted her from the pain and discomfort of life. She finally regains herself and creates or weaves a beautiful life in front of her by calling the nature as her own that she possess and which has given the capacity to cope up with life's demand.

### Conclusion

To conclude, Maya Angelou through her "Women Work" represents the supreme and successful woman who speaks to the general women that there is nothing impossible in this world for a woman to achieve. She stresses that women should rise from their ignorance and enjoy the life of a liberated self having equality of status in almost all fields by realizing the power and strength within them. Thus "Woman Work" acts like a personal testimonial dealing with domestic issues and a finishing with universal question on femininity

### Works Cited

1. Sahay, Sushama. *Women and Empowerment: Approaches and Strategies*. Discovery Publishing House 1998. Print.
2. Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge Publishing 1999. Print.
3. Irene Gedalof, *Against Purity: Rethinking Identity with Indian and Western Feminisms* London: Routledge, 1999. Print.
4. [www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/womanswork](http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/womanswork).
5. [www.poemhunter.com/maya-angelou/](http://www.poemhunter.com/maya-angelou/)
6. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/marxist\\_feminism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/marxist_feminism)

## ROLE OF ADVERTISEMENTS IN BREAKING GENDER STEREOTYPES

**K.Yemuna**

*Ph.D. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore  
and*

**Dr. M. Mary Neena**

*Assistant Professor of English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

This world is common for all living beings to live freely but people complicate it by creating boundaries between them selves. Stereotyping is one among the ways used to create boundaries. There are various types of stereotypes such as, racial stereotypes, gender stereotypes, and so on. Gender stereotypes are very common among people around the world. People tend to generalize some ideas based on their previous experience and the ways people responded to a particular event. Stereotyping is stereotyped with a negative perspective most times. But it also has some positive impact on people.

According to Saul McLeod, a psychologist and blogger defines stereotyping as follows in his article in a website called simply psychology.

“By stereotyping we infer that a person has a whole range of characteristics and abilities that we assume all members of that group have. Stereotypes lead to social categorization, which is one of the reasons for prejudice attitudes (i.e. “them” and “us” mentality) which leads to in-groups and out-groups.”

Gender stereotyping and gender hierarchy are intertwined. According to Oxford Learner's Dictionaries hierarchy is “a system, especially in a society or an organization, in which people are organized into different levels of importance from highest to lowest”. In some situations gender stereotypes are used to create gender hierarchy and in other situations gender hierarchy is used to stereotype people. But

unfortunately they both have created an imbalance between various genders in society and that made women to fight for their rights from men and transgender people from other genders. No gender is inferior to other genders but gender hierarchy and gender stereotypes prevent people from realizing it. People are struggling hard to erase the boundaries between genders for many years. They succeeded in their mission to certain extent and it is time to salute the people who fought against all odds to make this society a better place to live for all genders. This paper explores the impressions created by advertisements on people about breaking gender stereotypes.

People leave their traces in this world in many ways. Literature is one of the traces they leave here. It always creates an impact on people and it reflects the lifestyle and psychology of people. Likewise, advertisements also project the psychology and lifestyles of people. From the time immemorial sellers used various marketing strategies and ways to attract their buyers according to their psychology. Advertising is one among the effective ways used to market any product among people. Even in this technological era, advertisements attract people in many ways. But the changes happen in the way genders are portrayed in advertisements are more attractive than the way they attract people.

Living as a woman in this society is not easy but it is not tougher as the life of a transgender person. Women and transgender people fight a lot for equality. There are a few advertisements

which project the achievements they have attained in their struggle. Transgender people suffer a lot to survive in this society. Due to lack of acceptance in their family and opportunities in society they started to do odd and mean jobs like begging, prostitution, and so on. They are stereotyped by their jobs they do and treated badly then. But now they have opportunities to study and can do the jobs they want. They are successful in most of the fields. Most people consider that they are dependent but they are very independent. Vicks India is a part of Vicks, a popular brand that produces over-the-counter drugs. On 29 March 2017, it published an ad that features the story of a transgender mother and her daughter. It tells the story of Gauri Sawant, a transgender woman and activist who has adopted Gayatri, a young girl whose birth mother died of AIDS. In the beginning of the ad Gayatri says, "Mummy will be disappointed with me. She thinks I am going to be a doctor" and then she narrates her beautiful life with her mother. She lost her parents and her beloved new mother adopted her and takes care of her very well. Further, she says, "Mummy made her life on her own, she has faced so many problems in life and gone through a lot yet, she has always cared for me. My Civics book says that everyone is entitled to basic rights. Then why is my mom denying them?". Gayatri's question melted everyone's heart and in the end of the ad she says, "That is why I am not going to become a doctor. I will be a lawyer for my mom." This heart touching ad is a proof that our society has changed a lot and people have started understanding and accepting the struggle of transgender people. This ad broke the way transgender people and their lives are stereotyped. Acceptance and understanding are the effective steps towards change. Supreme Court of India's verdict on section 377 is the result that our society has changed a lot and people have started accepting other people as they are. People's response towards this ad was unbelievable.

Scrubbers are used to wash the dishes all over the world. Like the life of a scrubber the life of women is also hard. They have to fight against so many things to shine. Women are very strong mentally and physically. They have the power to create and destroy anything but they were given opportunities only to maintain the household activities for centuries. Slowly they started to bend the bars of their cage and broke them successfully. Now there is no job that women have not done. Avani Chaturvedi, Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh are the living examples who proved that sky is not the limit. They belong to the first batch of women fighter jet pilots. They said that their colleagues and superiors are men but they supported them a lot throughout their journey. There are many new and efficient women leaders emerging today. They are celebrated and supported by their family members and the society. Families play a vital role in creating a good human being. Children learn from their parents. In most families, mother does the housework even when she is a working woman. The 3M Company manufactures scouring pads and other tools used for dishwashing and scrubbing in houses. Scotch-Brite is one of their products. The recent Scotch-Brite ad depicts a man washing the dishes at his house. A voice asks him whether he has become a slave to his wife because he does the housework. His reply is a trend-setting statement. He says, "Everyone's house and everyone's work". This ad breaks the nose of all people who try to stereotype that only women should do the housework and men should not do the housework. If everyone in a house wants to live harmoniously directly refers that no one in the house should suffer. By sharing the housework among the family members everyone in the family will become responsible and have time for themselves.

Prega News is a company that manufactures pregnancy test kits. It published ads based on the struggles of women after pregnancy and during pregnancy. Those ads are

really inspiring and they are published with a tagline "Your second home" for women's day. One of those ads portrayed the struggle of a very successful boss who suffers from Postpartum Depression. The ad clearly shows how a working woman struggles after pregnancy because she cannot compromise on both ends. She manages to take care of her child and her work. Her team members are a mixed group of men and women who are young. They all are working on a project late night. But this new mother feels frustrated and starts feeling bad for being in the job. Her team members ask her to leave and they will finish the presentation before 10.00 a.m. the next day. She is very hesitant to leave and asks them, "You all do not need me anymore no?" Then, they reply, "That is not true madam. We understand that being a mother is not easy; we are trying to make it less difficult for you." These words bring back her confidence and the ad ends with a note that one in every five new mothers suffers from postpartum pregnancy and extending hands to make them feel comfortable at workplace will help them a lot.

Advertisements are one of the sources that highlight the changes in society. These above

quoted examples are evidence for a little positive change found among people. This change gives hope that our society has become a better place for all people to lead their life happily and peacefully.

### Work Cited

#### Primary Sources

1. Prega News. "Your second home | Join hands for the cause of women suffering from Postpartum Depression". Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube, 25 Feb 2018. Web. 1 Oct 2018.
2. Satyajeet Kadam. "SCOTCH BRITE - MAN". Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube, 5 Jun 2018. Web. 1 Oct 2018.
3. Vicks India. "Vicks - Generations of Care". Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube, 29 Mar 2017. Web. 1 Oct 2018.

#### Secondary Source

1. McLeod, Saul. "Saul McLeod." *Simply Psychology*, Simply Psychology, 1 Jan. 1970, [www.simplypsychology.org/katz-braly.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/katz-braly.html). Web. 3 Oct 2018.

## **GENDER CRISIS AND HARBINGER OF SOLIDARITY IN PEARL S. BUCK'S *EAST WIND: WEST WIND AND PEONY***

**Ms.H.Monica Sherly**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Literature always anticipates life. It does not copy it, but moulds it to its purpose. Literature is the reflection of mind. It is the great creative and universal means of communicating to the humankind. This creativity shows the difference between the writers and the people who simply write their views, ideas and thoughts.

American literature began with the discovery of America. It grows and multiplies through accounts of sixteenth and seventeenth century writers. American literature dates back from pre- colonial period till the contemporary date. Early American literature consists of diaries, letters, travel journals, reports and ship logs. The literature during seventeenth century began its significance with English people settling in North America. During the eighteenth century the different genres like dramas & novels of historical importance gained importance.

Pearl S Buck was Born on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1892 at Hillsboro, West Virginia. She is a 19<sup>th</sup> century writer. She has completed her early education in Shanghai University in 1907. Buck completed her Bachelor's degree in United States in the year 1910. Buck completed her Studies in philosophy and Worked as professor in United States.

Gerog Simmel states that the theory consisted of an interconnected conceptual language and a perspective for ordering, understanding, explaining and judging our experience of culture.

Gender is a quintessential element of human identity. The aspects of gender crisis were assessed as feelings of psychological

compatibility with one's gender, feelings of pressure from parents, friends and mostly from the society. Adjustments were assessed in terms of self-esteem and how human adjust with the others in the society.

The novel *East Wind: West Wind* is her first novel published in the year 1930. The novel portrays both Chinese and Western cultures through the protagonist Kwei. The novel gives a cultural crisis with the female protagonist Kwei. The novel was narrated in the first person narrative by the protagonist Kwei-Lan. *East Wind : West Wind* was narrated in two parts. The first part of the novel deals with the protagonist Kwei's marriage with a Westerner and the changes that happened after her marriage. Kwei was not accepted by her husband's family. Kwei was asked to move out of the family. She moved to the new house in the city where she belonged to an alien totally new to the place. This novel portrays a gender crisis that happened to the protagonist Kwei who is Chinese by birth, forced to an arranged marriage to a Westerner. He is a Medical doctor and does not seem to take interest in her till she asks him to unbind her feet.

The second part of the novel deals with Kwei's brother's marriage with an American. His parents have already selected a Chinese woman for him. He loved an American woman named Mary and he marries her. Till the end of the novel Mary was not accepted by his family. Both the women characters Kwei-Lan and Mary was rejected and been alienated by their own husband's families. Both the female characters got separated from the family and they were treated as aliens and as just their slaves and



mere workers. Both the families get united only after the birth of the child.

*East Wind: West Wind* is told from the Chinese traditional girl Kwei-Lan's point of view. The story follows as the female characters begin to accept different points of the Western world, and re-discovers her sense of self through the harbinger of solidarity.

*Peony* is a novel written by Pearl S. Buck and published in the 1948. In 1850, a young girl Peony was sold to work as a bond-maid to Jewish family. The protagonist of the novel is a female character named Peony which means compassion. As per her name Peony was more compassionate towards Jewish family who helped her in her living in Kaifeing. The novel *Peony* is an engaging story about love, gender crisis, tragedy and beauty of two different cultures. The protagonist was been dominated by the Jewish mother who was determined to torture Peony throughout the novel. She was in

love with David, the Jewish master but her love was shown as a hidden love as she had to face struggles in her life because of the dominant mother. Tradition forbids their marriage and David marries another girl from his own tradition. Peony was been alienated in that family after David's wedding.

Peony faced much struggles in her life from the beginning of the novel as when she was been sold as a bond-maid. The novel shows the importance of her duty and responsibility of being a maid and also the sacrifice that the protagonist faces being a woman which made her to be the strong woman in her life.

### Works Cited

1. Buck, Pearl S. *Peony: A Novel*, 1948. Print.
2. Buck, Pearl S. *East Wind: West Wind: A Novel*, 1930. Print.
3. <http://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/californialawreview>

## **WOMEN AT LIBERTY IN THE NOVELS - *THE ENGLISH PATIENT* AND *ANIL'S GHOST* BY MICHAEL ONDAATJE**

**Josepheena John**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Literature, the lasting artistic and intellectual merit transcends and disperses. Languages are deployed in a million ways that differ through the connection of ideas of universal interests. Literature took its roots in languages diverse and paved its way down hundreds of years, coated by the credos of the conventions and cultures that made every language and its literature unique and ceaseless.

Canadian literature like most of the other origins of literature, is highly influenced by socio-political contexts and rules. The external influences of the land and its language along with its history and culture gave birth to a variety of genres in Canadian literature. Multiculturalism has been the most widely portrayed theme in the recent writings. Trailing its way from the legacies of explorers, colonial writing, writings influenced by the confederation groups, the Canadian school and its influences along with the writers expressed their ideas in history, poetry, essays, novels, stories, drama and non-fiction writings. The contemporary writers of Canadian literature include- Margaret Atwood, Kathleen Margaret, Michael Ondaatje, Yann Martel, Alice Munro, Rohinton Mistry and more. The list of writers reflects that the writers of Canada have taken ways to write through hauntingly beautiful lines to portray their land and its people. They keep proving their intellectual merit into deeper thoughts of Canada, much more than the maple syrup, hockey pucks and cuddly bears, proving their finest in poetry, children's writing or as a literary historian.

Michael Ondaatje, earned pride to his country as the First Canadian writer to have

won the Booker Prize in the year 1992, he was born in Sri Lanka and moved to Canada and is presently based in Toronto. He is the recipient of multiple literary awards and is one of Canada's most renowned living writers. He excels as a poet, novelist, editor and film maker. The movie adaptations of his books are also greatly praised and many awards were won for the same. He was also made an Officer of the Order of Canada and was the Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He is the author of many books including novels and memoirs. His writings are highly mysterious and moving, compelling the readers to travel into the world of war with love, maps and exploration.

*The English Patient* is a novel written by Michael Ondaatje and was published in the year 1992. Michael Ondaatje won the Booker Prize, the Canada Australia Prize and the Governor General's Award for the same. The novel was adapted as a motion picture, which won the Academy Award for Best Picture and many other awards were won for the same.

The novel is set in an Italian villa during the Italian Campaign of the Second World War. Four dissimilar characters are brought together by the character the English patient who gets unrecognizably burnt. Hana, a nurse, stays behind in the abandoned villa to tend the patient whom she believes is English. The patient is taunted by his memories of love, passion, exploration and betrayal. The only object of clue that meets the space between the two is the copy of *The Histories* by Herodotus with written notes on a tragic love affair described in an unflinching manner. The other

characters like David Caravaggio and Kip join in the story as it unfolds. Caravaggio suspects the English man and his suspicions are confirmed as the patient reveals his story little by little, we get to know that the patient is Almasy and how his love affair with Geoffrey Clinton's wife Katherine cost his life. The story shifts to Kip who is an Indian and how he is smart enough to diffuse bombs and missiles with a particular knack and his affinity towards his job as a snapper. Hana has a secret liking towards Kip and feels secure when he is around. Hana celebrates her twenty first birthday and Kip feels uncomfortable as her boyfriend though she is the one who reminds him that humanity exists at a war zone. Very soon Kip is enraged by the news that the white men have dropped a missile in another white men's land (the United States launching their bombs on Japan), Kip is disturbed by this and leaves the place. Soon the novel winds up with Kip settling down in India as a doctor with his happy life, though he sometimes gets reminded of Hana.

Michael Ondaatje has portrayed Hana as a free spirited, young and daring woman who has stayed behind when the entire place was evacuated. She is stubborn in her ideas and keeps her mind occupied by reading a few books left in the villa and shares her thoughts with the patient and by writing notes on the pages of the books she had read. By reading books she always found an easy escape from reality and the monotonous life as a nurse tending to wounds.

The novel is written by a Canadian man which is an 'androcentric' perspective, clear enough to mean that a man wrote the novel and gave strong women characters in the novel by characterizing them through his thoughts. The close reading of this novel gives us more ideas that the woman in the novel stands firm in her ideas, live their life with freedom of space and always take the liberty to do what they feel. She does not wait and compare her life to Kip or

Carravaggio, she finds solace in the cosy rooms and corridors. She also finds comfort in the garden. She liberates herself from boredom by reading books and heals her mind through music. The novel commences with the subtle nature of Hana and it takes a while for a reader to accept that a woman can walk with such ease in a war zone where shells and bombs are active and may blow her up with a wrong step. "She turns and moves uphill towards the house, climbing over a low wall feeling the first drops of rain on her bare arms. She crosses the loggia and quickly enters the house." (Ondaatje 1).

*Anil's Ghost* (2000) set in Sri Lanka tells the story of a young female anthropologist investigating war crimes for an international human rights group. *Anil's Ghost* (2000), the much anticipated follow up returns us to the author's Sri Lankan homeland. Here the backdrop shifts from the European World War to the South Asian civil war and the horrors and traumas of the post-colonial violence. The novel is the story of Anil Tissera, a forensic anthropologist trained in the United States and in England. Anil returns to Sri Lanka to investigate a series of politically motivated murders on the island. Paired up with another anthropologist, Sarath Diasena, it is the discovery of human remains in the Banderawala caves that drives the quest for the truth and which haunts both the novel and its war-torn landscape.

Ondaatje does not limit his women characters with a stereotyped notion, he gives Hana and Anil the free will to do what they feel in every moment of their life. The three main aspects of the Foucauldian idea where the feminist writings or writings on women are based on political influence, the body being suppressed by the patriarchal ideas and the body as an object of sensuality is nullified in these novels. Hana reminds David Caravaggio that she is not an object. She is not being suppressed by any patriarchal rules and ideas, She realizes her love for the patient and Kip but

always keeps herself secure in their warmth and company and doesn't ask for anything more because she likes it that way.

Anil Tissera, in the novel is a personification of bravery and the stereotypical notion that women are fragile in thought and action is totally wiped out. She turns out to be every woman's dream life where she works and lives the way she wants to. There is nothing that stops her except the fear of death. She is portrayed as smart, witty and brave. Though the character is set in a very sensitive setting where she investigates the deaths of people after a civil war and during a silent war that the world is unaware of, she knows how cautious she has to be in every step. This again breaks the idea that women can't keep secrets, which is an idea that every misogynist uses as a strong thought against women.

This character in the novel is an example of how a woman can feel free and liberated in every aspect when freedom is her free will. It is mutual, she is left free and her mind and actions don't confine the freedom of the other people around her.

Michael Ondaatje has created these passionate novels with the characters Hana and Anil whose stories invite the readers to witness what it is like to feel like liberated women in war struck zones, while the reality of a war period is when women face the most traumatic and painful situations. It is true that heaven or hell depends on what you think, feel and do, a woman or women generally can find these oppositions in their everyday life, and if Hana and Anil felt peace in silence it is because they found peace even in her most disturbing moments of her life. Let a woman liberate herself through her thoughts, after every barrier we finally break, we need to either break more or build more empires.

#### Works Cited

1. Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2014. Print.
2. Ondaatje, Michael. *The English Patient*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016. Print.
3. Ondaatje, Michael. *Anil's Ghost*. London: Bloomsbury, 2000. Print.

## THE ENFRANCHISEMENT REVISITED

**D.Ram Prakash**

*M.A. English, University of Delhi*

The discourse of adult franchise always remains in the overlapping purviews of literature, politics, sociology etc. The exercise of adult franchise is one of the birthrights of every individual citizen which is thrown open to the moieties of the society independent of all the dualities, disparities and differences. In exercising this right, no particular sect can have leverage on the grounds of regional, social, economical, gender affinity or aversion over the other sects which is succinctly expressed by renowned activist Susan B. Anthony,

*"Men, their rights and nothing more, women, their rights, and nothing less"*

The dualistic mindset in early 20<sup>th</sup> century couldn't have expected such an uprising from the so-called **Valetudinarian spirits** fighting in the streets for exercising their adult franchise. Transformation alone remains permanent in this transient world. Women who were with an unquestioned conformity, dissented for the first time against the denial of their basic right in the modern times. This dissent gradually made them to realize that they are equal to men in every aspect. This reformation sparked from the thoughts and ideals of the suffragettes who existed in a domain which alienated the existence of women in terms of social, cultural, linguistic and political hegemony. The times have passed and we are incumbently in a fast track society which is far ahead of the past, still waiting for a future ensuring safety and solidarity to women. Henry Ward Beecher in his work *Eyes and Ears* gives a wholesome idea of change which is conducive to the central idea of this paper,

*"Our days are a kaleidoscope. Every instant a change takes place in the contents. New harmonies, new contrasts, new combinations of*

*every sort. Nothing ever happens twice alike. The most familiar people stand each moment in some new relation to each other, to their work, to surrounding objects. The most tranquil house, with the most serene inhabitants, living upon the utmost regularity of system, is yet exemplifying infinite diversities."*

Harriet Miller puts forth the lack of adequate chances and arenas for women, the gender-confined roles, shrinking spaces in the gross social setup. The need for robust thought-process was the only path to the redemption of the gender in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century leading to the publication of the essay "*The Enfranchisement of women*" in *Edinburgh Review* in 1851. One could find the marked similarities which makes this essay very relevant to the Female Democracy. She condemns the relegation of women to the domestic sphere. In her words,

*"Those who assert that the 'proper sphere' for women is the domestic, mean by this that they not shown themselves qualified for any other, the assertion evinces the great ignorance of life and of history."*

The impetus behind this paper is to reassess the documents of the previous centuries to avert the returning to the primitive age in terms of gender between Harriet Miller's "*The Enfranchisement of women*" and the contemporary milieu for the procural of entry into the renowned shrine of Sabarimala with reference to the Supreme Court's verdict on women's entry into the pilgrim premises. Revisiting Harriet Miller and entangling her ideals in this scenario excites me to the core. The 411-page judgement was based in the single argument – Gender discrimination and Endorsement of the right to equality. The main issue that creates coherence is the sense of

commonness in the women's outlook which is evident in the lines of Harriet Miller - *"The qualities which are not permitted to be exercised shall not exist"*. Interestingly, one could find striking similarities between this radical essay published in 1851 and the groundbreaking verdict delivered in 2018. They shunned the idea of ostracizing women because of their biological differences. Actuating such visionary view seems to an individual male like me as a postcolonial frisson which tingles and sublimates womanhood. But in the farrago of distortions and disarray, India poses a morbid picture of gender equality. Out of the five member panel all but one gave a consensual judgement allowing women to enter the shrine. The judgement reads as follows:

*"The subversion and repression of women under the garb of biological or physiological factors cannot be given the seal of legitimacy. Any rule based on discrimination or segregation of women pertaining to biological characteristics is not only unfounded, indefensible and implausible but can also never pass the muster of constitutionality."*

Harriet's idea of **Unquestioning** speaks a great deal about the rampant customs of politicizing the gender and gendering the politics which is de facto and de jure in the contemporary Indian scenario. There are ginormous problems in India because of the dereliction of the lawmakers in the implementation of the laws to practice. The ray of hope in every literati is the changing stereotypes levered by paradigm shifts in the focalization of women. The judgments seem to be a placebo to the afflicted maternal community because there is a widespread belief that there is a lack of judicial buttress. But I reckon this as the beginning of an era of voluminous transformations. The verdict emotes that predilection towards an enhanced public space as follows

*"Certain dogmas and exclusionary practices and rituals have resulted in incongruities between the true essence of religion or faith and its*

*practice that has come to be permeated with patriarchal prejudices. Sometimes, in the name of essential and integral facet of the faith, such practices are zealously propagated"*

The recent pro-feminist verdicts bring out the age-old idea of constitutional equality to gender which was professed by JS Mill. The incumbent scenario in India is the testimony of the changing times which delivers the agenda of "liberation of women from 'Legislative despotism' and 'romantic paternalism'". The ideas of JS Mill in his *On Subjection of Women*,

*"The legal subordination of one sex to another – is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a system of perfect equality, admitting no power and privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other"*

This was brought in the lines of the verdict which mirrors the notion of Mill couple.

*"Section 497 is a flagrant instance of 'gender discrimination', 'legislative despotism' and 'male chauvinism'. At first blush, it may appear as if it is a beneficial legislation intended to serve the interests of women but, on closer examination, it would be found that the provision contained in the section is a kind of –romantic paternalism which stems from the assumption that women, like chattels, are the property of men"*.

The way of approach towards the women's question has differed and treatment more diligent; one could sense the positive changes in the socio-political arena due to the strong presence of women. The question of women has developed hand in hand with the times to raise the national and social standards of India. This is the *sine qua non* for realizing the ambitious dream of **Superpower** through the deliverance of **Safety, singularity and solidarity**. These messianic events remain as the ray of hope in the era of disillusionment, disarray and distress. Let the beginning have a great impact on the **Nari Shakthi** by facilitating and felicitating them.

**Work Cited**

1. Mill, Harriet Taylor, *Enfranchisement of Women*, 1851. n.d. <http://womhist.alexanderstreet.com/awrm/doc15.htm>. Accessed 13 October 2018.
2. [https://www.supremecourtfindia.nic.in/supremecourt/2006/18956/18956\\_2006\\_judgment\\_28-sep-2018.pdf](https://www.supremecourtfindia.nic.in/supremecourt/2006/18956/18956_2006_judgment_28-sep-2018.pdf). Accessed 12 October 2018.
3. Beat, D. *Girls' Colleges in South Campus and Their Exclusion from DUSU Elections - DU Beat*. n.d., <http://dubear.com/2018/09/girls-colleges-in-south-campus-and-their-exclusion-from-dusu-elections/>. Accessed 12 October 2018.
4. n.d., [https://www.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2017/32550/32550\\_2017\\_order\\_05-jan-2018.pdf](https://www.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2017/32550/32550_2017_order_05-jan-2018.pdf). Accessed 13 October 2018.
5. "The Sabarimala Judgment - III: Justice Chandrachud and Radical Equality | Live Law". n.d., <https://www.livelaw.in/the-sabarimala-judgment-iii-justice-chandrachud-and-radical-equality/>. Accessed 12 October 2018.
6. Mill, JS, *On subjection of women*, 1861.

## RETRIBUTION AND GENDER IMPLICATIONS IN MANJU KAPUR'S "CHOCOLATE"

**D.Sharon Stephy**

*I M.A. English Literature, PSGR Krishnammal College for Women, Coimbatore*

Manju kapur was born in Amristar, India. She is an Indian Novelist. She is the best selling author of four novels, *Difficult Daughters* (won the Commonwealth prize), *A Married Woman*, *Home* (shortlisted for the Hutch Crossword Prize for fiction), and *The Immigrant* (shortlisted for the DSC Prize). She lives in New Delhi, completed her M.A degree in 1972 from Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada and an M.Phil. from Delhi University.

She brings out the problems women face in the form of religion, rituals and the struggles women face in their marital context. Her writings are based on women in the Indian context. Custom plays a important role in the life of women which makes her a burden to her family and she is never treated equal to the male child. In *Chocolate* through Retribution and gender implications she brings out the transformation of Tara the protagonist. Here we find Tara treating her cheating husband with her art of cooking and making delicious food. A reciprocal act of retribution is served here. Her writings portray women as the masters of their own fate who cannot be stopped by any external forces around them.

The bleak relationship between Tara and Abhay is brought out in the short story *CHOCOLATE*. Tara understands the trick of her husband and tries hard to become fit, which she succeeds. She senses the affair of Abhay and retributes him with her art of cooking. Abhay's parents wanted them to have a child, for which there was a problem and Tara was blamed for it. By the act of retribution she proves that the problem of child bearing was not with her but with her husband.

As a young college going girl Tara too had so many dreams but her dreams were shattered by the proposal for her marriage. She picked up interest in English literature, completed her schoolings and college in girls convent. Due to the urge of her family to accept the proposal she accepts and gets married to Abhay. And finds it to be a happy start as Abhay her husband stands by her side and supports her. Later, the trick of Abhay is known to her and by the act of retribution she proves her husband wrong.

From saris to salwar-kameez, Tara looked younger she felt more alert and alive than she had for a long time. She began to think about strategies. She must win him back, she thought. She decided to join cooking classes. "The way to a man's heart was through his stomach". Abhay hardly ate at home. So Tara joined Mrs. Singhal's cooking classes, which guaranteed mastery of continental, Chinese and Indian cuisines in just a year. And mastered the art of cooking, as a result Abhay gained weight and thus his affair was broken. Given the circumstances of a revenge, she needed an affair to give it a finish ending. She chose a friend of his and became pregnant and thus Tara's daughter was born. By this she proved that the problem of child bearing was not with her but with her husband.

Through her act as Bacon says "Wild Justice" she proves that women are never inferior to men, she raises her voice for herself and proves Women have equal rights in the society as Men has. The Taboo of her physical appearance no more affected Tara. Thus through Retribution she was able to bring out her identity. And now she sows seeds of



independence in her daughter, which will ensure her independence in the future. By improving her identity Tara is able to prove her husband Abhay is false. The title "Retribution and Gender Implications" in the short story of CHOCOLATE by Manju Kapur is highly relevant as she is able to bring out her identity through revenge and builds up confidence in

herself and emerges as a challenging independent woman who does not rely on her husband and the society.

#### Works Cited

1. Manju Kapur. Chocolate-  
<http://www.shortstoryproject.com>

## **RITUALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF INDIAN SOCIAL CONTEXT IN ABHA DAWESAR'S *BABYJI***

**P.V.Rajlakshmi**

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Sri Vasavi College, Erode, Tamilnadu*

India is well known for its social tradition and cultural enrichment. A tradition is nothing but a salient feature of a particular community. It may be habitual, way of talking, mannerism or behavior. When a tradition is a practice of a certain community, then it is developed into a culture. Once, it had reached its peak in Indian society, each age has its own zeitgeist. Indian society develops according to zeitgeist of respective ages. All the social system is created for human kind. The zeitgeist may change with respect to the social upliftment, but the humanity should remain the same for all the ages.

Humanity consists not only with male and female but also includes LGBT that is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender. This community emerged since from the Second World War. They are described as minority in gender classification. It is not fair to view them in deviant projection. Because, like the first two genders in the society, LGBT also has the equivalent right to live in this world. They should be viewed in normal eyes. We should focus their humanity rather than giving importance to their gender. But the current Indian Social context focuses only on ritualistic practices on gender. Due to this, there the gender disparity flourishes. The gender disparity does turn everything into ritualistic. A specific tradition is concentrated rather than humanity. The actual positive things that happens is forgotten for the minor reason of this gender disparity. Abha Dawesar's debut novel *Babyji* (2005), gives the depiction of the expectations of the society. The expectation is purely ritual rather than reasonable.

The protagonist, Anamika Sharma, is called as 'Babyji' by her servant maid, Rani, who is more elder than Anamika, though they both belong to same gender. The elders or dignitaries are referred with the suffix '-ji' in Indian tradition. Anamika belongs to upper class, though Rani is elder than Anamika. Here, humanity is questioned. It is the ritualistic expectation of Indian society, that a younger should be respected, depends upon her Social class. But Anamika is a free thinking and broad-minded teen-aged girl. She is incomparable in her knowledge. For example, when her physics teacher asks about Quantum theory in classroom, nobody can answer expect Anamika. Apart from knowledge, she has the courtesy to give respect to her elders. She taught to Rani that as follows:

Science had told us this century was nothing certain. The universe was chaotic and relative; these aspects measurable. There were few hard facts on which one could base a way of living one's life. I'd always scoffed at religion (ritualistic beliefs) as a crutch for the masses, so it wasn't even a consideration. We'd spent two thousand years only to find out that we didn't know. That moment, sprawled on my bed, changed my whole life. I was free all of a sudden. Free of the burden of knowledge and therefore of any morality that proceeds from knowledge. Only feelings counted. And sensations. (Babyji)

The zeitgeist of the current era is uncertain and unpredictable. People are living with the probable circumstances. Anamika is not even ready to consider the expectations of the society.

She would never mind about the ritualistic beliefs of her own religion, whereas she respects the emotions of human kind. Her choice of sexual taste is salient than any other people. So, Anamika is endangered with her sexual taste. It is the nature's gift among other human species. Her mind stands against conservatism. The role of tradition has also vanquished into the time stream. Being a teen-aged girl, she has the clear understanding of the society. She is not only enjoying sexism with the same gender, but she has other two undertakings; one is her neighborhood woman, Tripta Adhikari who is nicknamed by Anamika as 'India' and another one is her classmate, Sheela.

India is academic, wealthy and divorced lady. Anamika spends her nights with India when her parents leave her to go for sleep. She reaches India's house through tapeline. Her sensible happiness is described with the words of Dawesar:

I noticed that my biting had caused her to start breathing heavily, so I replaced my teeth with my lips. I gathered different parts of her flesh between my lips and kissed her all over, in the opposite order in which I had bitten. In her breathless moans and her cries of pleasure I owned her more than I owned myself and was immersed in her more than I had ever been immersed in her more than I had ever been immersed in my own self. Me, I had not yet discovered. I was an unknown quantity, a constantly unraveling mystery. But India was absolutely and completely known both carnally and otherwise. I rolled off of her with the sweet exhaustion of a man who has just haunted his dinner animal(20).

Though, all these are experienced with cheerful heart by Anamika, she clearly refused to involve with all the other activities at Kasauli such as smoking, drinking and man advancement with her. Such things, which is considered as social evils in Indian context is hated by Anamika's free thinking mind.

Because she prefers to choose only her sexual taste, not all other things. Though she is against conservatism, she respects individual emotional state. Her sexual taste may vary with other humans, not her humanity. Individual's senses should get primacy in human values. Being lesbian does not mean that she would involve all kinds of adultery activities. It is spiritualistic. But Indian social context forgets this.

Sexual bias between a man and a woman is gender conservatism. Anamika has broken it. By breaking gender conservatism, Dawesar introduces sexual relativism. The choice of sexual taste is accepted as it is. It is explored in the thoughts of Anamika while she is enjoying with Sheela. Sheela asks her about the moral justification of their sexual involvements. The depiction of Anamika's explorations with Sheela, as follows:

"Anamika, please stop." She whispered urgently. If she really didn't want me to, she could scream or move away or kick me. "You're beautiful," I said as I slid my hand between her thighs where her bloomers should have been. She closed her eyes again, but this time I couldn't tell if she was enjoying it or not. I pushed with my finger. I wasn't slow, the way I had been with India and Rai. I was afraid if I was too gentle she would use it to move away. I used all the force I could muster (31).

The enjoyment between Sheela and Anamika depicts the plays of a man and a woman. Anamika enjoys sexuality rather than gender. So she thinks to hide her contacts with others. She is perfectly managing all of her three lovers, who are never aware of each other, like a typical man thinks to hide his sexual affairs with his own woman. Here, Indian conservatism interrupts.

The tradition of living with a single mate is compelled to shatter the emotional overflow of men. It is viewed as illegal and such people are submissively viewed by the society and lose their public respect. To gain the public fame, to

people have started to open their personal secrecies. Men view women as tool of pleasure. Many men forge many woman in his personal life, whereas woman should never do it. This represents the gender conservatism in Indian context. But Anamika stands completely against this. Though she is enjoying lesbianism, she does never allow any man to advance with her. She is introducing gender relativism.

The society is conservatism as its norms. Due to the compulsions, everything turn into ritualistic. Gender conservatism is challenged and has fallen into crisis, due to the birth of new born gender community, that is, LGBT. These people are considered as minority. On account of their minority, the society views them as a tool of pleasure. Specifically, Indian society which is too far away from the Western ideologies, is blooming with Gender and sexual relativism. The new arrivals give crisis to the conservatism. So society views the new things with apathetic eyes. LGBT community needs not the apathetic eyes, Indian society wants to

keep up the conservatism in gender classification. So the ritualistic expectations make the LGBT community inferior. LGBT is a salient gift to the society. Instead of focusing with negative lens, the positive side should be gained. The further scope for this article is to query their adequate social need, whether concern or confession about their identity.

### References

1. Bottomore, T.B. "The Social Science, History and Philosophy". *Sociology: A Guide to Problems and Literature*. Blackie and Son (India) Limited: Bombay. 1986. Print.
2. Dawesar, Abha. *Babyji: A Novel*. Anchor Books: the University of Michigan, 2005. Web.
3. Johnpanicker, Dr.Joji. "Homosexuality in Indian English Literature: Queer Perspectives".
4. UGC Minor Project: UGC Ref. No.: MRP(H) - 1390/10 11/KLMG002/UGC/SWRO, Dated 22 - Dec - 2010 (XI Plan). Web.

## JOURNEY TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION AND IDENTITY IN *SPEAK*

V.Hemavibhushini

M.Phil. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore

Literature is an art, which gives meaning to life in a desirable way and literature is an expression of feelings over day to day experiences and that arises out of personal feelings. The characteristics and elements that literature possess acts as a catalyst for producing the powerful work. Modern literature became a perfect place for new thoughts and innovative themes which could tend people to read and to taste the real bliss.

Literature with its themes highly captivates the minds of people and its in connection with one's own life. Young adult theme is one among the other themes which matches with teenage struggles and their experiences in that particular period. This theme is targeted and centered upon young adults. Friendship, love, relationships, changes, identity, are some of the elements seen in the theme and in the young adult age. This paper is about how a young adult girl who faces the dominating world with her struggling willpower and her transformation in order to achieve identity.

'Women' is not an identical term to show differentiation but it is a word which possess power in itself, yet it needs some force to break in a point. Does the numerous women characters in ancient novels and epics are they given equal importance in history every time? Heroes were seen in almost all the stories but when the heroines become the center place it becomes an epic. In such a way this novel by Laurie Halse Anderson, an American writer known for her children and young adult novels brought out the life experiences of a 15 year old girl and her struggles both physically and mentally to prove herself to the society in the novel *Speak*.

When a girl receives utmost negative and bad experience in her life for the first time it might become a reason for her change of character further. In the novel *Speak* Melinda Sordino being a young adult encounters severe bash and becomes a victim but here she hides the secret within herself which became a major point of conflict within herself. A schoolgirl with full of colorful dreams becomes shattered when she was attacked and raped by a senior Andy Evans. The shock makes her dumb and she stops speaking and communication becomes nil, it grows into depression and her absence of mind in everything after that. Her own friends neglects her and the cruel looks of others, loneliness affects her psychologically. The charm within a girl was washed away entirely Melinda isolates herself from the rest of the world and she was afraid to face people by then. The only relaxation was her art class where she was given 'Tree' project for the year and one or the other tree symbolizes growth. Her transformation was a slow process and she shapes herself by the end of the novel. "You must walk alone to find your soul". (*Speak* 118) Meanwhile the 'tree' project of hers was on the progress and it matches the growth in finding her identity. "If this tree really lives someplace, that branch better drop soon, so it doesn't kill the whole thing. The new part is the best part". (196) after undergoing numerous hardships she finds her and proves herself.

Psychoanalysis as per Sigmund Freud is believed that people could be cured by making conscious their unconscious thoughts and motivations thus gaining insight. Melinda is conscious but her psyche was not cooperating for quick action, fear about further

consequences makes her to tremble she fills her mouth with clothes to stop the sound of her screams and bites her lips often to control her emotions, but still she follows her mind blindly. She was no longer an outcast, but was transformed as a Hero.

Melinda was an abnormal kid to her parents she hides everything and make her world a congested one with past terrible memories it was not her fault to act like that but her psyche didn't let her to overcome difficulties. It also shows that when there is no connection between mind and action it becomes a trouble. The same problem happens here when her mind says to react in right time but still her fear and anxiety stops her from everything. Melinda runs for protection from unknown fear, day by day it worsens when she meets people around her. Her state of depression could be described as like a worm she suffers silently.

The unconscious thoughts of Melinda was only fear but when she encounters people who spoiled the best part of her life it pricks her like a needle and a her fervor for little action against them crops up. It was not a planned change but her own psyche pushes her to start behaving in such a way. When Melinda feels some pleasure out of it she continuous to do it. Whereas the feminine quality within a young adult starts to raise up slowly the responsibility of her to grow among the other students and also to save other girls from falling into the pit guides her in a right path and to follow her conscience. There was no preplanned motivation or any ambition but it was merely the transformation which uplifted the quality of her action. A tree is a symbol of life, growth and strength, Melinda's ways was given as an activity about 'tree' for the current year and it matches well with her character and behavior. The tree gets its shape and growth day after day, Melinda's transformation also connected with the tree. The transformation is not from the outer appearance but her psyche. She starts to deal every day in a matured way.

Melinda would have changed her way of response by keeping herself quite permanently or moving to another school so that she would have experienced a change and escaped from further consequences and disturbances, sympathies from outsiders but she stays back in the same school even after meeting Andy Evans and facing all those criticisms from her surroundings. Her psyche took some time to observe the environment which is now new to her, it was not a planned incident but was an accident. She was not bold enough to react at that time due to her lack of will power and fear of being caught and spoiling her name in front of all. The power of companionship is worthy than being an idle dumb figure. When a person finds supportiveness it leads to move to the next level, Melinda was all alone in the start of the novel, she made herself stand out from the other students she was depressed and makes it worse day by day. Freud says that events in our childhood have great influence in our adult lives shaping our personality and behavior that is the anxiety originating from the traumatic experiences in the person's past may cause problems during adulthood in the form of neurosis.

Melinda becomes the best example, she was attacked both physically and mentally, and she was broken for being powerless and coward. Freud says that childhood experiences show its effect in adulthood and the memories in the subconscious mind come out in form of action but Melinda experiences a bad incident and suffers, comes out of it slowly in her young adult age. She was conscious all the time and her transformation took time because of her inborn quality of being unaware of facing the dark situation in life. She was a happy girl at first she never knew about outside world and its changing nature. Melinda was accustomed to her little world of friends, happiness, laughs and enjoyment as a girl but not more than that. As per Freud she was attacked by sudden unexpected incident and that stopped her from

being normal, it took a long time for her to accept the life and to carry herself among others.

The support system for Melinda was not people but her activities and works, she used her time in projects and in the janitor's closet. Somewhere it gave her free space to make up her mind to move on in her life. Melinda befriends some selected companions and finds little to fight back her trauma which was covered up so long comes out and burst giving an attention. Melinda could not express her anxiety or her depression illness but did express it later during her psychic changes as soon as she had the opportunity to reveal her conscious thoughts and womanly character of gaining self-identity through that her problem disappears.

The gender equality and strength of women was proved at last in such a way that the real strength lies in the willpower rather than physical strength. Melinda was capable with many strengths but her fear was not easily erasable from her mind. |Andy being a male showed his dominion status by attacking her and spoiling innocent girls, rather than being a

good partner he cheats and behaves in a selfish way but David was fair with her, proving gender identity is different from the personality of a person. Melinda was completely shattered at first but later slowly she starts to react, particularly saving her friend from Andy. The characteristic features of Melinda were completely feminine: the vision of future, identity, rights and the goal to achieve.

Transformation in protagonist, Melinda proves that change is possible when there is hope and determination in one's psyche. Therefore gender is not a barrier but the psyche of a person thrives and controls a person from actions. The protagonist Melinda in the novel *Speak* at last speaks out in the society for a cause there by making her life meaning full.

#### Work Cited

1. Anderson, Laurie Halse. *Speak*. Penguin group, 2001.
2. *Speak*. "A Study on the Absolutely True Diary of Part Time Indian, dh. truman. edu/english/fall2017group03/psychology/. Web

## **STRUGGLE OF THE TRANSGENDER IN *IF I WAS YOUR GIRL* BY MEREDITH RUSSO**

**R.Rajalaxmi**

*II M.A. English Literature, P.K.R. Arts College for Women, Gobichettipalayam*

Meredith Russo is an American Author from Chattanooga, Tennessee. Russo is a transgender woman, who transitioned in late 2013. Her debut novel, *If I Was Your Girl*, published in 2016 by Flatiron books, won the 2017 Stonewall book award. It was inspired by Russo's life events. She wanted to write a book about a transgender character with a happy ending. Like Amanda, Meredith is a gigantic nerd who spends a lot of her time obsessing over video games and star wars. It is an understatement to say that representation is important; it's vital to creating accepting and understanding communities. This is why we're particularly excited about this book, which uses a trans model on the cover. Being the new girl is always a challenge, but things start to look up when Amanda meets the Charming and handsome Grant Everett. Inspired in part by author Meredith Russo's own experiences as a Trans woman.

Transgender day of remembrance on 20<sup>th</sup> November honors those murdered as a result of anti-transgender prejudice. According to the Gay, lesbian and straight education network, 16.8 percent of transgender students report being physically assaulted because of their gender expression and 32.1 percent experience physical harassment. Education about transgender issues can play a role in increasing acceptance of and curbing violence against the transgender community.

When Amanda arrives in a small Tennessee town for her senior year in high school, she's perceived only as the little new girl. Boys flirt with her, and she quickly finds herself with three close girlfriends. Only her father knows

that Amanda is transitioning from male to female after being harassed and tormented for years in her life... to her being a small boy who knew he was girl, to her being a junior high student who was constantly bullied, and her suicide attempt three years ago. Keeping her secret becomes increasingly difficult as Amanda's friendships deepen; she shares her first kiss with Grant, her football player boyfriend; and is even nominated for homecoming queen. Will her new friends stand by her when her secret is revealed?. It makes them to feel unsecured. Before knowing about their past they become very friendly. After knowing everything it kills their happiness in the entire world.

Amanda Hardy is the new girl in school. Like anyone else, all she wants is to make friends and fit in. But Amanda is keeping a secret, and she's determined not to get too close to anyone. But when she meets sweet easygoing Grant, Amanda can't help but start to let him into her life. As they spend more time together, she realizes just how much she is losing by guarding her heart. She finds herself yearning to share with Grant about herself, including her past. But Amanda's terrified that once she tells him the truth, he won't be able to see past it. Because the secret that Amanda's been keeping? It's that at her old school, she used to be Andrew . Will the truth cost Amanda her new life, and her new love?"

*If I Was Your Girl* is a beautiful and yet heartbreaking story of Amanda as she attempts to adjust to life not only at a new high school in a new town but also as a female. Her flashbacks to past tortures show how traumatized she



remains after a childhood filled with the struggle to reconcile the differences between her body and her mind's gender identification. It also shows how a statement considered innocuous by cisgender people can cut to the quick anyone who does not fit that norm. As such, Amanda's trauma is deep and lasting. It is a wonder anyone is able to adjust and overcome such hate. Her entire story is a great example of how society gets caught up in body image and gender norm to the detriment of everyone.

As much as *If I Was Your Girl* makes you hate the ignoramuses who spew ignorant gender biases, it also gives you tremendous admiration for Amanda and for the entire transgender community. That they face such hate and confusion on a daily basis and are able to rise above it to become the beautiful butterflies they are remarkable. It would be so easy for Amanda to hide herself away for the remainder of her high school years but she does not. She finds friends, she remains social. More importantly, she puts herself out there in a way. That is scary for any person. She is truly a remarkable young woman.

What makes *If I Was Your Girl* even more poignant is the fact that Ms. Russo herself is a Trans woman. Her fiction is very much based in fact, and in many ways Amanda's experiences are her own. Her story, both her private and her fictionalized versions, provide much needed hope to an entire community left to flounder in a world where all sides struggle to accept them. She provides a vision in which life gets better and offers her own life experiences as proof. Moreover, she offers support where support is difficult to find and resources for those we need it.

*If I Was Your Girl* is one of those novels that should be required reading for every one of any age and gender. It is timely and does more to raise empathy for the transgender community than anything to date because it puts you

directly into Amanda's shoes. If you are a parent, Amanda becomes your daughter. If you are the teen, you resonate with cruelty of your fellow classmates. If you are a transgender teen, hopefully you recognize yourself in Amanda and realize that you can find happiness. We all can and more importantly, we all deserve it.

**you know, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender- people are people**

A person may be considered to be transgender person if their gender identity is inconsistent or not culturally associated with the sex they were assigned at birth, and consequently also with the gender roll and social status that is typically associated with that sex. They may have, or may intend to establish, a new gender status that accords with their gender identity. Transsexual is generally considered a subset of transgender, but some transsexual people reject being labelled transgender. Globally, most legal jurisdictions recognize the two traditional gender identities and social rolls, man and woman, but tend to exclude any other gender identities, and expressions.

However, there are some countries which recognize, by law, a third gender. There is now a greater understanding of the breadth of variation outside the typical categories of "man" and "woman", and many self-descriptions are now entering the literature, including **pangender, polygender, genderqueer** and **agender**. Medically and socially, the term "transsexualism" is being replaced with **gender identity** or **gender dysphoria**, and terms such as **transgenderpeople**, **trans men** and **trans women** are replacing the category of transsexual people.

## **SUPERMAN SYNDROME OVER CINDERELLA EFFECT: CHANGING TRENDS IN FEMINISM THROUGH MODERN FANTASY FICTION**

**S.Preethika**

*Avinashilingam University, Coimbatore*

The reason seen for the emergence of the feminist uprising have been the 'macho' rise of masculinity in the social, cultural and political background. The reasons which prompted the women to emerge out of their world remains the overprotective nature of men, who in this name have been exploiting their power. The modern days have begun to show a new variety of changes in this field, the same power of men with the superman behaviour are emerging to raise the flag for their masculinity with availing their female counterpart with equal opportunity. Unfortunately this has also led to the change for events in the female characteristic who almost in every circumstances look out for the story of Cinderella. This nature of the female have let to start the backward motion of the whole feminist movements and there is a chance of DE-feminism in the near future. The Cinderella effect and the superman syndrome in collaboration have made the modern life more efficient and liveable for all in the society. The literature which portrays these are emerging as the propaganda for the same. For years now the young adults have been prone to this changing habitat reading yet there is an underlying threat unknowingly sown in the minds which are to be analyzed, reported and corrected.

The superman syndrome in the modern fantasy fiction.

The superman syndrome is Personality or character trait, imply one or both character of workaholic nature or the person attempting to be a perfectionist or one-man-army, which is to accomplish things as much as possible by him/herself. This also has the saviour instinct

nature which makes the person to constantly feel the urge to try and help or "save" others like even comforting in times of distress whenever possible.

The superman syndrome is found in most of the fantasy fictions of the present days, powerful man with his soft heart and spontaneous mind. These figures of the young adult fantasy fiction have enabled the point of view shift from the macho-man to an adorable character of the superman. These superman character plays a vital role in teaching the whole men folks of the earth in itself. Shifting from the traditionally great legendary characters, these superman character have embedded the logic behind an ideal man in a equal society. The evolution of human race have seen such superman coming in action with many great history where the man rescues, fights and restores the peacefulness in the world, but the changes have become mandatory and famous authors like J. K. Rowling, Cassandra Clare and Veronica Roth has experimented this by making their male character providing equal opportunities for the females in the plot.

The true honour of a man is been changed. The dream of an utopia has been made by looking into the protagonist having the courage to look-up to others with the same respect as for themselves. The character of men in these famous series of Harry Potter, Mortal Instrument and Divergent are highly powerful men with all the abilities but still tend to be incomplete without their female counterparts. Their sense of morality with their female counter parts makes them adorable and supermanly. These protagonist with superman syndrome possess all

the possessive characteristic of a macho-man but are in deep conscience of their surrounding and are ready to acknowledge that their actions are part of the result from their supporting groups.

These sort of attitude shown by the man-character have revolutionized the old fashion men dominating world in literature and in the socio-political background.

### **Cinderella effect on women**

Cinderella's story is the world popularly known fairy tale of the modern world. With all the re-writing and creative writing, the story have been changed to a consider amount which are appealing to the modern feminist and the society in itself, still the basic underlying factor of the story haunts gender equality. Cinderellas are still in wait for their prince charming and are equally awaiting for their turn of fairy god mother.

This effect have been deconstructed many times and still this background remain intact. The Cinderella effect on a girl is grained into her heart from the early childhood and are let trusting to these fairytale; there are rebel girls books which has started to prompt the required changes that are to be made in such child pedagogy.

The children from a very early ages are taught to be the role play imitators and are still let in the mercy of imitating those past stories of princess in wait for their rescue. In this field there are multiple changes atoned and in the light of feminism many things have changed to an higher extend. Women have started to come out of their houses and are establishing their own light in this world.

In literature too the characters Hermione Granger, Clary and Beatrice "Tris" are popularly known as the substitute power in their respective series whose reasons are to be highly analyzed. These characters makes their life with their own choices and are the female fighter and heroes yet these character are the princess of the

fairy tales who find their prince in their own way and are happy ever after. These princess are a bit evolutionary, as they use their ability to reach their princes more by themselves than the fairy god mother, still the magic exists and are exquisitely let on action to serve the purpose of the supernatural air. They are always the princess ending up their perfect prince. The evil aunt and the cunning sister too prevail in the pursuit of making this plot harder in their own way. And as of all the Cinderella effect is spread in almost every other works in the contemporary fantasy fictions series.

Anyway, These Cinderella effect make the girl the beautiful, kind hearted, sweet but vulnerable to their surrounding. Disaster wielded them and life embraces. These Cinderella effects make the girls who she is and lets her know her role in the relationship and put the traditional and ethical feminine value on to the heads of the everyone.

### **Superman syndrome and Cinderella effect**

The changing trends of feminism in the contemporary world is notable by everyone as there can be seen a drastic shift in the role of feminism on feminism. The equilibrium in the maintenance of the society has doglegged all the problems faced by women of the past and a new century of women power have been established in the past century. There is established peace harmony still under progress and have a long way to go until its motive is achieved. There are changes seen to raise up as the failure to the mission from the malfunctioning of the system within. The changes in the setting of feminism has shown the different side of the manhood to the world and so does it has shown its other side of the females. There are two types of women, one the extremely good protagonist and the other the evil mother or queen, these Cinderella version of female are the only ones recognized by literature and the society. The real women are still far too in oblivion and with the raise of

these changes over the Cinderella effect have emerged a new platform. The whole traditional conventions are now been in changes and this changes are resulting in depletion of the characteristic of the female. The good and the bad are going on collab and the feminine character have started to adapt different level of understanding themselves. The radical feminism was one such where the women tend to praise into their own feminine nature and stood up by themselves, liberal feminism too showed the changes but the Cinderella effect have redone all these. With the radical push the modern days find the started to see the traditional hierarchy redeveloping.

This is a cycle of event in the last decades of the twentieth century which are driven in part by the feminist and gay liberation movements. This has included strands of the various related and spin-off movements, such as gender studies and queer theory emergence. The fantasy fiction is no different and has brought the changes where there is recycling of the whole event.

Some of the popularly known modern fantasy fictions like Harry Potter, Mortal Instrument and Divergent series of famous authors like J. K. Rowling, Cassandra Clare and Veronica Roth, the point of the changing trends in feminism in the modern world reveals the changing trends of feminism in the contemporary world. We could see that the superman syndrome has started to bring out the positive effect on women empowerment than the Cinderella effect which has eventually let negative impact in the minds of all. The Cinderella effect has made the girls to dream of their princess rather than being their own heroes. The girls in these works are more naive than they are portrayed to be. They are all the modern day self-respectable, self-sufficient and self-reliable girls who are in full form in their world but still are bound in the strings of the chauvinist units. Kick-ass female characters and fantasy books have been going hand in hand.

Often, these warriors can be found defending their family's honor, saving their town, and proving time and time against the men and prove that men aren't the only heroes. Still these women whose life are kept in open book are slandered in criticism, so it is important to learn these changes in looking to the women side of story to make amends.

## Conclusion

Hermione Granger's unique traits are being logical, close-minded, blunt, and book smart. Clary is incredibly stubborn and sarcastic whereas Beatrice "Tris" refuses to let her fears win. These characters of the great series have played a vital role in their own way but still in the end they go back to the supportive system where they leave their male counterpart to fight the war.

Character like the Wonder women is required to educate the world. Rather than being supporters it is essential to go beyond the superman to prove the power of super women to this world. The Cinderella effect will not be working any further if there are any real changes to be attained. So, the superman syndrome is more effectively a good supporter for the cause than the Cinderella effect in women empowerment in making the world devoid of gender inequality.

## References

1. *Theories of Women's and Gender Studies* (MWG -001), Indira Gandhi National Open University, Public Printing, Delhi, 2011, May 2016
2. Travis Langley, *Why Do Super Villains Fascinate Us? A Psychological Perspective*, 07.27.12.  
<https://www.wired.com/2012/07/why-do-supervillains-fascinate-us/>
3. Vanessa Joosen, *Feminist criticism and the fairy tale*, *New Review of Children Literature and Librarianship*, 10:1, 5-14, DOI: 10.1080/1361454042000294069,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1361454042000294069> Plain, Gill, Susan Sellers, A History Of Feminist Literary Criticism, Cambridge University Press 2007

4. Prof. Dr. Beate Neumeier, *Gender and Fairy Tales*, Gender forum, issue 44, 2013, Edited

## THE WINKING EYES: MALE GAZE IN MALAYALAM HORROR MOVIES

Pooja Prasad

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Amrita School of Arts and Sciences, Kochi

*Male Gaze* is a term coined by the British Feminist Film Theorist, Laura Mulvey in her seminal work, *Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema*. According to her Male Gaze is the act of depicting woman and her feminine world from the perspective of a man. This depiction includes her body and even her thoughts. In such a representation, the woman becomes a spectacle, an object of desire or a foil for man. And this kind of representation can solely be defined in terms of sexuality. The camera becomes the eyes of a male in most of the movies. Mulvey talks against this kind of depictions.

Sohini Chaudhuri in her work, *Feminist Film Theorists* talks about the prominence Mulvey's essay *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* (1975) holds even in the contemporary scenario.

Mulvey's 1975 essay explored the inscription of this tendency in mainstream narrative cinema, where it arguably has the most far-reaching effects. She argued that mainstream cinema is constructed for a male gaze, catering to male fantasies and pleasures. Uncovering the voyeuristic and fetishistic responses of male spectators to images of women, the essay was the first attempt to consider the interplay between the spectator and the screen in feminist terms. (Chaudhuri 2)

Mulvey wrote the essay by the inspiration she absorbed from the Women's Liberation Movement in Britain. It was published in the British journal *Screen*. It has generated huge response from all over the world and the essay literally demolished the tradition of watching films. After the essay's publication the style of watching the film completely changed. The questions like how women are portrayed in the

films and how women audience feels while watching a film and so on. began to gain importance.

This particular paper deals with the Male Gaze in Malayalam Horror Films. The paper delves into the scenes of Male Gaze in Malayalam Horror Films and critically analyse the reasons to include such scenes. The reason behind the success of such scenes on the big screen is also considered.

In most of the Malayalam horror movies, there is male gaze. The camera acts as a male's eye. Even when the film tries to create fear in the audience, it simultaneously creates a sexual pleasure in them, that is, in the male audience. This is not an exceptional case with one or two movies, but almost all horror movies have male gaze. Even the Yakshi or the monster figure in the horror film is not spared. She will be portrayed as voluptuous and seductress and there will be intimate scenes in which she tries to seduce men. These kinds of scenes are typical examples of male gaze. In Malayalam, even from the beginning of the horror movies, there are evidences of male gaze. From the first Malayalam horror movie, *Bhargavinilayam* (1964), directed by A. Vincent, the traces of male gaze can be seen.

*Bhargavinilayam's* screenplay is done by Vaikom Muhammad Basheer. The film is made from the influence of Basheer's short story, *Neelavelicham*. In the film, the Yakshi is the spirit of a beautiful lady, who falls in love with the hero, who is a young novelist.

When the hero, the novelist is at the beach and sings '*Ekanthathayude apaaratheeram*', there appears the Yakshi. Even though the novelist is portrayed as not interested in her bodily beauty, the camera focuses on her body. These scenes

try to induce fear and fascination at the same time, in the mind of the audience. Here this fascination is not just a mere one, but it has got highly sexual connotations.

The film *Yakshi* (1968) by K.S Sethumadhavan, which is an adaptation of Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's novel *Yakshi*, is not so different. It shows Ragini from the perspective of a male. The claim that the plot demands such a picturisation does not stand because; there are also other female characters who watch Ragini. But even when other women watch her, the picturisation does not differ much. This is the technique of camera. The camera shoots everything that is desired by the male audience.

The major fault directors did to the Malayalam Cinema while making such scenes is that they completely ignored the female population among the audience. Almost all horror movies have a plot which is very much related to sex and sexual relationships. The popular and age-old myth of *Yakshi* is very much intertwined with sexual aspects. When a man comes in sexual contact with a *Yakshi* he will be exterminated by her.

As in the myth the sexual element is also present in the Cinema. But even if the sexual element is there, it is always male gaze and never 'female gaze'. In the horror movies like *Bhargavinilayam* (1964) by A.Vincent, *Yakshi* (1968) by K. S. Sethumadhavan, *Moodalmanju* (1970) by Sudin Menon, *Vanadevatha* (1976) by Yusufali Kechery, *Vayanadan Thamban* (1976) by A. Vincent, *Lisa* (1978) by Baby, *Kalliyankattu Neeli* (1979) by M. Krishnan Nair, *Sakthi* (1980) by Vijay Anand, *Aarathi* (1981) by P. Chandrakumar, *Karimpoocha* (1981) by Baby, *Manasariyathe* (1984) by Soman Ambatt, *Sreekrishna Parunthu* (1984) by A. Vincent, *Pacha Velicham* (1985) by M. Mani, the directors are men and they did not bother to think from a female's perspective or to consider their female audience. It is indeed painful to study about a group of female audience who were not much

aware of such discrimination. This is because of the conditioning of female by the patriarchal society. The influence of this conditioning can be seen in the horror movie *Yakshagaanam* directed by Sheela, a female director. The film promotes male gaze not through the heroine but through the servant in the estate.

Even though the history of Malayalam Horror Movies have a lot of instances for male gaze, new female directors like Shalini Usha Nair with her horror film *Akam* are coming with fresh new ideas, which is a ray of hope.

### Works Cited

1. Haridas, V.V. *Yakshisangalppam*. Kottayam: Offset Printing Press, 2016. Print.
2. Kuhn Annette. *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema*. London; New York: Verso, 1994. Print.
3. Macey, David. *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*. England: Penguin Books, 2000. Print.
4. Ramakrishnan, Malayattoor. *Yakshi*. Kottayam: D C Books, 2017. Print.

### Web Sources

1. *Art Access Indian, Himalayan, and Southeast Asian Art*. The Art Institute of Chicago, 20 Feb. 2018. Web 24 Sep 2018. <<http://archive.artic.edu/indian/yakshi/>>
2. Bhattachiri, Satheesh. *The Concept of Yakshi*, Sooper Articles. N.p 2 December 2010. Web. 10 May 2018. <<http://www.sooperarticles.com/spirituality-articles/religionarticles/concept-yakshi-225521.html>>
3. *Vegetation Deity*. Wikipedia. N.p. 15 Aug 2018. Web.22 Sep 2018.

## **GENDER-A SYNONYM TO SEX IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS***

**K.Angel Vinoliya**

*Assistant Professor of English, Sri Ramakrishna College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore*

"Women establish not an abused minority, but rather a lion's share of all national populace and of the whole human species" (Morgan 3). Women for long have been viewed as just optional to men. The development of sexual orientation is thought to be an apparatus utilized purposefully or unexpectedly that adds to the sex segregation. Sexual orientation, an equivalent word to sex is a result of human creative energy. Sex is a normally decided natural scene, though sexual orientation is a socio-social characteristic. "We are a sure sex yet we learn or execute certain sex jobs which are not fated or attached inflexibly to hereditary sex. In this manner sex is settled and situated in nature, sex is self-assertive, adaptable and situated in culture" (Goldstein 2). The idea of oppression and strike on women may change as indicated by the way of life they are outlined into. Whatever, be the idea of concealment the ground reality continues as before, that women are just tributaries to man.

Sexual orientation equity is the longest war women have been battling since time immemorial. From the beginning of time, women on the planet who has battled for sex correspondence and women's rights are considered as women's activists. Women in Afghanistan have been experiencing sex value in its serious shape since ages. Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* portrays the predicament of women behind the dividers of Afghanistan amid a few intrusions in the nation. The issue of woman's rights and sexual orientation value has been raised through the character of Mariam and Laila. The novel worries the rights which were not given to

women alongside the areas to instruction, decisions and liberation that confine their extraordinary possibilities in the male ruled world. Male strength over the women in Afghanistan is a noteworthy worry that relates this novel to women's activist viewpoint. Intense relational unions, absence of opportunity, absence of personality, restricted space as far as level headed, societal, creative and mental level and torment that was executed towards the Afghan Women are the issues that are worried by the women's activists over the globe.

Khalid Hosseini expresses the social, political, religious and social structures of Afghanistan in corrupting and cheapening Afghan women. The strict Islamic laws undermine women's essential human rights and harm their equivalent interest in human network. All the female characters of novel persevere through alarming circumstances where they are manhandled past human creative energy. Hosseini draws a comparability between the destiny of two characters: Mariam and Laila, who hail from definitely unique foundations yet are associated by a lamentable curve in their lives. They share a similar torment and misery and experience comparative stereo-common preliminaries of being women in Afghanistan. The creator demonstrates how their battles and preliminaries lead them to battle back and to seek after bliss and a superior future. Further, Hosseini underlines the parallel of Afghan women's misery with the destiny of Afghanistan. He amazingly weaves the individual account of Laila and Mariam into the scenery of Afghanistan's tempestuous ongoing



history. As its women are stifled by male ruled society and barbarous laws of Taliban correspondingly the nation endures under the savage attacks of Soviet Russians, Taliban and Mujahedeen lastly its expectation of remaking under US intrusion in 2001. It is the job of women that Hosseini has investigated in this novel and does as such distinctively through the narratives of Mariam and Laila. It is important to dig into the historical backdrop of persecuted women in Afghanistan. Prior to the origination of Taliban, Kabul was a middle purpose of female autonomy anyway the common Afghanistan, especially south and east along the edge with Pakistan, was by and large a man driven natural zone where men picked the predetermination of women. There Women constantly lived in detainment. They wore burqa and once in a while went to class past the age of twelve. Women there had no way out in marriage, rather they were told when and whom they ought to wed. Life was a battle for Women in Afghanistan a long time before Taliban. In any case, it turned into simply more horrendous with the flare-up of war. Not solely were their primary human rights harmed anyway they in like manner experienced sex based abuse. They were stole and sold as slaves, constrained into marriage to state army leaders, constrained into prostitution and were assaulted. This is the unquestionable view against which *A Thousand Splendid Suns* has been made.

Women in Afghan are generalized by society and men, and on account of their way of life it is viewed as worthy. Women - the mistreated, uneducated, and poor turned into a subaltern gathering all in all and are dealt with unreasonably. The subaltern is a man or a gathering of individuals that has been prohibited from society. They don't have a voice, and are lost on the planet because of digestion and expansionism. As per Spivak,

"Subaltern Women are subjected to abuse more than subaltern men. They don't have legitimate portrayal, and in this way, are not ready to voice their assessments or offer their accounts. Nobody knows about the everyday battles they confront; subaltern Women are apparitions in the public eye."

The major reason for women becoming subaltern is the patriarchal institutions justified through the figure of Mariam and her epileptic mother Nana, who used to work as a housekeeper in Jalil's house and is cast off by Jalil after she gets pregnant with his illegitimate child. Jalil already has three wives and nine children and he is quite well off in his business. Hosseini delivers the twofold measures of a male centric culture that faults everything on ladies. Nana is the one who gives lessons of subservience and endurance to Mariam. It seems that she acts like the patriarchal manuals for young girls on how they should be submissive and dependent on the male authority.

## References

1. Goldstein S. Joshua. War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P, 2005. Print.
2. Hosseini, Khaled. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. London: Bloomsbury publishing Plc, 2007. Print.
3. Mishra, Lata. "Language and Ideology in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*." *Cyber Literature* 33.2 (Dec 2015): 19. Print.
4. Morgan, Robin, comp. *Sisterhood is Global: The International Women's Movement Anthology*. New York: The Feminist Press, 1996. Print.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF WOMEN- A CONCERN FOR GENDER SENSITIZATION

**Pritirupa Saikia**

*Assistant Professor, NERIM Law College, Khanapara, Guwahati*

Gender is a term with reference to social definition of roles and behavior assigned to both male and female in a given society. It is well described by the word SEX which biologically and physiologically defines man and women. It is a man made concept where men as always treated as superior to women. Gender inequality is defined as discrimination against women based on their sex. Women are considered by the society as weaker sex. She has been accorded with a subordinate position to men, even today a woman is disrespected, and de regarded, violated and discriminated both in internal and external sphere. Women have to face a peculiar situation everywhere in regard to herself respect and survival. Gender Inequality is a perception or unequal treatment based on their gender.<sup>1</sup>

The patriarchal society dominating the mentality of equality and developed a system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress, ad exploit women. Women exploitation is a age old cultural phenomenon of Indian society. Where system of patriarchy finds its validity and sanction in our religious beliefs.

According to MANU “women are supposed to be in the custody of her father when they are children, they must be in the custody of their husband when married, and under the custody of her son in old age or as widows. In no circumstances she should be allowed to assert herself independently.”

Sexual harassment of women at every single sphere of her life by means of any unwanted

sexual behaviour towards her. Gender sensitivity essentially refers to making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of all policies and programmes in an organization so that both the gender can be benefited equally and inequality is not perpetuated. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature against an employee by an employer or another employee in the workplace or in connection with the performance of or recruitment of work. It is also an act which is threatened or imposed as a condition of employment on the employee or which creates a hostile working environment. Sexual harassment has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the employee or intimidating, disregarding, humiliating or offending the employee.<sup>2</sup>

### What is Sexual Harassment?

Sexual harassment has a study rise in Indian society. The ability of an organization to identify and handle gender inequality and gender discrimination underpins its success in creating a gender sensitive and inclusive work culture. Ultimately the goal is to achieve gender equality. It is time to recognize that women are an important and integral part of our workforce. Women bring in balance and diversity and more necessarily emotional intelligence which is an important element for corporate success. It is therefore important for every organization to be sensitive, watchful and inclusive. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances requests for sexual favors and other

<sup>1</sup> Indian social Problems a sociological perspective by C.N SHANKAR RAO

<sup>2</sup> Rural, urban & Tribal Sociology in India by Dr. S. R Myneni

verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when either of the following is satisfied:

1. The conduct is made as a term or condition of an individual's employment, education, living environment or participation in a university community.
2. The acceptance or refusal of such conduct is used as the basis or a factor in decisions affecting an individual's employment, education or participation in university community.
3. The conduct unreasonably impacts an individual's employment or academic performance or creates an intimidating hostile or offensive environment for that individual's employment, educating or participating in a university community.<sup>3</sup>

The sex Discrimination Act, 1984 defines the nature and circumstances in which sexual harassment is unlawful. It is also unlawful for a person to be victimized for making or proposing to make, a complaint of sexual harassment to the Human Rights and Equal opportunity Commission. Sexually Harassing behavior include:

- Unwelcome touching
- Staring and leering
- Suggestive comments and jokes
- Sexually explicit pictures and posters
- Unwanted invitations to go out
- Requests for physical closeness
- Intrusive questions about a person's private life or body
- insult based on sex
- sexually explicit physical contact
- sexually explicit emails or text messages

A working environment or workplace culture that is sexually permeated or hostile will also amount to unlawful sexual harassment. The sex Discrimination Act makes sexual harassment unlawful in many areas of public life including in employment situations,

educational institutions, the provisions of goods and services and accommodation and the administration of commonwealth laws and programme.

### Reasons of Increase in Sexual Harassment

The reason for a steady increase in sexual harassment instances are due to many factors that degrade the condition of work culture as well as attach a mental illness to female gender.

\*patriarchal structure: The basic reason behind almost all types of harassment against women lies in our society's patriarchal structure whereby a male always thinks himself to be superior than a woman. This feeling of superiority complex manifests itself in various kinds of discriminatory practices against women in general as well as against working women.

\*sexual perversion: sexual perversion of mind is also one of the reasons of sexual harassment of women at workplace. While more and more females are being recruited in public and private sectors, such man have got an easy access to indulge in such sexually perverted behaviors.

\*jealousy at workplace: jealousy at workplace is one of the reasons of crimes against women employees. A male employee doesn't want to see his female colleague to get success, promotion or incentives by the employer. In jealousy that very employee starts harassing the female colleague by sexually perverted behavior.

\*Feeling of contempt and Disrespect: A general feeling of contempt and disrespect for women among male species is also a prominent reason whereby women are considered only as an object of fulfilling sexual desire of a man. Respect for women at home is always there but other women in the society are not treated as such.

\*Male superiority: There can be several reason for sexual harassment of women at workplace but the essential elements of all such

<sup>3</sup> Women status and empowerment in India by Shyam kartik Mishra

reasons is the deep rooted feeling of male superiority among men in general. The social conditioning of man in a patriarchal system reinforces such feeling generations which creates the base for crimes like sexual harassment at workplace.

### **Constitutional Provisions for Women in India**

The Constitution of India accepts the principle of equality of gender. The following provisions provide rights to women:-

- 1) The Preamble of the constitution speaks of equality of status and opportunity and of social, economic, and political justice. Article 14 of the constitution assures equality before law and equal protection of laws as a fundamental right.
- 2) Articles 15 and 16 of the constitution prohibit any type of discrimination on the ground of gender. Article 15 also prohibits that the state may make special provisions for women and that such provisions may not be treated as violation of right to equality. The constitution imposes a fundamental duty on every citizen through Article 51(A)(e) to renounce all practices that are derogatory to the dignity of women.<sup>4</sup>
- 3) No person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty as per Article 21. All citizens including women have the right to freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peacefully and without arms, to form association or unions, to move freely throughout the territory of India.
- 4) The Directive principles refer to women at three places:
  - a) Article 39 (e) seeks the state to see that the health and strength of men and women workers are not abused.
  - b) Article 39(d) asks the state to direct its policy to see that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
  - c) Article 42 requires the state to provide for maternity relief and make provision for just and human conditions.
- 5) The state should provide other facilities under Directive Principles to women along with men such as secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people under article 38; equal justice and free legal aid under Article 39-A, right to work; living wages etc.
- 6) Political powers were given to women in local bodies as per Article 243(D)(3) of the constitution, out of total number of seats reserved under clause (1) of Article 243-D, not less than 1/3 seats shall be reserved for women belonging to SC'S and ST'S.
- 7) Fundamental duties: According to article 51A (e), it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities, to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women<sup>5</sup>.

### **Sources of International Law Related to Sexual Harassment**

The United Nations and regional treaty systems have recognized sexual harassment as a form of discrimination and violence against women. International statements of law and principle provide an important starting in drafting legislation that prohibits sexual harassment.

United Nations: General Assembly Resolution on the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women defines violence against women to include sexual harassment which is prohibited at work in educational institutions and elsewhere, encourages development of penal, civil or other administrative sanctions as well as preventative approaches to eliminate violence against women.

<sup>4</sup> Constitutional Law of India by Prof Narendra kumar

<sup>5</sup> Constitution of India by J.N Pandey

**The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against women (CEDAW):** It directs states parties to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all fields, specially including equality under law, in governance and politics, the work place, education healthcare and in other areas of public and social life.

**Beijing Platform for Action:** It recognizes sexual harassment as a form of violence against women as a form of violence against women and as a form of discrimination and calls on multiple actors including government, employers, unions and civil society to ensure that governments enact and enforce laws on sexual harassment and that employers develop anti harassment policies and prevention strategies.

**International labour Organisation:** The ILO committee of experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations has confirmed that sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination covered by the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention of 1958.

**The charter of Fundamental Rights of the European union:** It enshrines the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of sex, and Article 23 obligates states to ensure equality between men and women in all areas.

### Legislation

#### The Gender Equality Law, 2011

The **Gender Equality Law, 2011** seeks to eliminate discrimination in employment, training and recruitment on the basis of sex, marital status, pregnancy or gender and to promote the payment of equal remuneration to male and female employees who perform work of equal value. It also aims to protect against discrimination in other areas such as access to goods, services and facilities, as well as

discrimination through job advertisements, application forms and interviews. Issues such as discrimination by professional partnerships, qualifying and vocational training bodies, and employment agencies as well as sexual harassment in the workplace are also addressed within the legislation.

### Exceptions and Special Measures

**Private households** are exempt from Section 4(1) of the Law, which deals with recruitment and selecting an employee for employment. However, once the employee is hired, private households shall not discriminate against the employee in the other areas of the Law.

The protection against discrimination provided in Part 2 of the Law does not affect the benefits granted by **charities** or the ordination, training, or selection of persons to be ordained or appointed by **religious bodies** and other necessary acts or practices of religious bodies.

It is not considered discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender, marital status or pregnancy if a **genuine occupational qualification** exists for a particular job. The Law allows for preferences to be made in the following circumstances:

- The essential nature of the job calls for a man or woman for reasons of physique (excluding strength or stamina) or for reasons for authenticity in dramatic performances or other entertainment.
- To preserve the decency or privacy of a person because the job will likely involve physical contact or a person may be in a state of undress and it would be reasonable to object to the job being carried out by persons of the opposite sex.
- In establishments with less than 25 persons are employed, the nature or location of the establishment makes it impracticable for the holder of the job to live elsewhere than in the premises provided by the employer and the premise is not equipped with sleeping

accommodations or sanitary facilities for both sexes.

- The job requires a married couple.
- The nature of the establishment, or where the work is carried out, requires the job be held by a person of a particular sex because it is a hospital, prison or other establishment for persons requiring special care, supervision or attention, and all the persons are of the same sex and it is reasonable, having regard to the essential character of the establishment, that the job shouldn't be held by a person of the opposite sex. The Law also specifically does not affect a provision in **any other law** which permits discrimination on the grounds of sex, gender, marital status or pregnancy. It also aims to protect against discrimination in other areas such as access to goods, services and facilities, as well as discrimination through job advertisements, application forms and interviews. Issues such as discrimination by professional partnerships, qualifying and vocational training bodies, and employment agencies as well as sexual harassment in the workplace are also addressed within the legislation. Finally, the Governor in Cabinet may prescribe **special measures** to promote equality of opportunity in employment for a specific period of time based on the grounds of sex, gender, marital status or pregnancy and such special measures shall not be considered discriminatory. For example, if Government wanted to address increasing women's access to decision-making at higher levels, a policy could be established that a certain percentage of women are appointed as members of government boards. This would be a special measure that would not be considered discriminatory under the Law.

### **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**

Parliament of India enacted "The sexual Harassment of Women at workplace (prevention, prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 to provide protection against sexual harassment of women at workplace and for the prevention and Redressal of complaints of sexual harassment and to deal with the matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. Sexual Harassment under section 2(n) includes any one or more of the following unwelcome acts (whether directly or by implications) indirectly-

1. Physical contact or advances
2. A demand or request for sexual favours
3. Making sexually coloured remarks
4. Showing pornography
5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non verbal conduct of sexual nature.

### **Judicial Pronouncement on Sexual Harassment**

1. Vishaka v state of Rajasthan, (1997), ADSC 53: The Supreme Court in this case held that sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour of physical contact and advances, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography or any physical verbal or non verbal conduct of sexual nature.
2. The court further stated that an act would be considered as sexual harassment if the victim:
3. Apprehends in relation to her employment or work, whether she is drawing salary or honorarium or voluntary whether in public or private enterprise and such conduct is humiliating and would result in health and safety problems;
4. Feels that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment or work including in relation to recruitment, promotion, create a hostile working environment or result in adverse consequences.

### **Bharati Ray vs Director, Xavier Institute, Dec.200**

Here Supreme court upheld that equality and guarantee against sexual harassment and abuse relating to women at workplace strict rules are to be framed and implemented

### **P.k Puthuppan vs K.S Girija, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2008**

Apex Court here gave the notice regarding incidents of sexual harassment in workplace will result in violation of fundamental right of GENDER EQUALITY.

### **Conclusion**

It can be said that though we have a specific law to prohibit sexual Harassment at workplace apart from already existing landmark guidelines of the supreme court of India but menace cannot be controlled until and unless the mentality of males in general would not change. Till the basic human dignity of women is not recognized and respected by men, no law will be effective, It is important that constitutionally guaranteed principles of equality among men and women do not remain only empty words and should be upheld in practice. Besides physical, psychological and social consequences of sexual harassment at work place, the disruption of economic activities and the damage to the environment of work are other sufferings of women. Sexual harassment violates a women's right to job security and equal opportunity. It can create working conditions that are hazardous to the physical and psychological well being of workers. It also creates a poisoned work atmosphere that can disempower and demoralize women workers. Thus certain general principles remedies and sanctions should ensure that sexual misconduct should be stopped and the victims must get proper financial compensation and emotional injury should be mitigated. It should also act as a deterrent to the harasser and the encouraging one for the employers to introduce preventive measures.

### **Bibliography**

#### **Books**

1. Agarwal H.O, *Human Rights*; Central Law Publications; Allahabad
2. Asmat Romana, *Sexual Harassment at workplace*, Allahabad Law Agency; Delhi
3. Atray J.P; *Crimes against Women*; Vikash Publishing House, Delhi
4. Borphy Julia, *Women in law*, Routledge & Kegan & Paul,
5. Bhat P Ishwara, *Law & Social Transformation*; Eastern Book Company, Lucknow
6. Gonsalves Lina, *Woman and Human Rights*, A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi
7. Jaisingh Indira, *Sexual Harassment at the workplace*, Allahabad Law Agency, 5th edition, 2004
8. Kataria R.P, *Laws Relating to Sexual Offences*, Orient Publishing Company, Allahabad
9. Khan Parveen Nuzhat, *Women and The Law*; Universal Law Publications, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 2016
10. Kumar Narendra, *Constitutional Law Of India*, Allahabad Law Agency, Faridabad, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2017
11. Kumari Ved, *Gender Analysis of the Indian Penal Code*, Eastern Book Company, Lucknow
12. Mishra Kartik Shyam, *women Status and Empowerment In India*, New century Publications, Delhi
13. Myneni S.R, *Rural Urban & Tribal Sociology in India*, Allahabad Law Agency, Faridabad; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2017
14. Shankar Rao C.N, *Indian Social Problems-a sociological perspective*, Chand Publications, New Delhi
15. Saxena Sobha, *Crimes Against women and protective laws*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi
16. Pillai Chandrasekharan K.N, *Women and criminal Procedure*, Eastern Book Company, Lucknow
17. Universal Landmark Judgments, Universal Law Publications, Delhi

**Article Journal**

1. Dash Siddhartha; Women empowerment In India, Orissa Review, Dec 2004

3. <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/9845/.pdf> Accessed 10/6/18

**Internet Sources**

1. <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/20-of-urban-women-working/2013/05/24article1603651.ece> Accessed on 10/6/18
2. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/syncretism>>

**Newspapers**

1. The Assam Tribune.
2. The Hindu.
3. The Indian Express.
4. The Sentinel.
5. The Telegraph.
6. The Times of India.



## PROBLEMS OF THE LGBT

**Mrs. Rashmita Borah**

*Assistant Professor, Nerim Law College, Guwahati, Assam*  
and

**Dr. Abhimanyu Sethi**

*Assistant Professor, Nerim Law College, Guwahati, Assam*

LGBT, the acronym stands for Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender. It is used to identify the LGBT community around the world. People who recognize themselves as either lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, collectively, are referred to as the LGBT community. To be precise, the significance of each word can be understood one by one.

Lesbian is the term which is used to denote a woman, who is romantically or sexually attracted to another woman. Such a woman is biologically bestowed with the character of homosexuality.

A man is identified as gay if he is interested in other men, sexually or romantically. He too can be referred to as a homosexual.

Now, the term homosexuality, which is the common ingredient of both lesbianism as well as gay behavior, is that element of a person which directs him to be sexually attracted to people of the same gender. The homosexual instinct, if present, in a person, caters to him the tendency to get enticed by person of the same sex. Hence, female homosexuality is called as lesbianism.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, male homosexuality is popularly known as gay behavior.

The next component of LGBT, i.e. the bisexual, just as the name suggests, refers to the sexuality of a person where he is sexually attracted to members of his same gender as well as the members of the opposite gender.

The last component, the Transgender, is a person who expresses sexual orientation that is

different from the assigned sex, determined at the time of his birth. In majority of births, a nurse or doctor inspects the genitalia when the baby is delivered and sex and gender are assigned.<sup>7</sup> However, in case of a transgender, the person expresses opposite sexuality with respect to his assigned gender. He may not be exclusively a male or female. Transgender are popularly known as the third gender.

Having discussed the relevant terms, an analyzes of the LGBT community is focused where the community comprises of people who have openly come forward to express their sexuality pertaining to one of the above mentioned categories. Such communities exist worldwide in various forms and manners. These communities are synonymous with the fight for equal rights for the LGBT people. The fight referred to, is annexed under the umbrella concept of the greater fight for human rights. The LGBT is represented by the very popular symbol denoted by the Rainbow Flag. Gilbert Baker was the creator of this logo. The colourful flag consists of the hues red, which represents life, orange for healing, yellow for the element of the sun, green stands for nature, blue represents art and violet depicts the essence of spirit. Another aspect of this community is the Pride Parade, which refers to the coming together of the people of this category, thereby asserting a stand against the various atrocities and discrimination they are required to undergo in day to day lives. The term Pride is used to

<sup>6</sup><https://britannica.com/topic/homosexuality>

<sup>7</sup><https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/sex/assignment>

demonstrate their collective and united strength.

The need to form such communities arises from the fact that they are ridiculed by the so called sexually straight section of the society. Most people are host to the mental setup which allows them to accept heterosexuality as the only kind of sexual orientation. Hence this leads to a situation of homophobia i.e. a fear against or associating with the homosexuals or transgenders. This leads to an immense discrimination against this group of people. They suffer exclusion of the LGBT community, therefore, choose to hide their orientation under fear of being discriminated against, but in this attempt of being viewed as normal they tend to suffer internally. Hence, they face a situation of identity crisis. In this process, sometimes they become victims across the world in all spheres of life. They face all sorts of difficulties while growing up in the society which assume that homosexuality is an unnatural behavior which results from mental illness or any bodily disease. They fail to realize that people are not homosexuals by choice but that they are biologically built in a certain way. Such behaviours are a result of variations in hormonal compositions. The general people are not able to relate to such diverse variation in sexuality. Many members of depression, in the long run, the consequence of which may be suicidal tendency.

Members of the LGBT community also assert that they are often ridiculed, insulted and laughed at by the so called normal people. They suffer allegations of being mentally sick and their orientation against the nature. Such despicable was their condition, few years back that they were not assumed human enough to deserve a designated public washroom.

One of the biggest problems faced by them is related to marriage perspective. Socially and legally marriage among such people is condemned. It is only recently that certain sections of the society understand their

condition. Also with the recent scrapping of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 which criminalized Gay or Lesbian sex, terming it to be unnatural, by the honorable Supreme Court of India, a pioneering step towards liberalization and freedom of this respective section of people is witnessed. The primary step has been taken by the Indian judiciary and it is expected that the society shall follow suit. However until and unless the society does not change its attitude and mindset towards this minority group, the legal step taken can only be seen as a small ripple in the vast ocean. In the coming days if same-sex marriage is to be legalized, the society's reaction towards it shall be divided. It can be said that the acceptance shall take time and shall be gradual.

Another problem faced by the LGBT community, especially the transgender is that they struggle to find suitable employment for themselves which is quite evident on a daily basis in the traffic signals, where we witness innumerable numbers of transgender asking for alms from the people passing by. Either they are ignored or mocked at, but upon a deeper consideration one realize that they are victims of unemployment and hence are left with no options but to engage in such degrading activities.

Being aware of the conservative society that we thrive in, another drawback thrown at them is that in majority of the cases when a homosexual, bisexual or transgender opens up regarding his position to his family, the latter finds it impossible to stand up to him and render him the required support. Family, being one of the most significant institutions in a person's life forms a pivotal role in his life. In such situations when the family steps back or disowns him, the very confidence that a person stores as a normal human being is lost. He loses half of the battle even before it technically starts.

"Chakka, Hijra, Homo etc" are certain offensive words used by some people to address them. Many of such people are

acquainted with tolerating physical violence against them. They are looked down and disgusted by others. This in fact is the very violation of basic human rights which are inseparable from any person, whether a male or a female or someone who belongs to the LGBT community.

Their entire life is a struggle only because they are born with a particular sexual orientation which is different from others. Homosexuality is one of the most avoided or detested issues in our society. These are considered as taboos.<sup>8</sup>

Several scientists have concluded that homosexuality is a natural phenomenon. A person does not become a homosexual by choice

but it is assigned to him genetically, just as a man is biologically assigned to be male and a woman is biologically assigned to be female. Forcing a person to pretend to be what he is not is in itself is cruelty. These people, on the other hand should be encouraged to come out of their shell and the task of bringing them out is our duty, as responsible human beings.

The world is home to all living beings. Nobody has the right to infringe the basic human right that is vested in a person by the very virtue that he is born as a human. Hence, laws favouring the stand of the LGBT community are very much welcome for peaceful co-existence.

## **PORTENDING THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S "THIS IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF ME"**

**K.Ramya Kalaivani**

*PG Student of English*

*Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore*

Literature, in many ways, acts as fortune-teller. Current scenario has been envisaged many centuries ago. Similarly, many contemporary writers have been predicting the future. Margaret Atwood is one such writer who portrays the reality and also anticipates about the future in her works. "This Is a Photograph of Me" is one of the poems in her collection *The Circle Game*. Even though the poem in an outer level discusses about a photograph, in close recce it brings out the patriarchal dominance in the society.

"This Is a Photograph of Me" is a poem of 26 lines including 12 lines which are given in the parenthesis, written in free verse. The poet uses the tone of melancholy to substantiate her point of view about the patriarchal dominance in the society. This poem can be divided in to two parts as first and second. The first part of the poem is the initial lines which deals with the description of the photograph and the second part of the poem can be considered as the one which is given in parenthesis which gives extra information about the photograph. Margaret Atwood, through the title reveals that it is real and not an imagination. She uses the word 'Photograph' and it is not just a 'picture' or an 'image' which may be an imaginary one. The mere title of the poem gives an idea that it is about the real state of a person which holds true even in the present society.

The first part of the poem begins with the line, "It was taken some time ago" (Line 1). This reveals that the poem is about a photograph which was taken earlier. Tracing the past, Margaret Atwood has predicted the present scenario. At first, the photograph appears to be

as 'a smeared print'. The words like 'smeared', 'blurred' and 'flecks' shows that it is a very old photograph. There is also a hint that it is 'blended with the paper'. But all these hints perfectly suit the present scenario. These gloomy adjectives can be interpreted to the mental trauma of rape victims. Rape victims are dull, unnoticed, disfigured and ruined which are thus revealed through these words. Women, young girls and even children are being raped. They are constantly struggling for justice. Rape is the fourth most common crime against women in India. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2013 annual report, 24,923 rape cases have been reported in India in the year 2012. This shows the intensity of abuse against women.

Margaret Atwood urges the reader to scan the photograph even further. She mentions that there is a branch of a balsam or spruce in the 'left-hand corner'. The branch mentioned in the poem is a portrayal of women. If so, then there are various veiled events which substantiate the ill-treatment on women in the society. It is not a complete tree as it is mentioned as 'like a branch' and 'part of a tree'. This shows that women are being suppressed and are not allowed to expose completely. There is also a mentioning of 'balsam' and 'spruce'. This is also a portrayal of women. Balsam and spruce are evergreen trees. Similarly, women are always cheerful and vibrant persons. The Balsam is the original mainstream tree and its most common colloquial name is 'Christmas tree'. It is a tree of celebration. Likewise, women are the mainstream in a family who are the reason for others' happiness. The usage of 'spruce' also

carries importance. Spruce is useful as a building wood. Even the Wright brothers' first aircraft, the *Flyer*, has been built of spruce. It is highly recommended only for indoor use as it has no insect or decay resistance quality. Correspondingly, women are delicate and are mostly allocated to do indoor works. After having a deep look on rape victims which is the 'Photograph', one can understand feminine nature which is not being followed in the society.

Rape victims are supposed to be submissive. But, the word 'emerging' in the poem, points out that they are arising. In the present scenario, some of them are trying to come out of it and are partially revealing themselves to the society. Still, in many cases, they do not want to unveil their identity. Emily Jacob, in her book *To Report Or Not To Report: Survivor Testimony of the (In)Justice System*, shares the powerful testimonies of rape survivors. In a chapter called "Did I Deserve this?", she discusses the story of Elizabeth Moncrieff. She is scared that her past sexual history will be paraded in front of others. So, she is unwilling to disclose her story. Even though they want to come out of it, they do not want to face problems.

On the right-hand corner of the 'Photograph', there is a 'small frame house'. It is referred as 'house' and not as a 'home'. This shows that it is a mere building. Also, it gains an upper hand as it is in the right-hand side. The word 'slope' denotes that it is in a higher level than the other end. Obviously, men are the ones who are dominant to women. Thus, 'house' is a portrayal of men. The background in the 'Photograph' is revealed as 'lake'. Lake corresponds to the society which includes men and women. Similar to the tree which is hidden from the lake and in the 'Photograph', rape victims are also not exposed in the society and they try to compress their stories. Thus, the first section of the poem can be vividly compared to the

present scenario where many rape victims wear a mask and hide themselves from the society. Margaret Atwood anticipates this context in the first part of this poem.

The second section of the poem is enclosed in the parenthesis. Atwood mentions that the photograph has been taken the day after she had drowned. She also reveals a truth that she is in the center of the 'picture'. Here, Atwood's usage of the word 'picture' shows that it may be imaginary. That is, she is visualising her and predicting her future. She adds that she is under the surface. This can be applied to the future state of rape victims. She tries to say that they will be exposed in the society and will not be in a hidden state. Even though they will be under the surface, they mingle with the society.

Atwood mentions that it is difficult to say "how large or small I am:" (Line 21). By interpreting it to the future, she means to say that it is difficult to predict the number of rape victims. But she gives a hint in the subsequent lines of the poem. "the effect of water / on light is a distortion" (Lines 22-23). In general, it is the effect of light on water and not the effect of water on light. In this poem, it is contradictory. It is understood that she anticipates a smaller number of rape victims or even no rape victims as it is mentioned in a contrary way. She mentions it as a 'distortion' and means to say it is imbalance. But, Atwood twists her prediction towards the end of the poem.

"but if you look long enough,  
eventually

you will be able to see me." (Lines 24-26)

Atwood ends this poem with a positive note by mentioning that everyone will be able to see her if they look in to the lake in a deeper level. Through this she tries to convey that the 'distortion' is not for women but it is for men. A kind of challenge is thrown upon men at the end of the poem. She dares men to face

women when they become apparent in the society.

The sub-title of one of Mary Shelley's short story collections, "The beginning is always today", is apt to justify the concluding thoughts. Atwood predicts that rape victims will come out of all their mental ordeal and will shine in their life. They will be no longer seen as a dull, disfigured and ruined ones. Rather, she points out with a warning to the readers that they will gain so much of energy to compete with the society and it will be a difficult task for others to face them. J.K. Rowling in his *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* says, "The thing about growing up . . . anything's possible if you've got enough nerve".

Atwood conveys the same message to the readers through this poem. Though this poem seems to be of a mere description of a photograph, there are lot of underlying elements which make the poem to understand in a deeper level. She does not want to focus on the patriarchal dominance in a direct manner. Rather, she focuses on the appearance of the rape victims in the society, thereby highlighting the injustice towards women. She

also gives a hope in the end of the poem by saying that it will not exist anymore and they will emerge as superwomen. It is a tinge of encouragement for the victims to overcome their torments. Thus, she succeeds in predicting the present as well as the future society.

### References

1. Atwood, Margaret. "This Is a Photograph of Me". *The Circle Game*, House of Anansi, 1998.
2. Jacob, Emily. *To Report or Not To Report: Survivor Testimony of the (In) Justice System*. Penguin Random House, 2018.
3. Jacob, Emily. "6 rape survivors share their powerful stories". *Stylist*, [www.stylist.co.uk/long-reads/rape-crisis-statistics-victim-survivor-women-stories-books-reading/188772](http://www.stylist.co.uk/long-reads/rape-crisis-statistics-victim-survivor-women-stories-books-reading/188772).
4. Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. London, Bloomsbury, 2014, p. 605.
5. Shelley, Mary. *Mary Shelley Short Stories: The beginning is always today*. vol. 2, Miniature masterpieces, 2014.

## FEMINISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

**Dr.G.Sujatha**

*Lecturer in English, TheHindu College, Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh*

Feminism is a movement which gained potential in the twentieth century, marking the culmination of two centuries 'struggle for cultural roles and socio-political rights-a struggle. In the international context, the awakening of feminism can be traced to the middle of the 19th century. This period witnessed the emergence of a set of educated, intelligent, independent women in the western countries, having new ideas and thoughts. They were fully convinced that women are capable of doing things as efficiently as men. This kind of awakening in women led to social revolution. They tried to redefine themselves in their writings. They started questioning the partiality and gender arrangement. They believed that more women should enter the new movement and write about their social problems. Many of them voiced their problems, experiences, feelings, desires, aspirations, and failures, in their writings. Some of them wrote about their personal lives, using their own experiences while fighting against the poor social status of and disparity against women. To avoid the possible embarrassment in their conventional surroundings, they disguised themselves in a way, as fictional heroines of their writings and exhibited their own experiences. Their literature depicted the new woman, who refused to be submissive to man. This global and revolutionary idea was coined as feminism. Feminism is an awareness of women's oppression and exploitation in society and conscious action by both men and women to change this situation. Linda Gordon, a noted historian, defines feminism as 'an analysis of women's subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it'. Today, feminists are working towards the emancipation of

women. Present-day feminism is a struggle for the achievement of women's equality, dignity and freedom of choice. It is an endeavor to control women's lives within and outside their homes. Feminism asserts the value of women as women. It efficiently counters the systematic devaluation of women that is, there under patriarchy. It demands and fights for a just and equitable society where there is no discrimination based on sex. Thus, the concept of feminism incorporates a broad spectrum of ideas and possesses an international recognition.

The concept of Feminism Movement got proper prominence and importance in the 1960s. Earlier, feminism was limited to some female writers only but the increased number of female writers and the representation of women characters in fiction world drew large attention in the literature. The word feminism comes from French word *féminisme* and according to the Cambridge online dictionary feminism is "the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state." The term 'feminism' itself is used to describe a cultural, political or economic movement aiming for equal rights for both women and men. Feminism is a collection of movements and ideologies that share a common goal to define, establish, and achieve equal political, economic, cultural, personal, and social rights for women. This includes seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employments. According to Ritzer (2004:448) "Feminism is kind of critical social theory which included in social context, political, economic, and history that is facing by injustice people".

Feminism was born to defend the rights and roles of women in society, as the development of culture and social structure increasingly distinguish women and men feasible. The difference between women and men develop into discrimination which then triggers harassment. According to Ratna (2005:588) "Feminism is the concept generalization of women. A critical of social theory which have the purpose is to obtain women right". Various kinds of social criticism made by women in a way that they feel can replace their social status in the society through various breakthroughs both in physical movement or movement in ideology. One of the ways in which women to do social criticism gently and educate is to create a literary work. Literary work is the expression of life in the world of truth and beauty; it is the writer record of man's spirit of the thought, emotion, and expression. According to Morsal Esten (1978:9) "Literature or literary is the expression from the art of reality and imagination as manifestation of human life through language as medium and giving positive effect to human life and humanity". Literary works is a reflection a picture or a reflection of people's lives. According to Plato "Literature is the imitation of life or description from the reality (mimesis). A literary work should be model of reality" ( ). Therefore, literary values are as good as idea. Through literature, the author tries to express people's lives that they felt or experienced.

The history of the modern western feminist movements is divided into three "waves". Each is described as dealing with different aspects of the same feminist issues. The first wave refers to the movement of the 19th through early 20th centuries, which dealt mainly with suffrage, working conditions and educational rights for women and girls. The second wave (1960s-1980s) dealt with the inequality of laws, as well as cultural inequalities and the role of women in society. The third wave of feminism (late 1980s-

early 2000s (decade), is seen as both a continuation of the second wave.

The term, 'First Wave Feminism' is commonly used in nineteenth and early twentieth century for European and North American feministic movements. They struggled for women's rights to vote and professional participation. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) is a mother of first wave feminism. She published 'A Vindication of the Rights of Woman' in 1792. Wollstonecraft argued that women would be equal to men in every respect if they are provided same education and opportunities as men. She stands against an injustice suffered by women (Code, 2000). In this period, the feminists' were concerned with education, employment, marriage laws and plight of intelligent middle class single woman. They were primarily concerned with the problems of working class white women of upper middle class. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone, Sojourner Truth are first wave feminist thinkers in US, struggled for social, civil and religious conditions and rights of women.

The second wave feminism originated from the writings of the British feminist, Juliet Mitchell (1940) with an ideology of radicalism based on economic and social conditions (Code, 2000). Many of the feminists in 1960s to 1990s were particularly connected to social movements i.e. the anti-Vietnam protests and the civil rights movement. They struggled for reproductive rights, legalizing abortion and birth control, analyzing gender differences, attaining equal rights in political and economic realms and gaining sexual liberation (Kontou, 2008). They focused on socio-economic issues like equality in employment, sexual harassment and the discriminations based on class, race, sexuality, age, ability, ethnicity, religion and political consequences. These feminists achieved success in sexual freedom, equal funding to women and integration between workplace and political areas.



American feminist writer, Rebecca Walker has coined the term 'Third Wave Feminism' which aimed at social and economic equality. The major concerns are sexual freedom, including women from different groups like colour, culture, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and low income. However, these feminists are mainly struggled for: reproductive rights, protection from violence at home, workplace and public place i.e. rape and domestic abuse, economic rights as equal pay, parity of regard, pensions, poverty, recognition of caring work, sex discrimination act, more female Member of Parliament, religious right as women clergy, rabbi, and equality at workplace - more women at work and more men at home. It has been actively involved academics with its interdisciplinary associations with Marxian psychoanalysis and post structuralism, dealing with issues such as language writing, sexuality, representation, etc. it also has associations with alter sexualities, post colonialism.

The women's movement is always concerned with women's writing on which Showalter remarks in *Literature of Their Own* by calling women writing a subculture. Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* published in 1970. This phase chiefly explores the relationship between female and literature and texts were analyzed to understand the treatment of female characters by the male in the society. Showalter proposed three stages in the history of women's writing: feminine phase (1840-80), in which women writers imitated dominant male artistic norms and aesthetic standards that is the phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of dominant male traditions; feminist phase (1880-1920), in which radical approach has been maintained that is; the phase of protest against the standards and values in favour of autonomy. And at last female phase (1920-onwards) which primarily focused on female writing and female experiences that is the phase of self discovery of the women's search for identity. The female is

biological, the feminist is political and the feminine is cultural. The main aspects in the phases of women's writings are Female writers tried to adhere to male values, writing as men, and usually did not enter into debate regarding women's place in society. Female writers often employed male pseudonyms during this period. Central theme of works by female writers was the criticism of the role of women in society and the oppression of women. Women writers were no longer trying to prove the legitimacy of a woman's perspective. Rather, it was assumed that the works of a women writer were authentic and valid. The female phase lacked the anger and combative consciousness of the feminist phase.

Feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms. There are many kinds of feminism in which sometimes and each one of them gives principles and conditions for giving woman her rights.

The Liberal feminism is one of the types of feminism that works within the regular structure of our mainstream society. People who are liberal feminists want sexual equality, and they work to make that happen through political and legal reform. Therefore, they believe that our culture should change laws such as employment laws to make sure that no one are discriminated against because of their gender. Liberal feminists also work to make sure that our society respects women in general. Liberal feminist, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) has focused on issues of education and equal rights of women (Code, 2000). Liberal feminism is a moderate form of feminist emphasized upon society rather than revolutionary change. Men have access to more lucrative and prestigious jobs in the formal sectors of the economy. Women are engaged in least productive and least paid activities in position of lacking the property, skills, capital and education (Saptarshi and Bhagat, 2005). These

situations force women to accept the jobs with low quality, dignity, paid, etc. at field, street, maids or prostitutes, etc. (Bandarage, 1984). Therefore, liberal feminists explained position of women in terms of unequal rights based on artificial barriers in women's participations in public life (Kensinger, 1997)

Radical feminism is a movement that believes sexism is so deeply rooted in society that the only cure is to eliminate the concept of gender completely. Radical feminists suggest changes, such as finding technology that will allow babies to be grown outside of a woman's body, to promote more equality between men and women. Radical feminists would argue that the entire traditional family system is sexist. Men are expected to work outside the home while women are expected to care for children and clean the house. Radical feminists note that this traditional dichotomy maintains men as economically in power over women, and therefore, the traditional family structure should be rejected. Germaine Greer (1939) is well known academic writer, journalist and scholar gave significant but controversial voices of radical perspective in the twentieth century. It is widely accepted situation that the male power and privilege is the basis of social relations (Lewis, 2007).

Socialist feminism, is slightly less extreme but still calls for major social change. Socialist feminism is a movement that calls for an end to capitalism through a socialist reformation of our economy. Basically, socialist feminism argues that capitalism strengthens and supports the sexist status quo because men are the ones who currently have power and money. Those men are more willing to share their power and money with other men, which mean that women are continually given fewer opportunities and resources. This keeps women under the control of men. Socialist feminists expressed their views on women's oppression from their work in the family and economy. Inferior position of women is the result of class

based capitalism. Socialists have defined the terms of private sphere (home) and public sphere (work). The private sphere is oppressing the role of women in the household and equal opportunities for women in the public sphere. Foord and Gregson (1986) have pointed that the patriarchy is a universal term used for male dominance in feminist writing. Therefore, socialist feminist's work is significant in exposing the gendered aspects of the welfare state (Blackburn, 1995). Socialist feminists have elaborated the presence of patriarchy at various levels: personal - unconscious (Jolly et al., 2012), psychological - in culture, ideology and society (Deal and Beal, 2004), trans-historical - human existence (production-people-reproduction), and economic or material - in any combination (Foord and Gregson, 1986).

Cultural feminism is a movement that points out how modern society is hurt by encouraging masculine behavior, but society would benefit by encouraging feminine behavior instead. It is developed from radical feminism, although they hold many opposing views. It is also a feminist theory of difference that praises the positive aspect of women. As radical feminism died out as a movement, cultural feminism got rolling. Cultural feminism believes in encouraging feminine behaviour rather than masculine behaviour. The feminism stands for 'rights' and culturalism stands for 'culture' (Volpp, 2001). The culture defines the way of life of every individual and society including thoughts, beliefs, behaviour, customs, traditions, rituals, dress, language, art, music, literature, etc. (Sharma, 2012, Mangayarkarasi, 2012). Foord and Gregson (1986) have noted perspectives of society into four forms of internal relation between man and woman: biological reproduction, heterosexuality, marriage, and nuclear family. The problems of discriminations between male and female arise in the expressions of the cultural elements. The men are always trying to use cultural elements for inculcating the domination through power.

Male and female identities are culturally determined as masculinity and femininity, respectively (Deal and Beal, 2004, Plain and Sellers, 2007).

The feminism theory is very important in our world today because it shows how unequal society is when it comes to gender. Women get treated unfairly across the world every single day. This needs to change; we could use more women in government positions, more publicity of women's sports, more management positions for women in the workplace, and start expecting more out of women. Thus feminism is a phenomenon of social change that attempts to liberate women from the shackles and grip of male dominated society, enabling them to claim their right as free human beings. It intends to rebel against hostile environment in which a woman is forced to live. The main objective of feminism is to improve the status of women and to provide equal opportunity and dignity with men. Feminism aims at compulsory education for women and improved employment. The writers, who were influenced by the feminist idea, involved themselves in expressing their ideas in their writings, which has led to the development of feminist literature.

## References

1. Bandarage, A. 1984. Women in development: Liberation Marxism and Marxist Feminism Development and Change 15, 495-515.
2. Blackburn, S., 1995. How useful are feminist theories of the welfare state? Women's History Review, 4(3) 369-394.
3. Code, L. 2000. Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories, Routledge 15-40.
4. Deal, W.E. and Beal, T.K. 2004. Theory for Religious Studies New York, London, Routledge, 2-54.
5. Elaine Showalter, 1985 The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory, New York, Pantheon, p.5.
6. Esten Mursal. 1978. Kesusateraan (Pengantar Teori dan Sejarah). Bandung: Angkasa.
7. Froom, J. and Gregson, N. 1986. Partarchy: Towards a reconceptualisation, Antipode 18(2), 186-211.
8. Jolly, M., Polly. R, and Rachel, C., 2012. Sisterhood and after individualism, ethics and an oral history of Women's movement, Social movement Studies: Journal of Social Cultural and Political Protest. 11 (2) 211-226.
9. Kesinger, L. 1997. in Quest of Liberal feminism, Hypatia, 12(4) 178-199.
10. Kontou, T., 2008. Introduction: Women and the Victorian Occult, Women's writing, 15(3), 275-281.
11. Lewis, O. 2007. Feminism and racial agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equality 21(72) 18-31.
12. Mangayarkarasi, K., 2012. Dualism of Canadian existence in Margaret Atwood's The Journals of Susanna Moodie, International Journal on Multicultural Literature, 2(1), 37-41.
13. Plain, G. and Sellers, S., 2007. A History of feminism literary criticism Cambridge University press New York 8-9.
14. Ratna, Nyoman Kutha. 2005. Sastra dan Cultural Studies: Representasi Fiksi dan Fakta. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
15. Ritzer, George. 2003. Teori Sosial Postmodern. Yogyakarta: Kreasi Wacana.
16. Saptarshi, P.G. and Bhagat, V.S. 2005. Employment Potential in Agriculture: A case study of Purandhar Tahsil of Pune district Maharashtra Landscape System and Ecological Studies, 28(1) 29-37.
17. Sharma, N. 2012 Cultural Conflict in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Namesake International Journal on Multicultural Literature, 2(1), 111-116
18. Volpp, L. 2001. Feminism versus Multiculturalism. Columbia Law Review 101 (5) 1181-1218.

## **GENDER POLITICS IN PAKISTANI LITERATURE: THE PAKISTANI BRIDE BY BAPSI SIDHWA**

**T. Josephine Sneha**

*M.Phil. Research Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Bapsi Sidhwa is an eminent Parsi writer in English whose works are pseudo fictional in nature. Bapsi wrote *The Pakistani Bride* in her later twenties with much ingenuity and sense of pedantic nature. During the visit to Pakistan, Bapsi and her husband came across the story of a tribal girl who was slayed by her husband when she tried to escape from his clutches. The incident was painful and haunting so Bapsi desired to record the tale of the tribal girl as soon as she returned home. As days passed the story got converted into a novel with pages running and then elements of fiction were induced so as to transport a message and to unveil the existing injustice in the society.

The works of Bapsi Sidhwa is sprinkled with the intricacies of the Parsi society. Since Bapsi is an eminent social activist working for the emancipation of women and their upliftment she touches upon the sequence of gender politics in her works. *The Pakistani Bride* captures the survival of Zaitoon, Carol and others who are restricted from social interaction whereas Qasim, Saki and Major Mustaq enjoys sexual pleasures and liberty thereby allotting a borderline for the genders. Male characters are presented as lustful creatures who appears in contrary to the female characters who happens to be scapegoat in the hands of biased community.

The novel begins with the stereotypical boundary set by Pakistani men where young girls are being considered as a commodity of transaction. A young boy, Qasim gets married to Afshan when he was around ten. Since Resham Khan was unable to pay the debt to Arbab Khan he promised his daughter instead of the money. Qasim at his young age lost all his

children due to a deadly ailment. Qasim was left all alone when his favourite child, Zaitoon along with his wife Afshan died out of small pox. In order to escape from remarriage, Qasim ran away from the Kohistani hills.

Qasim toiled in Lahore for a time period and during the partition crisis he met an orphan girl. The girl's parents were killed by an angry mob so Qasim decided to save the child. The orphan girl instantly accepts Qasim as her father and Qasim addressed her Zaitoon, as a reminiscence of his daughter. Qasim consoles, "I had a little girl once. Her name was Zaitoon. You are so like her"(30). Though Qasim's adoption is to be appreciated, his imposition of personal dreams and desires on the little girl was beyond unjust.

On reaching Lahore Qasim befriends Nikka and his wife Miriam who takes care of Zaitoon as their own daughter. It was Miriam who taught Zaitoon to read Quran and other materials and to sew clothes. Once Zaitoon entered her menstruation phase, her education ceased and was taught to cook and do the household chores. Unlike Qasim who expected something in return from Zaitoon, Miriam and Nikka were selfless in displaying love.

A young man is expected to receive formal education until he prefers whereas young girls are not given proper education. Instead they are expected to do the works assigned by men in the form of manipulation. Miriam though appears to be a motherly figure she pesters regarding the marriage of Zaitoon. Miriam claims, "Does Bhai Qasim think he's rearing a boy? He ought to give some thought to her marriage" (53). This demonstrates that gender

politics is not just employed by men but by women too with or without conscious.

Qasim without consulting Zaitoon gave his word to marry his daughter to Saki, a tribal man. Zaitoon was taken back but Qasim managed to fill the mind of the young girl with romantic notions about the tribal people. Zaitoon associates the image of tribal men with the man of her dreams. Qasim portrays Saki as a heroic, brave and proud man who follows a strict code of conduct. Miriam often intervenes stating that the life amongst the tribals would be in contrast to the one she lives in Punjab. Miriam tries to warn about the misfortune which is about to happen but Qasim has manipulated Zaitoon who was unable to act otherwise.

Miriam tries to dissuade Zaitoon assuring, "You are ours. We'll marry you to a decent Punjabi who will understand your ways. Tell your father you don't want to marry a tribal. We'll help you" (97). Unfortunately, Zaitoon's mind was filled with fantasized thoughts imposed by Qasim and so she was blindfolded to see the truth behind the words of Miriam. Qasim believes that woman should act according to the will of their father or guardian without any second thought. Though Qasim and Nikka visits the brothels and lust at women they do not want their own woman to enjoy any basic rights.

Zaitoon's odyssey to the Kohistani hills depicts her lack of deciphering the consequence of reaching the mountains. Zaitoon become an emblem of ignorance. The lack of exposure and education doesn't assist Zaitoon to understand the ways and means of a life in a minimal community. On reaching the plains, there was a member in army camp, Ashiq Hussain who fell for Zaitoon immediately but Qasim mentioned that Zaitoon was about to get married and so he remained still. Saki was a man of brutality who treated his wife like an animal. There was always beating, thrashing and harassment in one way or the other.

Bapsi Sidhwa has given spine chilling description about Saki making love to Zaitoon. Saki's eyes were filled with "proprietary lust" (159) and the scene edges to that of a rape. Zaitoon felt numbness and not romance. Every time Zaitoon recalls that night there was only screaming, screeching and crying for help. When Qasim left Zaitoon with her in-laws she wonders the reason for the woman to be separated from her parents but men can enjoy their stay with their parents until death. When harsh reality strikes Zaitoon begins to question the patriarchy but only in her thoughts.

Saki becomes wild and rough after beginning to suspect innocent Zaitoon. Saki even goes to the extent of killing her but was stopped by his parents. Zaitoon was punished mercilessly for no fault of hers. It was beyond limit for Zaitoon who decides to run away to Miriam. In discreet Zaitoon escapes from the clutches of her husband. Soon the news spread and Saki felt dishonoured so decided to search her in the army camp. Jaydip Singh Dodiya states that only death can free a married woman because, "In a tribal family, if one's wife is not happy, she cannot think of divorce because it will raise a question of the tribal husband's honour" (84).

There was Carol from California who came to Pakistan after marrying Farukh. Initially, Farukh seemed to be understanding but slowly began to suspect and shame her for her easy-going nature. When Carol and Farukh visited the Karakoram camp, they met Major Mushtaq who seduces Carol. Carol fell for his chivalry and respect which seems to be invalid in Farukh. Correspondingly, Carol assumed that having an extra marital affair is a way of rebelling the age-old tradition. Carol pesters Major to marry her but Major declines disclosing the truth that he was already married and would not want a wife like her.

Carol questions about the tradition of killing the wife when the husband suspects of an affair. Major states that he was unsure of

Farukh's act but assured that if it was him he would definitely kill Carol. Suddenly the realization dawned upon Carol about the typical mindset shared by all the men of Pakistan and so she cries, "I felt very special, and all the time I didn't matter to you any more than that girl does as an individual to those tribals, not any more than a bitch in heat. You make me sick, *All of you*" (224). Carol converses with Farukh about their marriage and decides to leave the place immediately.

While conversing, Carol found that Farukh loved her and the trust he has on her made her feel guilty. While packing, Saki arrives to complain about the missing girl. Zaitoon was found after some days who was raped by the local tribesmen. The men who speak more about moral codes and tribe laws were the first to break it. Major Mustaq and Ashif rescued Zaitoon and took her to the camp. Carol decided to take Zaitoon to U.S and save her from the cruel clutches of the Pakistani men. When Saki gets to know that Zaitoon was raped he cries for the first time. Saki's tears were of no use, had he reacted pragmatically and treated her like a human he could have prevented the chaos.

Honour outstands the most for Saki so he lies to his father that she died and he gave her a burial. With that note the tribal men felt a relief that their honour was protected and they left the place immediately. After their disappearance the Major orders Ashiq to take Carol, Farukh and Zaitoon away from the place. The ending note is given by Mustaq who promises the reader that Zaitoon will be taken to U.S by Carol who will stay with her or Ashiq would propose after some interval but the decision depends entirely on Zaitoon. Thus, Zaitoon survives in a place where gender

politics is of high temperament, only after a long struggle.

The novel highlights the bullying and bias existing in the Pakistani culture along with the struggle and survival of the Pakistani woman. Carol condemns the practice of patriarchy which judges women in a barbaric way. Bapsi Sidhwa exposes the victimization of women in the perspective of a novelist. The novel ends with a ray of hope that a new life waits for Zaitoon either with Ashiq or else it could be on her own.

Thus, the stereotypical boundaries set by all the genders disrupt harmony in the society. Biased approach is never productive to any of the gender since it affects their role in the society. The Pakistani literature is a microcosm of the entire world where gender roles are assigned thereby thieving one's freedom of choice. Likewise, this gender politics has negative impact on people as it presents a homogenous society. The barriers and hardships faced by women are ample and goes unnoticed and this attitude is normalized. The output of such step presents an image in the society of men being aggressive and women being submissive. Gender politics and gender roles never ceases instead they are passed on to the next generation. In order to prevent this education is the foremost step and inclusion of all the genders is the key to destroy the assignment of gender roles in the forthcoming era.

## References

1. Dodiya, Jaydipsingh. *Parsi English Novel*, Sarup and Sons, 2006, pp. 84.
2. Sidhwa, Bapsi. *The Pakistani Bride*, Penguin Books, 1990, pp. 30-224.

## THE JUXTAPOSITION OF GENDER AND QUEER IN R. RAJ RAO'S *THE BOYFRIEND*

**Dona Mathew**

*Research Scholar, Dr. N.G.P. Arts and Science College, Coimbatore*

Gender Studies is a field of interdisciplinary study devoted to gender identity and gendered representation as central categories of analysis. Theorists study the question of what gender and sexuality is. These disciplines study gender and sexuality in the fields of literature, language, geography, history, political science, sociology, anthropology, cinema, media studies, human development, law, public health and medicine etc. It also analyses how race, ethnicity, class, nationality etc., intersect with the categories of gender and sexuality. Each field has come to regard "gender" as a practice, sometimes referred to as something that is performative.

In gender studies, the term "gender" should be used to refer to the social and cultural constructions of masculinities and femininities and not to the state of being male or female in its entirety. It was in the 1970s that the term "gender" has got prominence. To demarcate between the biological sex differences, and to label as "masculine" or "feminine", the term was widely used, which again had the intention of maintaining the patriarchal power system to subordinate women as capable only for domestic roles. The British sociologist, feminist, and writer Ann Oakley's *Sex, Gender and Society* (1972) is a pathfinding book that explores the construction of gender further. Recent studies in sex and gender observe that the sex differences are socially constructed, therefore can be changed, even though biology contribute to some behavioural patterns.

Judith Butler's theorization about gender introduces the notion of performativity. Her conception of gender is perhaps the most radical of all. She does a Foucauldian model,

and asserts that all identity categories are in fact the effects of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple origins. This concept of gender as performance suggests a level of free play with gender categories that we enter socially. The result is that individuals have the potential to create "gender trouble" and challenge the way discourse establishes and reinforces certain meanings and institutions, such as that of "compulsory heterosexuality". Butler's most radical deconstruction of the sex/gender distinction has been embraced by queer theorists and third wave feminists.

Eve Sedgwick is another critic who spoke about the fluidity of identity including sexual identity in her influential book *Epistemology of the Closet*. She discusses about coming out of the closet as not a single absolute act. Coming out of closet indicates one's lesbian or gay orientation. In it, degrees of concealment and openness remain in the same amount, for one may reveal his/her gay/lesbian identity to family and friends and not to the public, colleagues or boss. Sexual orientation will not make one a complete outsider or innocent of all exploitative taint. A non-straight person may be a privileged person in the eyes of others. What Sedgwick tries to say is subject is not a fixed inner essence, but rather a complex mixture of so many things like one's allegiances, social position and profession.

Queer theory is a field of critical theory that emerged in the early 1990s out of the fields of queer studies and women's studies. Oxford English Dictionary defines "queer" as "strange" or "unusual"; also denotes homosexuals. The term affirms the identity of the homosexuals. It includes all "non-straight" people.

Pramod K. Nayar in *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory* defines Queer Theory as follows:

Queer theory looks at the history of cultural representations of the gay/lesbian as deviant, sick or criminal, while foregrounding sexuality as an important category of critical analysis when dealing with cultural texts. Queer theory moves between literary analysis and activism because it shows how cultural representations contribute to very real material oppression of homosexuals. (184)

The works of Lauren Berlant, Leo Bersani, Judith Butler, Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Adrienne Rich and Diana Fuss influenced queer studies. Queer theory expands its focus to encompass any kind of sexual activity or identity that falls into normative and deviant categories. Italian feminist and film theorist Teresa de Lauretis coined the term "queer theory" for a conference she organized at the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1990 and a special issue of *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* she edited based on that conference.

Queer theory focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire. Queerness has been associated most prominently with bisexual, lesbian and gay subjects, but its analytic framework also includes such topics as cross-dressing, intersex bodies and identities, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. Queer refers to all the other practices and communities like bisexuality, transgenders, transsexuals, sado-masochism, drag and camp, transvestitism etc. Queer theory examines the discourses of homosexuality developed in the last century in order to place the "queer" into historical context, deconstructing contemporary arguments both for and against this latest terminology.

Queer theory is derived largely from post-structuralist theory, deconstruction in particular. Starting in the 1970s, a range of authors brought deconstructionist critical

approaches to bear on issues of sexual identity, and especially on the construction of Heteronormativity, i.e. the normalizing practices and institutions that privilege heterosexuality as fundamental in society and in turn discriminates those outside this system of power and focused on non-heteronormative sexualities and sexual practices.

Earlier, the word "queer" was used as a derogatory and pejorative term. Same-sex love was considered as unnatural and deviant. But since 1990, it has attained wide popularity in the scholarly inquiry as the gays and lesbians had come forward to celebrate a way of life and an identity of one's own. Lesbian and gay studies started as liberation movement for they demanded legal, political, and economic rights equal to the majority heterosexuals. They functioned as separatist groups, however with the popularity of the term "queer", they started to function under the same objective as they share a suppressed history and have common political cause.

The Stonewall Riots of 1969 can be described as the origin of the gay liberation movement. Gays were provoked by the police raid at Stonewall Tavern at New York, which was a noted meeting location for gays. At that time, many homosexual Hollywood actors and artists made it public their sexual preferences like Jasper Johns, Andy Warhol, Rock Hudson etc. In academics too several critical writings came up adding critical insights into the area. College English brought out a special issue on gay politics in 1974. The term was appropriated by activist groups such as Queer Nation, Gay Liberation Movement (GLF), Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) and Outrage in Europe as well as in the USA. Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet*, and David Halperin's *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* inspired other works in the field.

Queer theorists try to identify and establish a canon of classic lesbian/gay writers. Their



another agenda is to expose the homophobia of mainstream literature and to foreground homosexual aspects of literature. A major question is why and how the number of homosexuals has increased worldwide. Urbanization and Modernization are two important factors in it. An increase in education as well the rebellion for basic rights have become some major impetuses for people all around. More people both in the lime light as well as commoners have started to declare their queer identity.

R. Raj Rao is a professor and head of the department of English at the University of Pune and is also a gay. *The Boyfriend* is his first novel published in 2003. It is probably one of the first gay novels from India. He is the first person to offer a course on LGBTQ literature in a university level in India and after the publication of his first novel, he started the Queer Studies Circle at Pune University. He is also the recipient of Quebec India awards.

When *The Boyfriend* was published, it created quite a stir in our society. It is on the chaotic, the so-called secret gay male culture and world of Mumbai and the realities of caste, class, religion and masculinity. Rao chooses to openly speak about it and the novel is used as a model in the field of queer studies and researches in India.

The novel shows the queer world of 1990s India. The protagonist is Yudi, an upper-class English-speaking freelance journalist living in Mumbai. He is a gay but refuses to open about it in the public. In the eyes of others, he is a middle-aged bachelor. He falls in love with Milind, a nineteen-year-old Dalit boy. But out of financial constraints, even though he is a gay, Milind is forced to marry a girl of his parents' choice.

Many of the public places are the meeting ground of the gays like the bogies of certain trains, certain areas of certain parks, public toilets, pubs etc. At the backdrop of the novel, the Hindu-Muslim Bombay riots of 1992 take

place and many gays are thrashed and imprisoned when found loitering in the Azad Maidan Park. Propagators of religion, in the novel, create a hyper-masculine image in post-colonial India and trigger homophobia and insults.

Rao uses code words and labels which are common among the queer community in Mumbai like "chakka", "dhakka start" etc. Such usage of language is a political strategy to prevent erasure from the normative nationalist discourses. It is the unacceptance the homosexuals receive from the mainstream heterosexual society that prompts them to find secret meeting places and language codes for them. However, gay men created a system of subcultural codes of dress and speech that enabled them to recognise each other. But the gay population in India is an invisible underground subculture. And without a visible homosexual community, safer sex education is difficult.

Rao compares homosexuality and untouchability. Yudi says to Milind, both homos and bhangis are untouchables. Both are outcastes. "What I am saying is that homosexuals have no caste or religion. They only have their homosexuality.... Straight people are Brahmins, gays Shudras. So you see, both you and I are Shudras. That is why we are best friends" (82).

In India, gender-based anxieties are always linked to religion and community. According to most of the religious beliefs, homosexuality is a sin which give rise to homophobia. It is through the agency of religion that nationalist discourses attempt to project homosexuality as a national threat.

Recently, in India, the Supreme court has abolished Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code thus decriminalized homosexuality. The court observed that the LGBTQ community has every right to enjoy their basic rights as the citizens as well as human beings. The declaration also stated that for centuries, in India, the

homosexuals were not even considered as human beings and were separated from the mainstream life. The court considered it as a shame and stood for the basic rights of the LGBTQ people. Many people hailed this stand as a victory of post-colonial India, but some conservative people are still against it.

We cannot decide what is right or wrong. We cannot decide one's identity or preferences. It is, nevertheless, psychological. One's sex is fixed. However, now-a-days, with the advancement of science and technology, one can even change the sex by going through surgeries. One's gender and sexuality are not predictable even though biologically a male or a female. Gender identities are culturally specific and not universal.

This paper does not claim that one position is right and the other is wrong. This study is not biased to be misunderstood or criticized. The

primary aim is to create general awareness among people on the LGBTQ community, their dilemma and demands. It also aims at enriching the current studies on Queer theory conducted worldwide. In short, to formulate a well-balanced society, it is necessary to accept everyone irrespective of their gender and sexual preferences as well as their shortcomings as right to live is basic to all.

### Works Cited

1. "Author R Raj Rao." Penguin.co.in. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Oct 2018.
2. Nayar, Pramod. K. *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*. New Delhi: Pearson, 2010. Print.
3. Rao, Raj. *The Boyfriend*. Mumbai: Penguin India, 2003. Print.

## **SILENT SCREAM: UNHEARD VOICES OF HIJRAS IN *SEVEN STEPS AROUND THE FIRE* BY MAHESH DATTANI**

**S.Merumesenaka**

*M.Phil. English, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

Literature is the criticism of life –Mathew Arnold

Literature is the artistic body that portrays not only the beauty of the society but also brings out hidden issues affecting the people. It plays a major role for bringing out the favourable changes that affects the people. In the current scenario, one of the sensitive issues is about giving equal rights for the third gender. Though the government has legally approved their community, the people are not ready to acknowledge them and often their struggles remain unrevealed.

The renowned Indian author, Mahesh Dattani, was the only playwright to win the Sakitya Academy Award. He has been lured by the most rampant issue that has eluded attention of society and his critical gaze is flung even on the most freezed out people of society. He is an Indian Director, actor, playwright and a writer. He is credited to the plays such as *Where There Is A Will, Dance Like A Man, Tara, Bravely Fought The Queen, Final Solution, On A Muggy Night In Mumbai, Thirty Days In September, The Murder That Never was* and one among them is *Seven Steps Around The Fire*. The play was broadcasted on BBC Radio 4, on January 9, 1999 as *Seven Circles Around The Fire* and was first performed on stage at Museum Theatre, Chennai, by MTC production and Madras players on August, 1999. The plot revolves around the investigation of the mysterious murder of Kamala, a beautiful eunuch .Uma Rao, is daughter of the Vice-Chancellor and wife of the Superintendent of police Suresh Rao, is a student of sociology, who is researching the life of a eunuch. She goes to police station to question Anarkali, who is a

eunuchand, is imprisoned for the murder of Kamla. Through her questioning Uma develops an understanding between them and the plight of the transgender. Her investigations to find Kamla's real murderer takes her on an unexpected journey.

This paper entitled "Silent Scream: Unheard Voiced Of Hijras in *Seven Steps Around The Fire By Mahesh Dattani*" attempts to analyze the mythical story ofHijras, the sexual classifications, the intolerable affliction, trivial margins and the invisible suffering which is hidden in the transgender society. The purpose of the study is to reveal their position in the society. It also dramatizes the conflicts, anguish, dilemma, insecurities, fears and frustrations of the Hijra that is granted no honourable social space.

The term Hijra, is of Urdu origin, a combination of Hindi, Persian and Arabic, literally meaning 'neither male nor female'. Another fable traces their ancestors to the Ramayana. The legend has it that god Rama was going to cross the river and go to the exile in the forest. All the people in the country have planned to go along him. But God Rama did not want the people to follow him. He said 'Men and women turn back'. Some of his male followers did not know what to do. As they were not supposed to disobey Rama, they sacrificed their masculinity to become neither men nor women and followed him to the forest. Rama was pleased by their devotion and blessed them. They are transsexuals around the world. The Hindu myth accepts their presence and respected their category but whereas they are denied by the society. The people welcome Hijras only for their family ceremonies to get

their blessings and on other occasions they curse and betray them.

Mrs. Uma Rao, a teacher from Bangalore University and wife of the Jail Superintendent, the daughter-in-law of the Deputy Commissioner and daughter of a Vice-Chancellor, has engaged herself to write thesis on Gender based society. She belonged to a reputed family and stands alone to investigate the murder of Kamla. She serves as a model for the women to voice out the struggle of the transgender. Though there was no proof the police charges Anarkali with murder and arrests her. Suresh confesses, "We only arrested her because there was no one else. There is no real proof against her. It could be any one of them" (60).

Anarkali is physically, mentally, verbally and sexually abused in the lock up but no one bothers to help her. As there are no separate prisons for the Hijras she is put in the male cell. The author depicts the chain of injustices that Hijras has to encounter in the society. Deprivation of basic human rights has reached to its zenith when they are addressed as inanimate 'It'. In the play, Munswamy, the police constable, addresses Anarkali with an overstressed 'It'. While Uma addresses Anarkali 'She', Munswamy chuckles satirically repeats the word 'She' as though she has committed a blunder and tries to rectify it by emphasizing 'It'.

As Anarkali herself is fed up with the fake arrest, she refuses to meet Uma at first mistaking her for a Journalist. But Uma is able to win her confidence and assures herself of her release. Uma is in dilemma and decides to quit her research. Her meeting with Anarkali transports her in deep empathy with the community. She decides to visit Champa, the head Hijra and ponders over the nature of Hijra and their isolation.

Champa, lives behind Russel Market in Shivajinagar and is the only person who can bail Anarkali out because nobody else cares. Champa does not have enough money for releasing Anarkali. So that Uma borrows

enough money from his father by uttering a lie to him and helped Hijras from the financial issue on release of Anarkali. Through this incident Hijras marginalized and depressed position in the society is revealed. Kamla marries Subbu in the temple and is burnt alive by the Subbu's father, Sharma. None demands investigation on the murder of Kamla. They feel isolated and humiliated.

The play deploys as the suspicious murder shifts from Anarkali to Champa to Salim to Salim's wife and then finally to Mr. Sharma. The author vividly waves the net of suspense to keep audience on the edges of their seats. The play sets out the social space of hostility faced by them and the vindictive social response that they experience.

I write for milieu, for my time and place-middle class and urban India....My dramatic tension arises from people who aspire to freedom from society... Each of us has a sense of isolation within given contexts. That's what makes us individual (Hindu).

The dilemma that Anarkali faces in the jail is whether to tell the truth or hide it. Supposing if she keeps silent, she will be convicted for Kamla's murder, a crime that she has not committed. But if she speaks out the name of the murderers, she will be surely killed by those influential people. Though she knows the truth, she is unable to reveal the identity of the culprits.

Subbu, the lover of Kamla, suffers from a guilty conscience and the presence of the Hijras at his new marriage party moves him so much that he snatches the gun from Suresh and shoots himself. He pays for the sins of his father. As a Superintendent of Police, Suresh hesitates to arrest the criminal. Instead he supports offenders and tries to hide the truth. The innocent Anarkali weeps secretly on brooding over her insecurities and frustration but whereas the high class people are protected from getting the punishment for their crimes.

Mahesh Dattani is a great craftsman. In this play he used voice-over technique. The dialogues are sharp, crisp and functional. It has special sound effects that are well-designed and are required to glue the attentions of the audience. The play not only portrays the tragedy of Hijras, but also the tragedy of whole political, legal and social system of India. Mahesh Dattani questions the role of the police, politicians and the society as the whole. The play also brushes out the tussle of transgender with no love, no justice, no protections, and no securities which serves as the basic needs for the survival of human beings. Though India is a secular nation, Hijras are still illtreated and

humiliated. Their weepings are invisible to the society.

#### Work Cited

1. Arnold, Mathew. *The Study of Poetry*. Ed. R.H.Super. N.P: U of Michigan Press, 1973. 35. Print.
2. Dattani, Mahesh. *Collected Plays I*. New Delhi: Penquin, 2005. Print.
3. Mortimer, Jeremy. "Unmasking Our Worlds". *The Hindu* 7 July 2005. 3. Print.
4. Hornby, A S. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Ed. Margeret Deuter, Jennifer Bradbery and Joanna Turnbull. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. India: Oxford University Press, 1948. Print.

## THE URGENCY FOR INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM IN INDIA

**D.Raichel Priyadharshuni**

*M.Phil. Scholar, Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore*

*"There always is a plate and other utensils that are kept separately for the maid that comes to clean the house. Nobody eats from it, otherwise."*

This is the common untold truth that exists in all urban cities of India. This practice is so evil and ingrained in our mindsets, that there needs an explanation on why this is wrong. Modern untouchability, is what this phenomenon is called and is based heavily on Casteism. The caste system, by definition according to BBC is "system divides Hindus into four main categories – Brahmins (priests and teachers), Kshatriyas (warriors and rulers), Vaishyas (farmers, traders and merchants), Shudras (laborers) and Dalits (street sweepers and latrine cleaners). Many believe that the groups originated from Brahma, the Hindu God of creation." Even though this practice was wide spread, the justification for this caste system is based on the Manusmriti, a widely regarded, authoritative book on Hindu law. In here, the caste system is just viewed as a basis of order and regularity of society. Even though the practice fails all morality, the caste system sustains with all its sub castes and is around 5000 in number and the hierarchy is rigidly established.

One might wonder the implications of caste in the gender hierarchy. We can't exclude caste as a separate sphere of conversation that cannot be hinged in anyway to the gender hierarchy because then we would be leaving out one of the oldest systematic form of oppression known by mankind. Feminism, in its root is meant to identify a system of oppression and empower the weaker section of the group. Hence it is highly essential that caste, as a system of oppression is taken into account to identify both the benefactors and the one that pay the price of shame. Though many might argue that caste is

an ancient thing of the past that has no implications in the present, it is always the farthest from the truth. To put it in simpler terms for the sake of shortening history, mostly lower caste people have been denied education for 2000 years or more. This means that people in higher positions of power in all sectors of the society still remain to be the benefactors of the caste system.

"Criticism of graph showing Indian Government Job Representation (2012) by Mohan Vanamalai" which clearly shows the disparity in equal opportunities for the lower communities. To put a better picture consider the following statistics from the public sector, 48% of Lok Sabha and 36% of Rajya Sabha are Brahmins, 65% of Supreme Court Justices so far have been Brahmins, 61% of IPS and 72% of IAS officers have been Brahmin so far. In the private sectors where there are no reservations this disparity only worsens. This system of injustice has led to a system where the law becomes inaccessible by a large part of the population who are considered lower than a powerful minority. The National Crimes Statistics states that has been a 19.4% increase in crimes against Dalits. The number of cases registered under the Scheduled Caste (Dalits) and Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis) Prevention of Atrocities act has also systematically raised every year since 2011, but this worsened in 2014 to 47,064 cases from 13,975 cases in 2013. This number has increased exponentially in the years, with the last gory murder of 23-year-old P. Pranay Kumar, who had married high caste women in Telangana. This system of injustice can be extended to all walks of life from land rights to access to basic amenities like water and shelter.

This systematic under representations should by all means be addressed by a wide spread movement like Feminism. Intersectionality in feminism can never be achieved by dismissing something as rampant as the caste system. The plain black and white terms of feminism stating men as oppressors and women as victims cannot hold its roots in a country like India. Intersectionality in all its complexity can be boiled to a rhetorical question, which is, *"Do we want to say that a Brahmin women is as oppressed as Dalit man?"*. The answer goes against the established gender hierarchy that deems men are oppressors.

No matter how deep the caste hierarchy runs down there is always a woman at the end of it burdened with all the abuse from the top. This can be seen in direct evidence from the UN women's report which states that a Dalit woman dies 14 years younger than women from other castes. The main factors include limited or no access to sanitation or clean water and also manual scavenging jobs while education remains a distant dream. They also face the blunt of domestic violence more than any other caste groups. The frustration of working inhumane jobs by Dalit men are taken out on their household women. According to a study in 2015, 86% of all manual scavengers came from Uttar Pradesh.

Eleven Indians have died from manual scavenging just in the month of September, 2018. Manhar Valjibhai Zala, the chairman of the NCSK(National Commission for Safai Karamcharis), revealed that over 123 deaths in sewers since the beginning of 2017 and a total of 612 people had died since 1993. The deaths of these men who are the only earning members of their families push the women and children to exploitative workforce including child labor and prostitution.

A report by IDSAN (International Dalit Solidarity Network) reports over 47% of increase of rape cases from Dalit a woman which is 47% more than the previous year of the

report. According to the National Commission of Human rights of India, more than 62,000 human rights violations of Dalits are recorded annually. If this has to be translated to a daily picture, on average, two Dalits are assaulted every hour, three Dalit women and children are raped, two Dalits are murdered, and at least two Dalits are tortured or burned.

Though the increase in cases the conviction rates are as alarmingly low as 1%. This is due to the positions of power held by the higher caste who see this violence as menial and discard them. Urban cities have been built on the systematic segregation which eliminates the marginalized communities to slums and areas with lesser resources.

This discrimination is not spared even in times of natural calamities like floods or earthquakes where the Dalit population receives lesser amenities than their counterparts.

It is very important to remember that even though a majority of the issues need more time and resources to be solved, issues like manual scavenging should have been solved a long time ago. While India boasts about its success in satellite launches, it is still dismissing innovations and resources that have to be given to solve problems like manual scavenging. There is a need for feminism to take up this mantle and carry the fight forward. Like white feminism which disregards struggles of black women, upper class feminism has taken up more space since the idea of western feminism landed in India. India as a country should definitely appreciate and hear voices of women from various walks of life. This means that there is need to listen to women and marginalized groups who are not seen in the list of famous, achieved or elite in our society. Upper caste feminism has been well known for speaking over backward caste or Dalit women. There is an inherent difference of needs that exist between them. Most upper caste women's demands are on the top tier of maslow's hierarchy whereas the lower caste women are

still asking for basic needs of food and sanitation. The platforms of these highly accomplished upper caste women are heard way too much and often taken as the voice of women in the entire country, which is wrong. The main reason being that it takes away the voice of a community of people who have been mistreated their whole lives and are looking for a way out to lead a respectable life.

By understanding this gender hierarchy, it is crucial for feminism to move ahead addressing the voices of different socio-economic groups. If we were to ignore this and continue with the men versus women narrative of early feminism, the cream of upper caste women will be the only benefactors of this system while the marginalized community is eliminated slowly right under the collective conscious of a nation. This is why there is urgency for intersectional feminism in India because we as a country that suffered under the British regime must be understanding and sympathetic towards the oppression system that has existed before and after the British rule. An

intersectional feminism of this kind would bring up the backward communities but also increase skilled labor, bring in more innovations, increase the talent pool of the entire nation. This awareness needs to be passed on to a generation who think that the only way to eliminate caste is not talking about it. There has to be a generation that studies caste abolishment and feminism closely and work towards it strenuously.

### References

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-35650616>
2. <https://quontrarian.quora.com/Criticism-of-graph-showing-Indian-Government-Job-Representation-2012>
3. <https://notablebrahmins.wordpress.com/2016/01/17/54/>
4. <http://ncsk.nic.in/annual-report>
5. <http://idsn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/IDSN-briefing-note-India-2016.pdf>



## GENDER SENSIBILITY IN STEPHEN KING'S *THE SHINING*

P.Nithya

Ph.D. Scholar, Dr. N.G.P Arts and Science College, Coimbatore

Gender behaviour is the outcome of social processes in a society, rather than the natural differences. From the very beginning of humanity, societies have assigned different roles and modes of behaviour to men and women. It highly depends on the society, culture, location etc. in which one lives. These discriminations based on gender, made men superior in the hierarchy and women were supposed to devote herself to the domestic domain. Women were considered as the weaker sex, both mentally and physically and their identity is determined only in relation with men such as daughter, sister, wife, mother etc. These differences in gender roles imposed by the society denied women's access to the education, experience and other cultural identities which in turn affected their participation in literature as writers, readers, critics and characters.

This paper analyses *The Shining* by Stephen King focusing on the gender roles. He is considered as one of the most successful American horror writers. This novel belong to the genre of Gothic Literature which became popular in the late 18th and 19th centuries in England. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is considered as the first Gothic novel. Gender and social construction of sexuality are considered to be an important element in horror novels. Stephen King's literary productions can be seen as the unintended outcome of the rise of feminism in the 1970's with the author relying on gender issues.

*The Shining* provides an interesting study of gender hierarchy. The plot centers on Jack Torrance, his wife Wendy and their five-year-old son Danny. Jack accepts the job as the winter caretaker of the historic Overlook hotel in the Colorado Mountains. He is a writer and a

recovering alcoholic. He hopes that this job would help him to reconnect with his family and give him the inspiration to write his play. His family accompanies him on the job. When the evil forces in the hotel influence Jack's sanity, it leaves his wife and son in incredible danger.

The hero Jack Torrance and his wife Wendy shows different problems with their own gender. When we focus on the character of Wendy, we can see her both as a strong and weak woman. At first she seems to have a very stereotypical role. Stephen King draws Wendy as a traditional wife and mother. She has a troubled past from her abusive mother. She has a history of violence in her family. Though her mother was not physically abusive, she had extreme narcissist tendencies and was verbally abusive. During the first few years of their marriage, Jack tries to help her come out of her past. But later she realizes that she runs from the arms of one abuser to another one.

Wendy is extremely sensitive to the abuse all around her. She notices the drinking and fighting of the couple that live upstairs of her family in the first chapters of the novel. She clearly knows that her marriage is hanging by a thread and her husband has a history of abusive behaviour. He had a bad temper which could no longer keep under control at present because he was drinking heavily and his writing was going bad. In such a situation, like Jack, she too thought that his job would help them to reconnect with their family. She is working hard to raise Danny and take care of Jack, but all she gets in return is scorn and contempt from Jack. This is seen when Wendy interrupts his writing to see if he wants a sandwich, he harshly repels her away and asserts that they are going to

make a new rule that Wendy can no longer enter the Colorado Longue when he is in it, whether or not he is typing.

Every day Wendy grows more isolated and marginalized. Each and every action she does seems to feed Jack's rage. The harder Wendy tries being submissive, caring and nurturing, the more he resents and belittle her. He asks her in one instance

Have you ever thought, for a single solitary moment, about my responsibilities to my employers? Has it ever occurred to you that I have agreed to look after the Overlook Hotel until May the first. Does it matter to you at all that the owners have placed their complete confidence and trust in me, and that I have signed a letter of agreement, a contract, in which I have accepted that responsibility? Do you have the slightest idea what a moral and ethical principle is? Do you? (289)

Wendy is working hard to raise Danny and to take care of Jack. But all she gets in return is scorn and contempt from him. Here Jack is presented as the epitome of hegemonic masculinity. Wendy is presented as a very feminine and obedient housewife. When the evil forces of the hotel catch hold of Jack's sanity, the role reversal is coming out to visibility. Wendy is taking care of the heating boilers and maintaining communication with the nearby ranger station. She is submissive, but she fights back when needed. Towards the end we can see that it is Wendy who does all the work Jack is paid to do. She feeds them well and make sure that they all are doing good.

Wendy is a protective mother too. She fights back and protects her son from an alcoholic and

abusive father. This makes her a strong, positive character. While she does not have the strength to leave her abusive husband, she stays a s a way to protect her son Danny. Wendy is physically weaker than Jack and is psychologically tormented by him. Only with her inner strength she overcomes all these situations. When she suspects Jack for harming Danny, she is forced to summon her strengths and fight against him. She goes super defensive and finally baseball bats his face and drags him into the pantry and locks him in. Then Wendy takes her son and drives the snow cat back to the town which is thirty miles away at night.

Though she began as a submissive, feminine character, her strength begins to show when she is in the hotel. Thus she redefines her existing gender role and emerges as a new woman. Wendy, while having her weak moments, is overall a strong woman who is determined to get her and her son out of the hotel alive. It is the circumstances and the feel that they are trapped in that place make Wendy challenge those notions which is expected of her as a woman. In the end she is the one who saves the day.

### Works Cited

1. King, Stephen. *The Shining*. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1978. Print.
2. Lang, Pat. *Dissecting Stephen king: From the Gothic to Literary Naturalism*. *The Journal of American Culture*. 29.2 (June 2006):235. Print.
3. [www.gradesaver.com/the-shining/study-guide](http://www.gradesaver.com/the-shining/study-guide).