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A Comparative Study of the Role of Women in New Generation Malayalam Films and Serials

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Abstract

This 21st century is called the era of technology, which witnesses revolutionary developments in every aspect of life. The life style of the 21st century people is very different; their attitude and culture have changed. This change of viewpoint is visible in every field of life including Film and television. Nowadays there are several reality shows capturing the attention of the people. The electronic media influence the mind of people. Different television programs target different categories of people. For example the cartoon programs target kids; the reality shows target youth. The points of view of the directors and audience are changing in the modern era. In earlier time, women had only a decorative role in the films. Their representation was merely for satisfying the needs of men. The roles of women were always under the norms and rules of the patriarchal society. They were most often presented on the screen as sexual objects. Here women were abused twice, first by the male character in the film and second, by the spectators. But now the scenario is different. The viewpoint of the directors as well as the audience has drastically changed. In this era the directors are courageous enough to make films with women as central characters. The stereotype roles of women are not seen in the 21st century films. The movies like 'Kahani' and 'The Dirty Picture' are very good examples for it. Both are absolutely women centered films. However, in the serials, women are still given just stereotype roles. They are often presented as jealous characters and epitomes of sacrifice. The 'Chandhnamazha' one of the popular Malayalam serials is a typical example of it. This paper 'A Comparative Study of the Role of Women in New Generation Malayalam films and serials' focuses on how women are portrayed in those different genres.

Keywords: Women-Centred, Male gaze, Stereotype, Malayalam Film, Television Serials, New Generation.

Mass media has a significant place in the history and in the present scenario. One of the most important features of mass media is their accessibility; they can be accessed easily and can reach a very large audience at a time. Films and television programs are very popular forms of mass media, which come under the broadcasting media. The films and television program have the capacity to capture the attention of the viewers and they can reach to people like a wild fire.

Mass media influences the viewpoint and culture of the audience and at the same time, it changes itself according to the current scenarios or settings. In this digital era, everything is accessible in one touch. A digital gadget can help us reach the vast world of

knowledge. Thus, mass media is becoming a kith and kin to the society due to its acceptability and flexibility.

The mass media and the society are very closely connected and mutually enriching; they are interrelated and interdependent. Media always plays a considerable role in the formation of values, beliefs and life style of the society. Media always moves along the society, they carefully examine the trends and taste of the society. For example, nowadays people are interested to watch reality shows and almost all the channels broadcast a number of reality shows, which target different age groups.

Films are generally considered as culture centered; they powerfully influence the culture and at the same time reflect the cultural changes of a particular time. The movies in the 19th century are poles apart from the 21st century movies; there are differences not only in the technical aspects but also in the perspectives, nature of the scripts, settings and style. The love relationships between the hero and heroines and the members of a family were depicted in a different style in the 19th century movies; gender roles of that time also were entirely different from the modern films. The differences reflect the cultural settings of those times.

The patriarchal norms and rules of the society once influenced the films very much. The roles of women in those times were biased. Devoted and loyal woman dedicated to her husband was considered to be ideal woman. No woman should disobey her parents or husband; she should always perform her womanly duties faithfully. During childhood she should be loyal to her father, after marriage she should be truehearted and loyal to her husband and in old age she should be obedient to her son. Thus, in each stage of her development the role of woman was to live without a soul of her own. Sita from *Ramayana* and Savitri from *Mahabharata* were the two ideal women in those days. The films like 'Sati Savitri' and 'Sati Seeta' are the best examples of that concept in the 19th century films.

Every woman in those days was expected to possess the ideal qualities of Sita and Savitri in their life. If one tried to break them or rebel against those norms and rules then she would be pictured as an immoral woman who lacked womanly virtues. The male chauvinism always wanted her to be inferior throughout her life. The patriarchal Indian society made her stereotype not only at home but also in every aspect of life including films. The role of women was stereotyped in Indian films. She played roles not with soul but with flesh; both the directors and audience wanted her to be a mere epitome of sexual pleasure. Women were appearing on screen as an object to satisfy the sexual hunger of the audience. They did not need a story or dialogues; the only thing they were required to do was to satisfy the lustful heart of men.

Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" introduced a concept called 'Male Gaze.' The 'male gaze' according to her, is the way in which the visual arts and literature depict women from a masculine point of view, presenting women as objects of male pleasure. She argued that in many of the films women are portrayed as an erotic object for the sexual satisfaction of the male characters as well as of the audience. The roles played by Silk Smitha in the films are good examples for that. She had been always on the screen as an erotic object for both the hero and the viewers. The amorous expressions and the style of her talking and dressing were deliberately chosen to satisfy that purpose. Even after her death, she has been still alive only because of her erotic performances in the films.

The 21st century witnesses revolutionary changes not only in the field of Science and technology but also in various other fields. Nowadays, the culture of the society has got a new face. It keeps on changing. The status and the role of women have also undergone a number of changes. The modern society is ready to accept men and women as equal. Many women in recent times are coming to the different mainstreams of life including politics, administration and films. Of late, even films without heroes are being produced. Concisely, the viewpoint of the society is undergoing a drastic change from the past. Recently Indian films try to provide fine platforms for women. The movies like 'Kahaani', 'The Dirty Picture' and 'Mary Kom' are such outstanding movies from bollywood, which delineate the inner strength, hardships and sufferings of women from multiple points of view.

Even in Malayalam films, this radical shift is very evident today. In recent past, there were some films, which came up with woman -centered stories and became successful both aesthetically and commercially. Now the directors are ready to take woman-centered scripts; producers welcome this attitude without any hesitation; the viewers are also ready to accept the changes.

While discussing the status of women in the 21st century Malayalam films, one cannot overlook the groundbreaking movie called 22 Female kottayam. It is a 2012 Malayalam film, directed by Aashiq Abu and starring Rima Kallungal and FahadhFasil as Tessa and Cyril.

The style of the narration and treatment of the women characters in the film are commendable. The story revolves around the central character Tessa, a 22 year old woman from Kottayam. She is working as a nurse in Bangalore with a dream to fly to Canada; she falls in love with Cyril. The character of Cyril was played by Fahadh Fasil, the youth icon of Malayalam Film industry. She loves him with full heart and they start to live together. Tessa completely offers herself to him. But, later the innocent and beautiful flower Tessa is brutally crushed by the boss of her beloved Cyril. Afterwards, she is betrayed and trapped by Cyril by putting some drugs in her bag. Actually, Cyril is a pimp; she unfortunately fall a victim to his well plotted treachery. So she is sent to prison where she meets Zubaida who is sentenced for murder; they bond well with each other. Zubaida moulds her to take revenge on Cyril and his boss. And with the help of another character called DK, she kills the boss by poisoning him with a cobra. Then she comes back to Cochin to strike back on Cyril with a disguised appearance. But her attempts fail. He discovers that the disguised woman is Tessa. The frustrated Cyril starts to beat her, however, his frustration slowly disappears and he begins to enjoy her company. But one night Tessa successfully takes her revenge, she removes his male organ with a surgery. In the midst of intense pain, he admits that his love was pure and true but it was overshadowed by his male supremacy concept and greed for wealth. In this story, we see a drastic transformation of a fragile woman to a strong and bold character. These kinds of transformation and woman-centered plots could not be imagined in the past.

"How Old Are You" is another well-liked movie directed by Roshan Andrews. The movie is very special in many ways. The most important thing in the movie is the coming back of a lady superstar after 14 years and she is Manju Warriar. She is a born actress and has a good image in the Malayalam film industry.

This film tells about the story of a 36 year-old married woman Nirupama; she is a UD clerk in the revenue Department. The role of her husband is played by KunchakoBoban, one of

the leading stars in the Malayalam film industry. Nirupama was an energetic, enthusiastic and charismatic woman during her youthful days. She was a source of inspiration for others in her college days. But after the marriage everything changes and she begins to live only for her husband and daughter. She even forgets her own soul in the passage of time. Many married women can identify themselves with the character of Nirupama in the film.

Nirupama is a character dominated by a husband, who is a typical representation of a patriarchal society. One day surprisingly she gets an invitation from the president of India, who wants to meet her. Unfortunately Nirupama faints in front of the president. After this incident she becomes a laughing stock of families, workplace and social sites. One day she meets her college mate Susan David, whose role was played by Kanika. That was a turning point in Nirupama's life; her classmate kindles her dreams and reminds her of their golden days in the college. Meanwhile her husband and daughter move to Ireland as he gets a job there. Then, her innovative thoughts on organic farming and her determination get recognition. It gets wide popularity and attention. The transformation of a 36 year old woman starts from that point. At the end of the plot, she gets another invitation from the President, as her concept of bio-farming gets a lot of relevance and popularity. The film ends with a scene in which Nirupama and her family meet the president again. This time she does not faint, instead she remains bold and strong.

Both the films narrated above show how beautifully the role of woman can be portrayed. The heroes are ready to accept the heroines as equal without any hesitation. This was not the case in the past.

However, the role of women in television serials are still stereotyped. The Television serials often depict women as fragile, weak and jealous. Serials do not need a strong script or good characters. The key themes of the majority of the serials are: the torturing of mothers-in law, dowry problem and some illegitimate relationships. These themes degrade the status of women. A good number of serials do not have an end; they start as serials and then become mega serials. Loosely connected plots are the soul of these stuffs.

Chandanamazha is such a type of serial, in which the leading role of Amrita is played by Meghna Vincent. She is a very obedient and fragile character in the story. In each and every episode she will be shedding tears. It does not have any strong plot; the episodes are simply wrapped with sentiments. Even in this century, role of woman in serials is not recovered from the Sita concept.

'Stheedhanam' is the same stereotyped serial. Here the problem is the mother in law; she is always humiliating and torturing the daughter in law. Besides that, the serial includes some illegitimate relationships and family problem too.

In most of the serials the mothers-in law are villainous, and the husband and father are henpecks. These types of serials are making the role of woman weaker. The directors are sure that, even if they do not have a good plot it will not be a problem. The major ingredients of a serial are: one villainous mother in-law, one over acting daughter in law and one henpeck husband and father. For wrapping the dish, some illegitimate relationships, accidents, and some illogical flashbacks are included.

As all know, the media can influence people either positively or negatively. What one sees will be reflected in her/his thoughts and views. Now many women are coming to forefront in all the fields. The society is realizing that they have equal status as men. But the television serials continue to portray women as weak and fragile. This should be changed in accordance with time. It is high time to change the perspective of directors and audience. Let us keep away the glycerin bottles and portray them as strong as they are in reality.

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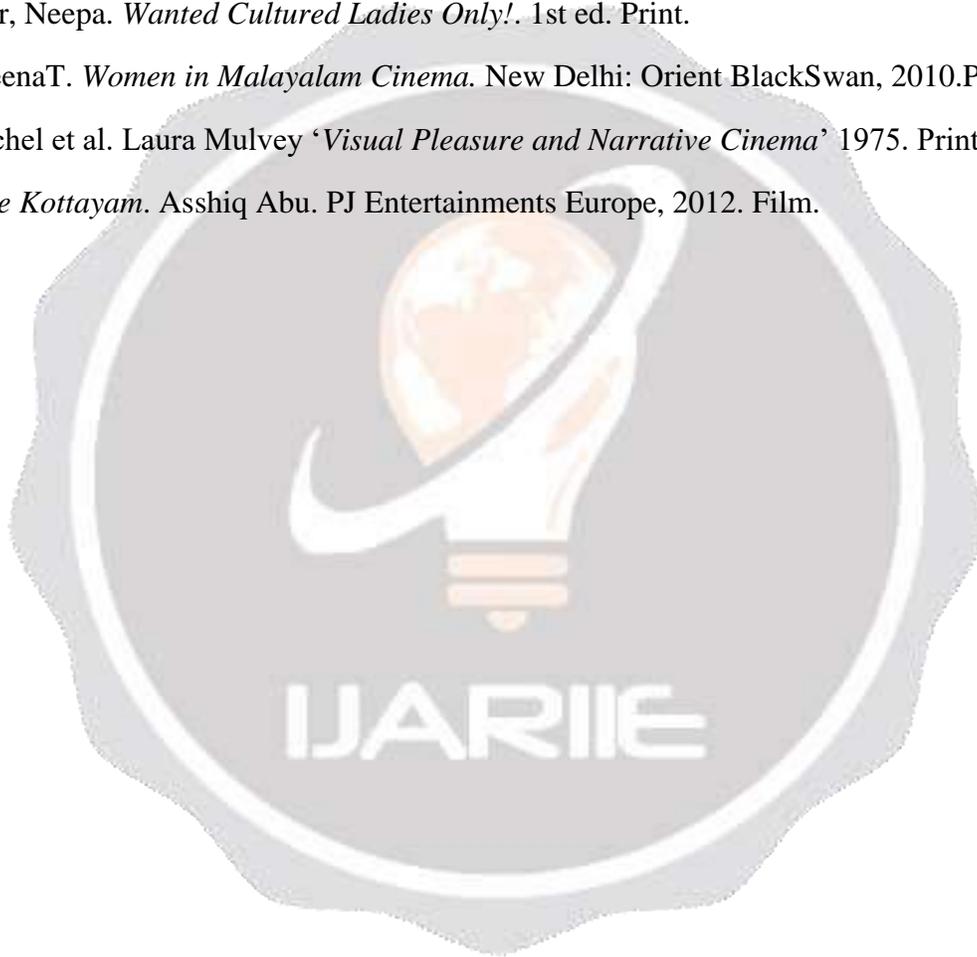
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A Critique on the Female Characters of Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us*

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Abstract

*"To call woman the weaker sex is a libel, it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior"- Qtd. by Kriplani. The place of woman in literature is a reflection of her place in society. In the western society and culture the male is regarded as in the central position and the female a departure. In Indian society and culture the status of women is even worse since women are dependent on men for almost all their needs. They become victims of male deceit, male lust and economic necessity. Today the Indian writers are projecting the image of a 'new woman', who is trying to find new horizons of self-esteem and liberation through their writings. Nayantara Sahgal is one of the best socio-political novelists today. She has tremendous grasp on the changing political scenario since the beginning of the Gandhian era. Her concept on feminism is enlightening and thought provoking. She castigates those who regard women as 'property' and discourage individuality in them. This paper offers an insight into three female characters taken from *Rich Like Us* a novel by Sahgal, which won Sinclair Prize and Sahitya Academy Award. The marginalized condition of women is depicted through the characters of Rose, Mona and Sonali, who are sidelined in the game of power. Through these characters Sahgal has presented the new woman who is urban, educated and professional. And this paper tries to show how the author has sought the transformation and reformation of Indian society through the freedom of women.*

Nayantara Sahgal, daughter of Vijayalakshmi Pandit and niece of Jawaharlal Nehru, is undoubtedly a prominent Indian English writer and a reputable political columnist. Though she has been hailed chiefly as a political novelist, her feminist anxiety is quite evident and her fighter spirit quite vocal in her fiction. Sahgal's concern for women, however, is that of a humanist more than it is of a feminist. This accounts for her holistic vision. She holds a truly Indian approach to the issue and adds a new dimension to feminist philosophy without joining the fighter band. Indian women, who are victims of Indian Patriarchal society, struggle to come out as liberated beings and those experiences are portrayed in the works of the author. When the works of Sahgal is scrutinised, her women characters can be classified into two categories. The first group consists of women who are happy in the confines of Hindu orthodoxy, and the other of those with a strong sense of individuality and an analytical mind but shuttling between traditional and modern values.

"He is the subject, he is the Absolute, she is the other"- De Beauvoir.

Sahgal condemns the idea of woman being treated as a dependent, weak and uncountable person in the society. She opines that in India women are not always taken into confidence by their men. Men take decision first and then impose it on women, who by then, have no choice but to submit to it. This fundamentalist behaviour of man is highly damaging to the concept of women as human being with minds and bodies of their own. Her opinion exposed in “Meet the Author” programme of the Sahitya Akademi clearly justifies her creative position,

My on- going theme would probably be freedom. Then I have another which could be called ‘the virtuous woman’ by which I mean that in every novel the heroine has moved one step further away from the stereotype of the virtuous woman into a new definition of virtue. . . . Traditional virtue lies in staying put, suffering. The new woman does the opposite. No more sati, she is determined to live and to live in self-respect. Her virtues are courage, which is a willingness to risk the unknown and to face the consequences.

Rich Like Us takes its title from a brief meeting at the beginning of the novel that Dev with a businessman named Mr. Neuman, who insists that if the poor of India would “do like we do, they’d be rich like us”. And this particular thought is persisting throughout the whole novel. This issue affects both protagonists, as Rose continues to question the tactics of her stepson Dev and Sonali sees first-hand the lavishness of the ruling party. Wealth is certainly not portrayed as the way to happiness in the novel, as the elite main characters seem trapped in a web of corruption, power and money from which they both stem. *Rich Like Us* is a phrase introduced as a question, and continuing as such throughout the novel.

The setting of the novel is New Delhi, one month after the declaration of emergency by Indira Gandhi. The novel opens into a room with total anonymity where there are many people flitting and discussing emergency as boon for their illegal entrepreneurship. The nameless host continues effusively before his foreign guest that there is no opposition to their planning and business as power is centred on bureaucrats.

The novel dedicated to the Indo- British experience is retrieval and a restatement of India’s past. Set in a period during emergency the novel reflects the struggle of India in the play of power through three characters Rose, a cockney memsahib and Sonali, a western educated, liberated and independent IAS officer, Mona, an orthodox Indian wife. Though the first two are new women aware of their social and cultural milieu, they suffer oppression in the male chauvinistic world.

Ram L. Surya, his English wife Rose, his Indian wife Mona, Sonali, the I.A.S. officer- the narrator are the principal characters while the Prime Minister and her staff appear large in the background since the declaration of Emergency. Sonali, I.A.S., Joint- secretary in the Union Ministry of Industry in New Delhi, gets demoted and transferred to U.P. because of her honest adherence to the Government’s declared Industrial policy in rejecting a multinational company’s application for a licence to produce a fizzy drink called Happyola.

The emergency has given all kinds of new twists nothing so much as one of the two bit dictatorship we had loftily looked down upon. Sonali is replaced by her former class fellow and present colleague Ravi Kachru. She calls the appalling images of the victim of the Emergency

barring herself and reminds herself of the philosopher's statement that "a coward is defined by the deed he has done". She resigns from the service rather than to be cowed does by a hypocritical government. Marcella Carlyle asks Sonali to write about the history of Moghal miniatures and art for Brain's project.

Eventually Rose feels very tough to cope up with the Indian traditions. And she is absolutely disappointed by the presence of Mona, Ram's first wife. She longs to have a company but fails to attain it till the end of her life. She finds herself sidelined and isolated when Ram leaves her and falls in love with another woman Marcella.

Even the minor character Mona strongly symbolizes a typical Indian orthodox woman in this novel. Even though she knows that Rose is Ram's second wife, she accepts the presence of Rose in her house without alternative. After some time only she makes a good relationship with Rose, and consults her to search for a daughter -in- law to her son. While dying of cancer she asks Rose to take care of her son and daughter- in-law. But she was killed and thrown into a well at the end of the novel.

Humanity is male and man defines woman not in itself but as relative to him, she is not regarded as an autonomous being- De Beauvoir (xviii).

Sonali, an educated and liberated woman, faces the brunt of demotion when ordered to serve at a lower rank in her state. She is replaced by Ravi Kachru who was her childhood friend. Both are foreign educated and illuminated persons having different perspectives about life. The polarities of their views are reflected in the way they react to the existing circumstances. While Ravi manages to be on the right side of the power keeping all the controversies at bay, Sonali rejects the proposal for the setting up of cold drink factory and displease the higher authorities. She refused to get bribe for approving licence of the plant of Happyola, an aerated drink. And thus her job gets into peril. She was demoted and ordered to serve at lower rank. But she refused. She has imbibed Gandhian values of non-violence from her father.

The thing women must do to rise to power is to redefine their femininity. Once, power was considered a masculine attribute. In fact, power has no sex- Katharine Graham

Sonali Ranade "is a fine Indian specimen of the new woman" (Choubey 37) is one of the bold and self-assertive protagonists of Sahgal. She is a young Indian civil servant who denies to being a strutting puppet in the hands of the senior officers. Possessing a towering figure and imbued with optimism, courage and indomitable spirit, she has achieved her years of wisdom with the inclination to fulfil, "a new tradition to create our own independent worth to prove" (22). She is not ready to compromise her ideals for anything or anybody. The compromises which are demanded in her job are coming on the way of her ideals; ideals with which she absorbed the fresh air in the atmosphere have become the necessity for her as breath for all living beings.

Though she falls upon the thorns of existing system, is not ready to surrender or bow before the powerful brigade of corrupt people. As the representative force of new women, she is

not only mentally, intellectually and economically liberated but also capable of facing the challenges of life with a great zeal and zest. Moreover without getting bemused she is ready to encounter with all sorts of forces which inflict innumerable torments and subjugate a woman. As a matter of fact she, consequently, comes out as a rebel who oppugns the prevailing system and unfurls her ardent desire for freedom unlike Ravi in his passivity regarding freedom, she opines about him: "He had never fought a battle for freedom. . . . He had no idea what the simplest subjugation were all about" (123-124).

Sonali is refreshingly aware of marginalization of women in this patriarchal society. As a girl she often recollects the words of her father, "Sonali, people like you, especially women like you are going to Indianize India" (22). According to the guidance of her father she lived a life of honesty, invincible spirit and great ideals.

Rose is an English woman, but through this character the author shows that it is not a matter wherever the women are they have the fate to follow men in one or the other situation. She is woman who suffers by the oppression and male dominated society. In the beginning of the novel she was seduced by Ram, especially fell for his magnetic eyes. She came to know about his first wife Mona and new born son Dev but bound with the strong feelings of love for Ram, Rose willingly leaves her country and parents and comes to India. In India she feels herself alienated in a foreign culture and in the house which neither welcomes her nor needs her. In India she feels herself wronged, this feeling expressed through the lines of,

She finds herself in a sari she could hardly keep on, her legs cramped under her pins and needles torturing her feet, the fire into which the priest stopped his nasal chanting to throw bits of this and that stinging face, her ears filled with foreign talk she couldn't understand, and finally, when she was almost hysterical with fatigue, wifehood (44).

Rose can leave Ram and return to England, but she did not want to go home and accepted her marriage to Ram for better or for worse. Ram believes in old Indian values of joint family system and makes Rose and Mona live in the same house though Rose lives on the upper floor and Mona on the ground floor. The presence of Mona and her son Dev makes Rose to feel a kind of insecurity and she thinks that until she get a baby of Ram she is not belong to that house.

Without a child of her own, Rose would never be mistress of the house, not even her half of it. She would pass through this family, this frightening, unshakable permanence, leaving not the imprint of her own on it. She was less than mist. There wouldn't be a trace left of her dreams or her nightmares, no one to regret her going, not a tear to mark her passage, while Mona's son grew and Mona's war trickled down to become a Hindu- Muslim riot in the kitchen where the Muslim cook for English food and Hindu cook for Indian food became embattled belligerents over wood and coal, oil, rice, tea, sugar and chains of command. (76)

According to the critics, the war between Rose and Mona is the reflection of India's trouble and turmoil that India went through during Quit India Movement and Partition. She finds herself isolated when Ram falls in love with another woman Marcella and left her. She is sleepless, and spends nights thinking that women are destined to suffer in the hands of men. She bears this suffering and pain almost for five years and realizes that it is the kind of justice for the

wrong she has done to Mona. When Ram paralyzed, she shocked to find that Dev is forging Ram's money. Ram does nothing for the future of Rose. She discusses this problem with Sonali with whom she shares her mental and emotional stuffs. But before Sonali could do something Rose is murdered and her body is dumped into the well. This is the plight of Rose. She is sacrificed on the altar of power.

Sahgal in her essay, 'Women: Persons or Possessions', insists that When I heard someone remark, "We never allow our daughter to go out" or "I can't do that, my husband would not like it", it sounded a very peculiar, alien jargon. As if, I thought, women were property, not persons. (Qtd. by Dass 220)

Some significant boundaries are prevailing in the condition of women is perceived in India. And Mona is such a kind of woman who never dares to question the mistakes of her husband. Though she doesn't like Rose she could not tell it to her husband and adjusts to live with the conditions put forth by her husband. She is portrayed as a victim of bigamy which is a prevailing issue during that time. She represents the middle class orthodox woman who never tries to live for their own self. Even though she knows that Rose is a person who usurped the marital life of Mona, she creates a friendly relationship with her. Even she hands over her son Dev in the custody of Rose. Thus Mona is a woman who tries to live for her husband, son, and society absolutely not for themselves.

As a feminist discourse, Sahgal's novels show the dilemma its women characters face at various points in their life. Rose's coming to India and getting married to Ram shows that it was her individual act of choice. Had Rose been mature enough to understand the status of a second wife, that too in an alien culture she wouldn't have taken this drastic measure. She suffers due to nonchalant attitude of Ram. Ram justifies the deed of him by telling the myths of Krishna and Draupadi.

Through Rose and Sonali, Sahgal has presented the new woman who is urban, educated and professional. Such a woman is self-respecting, dignified and capable to handle critical situation without any assistance from men. She can fashion her life in her style without making any compromise. Sahgal depicts her women characters with a lot of passion who are suffering due to sexual bias in a male dominated society. They forced to revolt against the conventional security of marriage. They are mistresses of indomitable spirit.

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A Postcolonial Feminist Reading of Bapsi Sidhwa's *An American*

Brat and Water: A Novel

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Abstract

The paper highlights the dismantling of the stereotypical feminine roles, giving way to self-assertion, quest for identity and the trauma of widowhood as envisaged in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa. Sidhwa's An American Brat and Water: A Novel is taken up for study. This novelist hails from Pakistan and is now a resident in the United States of America. Like other women writer's she articulates her feministic ideologies through her fiction. An American Brat unfolds the story of how Feroza, a sixteen year old Pakistani girl gains independence and starts asserting her identity once she is in the US. The novel chronicles the dilemma of the protagonist as she tries to construct her individuality as a migrant, moving away from the "so-called" conservative traditional constrains of her society. Diasporic in appeal, An American Brat delineates the subject of cultural shock young academics have to contend with when they choose to study abroad. Whereas in Water: A Novel, the patriarchy's fetishizing attitude towards culture and religion to establish its hegemonic control over the female body, their subjectivities and lives are analyzed. It illustrates the shackles of women and marriage, and women and widowhood, with the male desire controlling female sexuality. The novel depicts the predicament of an eight year old girl Chuyia, a widow, who is forced to stay in the Hindu ashram for widows to spend the rest of her life in renunciation. The ashram encompasses the withered life of women, subjected to deprivation and silence. To support the ashram they are forced into prostitution as well. Both the novels of Sidhwa expose the dilemma of women to construct an identity of their own amidst the marginalization and cultural patriarchy. Through her fiction, Sidhwa disseminates emancipation and empowerment of women from their subaltern existence and their double conscious identity.

Postcolonial feminism or Third World feminism came as a felt need for "new alliances" that would seek attention to the experiences of the non-white, non-Western women in the postcolonial era. It draws its insight from black feminism, emphasizing on centrality of race and ethnicity. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, a pioneering figure in postcolonial feminism remarked that "the entire feminist discourse about Third World Women' homogenized women from Asia, Africa and South America into single, coherent category. This, argued Mohanty, was the

homogenization of the rest of the world's women as 'one' woman that stands in contrast to the white woman" (Pramod K Nayar 113).

Bapsi Sidhwa, Pakistan's leading diasporic writer, gains prominence in this context. Being a Parsi born Pakistani-American, she reflects in her works the dilemma of the Parsi's through the portrayal of Pakistani sensibility. As a representative of postcolonial literature, Sidhwa articulates the trauma of partition, the pain and sufferings of women, and of the abuses against them during that period. Her works also delve deep into issues concerning identity crisis in colonial India and of Pakistan. Sidhwa's novels highlight the question of dislocation, about her personal experience in the Indian Subcontinent's Partition and of immigration to the US.

An American Brat, the fourth novel of Sidhwa chronicles the immigration of a sixteen year old Feroza, a Pakistani Parsi girl to the US. Her identity is caught among three cultures- her own Parsi culture, the Islamic culture and the Western culture. The novel is partly set in Pakistan and partly in the USA. The growth of Islamic fundamentalism in Pakistan and the insecurity the Parsi's confront forms the backdrop of the work. The protagonist's mother Zareen Ginwalla feels threatened by the encroachment of the Muslim Government and thinks that Feroza should be saved from such an influence. The influence of the Muslim Government is so high that Feroza's attitude to everything becomes more conservative. She even objects her mother for wearing sleeveless sari-blouse. Zareen tells her husband:

I went to bring Feroza from school today. I was chatting with Mother Superior on the veranda- she was out enjoying the sun- and I had removed my cardigan. Feroza pretended she didn't know me. In the car, she said: "Mummy, please don't come to school dressed like that". She objected to my sleeveless sari-blouse! Really, this narrow-minded attitude totuted by General Zia is infecting her, too. I told her: "Look, we're Parsi, everybody knows we dress differently". When I was her age, I wore frocks and cycled to Kinnaird College. And that was in 59 and 60- fifteen years after Partition! Can she wear frocks? No. Women mustn't show their legs, women shouldn't dress like this, and women shouldn't act like that. Girls mustn't play hockey or sing or dance! If everything corrupts their pious little minds so easily, then the *mullahs* should wear *burqas* and stay within the four walls of their houses! (10-11)

Sidhwa is critical of the priggish and puritanical politics of Pakistan which belittles and downgrade women in Pakistan. She comments:

In Pakistan, politics concerned everyone- from the street sweeper to the business tycoon-because it personally affected everyone, particularly women, determining how they should dress...how they should conduct themselves even within the four walls of their homes (171).

The un-Parsi like orthodoxy adopted by Feroza alarms her parents. The extreme conservatism spreading in Pakistan determines the predicament and the status of women at home and in the society. Born in a Parsi family and exposed to such a claustrophobic atmosphere instills her with the indoctrinated political and religious beliefs of Islam. This makes her parents decide to send her to US to spend summer holidays with her brother Manek, a graduate student at MIT. They think that "travel will broaden her outlook, get this puritanical rubbish out of her head" (14). Zareen's effort to send Feroza to USA can be viewed as an attempt to liberate her daughter from the constraints of patriarchy and from further influence of the fundamentalists.

Sidhwa enunciates protest through Zareen, against the limitations imposed on women and to emancipate them from the confines of their domestic dwellings.

Feroza's joy knows no bounds after her trip to USA is finalized. She repeatedly says: "I'm going to America, I'm going to America. To the land of glossy magazines, of 'Bewitched' and Star Trek', of rock-stars and jeans" (27). But soon her happiness fades when she is subjected to inhuman treatment by the custom officials in America. There is confusion regarding her name in the passport, which left her in a dilemma. She feels displaced and uprooted in the American soil. Her sense of self erodes and swings from "conservative milieu of Lahore to the exhilarating 'surreal world' of New York" (Deshmukh 51). There is an influx of questions from the custom officials as how long will she stay? Will she stay in US? How old is her uncle? etc troubles her. She could not give satisfactory answers. Feroza then undergoes a second inspection which infuriates her and she shouts at the customs officer. As soon as she saw Manek she feels relieved. When she approaches him a lady officer stops her and asked her passport: "Hey, you can't leave the terminal. Your passport, please" (59). In fact, Feroza's nervousness causes more troubles. In spite of her ignorance that foreign students are not allowed to work, she blindly reveals that Manek does other two jobs to support himself. When asked about this to him, he somehow managed to convince them by saying that he works for the university which is permitted there. Again the custom officer rebukes Feroza for lying and says that Manek is her fiancé. She is astonished by such charges and starts crying. The officials investigated everything in her bag including the shoes, the toiletries, the underwear and a sanitary pad. Feroza could not stand the humiliation and loses her patience. She yells: "To hell with you and your damn country. I'll go back!" (64). At this juncture, Feroza's instability in a strange land amidst strange people defines her expatriate self. Sidhwa deliberately makes Feroza suffer at the hands of the immigration officials to show her the unrealistic realities of a Third world or a New World to which she is exposed for the first time in life. In an interview Bapsi Sidhwa remarks that, "the book delves with the subject of the 'culture shock' young people from the subcontinent have to contend with when they choose to study abroad. It also delineates the clashes the divergent cultures generate between the families 'back home' and their transformed and transgressing progeny bravely groping their way in the New World" (*The Nation* 19). As Homi Bhabha puts it: "The problem is not simply the 'selfhood' of the nation as opposed to the 'otherness' of other nations. We are confronted with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population" (Bhabha 98). The "third space" to which Feroza is exposed, manifests a change in her outlook, giving birth to new subjectivities and perspectives. It is, in fact, Feroza's Parsi ethnicity that helped her to adjust with the challenges and traumas of the New World. As V.L.V.N Narendrakumar observes: "Some writers, like Bapsi Sidhwa, are unaffected by expatriation. They remain rooted to the psyche of native land. In the twentieth century, the creative epicenter shifted from the center to the margins. The Post-colonial writers are, in the words of Rushdie, 'Writing back to the center'" (Narendrakumar 9).

Sidhwa presents both the charm and ugliness of USA. The protagonist's unpleasant experiences in the New World foreground a sense of alienation in her. While walking on the Eighth Avenue the small dark video parlours interspersed by pawn shops shocks her. Feroza even confronts a sex maniac at the YMCA bathroom. While she is using the facilities at the bathroom she stands perplexed by the staring eyes of a man in the bathroom mirror. He is examining her not as a woman but as an object for voyeuristic pleasure and as a specimen for the male gaze. The man says: "How ya doin' baby? Ya wanna poke? (70). She tries to escape from

that man but another blocks her way. Somehow she defends and escapes from their lewd talks and actions. She is even denied the freedom in a private space.

Manek also shows her the disfigured and hideous face of the American society. He draws her attention to “the lookouts, runners, drug dealers, elegant transvestites, male prostitutes and hubs of poverty” (80). Feroza is shocked to see the port Authority bus terminal with “homeless and discarded people” who are “spreading scores of flattened cardboard boxes to sleep on in the bus terminal” (80). Such a picture of America is hard to accept as she herself witnessed these sights in her rural Lahore.

The smells disturbed her psyche; it seemed to her they personified the callous heart of the rich country that allowed such savage neglect to occur. The fetid smell made her want to throw up. She ran out of the building, and, leaning against the wall of the terminal, began to retch. (81)

These instances prove her that “America is not all Saks and Skyscrapers” (81). Almost all the horrifying experiences of an immigrant are shared by Feroza in *An American Brat*. The unscrupulous treatment meted out to her by a seemingly sympathetic soul put her in great trouble. As suggested by that strange lady Feroza takes the elevator that goes to the fifteenth floor but to her shock she finds herself in a different world. She is trapped in that elevator. With anguish and fear she starts bashing and crying out loud. A Japanese man saves her and scolds her for being foolish. “Never do that...never! You could be murdered. No one would know. All kind of shitty people...drugs!... Who is this woman? Show her to me! Right now you could be raped! You must have your head examined.... You’re not a baby. You got business in New York if got no sense” (94).

Feroza’s three months stay in US ended up in a four year study and becomes an “American brat”. The New World changed her from a fundamental conservatist to a self-assertive young lady. Manek’s words, “you will love New York” (66) proves to be true. She acts and talks like an American. She learns to drink, drive, dance and even use the American slang. Gradually she accepts the American culture and embraces it. Her “in-between” status is being eroded by her assimilation with the American culture. The life in America induces in Feroza a sense of freedom and emancipation. Against the doctrines of her Parsi community Feroza decides to marry a young American Jew David Press. The image of a liberated ‘New Woman’ who asserts her individuality and independence can be witnessed in Feroza. Even her American education changed not only her perspective, but also of Jo, her roommate.

Zareen objects to Feroza’s marriage with a non-Parsi. She tries to convince her daughter by saying that,

You are robbing us of a dimension of joy we have a right to expect. What will you bring to the family if you marry this David? His family won’t get involved with ours. But that doesn’t matter so much... What matters is your life-it will be so dry. Just husband, wife and may be a child rattling like loose stones in this huge America! (278)

Zareen even goes to America to foil their decision to get married. She finds David a perfect match for her daughter but such marriages were forbidden by their community. She even questions the gender bias in her Parsi community thus:

How unfair it was that while a Parsee man who married a 'non' could keep up his faith and bring up his children as Zoroastrian, a Parsee woman could not. And it did not make sense that the 'non' was not permitted to become Zoroastrian, one could hardly expect their children to practice a faith denied to their mother. (287)

The community welcomes Westernized education for Parsi women but they deny any kind of self-assertion and independence. The lives of the Parsi girls are confined to remarks like "You'll reign like a queen in your husband's house. You can do as you wish once you're married" (219).

Feroza goes back to Lahore to spend her winter holidays. Everything has changed in Lahore. Secularism gave way to Islamic foundation. Amidst all the changes in her native land she feels as a misfit. She takes refuge in her ethnicity but of no use. She decides not to return to her home anymore but to live in America. Though she feels rootless and displaced, "it was shared by thousands of newcomers like herself" (312). The protagonists Feroza and Zareen are not prisoners of their ethnicity; instead they try to challenge the doctrines of their community. "Sidhwa's ethno-religious discourse is thus what Homi Bhabha has called 'the social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective'" (Deshmukh 67).

"She (woman) is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute-she is the other" (Beavoir XVI). This concept of "otherness" is predominant in Sidhwa's *Water: A Novel*. Though it is presented in Pre-Independence era, it has traces of postcolonial feminism especially, the aspects of ethnicity, race, dislocation and their lived experiences.

Water (2006) throws light into the hypocrisy of the society which considers widows as an object of contempt and at the same time they are puppets in the hands of the upper class. The upper caste men make use of the socially neglected ostracized widows to satiate their physical hunger. Sidhwa exposed in the novel the nasty degraded life of the widows in an ashram in Benaras. Their silent cries and gratification for wholeness and independence is portrayed through characters of Shakuntala and Chuyia. The novel begins with the marriage of Chuyia, an eight year old child to a man few years younger than her father. It is obvious that such an ill-match is what the traditional structure of the society call for. In the course of the time the death of Chuyia's husband leads to her ostracisation from home. She is forced to stay in the Hindu ashram for widows to spend the rest of her life in renunciation. At the tender age of eight, Chuyia is victimized by the social constrains of marriage. She is dressed up in a white coarse sari, her head is shaven and her bangles are smashed. "The smashing of bangles was the first of many rituals designed to mark Chuyia's descent into widowhood" (33).

Sidhwa presents the helpless Chuyia clad in a white sari and exhibited in front of the mourners before her entry in to the ashram. "She had dressed up for all to see and glorified in their attention as the mildly shocked mourners turned to stare sympathetically at the comely little widow" (34). The death of her husband metaphorically marks her own death. She is being confined within the four walls of the dilapidated ashram, without any connection with the outside world. Her innocence and charm are ceased within the white sari.

Once a widow, a woman was deprived of her useful function in society-that of reproducing and fulfilling her duties to her husband. She ceased to exist as a person; she was no longer either

daughter or daughter-in-law. There was no place for her in the community, and she was viewed as a threat to society. A woman's sexuality and fertility, which was so valuable to her husband in his lifetime, was converted upon his death into a potential danger to the morality of the community. (32)

She soon overcomes her sense of dislocation as she befriends the other women in the ashram. Her childish talks and activities bring a new life in the inhabitants of the ashram. Through Chuyia Sidhwa evokes the desires and yearnings of women who are eschewed from the society for a life time.

The only character who silently seeks for completeness is Shakuntala. Her motherly affection for Chuyia reveals her intense desire to mother a child and thus attains wholeness. Kalyani also relives her youth after she befriends Chuyia. The fourteen inhabitants of the ashram are victims of cruel, unthinking tradition. Madhumati rules the ashram. The ashram has many internal politics within. "In characterizing Madhumati, Sidhwa has drawn the inhuman and torturous side of the patriarchal practices which has made a woman its puppet" (Chakraverty 86). The widows are expected to lead a life of celibacy after the death of their husbands. They are the symbols of purity and chastity but they are driven into prostitution to support the ashram. "We must live in purity, to die in purity, said Madhumati disregarding the hypocrisy in preaching this to a young woman forced into prostitution against her will" (144). Kalyani is forced into prostitution at an early age, by taking her across the water to the customers. Her acquaintance with Chuyia again allows her to dream of a life with Narayan, a Gandhian idealist. Their relationship defies the "so-called" traditional norms and of the "sacredness" associated with widowhood. She even agrees to go away with him. But Chuyia accidentally discloses this to Madhumati and she locks her up. Shakuntala unlocks her door and lets her go to Narayan. Kalyani's dream of a married life is again thwarted when she comes to know about Narayan's father who has fulfilled his sexual desire on her. Narayan remains constant in his love for Kalyani. Sidhwa here portrays the differentiated perspectives of two generations- when Narayan's father stands for a society which is responsible for the degradation of woman, Narayan stands to protect woman from the dirty clutches of widowhood. The novel ends with Kalyani's death. "Kalyani knew she had no choice; there was only one avenue to open her. Caste out in the streets she would die but to live without Narayan and return to a life of forced prostitution would be a worse kind of death" (177).

The bleak part of the novel reaches when Chuyia is forced to do sex work. Shakuntala saves her from the menace and she is sent with Gandhiji. Sidhwa ends the novel with an optimistic note of the rescue of widows from the ugly practices of Hindu tradition.

In *Water* the patriarchy's fetishizing attitude towards culture and religion to establish its hegemonic control over the female body, their subjectivities and lives are analyzed. It illustrates the shackles of women and marriage, and women and widowhood, with the male desire controlling female sexuality. Whereas in *An American Brat* Feroza is the representative of the postcolonial Parsi who has to confront both the pressures of religious fundamentalism and the orthodox patriarchy of her ethnic group. Both the novels of Sidhwa expose the dilemma of women to construct an identity of their own amidst the marginalization and cultural patriarchy. Through her fiction, Sidhwa disseminates emancipation and empowerment of women from their subaltern existence and their double conscious identity.

A Struggle for Social Rights: A Study with Reference to Nayantara Saghal's Female Protagonists

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Abstract

A definition of Human Rights run as, "...which humans have by the fact of being human, and which are neither created nor can be abrogated by any government. Supported by several international conventions and treaties (such as the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human rights in 1948), these include cultural, economic, and political rights, such as right to life, liberty, education and equality before law, and right of association, belief, free speech, information, religion, movement, and nationality." Self identity and freedom to an individual in social, political and domestic milieu plays a prominent role for every human being. When these rights are tested to be bestowed on an individual, there arises the necessity to fight for conquering those rights. The great Miltonic verse from Paradise Lost assures the value of freedom, when Satan says, "Better to reign in hell than to serve in Heaven." Highlighting the necessity of freedom to an individual, Nayantara Saghal pictures the struggle for social and domestic rights through her female protagonists. In this paper I would like to explore Nayantara Saghal's venture in combating for the social and domestic rights of her women characters, who are the representatives of womanhood in the society. The quest for social and domestic rights is done through Saghal's selected female characters such as: Rashmi in This Time of Morning, Simrit in The Day in Shadow, Anna Hansen in Plans for Departure , Sonali in Rich like us . All her female protagonists express their quest at different phases of their life. In Saghal's fictional world presents the experience of conflict, frustration and a long drawn period of stress, through which characters mature and eventually find a stable identity of their own.

Saghal's entire fictional corpus revolves round the twin themes, first – the political one, second – the lack of communication between people, especially between husband and wife, results in unhappiness. Along with the political theme, she also portrays the modern Indian woman's search for individual freedom and self realization. She delineates both the motifs in a very subtle and intricate manner.

Liberal in outlook, Saghal believes in the "new humanism" and "new morality" according to which woman is not to be taken as "a sex object and glamour girl, fed on fake dreams of perpetual youth, lulled into passive role that requires no individuality," but as man's equal and honoured partner.

Nayantara Saghal gives a vivid and authentic account of an Indian woman's plight in the modern world and her quest for individual freedom and self –realization, that is, the domestic freedom. Women in the novels of Nayantara Saghal question the validity of accepted set of

values and rebel against the existing moral codes and social norms which deny women the oxygen of freedom that nourishes individual self. Nayantara Sahgal's women refuse to be an acquiescent, suffering and sacrificing lot. They are women who are conscious of their emotional needs and hence cry for a change of order that starves them for individual fulfillment. They are women who long for an atmosphere congenial for self expression.

Sahgal's female have the determination to revolt against the oppressions. They have a conscious of themselves and want that they should not be treated merely as female whose duty is to confined to maintain the progeny and to look after the house and perform other household duties, but they demand respect as a life partner on the ground of equality and strive to be recognized as human beings.

Nayantara Sahgal is a liberal feminist who believe in the institution of marriage but they vehemently argue that mutual respect, understanding and co-operation are essential for the success of marriage. Through her narration, she challenges the conventional system that always expects woman to compromise.

The vivacious and outgoing *Rashmi* in this novel the only daughter of Kailas and Mera comes back to her parents, having deserted her discontented husband Dalip, an I.A.S officer, contemplating divorce. Rashmi experiences all the pangs of a divided self, a vital segment of her being clamoring for separation and release from her husband, and the other part still cherishing the savoured moments of togetherness in early years of her marriage. Finally Rashmi resolves to divorce to work and live alone in Delhi. Eventually, an irresistible urge for communication in confidence she moves closely with Neil Berensen, a Norwegian Architect.

Soon Rashmi breaks off her relationship with Neil too, as he fails to satisfy her inmost need for communication. At last she renews her childhood friendship with Rakesh. With a deep longing for communication within her, she asks Rakesh when the train is about to leave, "Rakesh ... Will you write to me? There is much I'd like to share with you." Thus she accepts Rakesh as a true companion.

Rashmi's divorce and her relationship with Neil are not a tasteless parody of transplanted modernity, but an inner need for communication and involvement which remain satisfied.

Nayantara Sahgal's *Plans for Departure* is the story of *Anna Hansen*, a Danish girl. Anna is one of the three major female characters in the novel. She is also the protagonist, a person who wants to taste the essence of life in its magnificent as well as mundane aspects. It is her desire for self-realization that she postpones her marriage to an English diplomat, Nicholas. She wants to understand life and asserts her right to be authentic self.

Anna's involvement with the suffragettes makes her aware of both the courage and dedication needed to bring about political change, and the brutal steps those who enforce patriarchal laws are prepared to employ to prevent protest. It is this awareness which initially prompts her to learn more about Indian demands for independence. Her indomitable independence and her sense of freedom provide a striking contrast to the British imperialism and the suffocating political situation of the 1914.

Moreover, she has come to India for self-realization - the age-old Indian concept of the ideal of life. First, however, Anna must challenge the social conventions of her own society - where "women are not trained for anything except chastity and self-denial." Her resultant behaviour, which is unconventional in India where she is employed as an assistant for Sir Nitin Basu. Anna's self-determination is mirrored in her decision to postpone her wedding to Nicholas. Whatever Anna may have achieved through her personal journey towards emancipation, a sympathetic male character appears to be a necessary adjunct to any equal relationship.

As beloved, mother, and an equal sharer of social rights and responsibilities, the woman is neither a commodity nor a brainless beauty rather than being judged in terms of male norms, "women need to look at themselves ... as the norm itself." Aptly remarks Jasbir Jain. The choice is between woman as a homemaker and woman as a professional. "Only exceptionally talented girls," rightly says Helen Deutsch, "can carry a surplus of intellect without injuring their affective lives"

Sonali in the novel *Rich Like Us* symbolizes Sahgal's philosophy of active intervention in life. Sonali is a conscientious I.A.S. officer working as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Industry in New Delhi. By creating a character like Sonali who is very critical towards established views concerning high caste (Kashmiri, Brahmin) Indian femininity, Sahgal is suggesting new patterns of feminine identity, more attuned to citizenship, professionalism and social responsibility. Sonali is quite different from the stereo type of women found in Indo-English fiction. Her problem is not marital disharmony or male domination. Her problem is how to cope with the hypocrisy, red-tape and corruption that have crept into the Indian Administrative Service? She is intelligent and intellectual independent yet committed to communal good, uncompromisingly conscientious and idealistic.

In the wake of Emergency, as she refuses to interpret rules to the advantage of her political bosses, she is transferred without warning, demoted and punished. A revolt against the authoritarianism of the ruling government which has already been fiery itself into a rage inside her, now becomes an uncontrollable fury and she decides that she can no longer be a party to the widespread conspiracy of silence that is Civil Service.

Sonali sustains moral courage and strength to face up the situation. After her resignation, the thirty eight years older Sonali becomes a central force to articulate and share the novelist's humanistic vision as a woman she can. We look through the unimaginable miseries and terror, let loose on her class by the manifest and unman fest firsts through her closeness with Rose. She feels concerned with Rose's predicament in a so unpleasant situation with her husband lying in coma and the stepson Dev denying her allowance of subsistence to render life a miserable experience.

Simrit in *Rich Like Us* is also a strong new woman in the sense that she dares to come out from the periphery of marriage. She is conscious for her identity and to achieve it she leaves her husband even after seventeen years of her marriage. It is Simrit's hesitant journey towards identity which is the product of that sensitivity of her which has made her a writer.

It is Simrit's rebelliousness, her willingness to change helps her in releasing her from the hold of the past; the old world where she had watched injustice prevail on the basis of gender and class makes way for a new one, where the possibilities of equality and opportunities are promised to all, irrespective of class, caste or gender. Therefore, she accepts divorce to make free from her wealthy business husband and walks out on her husband to carve out her own destiny. She could not compromise her self-respect. She leaves Som and moves else where with her children, learning to cope with things on her own.

Her divorce is her first step towards self-discovery, for she has managed to break out of the enclosure; her next step is her learning to cope with things on her own through reaching out to Raj and fulfilling her own sexuality. Simrit like an aware woman is able to break free of the patriarchal enclosure and come to terms with herself. Her decision to remarry is a sign not of continuing subjugation but of social and sexual emancipation that leads to autonomy and self-hood. Her days "could be entirely hers", and promise unending adventure.

For Simrit, in *The Day in Shadow*, divorce does not bring in freedom but confrontation with all that is orthodox in this man-centered society. Out of this struggle is born a new Simrit a person who makes choice, takes decisions and becomes aware of herself as a person.

Throughout the novels of Nayantara Sahgal, her female protagonists stretch "the air of freedom and freshness" and struggle "to break off the orthodox Indian conventions and moribund tradition." Women of Sahgal's fictional world come out of the shackles of bondage in their struggle to regain their self – abnegated identity. Moreover their freedom is not restricted to the superficial aspects such as in the matters of dress, eating habits, etc. but something deep inside the individuals, deeply rooted humanistic altitude to love, marriage and divorce aspects so central to female world.

Sahgal's women are all on quest for constructive and meaningful relationships with men demanding mutual understanding and involvement. Thus the women portrayals of Sahgal conveys their struggle for social and domestic rights, have faced many problems, conflicts, frustrations and inner stress in their lives through which individuals mature and eventually find a stable identity of their own.

Sahgal's women reaffirm her positive message that women can take steps to transform their own lives, and that with courage and determination they can challenge the codes which constrict them and achieve their social and domestic rights.

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Reclaiming the Boundaries: An Ecofeministic Reading of Ann Eriksson's *Falling from Grace*

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Abstract

Twentieth century gave rise to the environmental movement, being influential in the formation of Ecocriticism. Many ecological philosophies and positions have emerged in modern era, where they offer a range of views on the state of environment and its destruction. Ecofeminism is one such social movement which aroused from the feminist, peace and ecological movements. The sense of superiority is a commonality among the ecological standpoint in environmentalism. Ecofeminism claims that domination of man over woman is similar to human's control of the natural world. This paper tries to analyze the Canadian novel, *Falling from Grace* within the purview of ecofeminism. The theory is of the view that, "Both women and nature have been controlled and manipulated to satisfy masculinist desires, we say; both have been denied autonomous expression and self-determination" (Vance 60). Ann Erickson, the author of the novel brings out the natural world of old-growth forest of Canada and the protagonist Faye Pearson's closeness to the wilderness. Novelist portrays that subjugation of Faye Pearson as a woman and nature is interrelated.

Twentieth century gave rise to the environmental movement, being influential in the formation of Ecocriticism. Many ecological philosophies and positions have emerged in modern era, where they offer a range of views on the state of environment and its destruction. Ecofeminism is one such social movement which aroused from the feminist, peace and ecological movements. The sense of superiority is a commonality among the ecological standpoint in environmentalism. Ecofeminism claims that domination of man over woman is similar to human's control of the natural world. This paper tries to analyze the Canadian novel, *Falling from Grace* within the purview of ecofeminism. The theory is of the view that, "Both women and nature have been controlled and manipulated to satisfy masculinist desires, we say; both have been denied autonomous expression and self-determination" (Vance 60). Ann Erickson, the author of the novel brings out the natural world of old-growth forest of Canada and the protagonist Faye Pearson's closeness to the wilderness. Novelist portrays that subjugation of Faye Pearson as a woman and nature is interrelated.

Falling from Grace (2010) is the story of Faye Pearson, a woman entomologist, conducting research about small insects on tall trees in forests. Ann Erickson, the novelist who is also a biologist is keenly interested in nature which reflects in her works. She has also written novels like *In the Hands of Anubis* (2009), *Decomposing Maggie* (2003), *High Clear Bell of Morning* (2014). In this novel, she describes journey of protagonist Faye Pearson who is

connected with nature through her profession of canopy science, where she climbs highly grown tress of forests. In the beginning of the fiction, Faye utter these words: “This tale is not about me, Faye Pearson-three feet, ten inches tall-little person, dwarf, woman of short stature. This tale is about subjects much smaller and much bigger than I” (Erickson 2). With events plotted around Faye, author tries to bring out the challenges facing her as a woman and also the slow deterioration of nature in the face of modernity. Even though Faye Pearson is physically stunted she loves to be associated with trees from her childhood and in relating with nature she says, “What I seek most is solitude in the company of trees. Connection with another being”(Eriksson 1). Faye takes interests in the minute insects like beetle, mites that resides on the top of old trees like western hemlock, Sitka spruce, Douglas-fir. Ecofeminism believes in spirit and connectedness of every living thing. In a similar way, Faye connects and correlates with nature where she is interested in microscopic organisms.

Faye Pearson recruits Paul as her assistant for climbing trees and entomology research. In the process of selecting new assistant, she is angered; when a man asks her about physical disability despite his respect for her great reputation. Ecofeminist Karen Warren, views that “logic of domination” (qtd Garrad 26) is where androcentric attitude towards woman in subjugation is similar to that of the nature. A normal man views Faye in disdain despite being a scientist and knowledgeable in her field. She searches for an ancient forest to conduct her study, but most of them are under logging. Finally, Faye and Paul settle on Otter Creek Wilderness Park where the activity of logging is prohibited. Mary a woman with her children Rainbow and Cedar comes in search of an activist group, which is against cutting of trees. She queries Faye about their camping in Otter Creek. She hands over the pamphlet where it says:

The caption read: “Save Big Mama and the Ancient Giants.” The inside text described the imminent clear-cutting of the upper valley, a surprise move by the forest company, licensed by the government without public notice. The group called itself the Ancient Forest Coalition (Eriksson 20).

Mary as a woman feels concerned about destroying wilderness and decides to join the group. Despite having two young children, she decides to join the protestation against the logging of the trees. Ann Erickson through Mary, brings out the view that woman are concerned about nature. Ecofeminism consider the activities of corporate companies in degrading the environment as an act similar to that of violence against the feminine. So ecofeminists declare that, “We see the devastation of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns” (Mies 14).

Faye Pearson feels disturbed when she sees the markings of signs to be logged in the trees within her study area. She recalls memory of her mother of being active participant in peace march and anti-nuclear campaign. Grace, Faye’s mother compelled her children to join such movements. Ecofeminism considers western culture as the origin for the dominant attitude inherent in the society. Ecofeminist Val Plumwood, describes this overbearing stance in the following words, “humans are not only distinguished from nature, but opposed to it in the ways that make humans radically alienated from and superior to it” (Garrad 28). Anti-logging campaign began with a large group including Mary trying to stop the destruction of the forest. Meanwhile Faye discovered endangered murrelets on the canopy of the trees in the site and tried to communicate its importance to the forest officials. Grace also joined the campaign to the

surprise of Faye. Eventhough police arrested few of the campaigners; still a large number remained against the activity.

Terry instructed the core group to observe from the side. ‘We’re needed for coordination and insurance.’ ...Billy and four members of his family had drummed as police led, carried, and dragged eighty-six protestors off the road and transported them to the detachment in Duncan. Over a hundred activists were camped in the clear-cut prepared for more of the same tomorrow. (Eriksson 106)

When nobody headed to discovery of the important microorganisms at the tree tops Faye decides to join the protest inspite of the court order to remain away from the logging area. The company with assistant of Police officers tried to remove the campaigners and so furious Faye uttered these words: “I object to the logging of this ancient forest,” I yelled, “and the destruction of the habitat of all living creatures on this land” (Eriksson 119). Finally, everyone in the campaign is arrested including Faye and they go through a legal trail in the court.

Faye Pearson after release from custody goes to University to takes lecture on the forest soil and significance of creatures living in the canopy. She talks about Centinela extinction of ninety species in 1978 in Equador due to agriculture clearing of forest. The same is continuing with logging in forest so she says,

A Centinelian extinction occurs when an ecological island, like the ridge in Equador, is cleared. Species go extinct in a viral instant, including those unknown to science before they are gone...There’s no doubt in my mind that the industrial clear-cut forestry allowed today results in Centinela extinctions for canopy mites on a grand scale (Eriksson 156).

Nature exists for its own purpose. Human beings have interrupted the nature flow and it has resulted in environmental crisis. Ecofeminism also opines the same where it considers nature as exemplary, “But wilderness is more than a land-use designation: it is the part of our environment that is idealized as "perfect nature," as, indeed, the highest or purest form of nature we have” (Vance 62). Faye Pearson though lovable to her family members, she faced challenges as both woman and disabled. Once during her youth, she was called ‘midget’ and strange boys chased her. Paul copulated with Faye thinking her to be Mary and she became pregnant with his child. Her mother encouraged her to raise the baby even after knowing that the child would be a dwarf. Initially Paul feigned ignorance to Faye, but accepted the child and her. Faye hears through anti-logging campaign friends that the Otter Creek is continually being cleared of trees. Faye ushered Paul to visit the site along with her mother and Rainbow. But when they arrived at the wilderness area, heavy downpour started and Paul suddenly drowned inside the flowing water. With the help of two officials the family retreated back. Paul passed away after being unconscious from drowning and Faye gave birth to a girl called Camille. Faye continued to take interest in the decline in the forest ecology due to clear-cutting and pressed for measures through letters to ministries hoping for a change. Novelist, Ann Eriksson shows through life of Faye Pearson that domination on woman and nature are interrelated. Ecofeminism relay that woman and nature are connected so they both suffer the disintegration. So ecofeminist Vandana Shiva claims that,

The fact that women are most adversely affected by environmental problems makes them better qualified as experts on such conditions and therefore places them in a position of epistemological privilege; that is, women have more knowledge about earth systems than men. This means that these women are in a privileged position to aid in creating new practical and intellectual ecological paradigms (Lorentzen 1).

Therefore, the ecofeministic analysis of the Canadian novel *Falling from Grace* indeed shows that nature and women are correlated. Both being subjugated need to alleviate from the decline and reestablish in the society.

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Women at Cross Roads: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives

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Abstract

Shashi Deshpande is a writer who is considered as a representative of women of India. In her writing, she has tried to depict the condition and problems of the women of her society. Her novels can be easily termed as feminists novels because almost all are based on the problems existing in the lives of the women and their response to different situations. Her protagonists are always female and depict contemporary problems and dilemmas. She explores the inner conflict existing in a woman and how she adjusts to the surroundings which are not according to her wishes. She deals with the concept of women in today's middle class Indian society who tries to make fusion of the traditional and the modern. It is within the existing social framework that Deshpande depicts the reality of women lives.

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine – Simone de Beauvoir

Women by nature are not self-seeking and domineering. Oriental women especially are gentle, adjustable, and accommodative and service minded. In her role as daughter, mother and wife the Indian woman in general bothers least about her own comfort and happiness. Indian woman is so conditioned by traditions and customs that she accepts the responsibility of being the custodian of family honour and prestige. Such women who fastidiously observe and follow the social norms and customs can be termed as traditionalists.

Shashi Deshpande is a writer who is considered as a representative of women of India. In her writing, she has tried to depict the condition and problems of the women of her society. Her novels can be easily termed as feminists novels because almost all are based on the problems existing in the lives of the women and their response to different situations. Her protagonists are always female and depict contemporary problems and dilemmas. She explores the inner conflict existing in a woman and how she adjusts to the surroundings which are not according to her wishes. She deals with the concept of women in today's middle class Indian society who tries to make fusion of the traditional and the modern. It is within the existing social framework that Deshpande depicts the reality of women lives.

Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*, a sahitya akademi award winner novel, looks at social history from the perspective of the family. While exploring man-wife relationship in

Indian society, Deshpande in this novel offers an intimate and domestic chronicle of the subtle tyrannies suffered by women and the pain of realizing self-knowledge. It is the story of personal journey, the heroine learns as she undergoes the mental torture and suffering at the hands of her husband.

Though the women in this era are born to be much aware about her rights, liberty to express her ideas, freedom to enjoy finance and the chance to stand for a cause, still she continues the silence. *That Long Silence* is not an imagery story; rather a story that happens in every middle class and educated Indian woman's life. The protagonist Jaya is an educated middle class woman who lives with her husband Mohan and kids Rahul and Rati. She is a typical Indian middle class woman who is confined between realization and restrictions. She remained as a sufferer both in childhood and adulthood. As a young girl her father brought up her as an individual who has the rights in society as well as family irrespective of gender. But her grandmother chided her for inquisitive and witty nature. The grandmother cautions this girl as "a husband is like a sheltering tree" (137), and that "the happiness of your husband and home depends entirely on you" (138). Thus her father's upbringing looks strange in front of a society which hesitates to accept women as an individual.

After graduation Jaya steps into the role of dutiful wife; she finds herself in the midst of domestic tension while knowing about her husband's corrupt practices at office. Due to this the couple moved to a small apartment in Dadar from posh church gate flat. Here, Jaya loses her identity because the couple breaks into silence, which leads to depression and frustration. She is disturbed by the present situation in the family and starts questioning herself, she comes to realize as follows, "The real picture, the real 'you' never emerges. Looking for it is as bewildering as trying to know how you really look. Ten different mirrors show you ten different faces" (1)

From the above context it is clear that Jaya is unhappy with the present situation. She could not enjoy her own self, she feels that she loses her identity and acts according to the wish of society. Finally, she decides to break the silence between them which would result in harmony of family.

Jaya feels as she has no status of her own instead, she acts as someone's daughter, wife and mother. She expresses this view as, "I was born. My father died when I was fifteen. I got married to Mohan. I have two children and I did not let a third to live" (2). Thus the last clause of above line states about an abortion undertaken by Jaya without her husband. She maintains secrecy due to the lack of freedom as a wife.

Up to this point Jaya serves as a dedicated wife and accepts the life of passivity for herself. Her practices are done by her under only one consideration that is what her husband will think of it. Her losing self is revealed in the novel as, "I'm Mohan's wife, I had thought, and cut off the bits of me that had refused to be Mohan's wife" (191).

In her traditional role model, Jaya has upheld the maxim that a husband is like a sheltering tree and she has hardly ever stepped out of his shadow. Gradually she reduces her wants and desires to the bare minimum. Being an ideal wife and mother, she always thinks of the comforts of her family. Her husband also expects these things from her. To her marriage life becomes unbearable and monotonous as it moves in a fixed pattern. She denotes this as, "worse

than anything else had been the boredom of the unchanging pattern, the unending monotony (4). Further, she compares herself to mere travesty of the noble Gandhari who has wrapped her eyes with a piece of cloth in a supportive gesture towards her blind husband, Dhritasashtra, king of Hastinapur.

On the point of practicing the role of traditional wife, Jaya has given up her hobby of writing just because Mohan does not like it. Added, she even turns a blind eye towards her husband's illegal means of earning and corrupt practices.

Jaya has been a short story writer of moderate success. Although Mohan takes pride in the fact of being the husband of a writer he strongly objects to her themes which he suspects to have strong autobiographical overtones. She has been scared of Mohan, so in spite of her best judgment she gives up writing fiction and settles down to write middles to newspaper which pose no problem to anyone. She writes Seeta column for the magazine and comes to believe that everyone likes it. But later on through the self- scrutiny she realizes that Seeta column is a patriarchal construct, as she portrays in the lines as follows, "The means through which I had shut the door, firmly on all those women who invaded my being, screaming for my attention; women . . . I could not write about, because they might resemble Mohan's mother, or aunt, or my mother or aunt. Seeta was safer" (149). Thus, Jaya transforms her interest on the subject of women's suffering which is close to her heart. In accepting the role a traditional housewife she has actually neglected her own self and identity.

The most critical moment comes when Mohan tells her that she is his wife of success alone and not of failure. She begins to laugh without control at this absurd allegation. It is too much for Mohan that someone laughs derisively at his failure and he abruptly leaves home before Jaya could give her explanation, "I didn't mean to laugh, I wasn't laughing at you, I was laughing at everything- marriage, us, this whole absurd exercise we call life. . . " (122). It is this desertion of Mohan leaving Jaya alone leads to her introspection on what went wrong with more than the mere shifting from Churchgate to Dadar flat.

She has the last hope that Mohan might have gone to their Churchgate house and rushes there to find him, but only an empty and stale house receives her. To make matters worse, Rupa and Ashok telephone her that Rahul has been missing. This double jolt brings her ego down to desperate level, she forgets for the time being that she has to become a modern woman with a say of her own, "Smugness fell away from me, not in bits and pieces, but in mammoth, frightening chunks" (174). What she wants now is a serene household with Mohan and their two children, Rahul and Rati. She is thoroughly drenched while returning from Churchgate to Dadar; exhaustion coupled with emotional trauma makes her deliriously sick. It is her neighbour Mukta, who nurses her back to health. Soon Rahul returns and Mohan's telegram informs her that everything is alright. Thus, after days of upheavals, normalcy is going to return to her life with the only difference that now she is determined to break her silence. Thus, the novelist seems to give important message to the readers through the character of Jaya. This is seen through the words of Sarala Palkar in *Breaking the Silence: Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence* as, "women should accept their own responsibility for what they are, see how much they have contributed to their own victimization. . . it is only through self-analysis and self understanding, through vigilance and courage, they can begin to change their lives" (134).

Jaya, in this novel finally decides to come out the cocoon when life becomes intolerable to her. Her stay at the Dadar flat makes her realize that she has really distanced herself from the true inner self and that this distancing is due to her desire to act according to the wishes and patterns of others. So long, she has acted as her father's daughter, as Mohan's wife, and as her children's mother, without realizing that she has a personality too and that she has an independent existence of her own. Hence she firmly resolves to break the icy silence which has plagued her family since long. She wants to get back to her old, happy days by setting the present situation on a right track. Now she decides to ". . . Plug that 'hole in the heart' I will have to speak, to listen; I will have to ease that long silence between us. "(192). This decision may not be so drastic or so startling, but it is of far-reaching significance in the conjugal life of Jaya and Mohan. Clearly, it will break the ice in the relationship of wife and husband. It is to credit of Jaya that she takes the initiative in this matter. Moreover, it promises a happy life of understanding between the two, and if they have learnt the right lesson out of the present imbroglio they will not create such a situation again. Jaya's initiative in breaking 'that long silence' is decidedly a welcome step towards restoring happiness in the family. The novelist thus sends a message to entire humanity about the roots of domestic joy and bliss.

Broadly speaking, Jaya's predicament is caused by lack of communication between the couple. Deshpande visualizes a situation here which is not conducted to a harmonious relationship between man and woman. As a feminist writer, Shashi Deshpande often concentrates on the tortures and sufferings of middle-class Indian women who happen to be educated and sensitive and who are conscious of their legal social and conjugal rights. Deshpande highlights the household conflict between wife and husband which operates at the emotional, intellectual and sexual levels. She is fully aware of the patriarchal set-up of Indian society, and she does not plead for any kind of confrontation or militancy between man and woman. Though *That Long Silence* is cast in the feminist framework, Deshpande does not transgress the limit of Indian socio-cultural reality. As such, the novel is of immense relevance in the present-day socio-cultural context.

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Women at Cross Roads: Multi-Disciplinary Perspectives

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Abstract

American literature is structured by the history of United States of America. During Modernism period, many women writers contributed and influenced the literature of first half of the twentieth century. These writers focused on writing about several problems faced by women. Unfortunately, after initial success, many writers lost their significance and fell into obscurity. During the second wave of American Feminism in 1970s feminist scholars realized the importance of the works of women writers of Modernism period and published once again because they thought that these woman writers' works are worth acknowledgement from readers. One among the writers who lost her place in literature after her death and identified as a pioneer woman dramatist is Susan Glaspell (1876-1948).

*Susan Glaspell, a playwright and a novelist, portrays different features of feminine consciousness and specially a woman's experiences in her plays. Glaspell, in her works explored forms such as realism and expressionism, which are of essential to portraying the psychology of women. Glaspell's description embodies a woman's condition. Through such experiences, the feminine realization grows in a woman. This can be seen in her play *The Verge* (1921). In the present study, the protagonist Claire Archer's struggle to break the existing patterns of tradition in order to get freedom is analyzed to show how the life of Claire Archer changed herself as an ambitious woman and result of her experience.*

Keywords: *Susan Glaspell, Feminism, gender-biased oppression.*

Susan Keating Glaspell (1876-1948), playwright, novelist and an actress, was born in Davenport. Before enrolling at Drake University in 1897, she worked for *The Davenport Morning Republican* and *The Weekly Outlook*. After completing her education, Glaspell joined in *Des Moines Daily News*. Susan Glaspell's area of concentration was to report the legislative issues. From December 1900 to April 1901, Glaspell filed twenty six stories on a murder investigation where a wife was convicted for murdering her abusive husband. She resigned her job and returned to her hometown in 1904. She was associated with local writers and formed Davenport group. In 1909, Glaspell completed writing her first novel, *The Glory of the Conquered*. Glaspell met George Cram Cook and married him in 1913.

Together, Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook formed a non-profit theatre company called "The Provincetown Players", America's first modern theatre company. The couple with other writers had produced ninety plays in eight years. Eugene O' Neill was discovered by Susan

Glaspell who would eventually become an important dramatist of American literature. Glaspell had produced eleven plays, starting from her one-act play, *Trifles* (1916). This play was based on the murder case reported by Glaspell in *Des Moines Daily News*. One of her full-length plays, *The Verge* was a radical feminist play. Glaspell's play, *Allison's House* (1930) won the Pulitzer Prize for drama in the year 1931.

Susan Glaspell died of viral pneumonia in Provincetown on July 28, 1948. Glaspell's strong female protagonist lost their popularity after World War and her novels fall out of print soon after her death. Only during the second wave of American feminism, feminists realized that Glaspell's works were feminist in nature and published once again.

The three act play *The Verge* produced on 1921 in Provincetown Players, New York. The play starts in a greenhouse, dramatizes Claire Archer's alienation from her family. She spends time mostly for her botanical experiments, leaving her family's needs. She does not want to get trapped in familial ties like her sister and other women. But her family does not leave her as she likes and tries to change her by giving advice and psychological treatment. However they try, it is of no use because Claire's strange behavior gets strong. As the play ends, Claire strangles and shoots her lover in order to escape from a man who dominates her. He is the same just like her husband who has similar ideas about a woman's place in the house. Cheryl D. Bohde in *American Women Writers* says as, "The play demonstrates Glaspell's continued pre occupation with restrictive culture." (135)

Claire Archer, who is oppressed by her family wished to break the existing pattern of woman's life and create new life. In order to do so, Claire Archer focuses on creating new breed of plants namely Edge Vine and Breath of Life. She refuses to accommodate herself to old norms that restrict her and struggles to create new forms, new meanings and new reality. Her husband Harry, on the other hand is a conventional man, wants his wife Claire to take care of household chores and the family. Most of the scene takes place in the green house where Claire experiments with the Breath of Life. When Harry Archer and their guest Dick inquire why she is producing a new breed of plant, she tries to explain but cannot express easily in words. Her ideas are beyond the expectation of those men. Claire says the plant will destroy old patterns and gives new life which is none other than Claire's present life. She puts her own life in the growth of plant. She thought when the plant grows and breaks the existing pattern; her life will also change because she believes that she can bring the change.

Harry and Dick doubts whether Claire can produce new breed, but Claire is sure that she can do. Claire is not ready live in a world where a woman is mould to live in a patriarchal society.

CLAIRE: I'm not so sure—that I do. But it can be done! We need not be held in forms moulded for us. There is outness—and otherness.

HARRY: Now, Claire—I didn't mean to start anything serious.

CLAIRE: No; you mean to do that. I want to break it up! I tell you, I want to break it up! If it were all in pieces, we'd be a (*a little laugh*)shocked to aliveness (*to DICK*)—wouldn't we? There would be strange new comings together—mad new comings together, and we would know what it is to be born, and then we might know—that we are. Smash it. (*her hand*

is near an egg)As you'd smash an egg. (She pushes the egg over the edge of the table and leans over and looks, as over a precipice)

HARRY: *(with a sigh)* Well, all you've smashed is the egg, and all that amounts to is that now Tom gets no egg. So that's that. (1.64-65).

Claire believes that there is otherness in the world. There is a place where woman cannot be dominated and bound by familial or social ties. Still Harry and Dick do not accept what she says and mock at her as all she have done so far is crushing an egg into pieces and nothing else. This shows that Harry and Dick are not accepting the change Claire wants. Harry wants to dominate Claire and always have control over her.

Tom who is the second guest as well as Claire's friend comes to the green house and supports Claire. This makes Claire to like Tom. When Claire's daughter Elizabeth comes to meet her mother after a long time, Claire does not show any affection for her. Claire wants to come out from the circle which confines a woman to look after her husband, children and house. Another reason for Claire to hate her daughter is that she is also brought up and educated in the older pattern which draws a boundary for woman. When Claire finds out that her new experiment Edge Vine fails, she rips the plants and turns angry because she does not want her plant just to go to the edge and fails like so many women struggled for new life. Claire wants to reach the edge and also to break the existing pattern.

In the second act, Adelaide, sister of Claire tries to convince her sister to fulfill Claire's job as a mother and take care of the family.

CLAIRE: So—you being such a tower of strength, why need I too be imprisoned in what I came from?

ADELAIDE: It isn't being imprisoned. Right there is where you make your mistake, Claire. Who's in a tower—in an unsuccessful tower? Not I. I go about in the world—free, busy, happy. Among people, I have no time to think of myself.

CLAIRE: No.

ADELAIDE: No. My family. The things that interest them; from morning till night it's— (2.80)

Through their conversation it is clear that women are not allowed to think about themselves. Instead they are appreciated when they think about their family and live a sacrificial life like Adelaide. Women who live like Claire are not encouraged to pursue their dream. But Claire refuses to accept Adelaide's words and argues with her. Harry concludes that Adelaide trying to convince Claire is of no use and tells that he called for Dr. Emmons to visit their house for dinner and also for giving counseling for Claire. Harry also tells Tom to convince her because Harry knows Claire will listen to Tom's words. When they are left alone, Claire confesses her love on Tom. But he refuses her love saying if he marries her, he cannot love her in the same way as now. This shows that Tom is also a man just like Claire's husband Harry Archer. But she is not aware of his mind while she confesses her love. When the play ends, Tom tells her to stay with him.

TOM: I love you, and I will keep you—from fartherness—from harm. You are mine, and you will stay with me! (*roughly*) You hear me? You will stay with me! (3)

Only then Claire understands that Tom also tries to dominate her. He is just like Claire's husband Harry who has a perspective of women as a person just to satisfy hers family's needs and obey her husband. Once Claire understands that Tom behaves like Harry, she strangles Tom and shots him out of madness.

Susan Glaspell's may portray her protagonist Claire Archer as a mad woman and she is the one who make others suffer because of her strange behaviour. But the reason she turned mad is because of oppression and suffering she experienced from her family. In order to escape from these boundaries she focused on creating new species which breaks the old existing pattern and gives new meanings and new life which is none other than her own life. She believed that if The Breath of Life blooms, then even she can come out from old traditional pattern. Though she created problem for others, it is hers ambition which forced her to strive till the end and become a source of change in the lives of women.

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Crises Management in Paulo Coelho's *The Devil and Miss Prym*

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Abstract

Paulo Coelho is a prolific writer who has made his mark through his unique stories. He has depicted the various facets of women. His women are strong when faced with turmoil. The Devil and Miss Prym (2000) narrates the choices made by the village in Viscose at the helm of temptation. The sheer character of Chantal, the central character is revealed when she faces crises turned on by the visit of a stranger with eleven gold bars. There is a ferocious battle within the young woman; a battle between her angel and her devil, which represents the age old battle between good and evil. The decision she makes represents the temperament of humanity on the whole. This paper titled "Crises Management in Paulo Coelho's The Devil and Miss Prym", is an attempt to decipher the role of emotional intelligence in crises management.

Keyword Crises, Crises Management, Paulo Coelho, Miss Prym, Emotional Intelligence

Women have through the ages proved their caliber. They have withstood the most chaotic of times right from Queen Esther in the Bible, Sita in the Puranas, Shakespearean heroines like: Portia, Cordelia to real world women of history Rani Lakshmi Bai to Malala Yousafzai. Literary writes have also represented the indomitable spirit of women. Paulo Coelho a renowned Brazilian writer and recipient of numerous awards and acclaims has portrayed the multifarious demeanor of women in his novels. His women are sturdier, resilient than their male counterparts. Chantal Prym in the novel *The Devil and Miss Prym* is an exemplar of women and humanity in general.

"Crises" the very word causes pressure and sends chills down our spine. Seeger, Sellnow and Ulmer explain that crises are "specific unexpected, and non-routine events that (create) high levels of uncertainty and threat or perceived threat" (21), affecting an individual, group, community, or whole society". What will happen when the decision we tend to make has resounding effect, not only in our life but in the lives of an entire community when we face crises? Chantal Prym, an orphaned barmaid, is fitted in a similar situation. The crises is unleashed in Prym's life when she meets the stranger. An "insane proposition" (91) is given to

her by the stranger. He wanted her villagers to break the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” (16) in exchange for ten gold bars. She is also promised one gold bar. He show her eleven gold bars buried in the forest. He gives her the responsibility to inform her villager’s the strangers deal. She is a pawn in his plan.

Prym’s world changes overnight. Crises unleash mental disequilibrium and a person is unable to balance internal and external demands. “She ended up giving the wrong change to one of the customers, something which almost never happened” (39). She struggled to sleep and even had “extreme tiredness and a soaring fever” (39) on the third night. A raging inner tempest occurs in her psyche. Good and Evil battle it out within here. “She had spent one night with Good, one night with Good and Evil, and one night with Evil” (58).

When disequilibrium occurs we tend to resort to coping mechanisms. Pacifying one-self, Prym soothes herself telling that everything was under control, is one such method. Another is “keep putting off” (61), putting things on hold, she also does that by not revealing the stranger’s proposition to the villagers for three days. However, crises has its own cycle of development of an initial, middle and a final stage. The middle stage is the eye of the cyclone, where it hits at full dexterity. The stranger who “walks the earth with a devil at his side” (71) was a persistent force and Prym was coerced to narrate to the villagers of Viscose the strangers offer and wager. Prym says that “I am pulling down the cross and erecting another gallows in the middle of the square” (77). The entire village is hauled into the twirls of the crises. The 281 residents of Viscose community’s response to crises is only the tip of the iceberg. At first, it seemed like “they had all made a pact of silence” (95). Later, they seek to deal with the crises.

Crises management involves planning a strategy to deal with crises and confronting and resolving the crises. The half-dozen individuals who controlled the community were:

...the hotel landlady, responsible for the wellbeing of tourists; the priest, responsible for the care of souls; the mayor’s wife, responsible for the mayor and his decisions; the blacksmith, who survived being bitten by the rogue wolf; and the owner of most of the lands around the village (103).

They convened a meeting to chalk out their response to the whole situation. Each individual tried to find their profit from the crises. They all shared, “a healthy mistrust of one another” (100). The landowner was planning to expand his land acquisition, the priest wanted to utilize this opportunity to spread religious belief, the mayor intended to expand his popularity. However, the priest capitalized the opportunity the most by being the conniving fox. His statement, “the sacrifice of one individual saved all humanity” (108), triggered off the bottled up feeling of disgust on their mundane existence in the village. They together decide to make the ultimate sacrifice of Berta to resolve the crises. The mode of executing their plan was through, “a firing squad” (166). The whole crisis misleads them and takes them away from their beliefs.

Emotional intelligence is perceived to be a most essential innate quality in humans. Daniel Goleman in his *Emotional Intelligence* (1996) explains emotional intelligence as having five domains- self-awareness, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others and handling relationships. He also goes on to say that,

Emotionally intelligent women... tend to be assertive and express their feelings directly, and to feel positive about themselves; life holds meaning for them... they are outgoing and gregarious, and express their feelings appropriately ...; they adapt well to stress (45).

The only person to go beyond the crises was Pym. Her emotional intelligence is far higher than her counterparts.

She first recognizes the crises as a temptation, a self-awareness of her inner feeling. She recognizes her emotions of fear and terror. "She had dug up the gold bar three times, but had been incapable of actually running off with it" (132). Her region's legacy of Ahab and St. Savin helps her find resisting the temptation. Pym shows trust on her villagers and believes that they "have their dignity" (100). She also believed that one man's madness would not alter the beliefs of her community. Her people were "hopelessly indecisive" (119) and cowards. When she is enlightened about the decision taken by the villagers to make the 'ritual sacrifice', she recognizes their emotions and decides to battle it out till the end. Pym goes on to realise that "it wasn't a temptation, it was a trap" (132). At the Celtic monolith, she exhibits her true emotional intelligence. She is assertive in expressing her views on the deceiving nature of the stranger's proposal and reverses the villagers' decision. Her self-control to overcome the evil within her is evident because of her high emotional intelligence.

On the contrary, the stranger had faced an inner crises when he loses his family. He loses "...faith in ... fellow man" (68) and embarks on a journey to find the answers to his loss. The pressing question in the stranger's mind about the nature of the human beings. It is human tendency to seek answers when tragedy befalls them. He forgoes the humanity within his, unable to control his crises unleashes it on the people residing peacefully in a mountainous village. He becomes the devil's advocate and chalks out a plan for "a senseless murder" (120) to be done.

Human beings are bound by crises all through their life. It either breaks us down or builds us up based on our choices. The choices humans make is reflected by Coelho here very well. An entire community makes a terrifying choice between life, death and power, in the span of a week. Chantal Pym's exhibition of emotional intelligence is the saving grace in averting the crises.

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Cultural and Traditional Conundrums in Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*

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Abstract

Since nineteenth century, the literary works have been becoming a regime culture. It has strongly been attracted to gender's problems. The attitude of the young writers of today proves that from the beginning up to now the writer has always felt he/ she has an important role to play in society. The writers from African continent, regardless of north or south, or, East or West, have no time for art for art's sake. For him or her, art has a social and political function; its primary role is not entertainment but education of the masses. As the most significant trend in the Eighties there emerged a powerful new breed of female novelists such as Buchi Emecheta, Mariama Ba and Aminata Sow Fall. Mariama Ba is regarded as one of the most original writers emerged from West Africa. The life and work of Ba has become emblematic of the power and creativity of black African women writers. Her frustration with the fate of African women is expressed in her first novel So Long a Letter. A critical reading of the novella So Long a Letter reveal a major source of conflicts like rapacious effect of polygamy and prohibition of girl-child education advancement. The present study concentrates to reflect the plight of an educated Muslim woman and her way out to liberation.

Keywords: *Islam, Women, Culture, Polygamy, Education*

Women all over the world struggle every minute with a culture or religion that imparts its harsh realities on them. They live voiceless yet still with a tinge of hope that liberation will come to their rescue as a result of their perseverance and determination. Polygamy has existed in all over the African continent as it represents an aspect of their culture and religion. These types of marriages have been more present in African countries like no other countries in the world. One of the reasons why this has happened is because these societies have managed to see that children are a form of wealth and this way a family with more children is considered to be more powerful. According to Connie M. Anderson, author of the article "The Persistence of Polygyny as an Adaptive Response to Poverty and Oppression in Apartheid South Africa", polygamy is more common in Africa than anywhere else in the world today. It is a socially accepted practice among tribes and communities in a number of African countries, particularly those in the western region. In the African context, according to R. A. Musimbi Kanyoro, "before marriage, a woman

did not have an independent identity. A woman was regarded as the daughter of her father. After marriage she became the wife of her husband” (Kanyoro).

According to the traditional mores, a woman is expected to owe to her father and then to her husband, a lifetime obedience. This latter is exalted without reason. Any misbehavior or unjust attitude made by the husband has to be affronted by patience and silence from the wife. A critical reading of the novella *So Long a Letter* reveal a major source of conflicts like rapacious effect of polygamy and prohibition of girl-child education advancement. Although the cultural setting of the novel is in Senegal, it is a representative and symbolic of Africa or anywhere in the globe when it comes to the attitude of polygamous practice and girl-child education. Mariama Ba reflects the plight of an educated Muslim woman in this novel.

The novel takes the form of a long letter from Ramatoulaye, a Senegalese school teacher, to her best friend Aissatou. The occasion is the sudden death of Ramatoulaye’s husband. Yet the novel is not about death, but rather about figuring out life. Under the guise of working through her grief, Ramatoulaye uses the letter as a vehicle to reminisce her emotional journey. She writes about her emotional struggle to regain her life soon after she came to know about her husband Modou’s second marriage at the age of fifty. Though the laws of Islam permit the action of Modou, it is regarded as an abrupt rejection of their thirty years of life together. It also considered as the betrayal of trust of woman.

Aissatou is the perfect target for Ramatoulaye’s musings. Their grandmothers had been friends back in the village. Their mother’s compounds had shared a fence over which they had gossiped and teased one another daily. Ramatoulaye and Aissatou attended school together and were attracted to a new generation of progressive thinking African women from throughout French occupied West Africa. Ramatoulaye and Aissatou went on to marry radical young activists for the cause of Senegalese independence. Each did so against the wishes of their family. Both husbands would subsequently rise rapidly to the top of their respective professions, moving into the space left vacant by the receding colonial regime. And each would ultimately take on a second wife.

Although both tradition and Islamic law acknowledge the right of men to have more than one wife, Aissatou felt her husband’s remarriage as an act of betrayal, a blasphemy against their own marriage vows. Aissatou immediately walked out of her husband, went back to school, forged a lucrative career, and created a new life for herself and her two sons. Years later Ramatoulaye’s husband would announce his own intention to remarry. By this time Ramatoulaye was no longer the young radical. She was a well settled school teacher, mother of twelve, looking forward of growing old and more intensely in love with the man who is at the center of all her identities – wife, mother, teacher, and person. Ramatoulaye’s heart now experienced the hurt that her friend Aissatou had had to endure years earlier. But Ramatoulaye’s conscience led her in a different direction. She would not divorce. Though her husband’s ever declining attention ultimately reduced her status of a wife, she was not ready to relinquish her status or claim on her husband. Ramatoulaye’s anguish is all the more complete when her husband’s new wife is revealed to be a friend of their daughter, a mere child who had spent much time in Ramatoulaye’s company.

Though both the women belong to same community, Ramatoulaye and Aissatou contrast in their decisions. But eventually they share and even respect each other’s decisions. Though

Ramatoulaye is against her husband's deed, she obeys the norms of culture – where the women are always submissive. She says to Aissatou, “I am one of those who can realize themselves fully and bloom only when they form part of a couple. Even though I understand your stand, even though I respect the choice of liberated women, I have never conceived of happiness outside marriage” (Ba 58).

Most of the women accept the norms of the society for its sake than their own purpose. Aissatou takes the decision to leave her husband and his family when he decides to take a second wife. When Ramatoulaye learns this she advised Aissatou to compromise with him and warns her that she is trying to burn the tree that bears the fruits. This becomes a reason for Ramatoulaye to accept Modou's second marriage. Though she is ready to accompany her co-wife, Modou doesn't give her the opportunity to face the situation. He simply dumps his first wife thereby rejecting the Islamic rule. He does not bother to come back and explain his decision. Although Ramatoulaye decides to endure polygamy according to the precepts of Islam, she grieves on the fact that she was not given a choice. She is aware of her helplessness. Modou's friends and family attempt to bring him back to Ramatoulaye but it fails. His new found happiness gradually swallowed his memory. Eventually he forgot Ramatoulaye and their kids.

Binetou, the second wife of Modou, whose age is the age of Modou's first daughter, suffers in the long run. The pressure of poverty makes her accept her mother's forceful decision of marriage with the man twice her age. But ultimately she is the one who suffers more than Ramatoulaye. Binetou loses Modou at the age of nineteen. She has to start her life all alone even at this age. Ramatoulaye considers Binetou as a mere child since she grew up and studied with Daba, her first daughter. She is aware that like many others, Binetou was just a lamb slaughtered on the altar of affluence. The translation of Quranic verse 4:34 states that:

Men are the {qawwam} [protectors and maintainers] of women, because Allah has given the one more [strength] than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are {qanitat} [*submissive*], and guard in the husband's absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear {nushuz} [*discord, hostility, dissonance*], admonish them first, then refuse to share their beds, and finally {adriboo} [*'to beat' or 'to forsake, to avoid, to leave'*] them; but when they {ataa:} [obedient] to you, then seek not against them means of annoyance: For Allah is Most High, great above you all. (Bogaert 1)

If ever there has been a controversial verse in the Holy *Qur'an*, it certainly is verse 4:34. Opponents of Islam use this verse to label this religion as unfriendly to women. Throughout the Holy *Qur'an*, Allah emphasizes that men and women are equal for Him. Allah will judge them in exactly the same way. But the words like *qanitat* and *adriboo* in the verse were interpreted differently to showcase women as menial and submissive to men in Islam. The word *qanitat* used exclusively in the sense of '*submissive, obedient to Allah*' and not '*submissive to husband*'. This verse is about pious women who, just like pious men, are obedient to Allah. A wife / husband, who are obedient to God, must live up to her / his marital duties.

Further the verse instructs a husband whose wife causes problems in their marriage to first talk to her about it, and then leave the marital bed, then *adriboo* his wife. The Arabic word used here *adriboo* has several dozens of meanings, such as: '*to beat*', but also: '*to forsake, to avoid, to leave*'. This context actually meant that when a wife causes a problem in the marriage,

her husband should first talk to her about it, then leave their bed (forsaking his sexual satisfaction), then avoid her even more (not talking to her anymore, leaving the room when she enters it, and possibly even leaving the house for a while), in order to prevent things from getting worse, and on the contrary to let things cool down and create enough space in view of increasing chances of a reconciliation. What makes much more sense is that this verse does not allow a 'superior' husband to 'beat' his 'inferior, disobedient' wife. On the contrary, this verse appears to tell that a husband must look after his wife (an equal partner who, like he, is obedient to God). But the opponents take these words for granted to strengthen the men and making women more vulnerable.

According to Islamic law men must give equal importance and rights to each wife when they marry more than one. He has to support them economically. But Modou violates these rules. He fails to support his wife Ramatoulaye and his children. Modou and Mowdo in the novella *So Long a Letter* symbolize the men who take Islamic laws for granted for their own conveniences. Though Mowdo loves Aissatou the impact of culture and traditions of African Muslim society made Mawdo accept his cousin Nabou as his second wife. The influence of religion made them blind to the consequences of their action. Neither Mawdo nor Modou think of their wives while they decide to go for second marriage.

In male perception, wives do not need to be informed about their husband's second marriage. It is the personal job of Imam and few family males. In Imam's words, "There is nothing one can do when Allah the almighty puts two people side by side... all he [Modou] has done is to marry a second wife today" (Ba 38). The Verse Surah Nisaa 4: 3 in the Holy *Quran* is an evident of Imam's words. It says, "...marry women of your choice two or three or four; but if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one" (Burhan). The one and only restriction that Islam puts on a person who wants to practice polygamy is justice. Justice and equality in everything – in the time he spends with each of them, on the amount he spends on each of them, on the gifts he gives to each of them, etc... There is absolutely no condition in *Shariah* (Islamic law) that states that the husband needs permission from his wife or inform her, if he chooses to marry the second time. The patriarchal society takes this for granted to practice polygamy. Allah has not commanded that every man must practice polygamy. It is only a legal allowance for men, who for any reason, need to cohabit with more than one partner.

Ramatoulaye describes her humiliation on the practice of polygamy to Daouda, one of her suitors: "You think the problem of polygamy is a simple one. Those who are involved in it know the constraints, the lies, the injustices that weigh down their consciences in return for the ephemeral joys of change" (Ba 71-72). In addition to this, Ramatoulaye's house is stripped, stolen, and spoilt by numerous in-laws and mourners after her husband's death. This dramatic twist underscores the greed, hypocrisy, contempt and victimization with which widows are treated in the Senegalese milieu. Ba views widowhood as a traumatic experience for women. It is the most dreadful moment for every Senegalese woman. She is forced to sacrifice her possessions as gifts to her family-in-laws. Women face still worse conditions than this. She gives up her personality, her dignity, ultimately becoming a thing in the service of man. Her behaviour is conditioned and monitored all the time.

The two friends have suffered deception and betrayal from their husbands to whom they were married for a long time. However, they adopt different attitudes toward their misfortunes. Aissatou takes Mawdo's betrayal seriously and refuses to forgive or forget; she prefers divorce

and takes full responsibility of herself and her children. This decision is very courageous and actually rare in a society where polygamy constitutes the rule and not the exception. Even Ramatoulaye was very much aware of this betrayal that must not to be forgotten or forgiven but she accepts it. Coulis observes: “Aissatou has known the same betrayal as her friend. And yet, she unlike Ramatoulaye who chose to stay and remain a co-wife, refuses to accept the situation and leaves. She will not accept the othering by her husband or his attempt at colonizing her and their children” (31).

Ramatoulaye’s decision to stay as Modou’s wife comes from her beliefs in the sanctity of the institution of marriage. She is very much aware that men become unfaithful to their wives for the sake of ‘variety’. As she firmly believes a woman needs a man in order to maintain balance in the society, she forgets, forgives and accepts the ‘betrayals of the flesh’. Ramatoulaye’s and Aissatou’s different answers to polygamy reflect their different stands on women’s issues. While Aissatou regards polygamy as an injustice to fight, Ramatoulaye sees it as a burden that society imposes on her with which she has to cope. However, their ability to handle this divergence of opinion demonstrates the strength of their friendship.

On one hand, those who practice polygamy underscore the place of education and cultural or religious influence in it. After the death of his brother Modou, Tamsir seeks the hand of Ramatoulaye in marriage. Though Islam permits Tamsir to marry four, Ramatoulaye rejects his offer on the ground that he already has three wives. Islam set forth some economic conditions for marrying more than one woman. It is limited with the human capability – it includes being just in food, clothes, housing, interest and treatment. However the *Quran* denotes that it is very difficult: “... if you fear that you will not deal justly with (certain women)..., then marry those that please you of [other] women, two or three or four. But if you fear that you will not be just, then [marry only] one or those your right hand possesses. That is more suitable that you may not incline [to injustice]” (An-Nisa 4:3).

In Islam, polygamy is not an essential rule but a permission that can be used when extraordinary conditions are present. Its primary intention is to maintain the family. In Islam, it is necessary for a man who wants to marry one woman or more to be able to meet the eating, drinking, clothing and housing expenses of her or them. To help Tamsir out with his financial obligation, one of his wives dyes, another sell fruits, the third untiringly turns the handle of her sewing machines. His income cannot meet their needs with those of their numerous children. Because Ramatoulaye is educated in both Western and Koranic ways, she was able to tell Tamsir to his face this grim reality of his proposal to her.

Ba’s women find succour in the power of education in shattering the barriers to bonding. The liberating influence of Western education has therefore given the talented woman a voice with which to speak out on behalf of her less talented and privileged sex. Ba fortifies her women with unlimited rebellious language as weaponry along with the wisdom of education. This is why Tamsir’s exploitative declaration to Ramatoulaye regarding their marriage, was met with such a convoluted encounter and ‘come down let’s fight’ language. According to Ramatoulaye, marriage means an act of faith and of love; the total surrender of oneself to the person one has chosen, and who has chosen you. This made her to bursts out to Tamsir when he offered her the marriage proposal soon after her husband’s death. Ramatoulaye, full of rage decides that it is time to break the silence of thirty years of harassment, violence and sarcastic contemptuousness.

Ba represents many characters that are torn between the past and the present. They look back at their past with nostalgia but resolute on the need to introduce modernity. Yet Ramatoulaye longs to break the traditional clutches, there are some aspects of modernity that simply frighten her. She wishes to have technological advancement and individual freedom without the concomitant lowering of standards. Such kind of modernity can be established only through education. But the very tradition does not allow education to women. This is expressed through the character Aunt Nobou, Mawdo's mother, who teaches her niece that a woman does not need too much education. *So Long a Letter*, as a semi biographical depiction of women's life, draws upon the life experiences of the author and the people around her. Through her narrative she clearly states that sex should not be a barrier for the acquisition of Western formal education.

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Delineation of New Women in Veronica Roth's *Divergent*

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Abstract

"And though she be but little, she is fierce" -William Shakespeare

*Feminism defines as the advocacy of women's right on the ground of the equality of the sexes. It has many facets; early facets were confined with the sufferings and inequality of women in society. Here comes another new facet of feminism in science fictions, which are concentrating on the successful survival of female characters, even though they have undergone many problems. Science fiction writers have the chance to create a new world, which gives place for strong female characters that are not constrained by sexism or disparity. They are called as New Women and these characters are vitally influencing real world women. This paper glimpses at the delineation of New Women characters in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* which is a young adult dystopian fiction. There are many female characters carrying the characteristics of new women such as Tris, Natalie Prior, Jeanine and other minor characters and they are influencing the real world women.*

Keywords: *Feminism, New Women.*

Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary defines Feminism as "the belief and aim that women should have the same right and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim." Feminism as a movement gained significance in the 20th century, which fights for cultural roles and socio-political rights of women. The movement gained increasing prominence across three waves: the first wave, the second wave, and third wave. The first wave of feminism started in the 19th and 20th centuries as a struggle for equality and property rights for women. The second wave feminism in the 1960s and 70s was characterized by a critique of patriarchy in constructing the cultural identity of women. The third wave feminism in post-1980 has been actively involved in academic with its interdisciplinary associations and dealing with issues like language, writing, sexuality, representation, etc.

Today feminism in its diverse forms, such as liberal feminism, cultural/ radical feminism, Black feminism, materialist / neo-Marxist feminism, new feminism, continues its struggle for a better place for women. Beyond literature, feminism is found in many other disciplines such as painting, arts, architecture and sculptures. Currently, there is a drastic change in the approach of feminism from the early phases of feminism mentioned above. Apart from the struggle for their rights, they start to create their own identity in society. They are exposing themselves as strong

and intelligent. Because of this change, they start to entrench as one of the major parts of a society. The feminism in future will be more advanced than the current and it will enhance the status of women. The women who are having the above characteristics, they can be calling as New Women. This kind of female characters are depicting in science fictions by its writers and this kind of fictions play a vital role in changing the minds of the people. The present paper deals with the delineation of new women in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* and how these characters influence the real world women.

Veronica Roth is an American novelist and short story writer known for her debut *Divergent* Trilogy consists of *Divergent* (2011), *Insurgent*(2012), *Allegiant*(2013) and *Four: A Divergent* collection. She wrote many young adult dystopian novels and short stories. The novel set in a futuristic, dystopian Chicago, where the society divides into five factions based on their virtues. These are Abnegation, Amity, Dauntless, Candor, and Erudite. Every year all the sixteen years olds sent to the aptitude test to know, which faction they are best suited. On choosing ceremony, they have to choose their faction for the rest of their lives, whether it's the one they grew up in or not. Sixteen years old Beatrice prior (Tris) is born in Abnegation, because of her inconclusive result (as Divergent), from the aptitude test she transforms to Dauntless. Being Divergent is dangerous in the society. There are three stages in the initiation test which evaluates the physical, emotional and mental strength of the initiates. In all stages of the test, Tris proves herself to the dauntless leaders and ranked first. Meanwhile, Erudite (Jeanine) declares the war against the Abnegation with the help of Dauntless sleep walking soldiers. When Tris comes to know about the war, she dismantles the simulation on the Dauntless soldiers which made them sleepwalkers and wins the war, but she loses her mother and father in a fight and immigrates to the Amity compound.

New women are young, well educated and independence of spirit, highly competent, physically strong and fearless. They are representing a new ideology of women and their role in society. Education and freedom in thinking are the crucial components in feminism, which makes women as new women. In addition to the above new women characteristics, there are many others too. Those are listed here: they are never embarrassed to ask what they want, they are very self-confident and optimistic, they believe in having a career to establish their worth and independence, they never care about their aging, never give any excuses, and uninterested in marriage and sex. New women are capable of managing both household and workplace duties. The most prominent change is their presence in the public arena. In literature, new women frequently took different forms, the early example of the new women in fiction include Nora in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), a woman who leaves her husband to pursue her own desire. In the process of presenting new women characters in literature, contemporary science fictions are playing a crucial role and they are heavily influencing the real world women. To prove this statement the present paper deals with the delineation of New Women characters in Veronica Roth's *Divergent* such as Tris, Natalie Prior, Jeanine and other minor characters and their influence on real world women.

The protagonist of novel *Divergent* is Beatrice Prior, the younger daughter of Andrew and Natalie Prior, one of the Abnegation leaders. The depiction of her character is exactly matched with the characteristics of the new woman. This part of the paper analyzes the character of Tris with new woman characteristics. As mentioned above new woman is well educated, independent, competent, physically strong and fearless, then Tris provides with good education

and freedom. Education can reduce the gaps of inequality between men and women in society. In the beginning of the novel, it shows how the sixteen of the society are given the freedom to choose their own faction according to their wish. By birth, she belongs to Abnegation but she has little crazy about Dauntless faction so when she gets the chance to change her faction she chose dauntless as her own. "I shift my hand forward, and my blood sizzles on the coals. I am selfish. I am brave."(47) This line shows how she is crazy for Dauntless for that how she left her parents and home.

Regarding Tris's competent, she proves herself in the initiation tests of Dauntless. There are three tests in initiation which evaluates the physical, emotional and mental strength of the initiates. Tris wins all the three tests and ranks first at the end of the initiation. There are many scenes which portray the competent of Tris as a strong female, fearless and intelligent. Her physical strength shows in all the fighting scenes with other men initiates as she does with Molly, "As she gasps, I sweep-kick her legs out from under her, and she falls hard on the ground, sending dust into the air. I pull my foot back and kick as hard as I can at her ribs."(173) More than her physical strength she is strong at intelligence. Using this intelligence she passed other two stages of initiation and ranked first. Example for her intelligence is,

We can't act until we know where the other team is. They could be anywhere within a two-mile radius, although I can rule out the empty marsh as an option. The best way to find them is not to argue about how to search for them, or how many to send out in a search party. It's to climb as high as possible. (140)

The early concept of strength of men and women is men are stronger than women physically and mentally. Then they have changed it as men are physically strong and women are mentally strong. But new women changed this view and made a need concept the women also very strong in physical and mental activity. 'Fear' is considered as one of the qualities of female, but new woman breaks that concept and creates new tradition as fearless females. Tris also overcome many fears of her such as crows, drowning, Tobias etc. New women believe in having a career to establish their worth and independence. Tris also have an aim that is she has to win the initiate test and be in Dauntless. When she enters new in the faction is the weakest among initiates. After that, she sets her goal and works hard for it. At last, she gains the best result as the first ranked and creates her own esteem in dauntless.

As a responsible and leading figure of the initiates in dauntless, she supports other initiates in their suffering. For example, when her friend Al is criticized for being a poor knife thrower, Tris volunteers herself to stand in for him when he is forced to stand where the target is and get knives thrown at him. This demonstrates a selflessness that goes beyond duty. These all features show that Tris is the new women in the novel. Mostly science fictions have strong female protagonist than the male. It sounds like the female characters of Shakespeare "Shakespeare has no heroes, but only heroines," Obviously these novels are reading by young adult people so those are influencing them tremendously. Especially Tris is the prudent influencing character in the fiction.

Natalie Prior is the mother of Beatrice and Caleb Prior. She is one of the new woman characters, because of her willpower to save her faction and family and do what is right. The suspense of Natalie is the turning point of the novel which is about her faction transformation from dauntless to abnegation. Though she appears nothing but selfless and kindhearted, she has

an inner core of strength that is revealed to Tris at the end of the novel. As new woman never cares about her aging, Natalie is the character who never cares and considers about her age and took part in the war between Abnegation and Erudite. As a mother of Tris, she also possesses some of the features of new women. Being a new woman she has the courage to stand for herself as divergent and for her faction and family. She is an independent woman who also gives freedom to her children to choose their faction. Before the Choosing Ceremony she lets Tris know that no matter what faction she chooses, she will always love her. Below lines express how Tris's mother and father react against her faction transformation.

I hadn't. My father's eyes burn into mine with a look of accusation. At first, when I feel the heat behind my eyes, I think he's found a way to set me on fire, to punish me for what I've done, but no—I'm about to cry. Beside him, my mother is smiling. (48)

As mentioned above the presence of women in the society as a part of it makes them new women, likewise Natalie Prior is playing a crucial role in the society as a part of City Improvement Projects. When Tris describes her mother as a professional she says,

...she works for the government, but she manages city improvement projects. She recruited volunteers to administer the aptitude tests. Most of the time, though, she organizes workers to help the factionless with food and shelter and job opportunities. (31)

Natalie Prior is experiencing the equality of men and women both in her home and society. She has the freedom to talk and do whatever she feels right. She never depressed by anyone. Unfortunately, she died at the end of Divergent during the fighting. In the last sequel of the Divergent trilogy entitled as Allegiant shows far more in depth look at this courageous woman. This woman is a great exemplar of all the things that can happen if you stay strong and keep your chin up in this world.

Jeanine Matthew is serving as the main antagonist dehumanizer of the novel. She was born and chose Erudite as her faction. She is appointed as leader of Erudite only based on her IQ score. She may not appear in many parts of the novel, but she is the major cause for all dehumanized actions in the novel. Even though she is the negative character she is the strongest woman in the novel than the others. As a woman, she does many things against the Abnegation faction in order to attain the government power, such as manipulating other factions against Abnegation. She created the mind-control serum to make dauntless soldiers as sleep walkers and use them against abnegation in the war. In this novel, the simulation which is used in the fear landscape is also invented by Jeanine. It is not only creating hallucinations, the serum stimulates the amygdala, which is the part of the brain involved in processing negative emotion like fear and then induces a hallucination. The tiny transmitter in the serum sends data to the computer. This is what happening in stage two and three tests for the initiates. These all things show how she is very strong at her intelligence. But the major defect of her is she used her strength for the negative aspects with the selfish motive. Her lust for power makes her more dehumanizer, because of that only she continuously attacks the Abnegation representatives, who are in the power and selfless. Her major plan to attain the power she does many things, those are expressed by Tris as,

She is more machine than a maniac. She sees problems and forms solutions based on the data she collects. Abnegation stood in the way of her desire for power, so she found a

way to eliminate it. She didn't have an army, so she found one in Dauntless. She knew that she would need to control large groups of people in order to stay secure, so she developed a way to do it with serums and transmitters. Divergence is just another problem for her to solve, and that is what makes her so terrifying—because she is smart enough to solve anything, even the problem of our existence. (432)

These lines are showing how Jeanine is strong in her mind and willpower, because of her evil thinking only she falls down. If she uses this kind of strong willpower for a good purpose she might have achieved in her goal. So she is one of the new woman characters in the novel.

Divergent is the story of the shaping of female characters, the discovery of their talents, abilities, and heart. The sequel books are concentrated on how they are learning from their experiences, becoming a leader, and inspiring others. These woman characters give hope for the readers who are reading it, especially for female adults. They are just fictional characters only but they can help the real world women to shape themselves and can create a kind of self-confidence. For that only young adult writers are presenting the positive women characters who can survive in the contemporary society. Obviously, new women are the best for the survival characteristics of a female in the world. Through this research paper, one can find the new women in the novel and the basis for the emergence of new women in the society. As mentioned above Education and independence can only bring out the new women characteristic of the real world women. So, depicting positive strong female characters can change the mindset of the real world women. Each one can learn something from each new woman characters. For example, Tris can teach the reader how to be strong and self-confidence in the critical situations, Natalie can teach how to manage the positions in both home and society, even Jeanine can teach the young how to be alpha women in contemporary society.

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Dissidence in Jihadi Jane of Tabish Khair

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Abstract

The idea of going in search of God through fearless fundamentalism and then realizing that the path that they had followed did not satisfy their needs, turns on innumerable conflicts in the lives of two childhood friends Jamilla and Ameena. This paper attempts to give an outline of the experiences of two girls who select a path to fulfill a dream and find themselves in an utterly new, unexpected and a helpless situation. The novel under analysis is Jihadi Jane written by Tabish Khair who was born in 1966 and educated mostly in Bihar, India. The author of several critically acclaimed novels and poetry collections has been the winner of the All India Poetry Prize as well as fellowships at Delhi, Cambridge, and Hong Kong. His novels include The Bus Stopped (2004), Filming: A Love Story (2007), The Thing About Thugs (2010), and How to Fight Islamist Terror from the Missionary Position (2014). They have been translated into several languages and shortlisted for major literary prizes including the Encore Award (UK), the Crossword Prize, the Hindu Best Fiction Prize, the DSC Prize for South Asia (India), and the Man Asian Literary Prize (Hong Kong).

Jihadi Jane by Indian-born writer Tabish Khair aims for the core of the question : Why there was something called Jihad? While Jamilla, the narrator, is more reserved and has strict religious upbringing, Ameena is a girl who is wild and a quasi-rebel to anything she finds disagreeable. Jamilla's journey to Syria begins in school. A teacher of literature plays a significant role in it. The teacher is "an Indian woman called Mrs Chatterji" (*Jihadi Jane* 13) who "loved English and English poetry with the sort of fanaticism that only the ex-colonized bring to both" (*Jihadi Jane* 13). Mrs Chatterji's well-intentioned liberalism proves no match for the certainty of Jamilla's conclusions. Jamilla's victory over her hapless English teacher serves to strengthen her growing convictions and she becomes increasingly focused on narrow readings of religious texts. In this she finds powerful reinforcement on the Net.

Soon both girls, Jamilla and Ameena, find themselves entranced by a powerful Internet preacher named Hejjiye, a woman running an orphanage-home in support of the men fighting in the name of jihad. Leaving their families and country behind, they abscond to join the Islamic State in Syria to serve a cause they unquestioningly believe in. Both girls are taken away by the projection of matters by Hejjiye and leave to Syria. They experience the horrors of war and the stilted view of it in the head of the fanatics.

There is conflict at home first. Jamilla loses her father and when her brother marries she is forced to move out of her bedroom as her brother and his wife needed privacy. Soon she realized that she was made to feel like an unwanted member of the family. She had no say in any of the family matters and her brother decides who she was going to marry even. This makes her

feel, what her role was in her own family. Jamilla's mother could not take decisions individually either, as she was dependant on her son. Jamilla's confusion and conflict with her own family found solace in her friendship with Ameena. Ameena on the other hand was suffering from being unaccepted by a boy whom she liked much during schooling. She was absolutely at logger heads with her mother who had separated from her father. Her Father still had contacts with her. He gets her an apartment and she soon feels she too had to live alone as her conflicts with her mother took away her peace of living and mind.

Jamilla's and Ameena's astrangement from family front bring both of them closer. They feel solace in the strict following of their religion, Islam. Jamilla moves in with Ameena in the later's apartment. They slowly become constant followers of internet sites that spoke of and spread their religion. They also get acquainted to Hejjiye on internet who supported men fighting for jihad. They constantly read and attended lectures of and on Islam. They were completely taken away by arguments that spoke of the need for saving their brethren. There was information and justification as follows:

Look at the way the Christians have been circling and hemming in the Muslim world, they proclaimed. Look at the wildly sprouting military bases: Did any Muslim nation have a single military base in a Christian country? No wonder, they scoffed, Bush II slipped and used words like "crusade" – before his damage-controllers stepped in to assuage the conscience of those duplicitous leftists of the West who did not even have the guts to face up to the truth of the matter and instead quoted that ex-Jew, Marx. (Jihadi Jane 31)

Such lines easily look justifiable and the girls move closer to Hejjiye. She was one among those people who either preached a very strict version of Islam or highlighted the hypocrisies of the West: the political double standards, the arms industry, the orange-clothed prisoners in places like Guantanamo and the lack of international democracy. They thought all these needed to be faced. They too had to join in the crusade. Leaving their dear ones, society and country behind, they go ahead to join the Islamic State in Syria to serve a cause, they unquestioningly believed in. They land in the orphanage of Hejjiye. There, all of a sudden Ameena's marriage is arranged with Hassan. Conflict begins to show up again in the new life they begin. Things begin to change for the worse once Ameena marries Hassan who is a jihadi leader. "Hassan's fanaticism was a career to him. Killing was his corporate job. Apocalypse was how he planned to corner the market" (Jihadi Jane 207). Jamilla begins to see the world that she left everything for differently. Ameena is taken to her Husband's place. She witnesses him shooting people on the very day of marriage. She meets his other wife. She was set aback with the way he treated a poor Yazidi young boy, Sabah, who was a domestic help in his house. She realizes she had no meaning in his life. She pitied the plight of his other wives and the boy, Sabah. She realizes this was not the life she had expected. "Ameena realized that he looked truly happy only when he left an execution site, wiping the sword on his fatigues, his face splattered with blood" (Jihadi Jane 177). To kill the innocent or hurt people who belonged to other countries was not her wish. Getting out of that vicious circle was almost impossible, but there was one way.

Meanwhile Jamilla is shocked when she hears Hejjiye teaching young and innocent children that there was no harm in becoming a Human Suicide bomber to fight for the cause. She tries to voice her disappointment at teaching things that she did not believe was right. She meets resentment and hatred. Hejjiye starts to avoid her. She also pities two Peshmerga women soldiers

who were prisoners in the orphanage. Ameena is brought back thoroughly beaten and roughed up for trying to save the slave, Sabah, Hassan wanted to kill and which he succeeds in doing. Her behaviour was so different after her return. Jamilla finds her avoiding her. At last she learns that she and Ameena were selected as suicide bombers to fulfill an assignment. She did not want to die. She neither wanted to kill. She wanted to help her brethren but not murder innocent people. She had no choice. But Ameena knew how to help. She pretends to not know how to wear the suicide belt. When her husband tries to help out, farther in other end of the building, she blows herself and Hassan up. Jamilla and the prisoners run for their lives. The novel ends by Jamilla going away to Bali to lead a still newer life. She did not want to go back home and trouble her mother and family with scandle and rumour that the society may subject them to, if she joined them again. She preferred to remain lost. She flies to Bali for a newer and fresher life.

The girls prove to be fearless in following fundamentalists in the beginning. They later realize that life out at Syria was not the one they had aimed at. They realize that the victims were within themselves. The novel speaks from Jamilla's perspective and in her voice as she recounts her adventures to a male listener. Unending brutal experiences, violence and the narrow notion of interpretation of religion, pushes them to ask many questions about the intention and the path to achieve the 'cause'. The novel helps to understand the process of convincing propaganda, fanaticism and the 'recruitment' through social media employed by fanatics to lure vulnerable people. It also lays bare the horror and bewildering experiences of being a part of a terror gang. It's heart-wrenching, shocking and painful.

When mind searches for solace, any form of embracing extremism is not going to give a solution to the searches. Humanity is the only answer for peaceful living. When people run from conflicts they often run into further conflicts. The disturbances at home, the confusions at school, the scandals of the society, the workings of the environment drive them towards a source which they thought would in the end give them solace, peace and a meaning in life. But they met conflicts there too. They could escape from home, from school, from society, from their country—but not anymore. They could not escape from the clutches of strange situations of the new life they found themselves in. Unquestioning obedience, unthinking submission, undoubted faith in decisions take by an unknown someone, unbelievable situations dumbfound them. Ameena finds that the only way to help her childhood friend is for her to sacrifice her life while at the same time taking with her Hassan who she feels may spread more violence.

Conflicts that Jamilla and Ameena face at every stage of life is not the only story of the two British Muslim girls of migrant parents. Women face conflicts at every phase of life. At home when discriminated, in school when side swept, in society when neglected, in the state where marginalized, in the country when gone unrecognized, in the world where hated. The childhood friends Jamilla and Ameena try to escape from all this neglect and rejection by choosing a new life where they feel their work would be respected and accepted- there too they face dejection and realize that for a woman there was no escape. Jamilla searched in vain. She regrets she had tried to influence Ameena unlimitedly into principles whose ends she herself was not sure of, to remove her from bad influences during teenage. She confesses:

I have said I felt oddly torn-triumphant and guilty at the same time. I did not understand guilt then . . . It is only now, in this green Bali with its small Hindu shrines, that I have begun to understand it. Actually it began some months ago,

when I read Rumi for the first time . . . It was when I was reading this long poem by him that I began to understand why I had felt guilty (Jihadi Jane 43).

It was a poem about prophet Ibrahim encountering an illiterate shepherd who prays to and imagines God-Allah – as if God were a beautiful lamb. Abraham scolds him for his mistake, blasphemy and ignorance. God takes Abraham to task. God asks what Abraham had done. God's voice says "A prophet's work is to join hearts to me, not to sunder hearts.' Do you understand?" (Jihadi Jane 43). Jamilla felt that she in the course of trying to help Ameena, had sundered hearts. Women often fall into conflicts in the name of caring, protecting, having concern, and because somebody belongs to some one or the other but no amount of conflict should lead to further conflicts. Yet here too, inspite of ending trouble the love of her friend, the concern of a mate, the undulating loyalty in friendship saves Jamilla's life. It teaches her that only love can help the world go round. The novel *Jihadi Jane* is indeed a sophisticated, serious as well as a Heart-wrenching story of how two young girls who try to escape from conflicts in life, land in further trouble as they meet at the cross-roads of life, and here too it is only friendship that helps in the end. It is kindness that sets everything right. It is care that is going to keep things moving. It will be love that will heal the world off its wounds.

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Eco-aesthetics and Green Activism

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Abstract

*Resistance is born wherever there are unequal power relations. Like history that repeats itself famously, resistance recurs at periodic intervals transforming the lives of people. This is a fact long understood by those scholars among the academia who study social and political changes in any society. But what has engaged the modern academician is the fact that from a single, impulsive, volatile 'No' to logical, methodical acts of rebellion, there is a plurality of resistances. Louise Amoore in her "Introduction" to *The Global Resistance Reader* identifies different kinds of resistances and says that each is a special case study. She specifies "resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial" (15).*

Resistance is born wherever there are unequal power relations. Like history that repeats itself famously, resistance recurs at periodic intervals transforming the lives of people. This is a fact long understood by those scholars among the academia who study social and political changes in any society. But what has engaged the modern academician is the fact that from a single, impulsive, volatile 'No' to logical, methodical acts of rebellion, there is a plurality of resistances. Louise Amoore in her "Introduction" to *The Global Resistance Reader* identifies different kinds of resistances and says that each is a special case study. She specifies "resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial" (15).

If the first half of the twentieth century saw organised resistance against repressive political regimes, resistance that evolved in the later half, after the Second World War, took up various human rights issues which included class, caste, ethnicity, gender, space, and environmental rights. The turn of the century was marked by the fusing of these diverse political and academic discourses after the realisation that all these issues are interconnected and cannot be solved singularly without taking into consideration all the other strands of oppression. The twenty-first century is marked by people's sociopolitical resistance movements for environment, which bring together concerns of gender, ethnicity, class, and nature under a common umbrella.

In this context, it is perhaps relevant to note the fact that people's struggles for environmental protection and conservation are taking a 'cultural turn' because it is important to reflect on the culture which gave rise to the resistance. For example, since the 'indigenous revival' in the political history of the late twentieth century, these communities have actively resisted the colonial/neo-colonial appropriation of their lands and have built organisations dedicated to retrieval of the same. Land rights are a crucial issue that has brought these once

isolated cultures into the very front of political agitations all over the world. They argue that their identity is firmly rooted in the landscape which is timeless. The dynamics of a global indigenous society which seek to address environmental dangers is explored in this paper. Hence, it is important to analyse the landscape *of* resistance and the resistance *for* landscape to understand how people dispossessed of their land struggle against loss and negation, to recover a sense of place and belonging. I would like to look at how resistance against ecological degradation assumes different dimensions when initiated and spearheaded by women who belong to indigenous communities.

Wangari Maathai's *Unbowed: A Memoir* is an autobiography of an exemplary woman who organised effective grassroots activism in Africa, which in turn, have captured a wide global following in the twenty first century. If writing is a form of activism, then women, who write their selves into recorded history, are *résistante*. Again, if the writers are themselves potential actors in the cause they promote then the whole endeavour serves a dual purpose. The pen and the sword are the tools of resistance. Recent literatures on resistance and social movements examine their potential to counter hegemonic power structures which act against both women and nature and undermine neo-liberal projects. Arguing for a resistance *for* landscape these women write/ act engaging in the modernist problematic of articulation / practices. According to Marianne H. Marchand, "testimonies or life histories represent two distinct resistance practices" (220). First they are an important instrument in grassroots activism and political struggles because they "provide a medium to get their message out" (220). Secondly, these self writings help to "recover women's voices on such important issues as development, neoliberalism, militarization, human rights, and globalization" (220).

Generically, these writings - where the interests of the indigenous-woman and the earth/land coalesce - challenge traditional categories and distinctions. According to Julian Thomas, "landscapes are disputed, struggled over, and understood in different ways" (181). Women by writing their selves are also writing for the earth, because it has become very apparent that what happens to the earth affects women also. Now women have emerged as the strongest spokespersons for a sustainable model of forest, arable land, water, and energy development. They have contributions to make on a world level that must be integrated into a national ecological focus. Women can infuse greater meaning into the very term 'sustainable development' by framing policies which are, simultaneously, eco-friendly and viable. Their strategic communal roles in protecting environment also lead to their empowerment. With group strategies working so well, women realise their potential. With actualisation of the latent potential comes a retrieval of their lost autonomy and independence. The self-writings of indigenous women are both dynamic and synergic.

Writing her story, the woman-indigene subverts the institutions of power and gains access to history, literature, resources, and power. There is an inverse appropriation in the self-narratives – the oppressed cultures appropriating the dominant culture's language, discourse, technology, and ideas obtaining power through them. They transform and reconstruct their identity in the new social order. Indigenous women articulate their lives not from abstract ideas but from the collective knowledge derived from the lived experiences of their community. This situates their subjectivity within their community which helps to empower them. They link their specific experiences with the larger social movements leading to political activism. The ideology

behind this activism is secular and inclusive of all - the living, the nonliving, and the earth herself. This kind of resistance is rightly defined by Jeffrey W. Rubin as “actions involving consciousness, collective action, and direct challenges to structures of power” (245). Resistance literature, in many cases, raises individual and group consciousness, which leads to social change and also aids transnational movements. Literatures which speak for earth and her environs assume importance globally pointing to a new social order which transcend ethnic, class, and racial divisions.

Women’s sense of an interconnected self proves to be a source of strength, and the means for transformation and transcendence from the personal to the collective. In 2004, when the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Wangari Maathai for her contribution to sustainable environment, democracy and peace in Kenya, it opened a new chapter in the history of Africa- her history, her politics, and her ecology.

They said:

Peace on earth depends on our ability to secure our living environment. Maathai stands at the front of the fight to promote ecologically viable social, economic and cultural development in Kenya and in Africa. She has taken such a holistic approach to sustainable development that embraces democracy, human rights and women’s rights in particular. She thinks globally and acts locally. (*The Green Belt Movement ix*)

The Nobel Committee’s emphasis on the need for framing and acting on local needs with a national and a global vision validates the earlier claim of the relevance of extending local actions for saving the environment to a more universal one. Maathai’s work stands as a living testimony to the multi layered task of the activist’s role in greening the desertified lands of Kenya, empowering women by making them economically independent, energising the hitherto subdued female force to take active participation in the ecological movement, and challenging the existing power equations by mobilising them against the autocratic dictatorship of governance in her country. Wangari Muta Maathai in her autobiography, *Unbowed: A Memoir*, reflects on how her life’s work evolved out of the simple idea of planting trees in her native Kenya. Maathai says:

At the time of my birth, the land around Ithi was still lush, green, and fertile. The seasons were so regular that you could almost predict that the long, monsoon rains would start falling in mid-March. In July you knew it would be so foggy you would not be able to see ten feet in front of you, and so cold in the morning that the grass would be silvery-white with frost. (3)

Wangari being the eldest daughter is closer to her mother: “As far back as I can remember, my mother and I were always together and always talking. She was my anchor in life” (13). It is from her mother that she learns the principles of farming. She had a special affinity for the land. “Earth and water, air and the waning fire of the sun combine to form the essential elements of life and reveal to me my kinship with the soil” (47). The belief among the Kikuyu is that after death they would join the “spirit world of the ancestors”. The final blessing of the community on the newly departed is, “May you sleep where there is rain and dew” (37). But the rains soon become scanty, when the forests are encroached upon; the local species of

plants give way to commercial trees like the eucalyptus. By the mid 1940s much of Kenya's natural ecosystems were irretrievably destroyed.

During the 1970s, Maathai associates with many civic organisations for the welfare of African people and she is invited to the board of the Environment Liaison Centre. The Centre was doing awareness campaigns against the degrading ecosystems of the African landscape. Another stream that led to her growing concern for the environment was her academic interest in the health of livestock which was being ravaged by numerous diseases. She finds that the animals are undernourished because the vegetation in the field is scanty. "The connection between the symptoms of environmental degradation and their causes – deforestation, devegetation, unsustainable agriculture, and soil loss – were self evident" (125). Another reason for her growing involvement in ecology was the result of a study by a woman researcher during the course of a seminar organised by women members of National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK). This researcher observed that the dietary habits of the people of central Kenya have changed from traditional food to processed food expending less energy. After this many cases of malnutrition among children have been reported. The scholar argues that it is deforestation and lack of available firewood that make women look for alternate food, but these are inadequate providing less minerals and proteins. The crux of the problem faced by the rural women could be said in a nutshell: "They didn't have enough wood for fuel or fencing, fodder for their livestock, water to cook with or drink, or enough for themselves or their families to eat" (124). Spike Peterson and Anne Runyan say:

As the primary food, fuel, and water gatherers, these women have particularly strong interests in reversing deforestation, desertification, and water pollution. When these processes threaten women's abilities to draw upon natural resources for themselves and their families, the women act in the only way available to them – putting their bodies on the line. (239)

The cruel apathy of the rulers ultimately ignites sparks of resistance. History provides numerous examples of peasant revolts, political dissidents including students, mass strike by union workers who were the acknowledged agents of resistance. But, in the neo-imperialist world of globalisation, agency is not restricted to the earlier actors, but may include a whole diverse range of people from ethnic minorities, women and homemakers, clerics, and other fringe groups. Again, even if the site of resistance is localised, the impact can be seen crossing geo-political borders. When landscape becomes the site of resistance between people and power structures, the agents of resistance engage in James H. Mittelman and Christine B.N. Chin's words, a "borderless solidarity" to link issues concerning the environment, women's rights, and racism to "highlight the interconnectedness" of these seemingly different discourses (26).

Maathai understands the issues and now the task is to find solutions. Suddenly it comes to her, "Why not plant trees?" which will in due course solve the problems of deforestation and soil erosion, and serve as a watershed to preserve perennial streams. "This is how the Green Belt Movement began" (125). The emergence and the growth of the Movement also coincide with women's movement on a global scale. She finds that a project can succeed only by involving local people, committed to community welfare. By late 1977, the tree planting initiatives gain wide popularity with the slogan, "One person, one tree," and communities themselves were mobilising in support of the Movement. It was the women who put in hard work, establishing

tree nurseries, planting and nurturing seedlings. For every seedling that they plant, they are given a small amount as incentive. These women are “foresters without diplomas,” the backbone of the Movement. As communities of women replicate the process, it was hoped that one day the earth would be restored and rejuvenated to its “cloth of green” (137).

Although it begins primarily as a women-centric activity, it is ably supported by male family members (husbands or sons) who keep accounts of the seedlings planted and also undertake the task of travelling to nearby farms to enlist their support in planting trees. “The sight of these men was always a surprise to those who came to evaluate the Green Belt Movement’s work” (172). It is a work undertaken by the community-men, women, and children alike. From an organisation that works to salvage the Kenyan environment, the Green Belt Movement also started interrogating the root causes behind the problems faced by the people. According to Peterson and Runyan, women tend to “become involved in revolutions initially because of their practical gender interests and then work for their strategic gender interests when they run up against sexism in revolutionary movements” (231).

Interacting with the people, Maathai finds that the government even after independence still pursues land distribution policies which aim at depriving the rightful owners. Maathai focused on the bias of public policy which systematically channels scarce resources from the poor people to the prosperous sections to organise her resistance movements. First, she encourages the people to be aware of their government’s shortcomings and stand up to fight for their rights. Secondly, she instills the need for collective responsibility to improve their living standards instead of waiting for the government to change their policies. Thirdly, her insistence that people involved in the Movement should learn the local languages have resulted in more participation from the rural population who have very little, or no knowledge of English or Kiswahili. This was instrumental in including and bringing together people from all classes, irrespective of gender or tribal differences. What begins as a tree-planting initiative soon changes to a people’s movement for peace and democracy. The Green Belt Movement thus also plant seeds of change, hope, unity, freedom, and trust among the people.

The 1980s was a difficult time for the people of Kenya. The government came down heavily on dissenters, people were imprisoned without even a trial on mere suspicion, the powers of the judiciary were virtually nullified, and violent repercussions followed even peaceful demonstrations. Those who had public backing were either detained (some did not survive the harsh conditions of the camp); others went into exile, either self-imposed or forced. The students of the University of Nairobi who were involved actively in the agitations for more political freedom were shot or arrested and the university was closed down by the government for a period of time. Ethnic violence also marred the peaceful coexistence of the people instigated by the government playing one community against the other. There was even a travesty of an election completely rigged by the authorities.

Maathai who was closely involved in the pro-democracy movements soon comes into direct conflict with the government over the contentious issue of building a skyscraper at Uhuru Park, the one “green swath” in the heart of the city of Nairobi. She writes letters reminding the authorities that the Park is “a space for public meetings and national celebrations, a playground for many city children, and that future generation were relying on us to keep the park in the form

that it had been bequeathed to us” (187). This brings to light the role played by the older generations in safeguarding the environment, the responsibility of the present to take over their stewardship seriously, so that the future generations can live and survive on this earth, our home. “I felt strongly that the issue extended beyond the preservation of the park to a matter of the government being responsible and accountable to its citizens” (188). Women fighting for the landscape are also fighting for a whole new world view, for a new political culture. Paul Ekins describes this struggle thus: “The whole story is a classic example of the connection between human rights abuse, ‘prestige project’ development and unsustainability” (341). The heart of the issue is the need for the citizens of Kenya to raise their voice against injustice. The fight to save Uhuru Park becomes the fight for freedom, survival, and a means for self-realisation. What began as a peaceful environmental movement, changed to a mass revolt against the authoritarian government. During all these difficult times, Maathai always holds true to her beliefs, her innate sense of what is just and fair, and refuses to be cowed down by personal harassment or public vilification.

The Green Belt Movement thus also plant seeds of change, hope, unity, freedom, and trust among the people. The Green Belt extending to other African countries like Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, and Mozambique, becomes a Pan African Movement. The 1990s witnessed a change in the deep-seated fears of the Kenyan people who was emboldened to take up newer strategies against a repressive government. The demand for true representational government leads to the reintroduction of a multi-party system, till then not tolerated by the ruling regime. Maathai is arrested for issuing the warning and alerting the press against a government approved coup where the country will be taken over by the army. In the face of police brutality Maathai says, “We remained unbowed” (222).

Maathai says, “I spoke on how to protect and restore the earth, along with the need for democracy, human rights, and an end to rampant corruption” (227). For Maathai, the trees that she asks the women to plant are the trees of hope for future harmony which will bring in different ethnic communities together to a common forum. She said, “These are trees of peace. We are not interested in conflict. We want to foster peace”.

All this led to the increased visibility of the Green Belt’s activities both nationally and internationally which helped to foreground issues of the environment and democracy to a wider audience. Maathai is the founder of the “green party” of Kenya, and the idea of green politics slowly takes root in this land devastated by environmental debilitation. When the new century dawned there was hope for a better future. The dictator President Daniel Arap Moi was about to step down and the December 2002 election brought a true democracy to Kenya nearly twenty-five years after its independence. From tree-planting initiatives to the Parliament may appear to be a huge leap, but Maathai by virtue of sheer courage manages it. Wangari Maathai was appointed as Assistant Minister in the Ministry for Environment and Natural Resources. *Unbowed* documents the challenges that she faced, and her tactics for negotiating change.

In 2004, Wangari Maathai becomes the first woman in Africa to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her environmental concerns, for brokering peace among various ethnic clans, democracy and freedom in her country, and also for her fight for human rights. She says, “Trees are living symbols of peace and hope. A tree has roots in the soil yet reaches to the sky. It tells us

that in order to aspire we need to be grounded, and that no matter how high we go it is from our roots that we draw sustenance” (293). Her roots are strong in her indigenous heritage.

Wangari Maathai has become the symbol of the eco-collective working to heal the earth. She fuses the hitherto parallel discourses on the environment, human rights, democracy, women’s rights, and peace building by proving the interconnections between them. Wangari Muta Maathai is no longer amongst us. Her work however lives on for the task of founding a just society is not yet over. Resistance is a continuum.

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Exploration of Women behind the Veils in Indu Sundaresan's *The Twentieth Wife*

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Abstract

Indu Sundaresan, the passionate writer of historical fiction was born and raised in India. She then migrated to the United States for her graduate studies at the University of Delaware in Economics. Her debut novel The Twentieth Wife won the Washington State Book Award in 2003. She wrote The Feast of Roses and The Shadow Princess, the sequels of her first book. Some of her other works are The Mountain of Light, The Splendour of Silence and In the Convent of Little Flowers. Her first novel The Twentieth Wife is about the emergence of future Empress Nurjahan, from her birth and how she becomes the Empress of Mughal Empire. This novel is the rendition of the most fascinating period in Indian history and has brought the legacy of untouched area of it. It articulates all about the women and their commendable participation in politics. Indu Sundaresan wrote this book as the fictional biography of the most controversial Empress Nur Jahan. When the patriarchal society did not allow the women to get educated or work or even to be shown out. The harem women were veiled always when they are out of the imperial harem and not seen by other than royal men. This novel The Twentieth Wife exemplifies how women ruled or participated in the politics from behind the veils.

History is a narration of events happened in the life of people that brought changes politically and socially. It may include the rise and fall of nations or kingdoms. In his essay *History: The Meaning and Role of History in Human Development*, Bill Nasson says "History is the study of the past in order to understand the meanings and dynamics of the relationship between the cause and effect in the overall development of the human societies" (1). Today, many talented novelists are attracting readers with their novels based on earlier centuries when emperors, kings and British ruled India.

Some among the contemporary writers, like Salman Rushdie, Alex Rutherford, Kunal Basu and Ruchir Gupta embraced the Mughal period for their plot. When Salman Rushdie and Kunal Basu adopted the Mughal court of Emperor Akbar the Great and fictionalised the story in their novel *The Miniaturist* and *The Enchantress of Florence* which belongs to sixteenth century, Alex Rutherford took the entire Mughal period in their series *The Empire of Mughal* and Ruchir Gupta have exhibited the story of Jahanara as protagonist in her *Mistress of The Throne*. Indu Sundaresan in her Taj Trilogy has fictionalised the stories of mysterious Empress Nur Jahan and Princess Jahanara.

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This novel is the rendition of the most fascinating period in Indian history and has brought the legacy of untouched area of it. It articulates all about the women and their commendable participation in politics. Indu Sundaresan wrote this book as the fictional biography of the most controversial Empress Nur Jahan. When the patriarchal society did not allow the women to get educated or work or even to be shown out. The harem women were veiled always when they are out of the imperial harem and not seen by other than royal men. This novel *The Twentieth Wife* exemplifies how women ruled or participated in the politics from behind the veils.

Indu Sundaresan has written *The Twentieth Wife* as the fictional biography of the most influential women of Mughal Empire. Mehrunnisa was born into an aristocratic family, Ghias Beg was a noble of Persia but then he finds himself fleeing to India as a refugee to escape from the creditors. She was born on 31st May 1577 in Kandahar, on their way to India. Ghias leaves Mehrunnisa reluctantly on the road side as they were not able to feed the new born. Malik Masud the leader of the caravan finds her and reunites with the family.

Ghias finds job in Emperor Akbar's court as a courtier and later promoted to be Diwan of Kabul. Mehrunnisa had a comfortable childhood; she had classes from Mullahs, eventually educated along with her brothers, which was not possible for any commoners in her period. Ghias was invited for the royal wedding and hence the entire family attended to greet the Emperor and Empress on their son's wedding. The harem women gathered in the zenana balcony behind the Emperor which was hidden by a marble lattice.

Mehrunnisa being a girl stays with her mother in the zenana balcony and her brothers were taken to courtyard where the emperor and other courtiers gather for the wedding of Prince Salim. "It was unfair that her brothers were allowed to be present at the courtyard below while she had to be confined behind the purdah with the royal harem"(27). The encounter of Mehrunnisa with the Royal concubine during the ceremony made her to be noticed by the Padsha Begum, the powerful lady of Mughal Zenana. The women in her period were not allowed to be in the public unveiled, literacy was far a dream to them in those days. They were given in marriage mostly at the age of fourteen; they were not allowed alone to the bazaars unless accompanied by men of their family.

When Mehrunnisa went to pay respect to the Padsha Begum on her turn from Kabul, Ruqaya Sulthana Begum was very happy to see her and wanted Mehrunnisa to wait upon her. As it is an order from Padsha Begum herself Mehrunnisa could not deny and visited the imperial harem to wait up on Khurram the son of Prince Salim and Princess Jagath Goshini, whom the Padsha Begum demanded under her custody, which paved way for her to meet Prince Salim.

Akbar orders Ghias to get Mehrunnisa to be married with Ali Quli who was a brave soldier. The marriage was imposed on her though she doesn't want that; as it was Emperor's order and her family honour depends on her. 'His Majesty would never sanction a break-up of your engagement. Never. Do you understand?' (89)

Salim met Mehrunnisa in Minna bazaar and fell in love with her. At the moment when Salim expressed his love, she had to deny his love, her childhood dream, the moment she was waiting for. It is the order from the emperor to marry her to Ali Quli. Being a girl, accepting the Prince's love would bring disgrace to her father and family. The inheritance of feminine that has followed through generations confined her to wait for an order or call from the imperial palace or harem. Instead, with limited festivities Mehrunnisa married Ali Quli. For whom she means a very little, though he didn't harm her physically or marry another woman, he did not care for her. Even when she probed about the slave girl, the one he slept with in Mehrunnisa's bed; he marginalised her saying that she is talking too much for a woman and hit her. Still she has to abide that as she is wife of the man as per the culture which she has brought up; states that a woman should always conform to her men that are father, brothers, husband and sons throughout her life. "You talk too much for a woman, Mehrunnisa" (116).

On the demise of Emperor Akbar the apparent heir Prince Salim came to throne and ordered Ali Quli to leave to Bengal as he allied with Khshru to rebel against him. He took Mehrunnisa along with him and she gave birth to a girl baby there. During the betrothal of Khurram with Arjumand, Salim happened to meet Mehrunnisa and commanded Ghias to invoke Tura-i-Chingez, the law of Timurs to divorce Ali Quli. Mehrunnisa was not even given an opportunity even to express her thoughts or her safety. She has just bound to be his wife. Ali Quli who was a man far from culture refuses to divorce, kills Qutubuddin Koka, the governor of Bengal and also killed by his army men. "I will never agree to this." Ali Quli glared at her, his ugly face in anger. 'You are my wife and will remain so. Even the Emperor cannot command me to give up you. Emperor! Bah!' (280)

After Ali Quli's death Jahangir summons Mehrunnisa's presence at Agra. On receiving summon from the emperor, Haidar the henchman to the Governor of Bengal, kept them safe and escorted to Agra. Mehrunnisa took refuge under the guardian of Dowager Empress Ruqaya Sulthana Begum in the imperial harem. She worked as the lady-in-waiting and she designed clothes for the harem ladies and was well paid. Again in the Minna Bazaar she wore white ghagara, which the women above thirties dare to wear. She radically attempts to overcome that notion of that period. Understanding Emperor's madness to Mehrunnisa's and her power over Jahangir; Dowager Empress made her to meet him in the Minna Bazaar. Then Emperor often went to meet Mehrunnisa at imperial harem, who was under the guardianship of Empress Ruqaya.

Mehrunnisa was not content with the eyes preying on them in the harem; she was worried to see that Jahangir's love for her was not as hers. Jahangir went to Ghias house to meet her, to offer her place in zenana. In those days the generals and nobles set stall in the harem premises which was open for the harem women. The noble wives and daughters go unveiled to get a glimpse from the Emperor or Princes, to impress them and become a royal lady or concubine and benefit their entire family. When Jahangir expressed his need for her with him for his life,

Mehrunnisa was waiting for these words all these four years, after the death of Ali Quli and her hurdles and nightmares of the nights in zenana. But he wanted to be with her, as just a woman in zenana, always accessible. She refused to be one among the hundred, as a common woman or concubine in his zenana. “The Emperor’s face flushed. ‘But of course it is. Without a title, you would have no standing in zenana. So say will you come as my empress. Will you? Please? He looked at her anxiously” (360). She was struggling within her not to plea for the love that she wants. She wanted that Jahangir must understand her love for him. The abrupt ‘no’ from Mehrunnisa made Jahangir to think, all these days she had only a little stand in the zenana and just bringing her will not make any difference. When Jahangir asked to come with him as ‘Empress’ she could only see the deep love he has for her. “He was not merely asking her to be a wife. He was giving her his life” (360).

Indu Sundaresan has explored how Mehrunnisa was marginalised throughout her life from birth, even when she was an infant; the ayah stating that a girl child should worth something. Then in the harem, her love was restricted being a commoner. Her marriage was imposed on her to a soldier, who discriminated her saying she is only a woman have no rights to question and not even to give him his hire a boy child. She was undergoing all these as she was educated from her childhood to be good wife. She never protest any of them as she took it as it was her culture to obey the power and husband whom she belongs to after her marriage.

Indu Sundaresan also tried to exhibit the emergence of Mehrunnisa, when she took refuge in Ruqaya’s harem, the royal women looked her down for the deeds of her family member to have hands in politics. But she never gives up her esteem by being loyal and never expected or involved. Indu sundaresan also establishes her courage, even when she was offered with the privilege to be the favourite woman in the harem, she radically refused to take it, until it turn as she wanted it. On marrying Emperor Jahangir she became the Empress Nur Jhan, who ruled the entire Hindustan, under the shadow of her husband. She was in heights of power in her time, when ladies were not allowed even to show their face in public. They both made a wonderful reign and consider being self-sufficient. She wanted to support him behind the veil, just for the man she loved.

Thus Indu Sundaresan’s *The Twentieth Wife* as a fictional biography has fictionalised the unexhibited parts of the life of the most controversial Empress Nur Jahan. The history has not much spoken about this brilliant Empress who ruled under the shadow of Emperor Jahangir. This novel has presented her, though she was the princess in her family, the patriarchal society then, looked her as a common woman and imposed her marriage on her. But then she has emerged out of that, when the situation made her to fight even within herself and for her place. The unperturbed boundless love for the Emperor Jahangir, made her the twentieth wife, which resulted in becoming the empress of the empire, supporting him behind the veil.

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Feminine Baffled Conscience: An Analysis of Ian McEwan's *The Children Act*

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Abstract

Ian McEwan, an English author through his novel The Children Act unravels the life of Fiona Maye, who is a well-known judge at the family court. Though civilians look towards her words of wisdom at their cross roads, Fiona herself could not find any one to turn to when she needs support. She is enmeshed in the unhappy married life without children and has to compromise with her principles when her husband seeks pleasures from forbidden ways. Fiona finds herself in a more doleful situation when her conscience accuses her for the death of an 18 year old boy, whose life was intervened by Fiona as a part of her profession. This paper proposes to explore the multiple miseries working women have to cope up with and how their intensity increases with their sought after life status.

From the time when gender roles were tailored, women were fitted into the status of 'not working' and this label was not bothered by the victims as they had to toil hard for the family every day. The patriarchal education and cultural practices compelled them never to escape to the other side of the 'bread winners'. Later the derogatory situation of women was discussed and the idea of women empowerment exhorted women to fight for equal status and equal job opportunities. Thus the working women became a symbol of empowerment and they enjoy the status even today.

Ian McEwan, an English novelist and Booker Prize winner, through his novel, *The Children Act* (2014) unravels the life of Fiona Maye, who is a well-known judge at the family court. Though civilians look towards her words of wisdom at their cross roads, Fiona herself could not find any one to turn to when she needs support. She is enmeshed in the unhappy married life without children and has to compromise with her principles when her husband seeks pleasures from forbidden ways. Fiona finds herself in a more doleful situation when her conscience accuses her for the death of an 18 year old boy, whose life was interfered with by Fiona as a part of her profession. This paper proposes to explore the multiple miseries working women have to cope up with and how their intensity increases with their sought after life and career.

The novel is set in London, and the protagonist Fiona Maye is introduced who is a High Court Judge and is in her fifties. When the novel begins, Fiona has just lost "the normal and comfortable state of being ... when the two (man and woman) live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating (Woolf, 102). Jack, the husband of Fiona has decided to desert her for another younger woman and seeks the permission of Fiona to go with her. Fiona is irritated and

is not able to forgive Jack who is preparing to throw away the marital relation after thirty five years. She is unable to read Jack who had always been kind and loyal (6).

Androgynous creative mind began to control Fiona as she decides to prove her power by attaining autonomy over the apartment (Woolf, 103). Though she yearns for the presence of her husband by checking her mails and phone every five minutes, she compels herself to make a new set of lock and key so that she can deny entry to Jack in the apartment and keep him at the bay. Fiona herself cannot decide what she needs. Her conscience is unable to discern what is right from wrong. This confused state along with the professional power directs her to accept Jack back when he returns, without much resistance. The author seems to assert that subaltern voice is unheard or meek even if the subjugated attains power in the main stream.

The professional life of Fiona is unraveled and it seems she maintains a fair balance of her conscience while she directs the life of the civilians. She does not need any support or advice when she prepares her judgment. Fiona is able to identify what is the best and right for the people who have approached her and it is never reported that any one is discontented in her judgment. Her presumed poised conscience begins to leave her alone once she enters her personal life.

Fiona is presented with the controversial case of Adam Henry who is a leukaemia patient and is three months away from adulthood. The doctors demand blood transfusion for Adam whose life is in danger. But his parents are against the idea for religious reasons and are ready to lose him if necessary. The clash between the medical authorities and his parents leads the case to court. Thus Fiona becomes the decision maker of Adam's life. She makes judgment against the wishes of Adam and his parents and states that the life of the individual is more precious than the religion to which he is adhering to (123).

Her personal realm is disturbed by Adam after his recovery as he would like to find a mentor and guide in Fiona who helped him from his death bed and gave him a second life. Fiona finds herself in the stumped state again as she is unable to take the decision of how to respond. Even though she knows that the motives of Adam are not ill minded, Fiona is not able to take him in as she fears the society and also because her conscience does not help her to take a decision. Fiona's baffled state is more evident when she gets completely numb while she is informed about the choosing of the death by Adam.

Fiona is told by Adam's care taker that Adam lost hope soon after his recovery as he could not find support and when the disease returned after few months, he chose not to undergo medication (210). The hospital authorities were stranded this time as Adam was free to choose his life and medication, since he had officially entered adulthood age of eighteen. Fiona's conscience begins to suffocate her again as she believes herself to be guilty of his death. She chooses to seek support from her husband and turns to him as she used to do before he left her.

Thus Ian McEwan through his novel seems to assert that the feminine self is never able to disassociate from the baffled states without help or support from their counterpart. Even if she achieves great strides in life, muddled state continues to haunt her and she will ever remain in the clutches of patriarchy in order to find a way out of this mesh. The stubborn patriarchal approach which not only adds up to the miseries of working women, also keeps them away from lending a helping hand to women.

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Gender Construct and Female Identity in Islamic Society: A Study of Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass*

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Abstract

*The phenomenon of discrimination in social life often inspires authors in making their literary works. The gender inequalities such as inequality of workload, psychological violence, marital rape, polygamy, illiteracy and discrimination in holding rights and power leads to the development of feminist consciousness. The women in Arab novels, written by Arab women, express their personal experiences in Arab society. Though the novels are fiction they are based on the real life experiences of the authors and can be taken as facts of what events transpired during the lives of the authors. The renowned Moroccan sociologist and author Fatima Mernissi was an important and influential figure in Arab Islamic feminism. As an Islamic feminist, Mernissi was largely concerned with Islam and women's roles in it, analyzing the historical development of Islamic thought and its modern manifestation. Through her autobiographical novel *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*, Mernissi expresses the tradition of an affluent harem in Fez and attempts to trespass the hududs (frontiers). Harem culture is considered as the causing of a patriarchal system where women are restricted from activities outside and they are required to follow the rules. This paper aimed to explore on the harem culture and the characters' attempt to find opportunities to change it.*

Keyword: *Islam, Women, Tradition, Harem, Barriers, Frontier*

In the struggle for power between nations and civilizations, gender issues pertaining to the Muslim world have been politicized. In this process women's lives have been deconstructed and taken out of context. As the Muslim woman finds her position being shifted from subject to object, her voice is muted and her agency is nullified. Not surprisingly, women's behaviour in a patriarchal culture is often built up by the social order which is cultivated and controlled by male dominance. Men feel that women's sexuality is a constant threat to the traditional moral order. Hence socializing that includes family, friends etc. have collaborated to alienate women from their sexual appeals. The socio-cultural values diminish the liberty of women's sexuality and extend men's sexual freedom because the honour of the family is judged by the sexual conduct of their women: "Women are vested with immense negative power because any misbehavior on their part can bring shame and dishonor to the male members of a whole community lineage or family" (Kandioti 326).

Supervising women's sexuality often extends into the debates over modesty, behaviour and dress. Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* focus on women

and the ways they maintain their modesty physically, emotionally and socially. In her book *Behind Closed Doors: Women's Oral Narratives in Tunis*, Monia Hejaiej defines modesty: "It [modesty] has three modes of manifestation: First, in physical appearance, as in the customary covering for the various parts of the body, then in prescribed personal traits, such as humility, reservation and modesty, and most distinctly in the social requirement of seclusion; which is intended to ensure chastity and fidelity" (61).

Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass* is a memoir that unfolds in Morocco between 1940-1950. The story is about her childhood growing up in a *harem*. It unveils the story of everyday life in Morocco from the perspective of women living in the *harem* of Mernissi's father and uncle. It seems to be an insider's account of Islam and women, experienced in Morocco in the advent of country's independence from France.

The title '*Dreams of Trespass*', refers to the visible and invisible barriers in life. These barriers have to do with Islam, with women and also with the issue of borders – Moroccans had undergone French occupation and they created invisible lines between different groups of people in the country. Another central question regarding barriers is involved in the concept of *harem*. Fatima experiences all kinds of barriers during her life in the *harem*. The exploration of what these barriers mean to her and to her family is what makes this book a fascinating read.

Mernissi's female characters are presented as dynamic individuals who interact within the spaces around them, shaping and being shaped by them. As many of Mernissi's females are unhappy with their limited movement, they are constantly testing the boundaries, probing for ways to improve the condition. As a young girl growing in a *harem*, Fatima experiences all the little trivialities of her life and she becomes a precocious little child. She is constantly questioning her mother and aunts about boundaries she is in. They tell her to stop questioning all the time. At first glance, it seems as if her questions are little or have no importance; and they are mere things any young child would ask when they step into the real world. But upon closer examination, it is clear that she is questioning the life in the *harem*. In fact, the frontier is one of the main entities that shape her life and being. When she asks questions, no one answers her. Hence she realized: "In a *harem*, you don't necessarily ask questions to get answers. You ask questions just to understand what is happening to you" (Mernissi, *DT* 22).

Mernissi sees how the frontier seems to be changing everything about her and her surroundings. Thus she decides to figure out how the frontier works before everything she knows would slip under her feet. The young Mernissi has an almost paradoxical relationship with different frontiers. For her, it is both a source of happiness and a source of pain. It is mysterious to her, but at the same time she feels it smothers her and the other women. At the beginning it is very obvious that she feels overwhelmed by the frontier, and looking for it became her life's occupation. She admits that anxiety eats at her whenever she cannot situate the geometric line organizing her powerlessness. This unease, Mernissi feels is same for most of the women in her novel. Mernissi's house gate is a definite *hudud* or frontier because women in the house need permission to step in or out. Every move has to be justified and even getting to the gate is a procedure. She describes the frontier at home as the house gate, a gigantic stone arch with impressive carved wooden doors. It separates the women's *harem* from the male strangers walking in the streets. For instance, when Chama, Mernissi's cousin tries to follow her brothers out of the house without getting the permission of her father, Ahmed (the doorman) brings her back telling her that he has no instructions to let the women out.

Male domination in harem tradition includes gender role and violence against women and eventually leads to women's oppression. Women in Mernissi's harem experience oppression since they were born. In Moroccan tradition male and female infants get unequal treatment. The female infants are ignored whereas the male infants get a special ceremony as they are superior creatures in the lens of patriarchal society. This difference occurs because of the gender inequality. Gender inequality comes from biological differences and it creates gender roles. Patriarchal society plays a significant part in the existence of gender role.

The men seclude women inside the harem to showcase their domination. Women are objectified and considered fit only for household task. Gender roles in the family and in the society are introduced to female children in the harem by adults in the family. They were taught to cook, dress up, sew and clean the house. Men in the patriarchal society describe women as inferior, weak, stupid and ignorant. They fail to assess women's potential and capacity. They are given a limited access to information, education and public place; meanwhile men get unlimited access to all these.

Women's limited access to knowledge and making of decision expose their role within Islam. One of the most important responsibilities of a Muslim woman is to protect her body. Men pay special attention in the way a woman dresses. For instance, when Fatima's mother fought with her husband in order to get rid of the traditional veil, it drove him crazy. He angrily warned Fatima's mother that she is destroying the family honour and if women dress like men, it is more than chaos – it is *fana* (the end of the world). In an interview to *Fresh Air*, broadcasted in 1993, Mernissi acknowledges her mother:

She fought in the limits which were granted to her. What she did was instead of wearing the haik, for example, which is this seven meters long piece of white cloth, she wanted to take men's djellaba, which the long robe with trimmed sleeves which give much more freedom to the movements. And that was a huge battle because it was like when the French women or the American women took the liberty to wear men's pants. It was the same thing (Gross 1).

However, it would be wrong to say that only the powerful control the *harem* and frontiers. The truth is that often mothers instruct children to follow the rules even if they do not agree with it. Within the Fez household, two opposite camps exist – the traditional one that is represented by the older generation including Chama's mother, Lalla Radia and Lalla Mani; and the newer generation represented by Fatima's mother, Chama and Aunt Habiba. As one can see, there is a plethora of different individuals that compose and endorse certain values and accustomed standards. While the older generation claim that boundaries and frontiers, like the harem, are a 'good thing' that protect women from the 'unsafe streets', the younger generation feel that they were 'choked' and needed to break free from all inhibitions found in such things as gates, veils, and '*qa'ida*'. The *qa'ida* is an invisible rule that is much worse than walls and gates. Because with walls and gates women at least know what is expected from them.

One of the characters in the novel who upholds the harem with all her energy is Lalla Mani. Eventually, she embodies traditionalism and constantly supports men. Lalla Mani sustains the disciplinarian rule and organizes the communal living. She observes women and makes sure that they do not violate the *hudud* (which is not only physical but also moral). There are many occasions where she displays her discontent when the traditionalism is transgressed by the

conduct of women. For instance, when the women are enacting in month of Ramadan – imitating feminist figures from history and literature such as Scheherazade's heroines from *A Thousand and One Nights* and Religious figures like Prophet Mohammad's wives, Lalla Mani would give an elaborate preach. She predicts hell for everyone who forgets of Allah's commands, particularly those who wanted to discard the veil, dance, sing and have fun. Lalla Mani severely castigates an individual for what she considers disrespectful or irreligious act. When Fatima's mother chases her husband between the columns, everyone would scream with laughter. Then everything would come to sudden stop when Lalla Mani appears on her threshold. As a reminder for this action, Lalla Mani would call out Fatima's mother's family name to show that she is a stranger in the Fez household. Lalla Mani rebukes her for not showing respect and obedience to her husband.

Lalla Mani even believes that humour is disrespectful. Chama's dramatic plays and Mina's dancing are regarded as improper. She says: "Theatre is a sinful activity to begin with," "It is not mentioned in the *Koran*, and no one ever heard about it in either Mecca or Medina. Now, if careless women still insist in indulging in theatre, so be it. Allah will make everyone pay for their sins on judgment day...." (Mernissi, *DT* 109) According to Lalla Mani, only bad and half possessed men and women will dance in public. When a person possessed by a *djinni*, he/she will lose all sense of the *hudud* or frontier. He/she will fail to realize good and bad, between *haram* and *halal*. More particularly when a woman possessed by the *djinni*, she will leap high in the air while hearing their rhythm playing and shake their bodies shamelessly with hand and legs flying over their heads.

Even Lalla Radia, Chama's mother is full of traditional ideas. Like Lalla Mani, she supports sexist thoughts. She believes that women should be enclosed in the *harem* to protect them from the outside world and from the Western invasion. According to her, an individual should keep their traditional cultural identity to compose and endorse certain values and accustomed standards. These values should not be spoiled by any intruders. Children are taught to follow certain ritual that covers the value of harem tradition. Children have to call all important grownups as Lalla and Sidi, and kiss their hands at sunset wishing them *msakum* (good evening). Fatima recollects certain incident when they follow this custom of 'kissing' and 'wishing'. Every evening, Fatima and Samir would kiss everyone's hands as quickly as possible to return to their games. In such a hurry they would trip over each other and collapse onto the laps of important people, or even fall down on the carpet. Then everyone would start laughing at this. Also, a daughter-in-law was obliged to stop at her mother-in-law's to kiss her hand after *hammam*. She must show respect and obedience at all times to her. As Fatima's mother says, for the children following the customs is just a beginning and they have to go a long way to keep it.

Another character who stuck to custom was Lalla Thor, the first wife of Mernissi's maternal grandfather. She was from city, and considered herself as superior to other co-wives. When she heard about the women's decision to wash the dishes in the river, she condemns them for destroying the reputation of the house by calling them out as peasant women. For Yasmina, Lalla Thor was an insignificant woman with white and lifeless skin who never does any housework and keeps her three layers of Caftans hanging leisurely down to her ankles.

Even Yasmina who lives a relatively liberal and comfortable life, experiences unhappiness and has her own definition of what it means to exist in a frontier:

Sometimes, she said that to be stuck in a harem simply meant that a woman had lost her freedom of movement. Other times, she said that a harem meant misfortune because a woman had to share her husband with many others. Yasmina herself had to share Grandfather with eight co-wives, which meant that she had to sleep alone for eight nights before she could hug and snuggle with for one. “And hugging and snuggling your husband is wonderful,” she said “I am so happy your generation will not have to share husbands anymore.” (Mernissi, *DT* 34)

Though Yasmina’s lifestyle is much more independent than Fatima’s, Yasmina is still aware of the oppression that comes from being a female. She is much conscious on the women’s issues in the world; she would say that the world is not concerned about being fair to women. Rules are made in such a manner as to deprive women in some way or another. From these ruthless rules it is evident that those are not made by women. According to Yasmina, harem did not need walls. Once you knew what is forbidden, you carry the harem within. Those rules and customs of tradition are inscribed under your forehead and under your skin. This idea of an invisible harem, *qa’ida*, is a law tattooed in the mind of the people. But it is unfortunate that most of the time the *qa’ida* is against women.

Another frustrating aspect of the harem is its communal life that includes the eating ritual. One of the problems in the communal life is everyone should live according to the group’s rhythm. One cannot just open a refrigerator and grab something to eat when they feel hungry. In fact, there is no refrigerator back then. Fatima’s mother hated this entire idea of communal life. She dreamed of living alone with her husband and kids. She would say: “Whoever heard of ten birds living together squashed into a single nest?” “It is not natural to live in a large group, unless your objective is to make people feel miserable.” (Mernissi, *DT* 77) Though Fatima often complains about communal life, she has been patiently living in the large family in the harem. In *Dreams of Trespass*, Aunt Habiba suggests that in order to understand the issue of harem, one has to develop patience and learn to accept that for a while. Therefore, patience can be a clear path for better understanding.

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Gender Representations in Cultural Productions for Children

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Abstract

Gender is one of the fundamental ways in which the social life of human beings is organized. From infancy onwards, parents often think that boys and girls are very different. Boys are presented with toy guns, miniature vehicles etc. while girls were presented with dolls, miniature kitchens sets etc. There are few factors worldwide that influence the lives of people from birth to death in determining a person's gender. Gender matters from the trivial to the most profound aspects of a human being's life. Most toys, dolls and gadgets for girls are pink, while for boys it is blue. This colour coding for boys and girls itself is sexist and perpetuates gender stereotypes. In some cultures it influences what or how much education children receive. The role of bodily compartment and action in producing 'the child', 'the model pupil', 'the girl', 'the boy' etc should be taken care of. An example which can be considered is 'throwing like a girl' or 'don't cry like a girl'. The literary works in the popular magazines for children and serials in exclusive channels for children are generally gender biased. The women characters are marginalized and they act in a supporting role. There isn't a 'Wonder Woman' for Indian children to cherish. This paper will try to look into the representation of gender in the recent cultural productions for children. The literary texts, videos, online and offline games for children etc are analysed in the light of gender experiences. The attempts taken to subvert the traditional binaries and also the diasporic young adult literature will also be studied.

The social life of human beings is organized in such a way that gender is one among the most decisive factors. When people hear about a child the first question that arises is – is it a boy or a girl? From infancy onwards boys and girls are treated in different ways. From the trivial to the most profound aspects of human life gender plays a key role. Whether a child is a boy or a girl often determines the toys that one receives. It is a general trend that pink is for girls and blue is for boys. Until the 1970s gender was not a term that was used commonly to refer men and women or boys and girls. In *Cultural Theory – The Key Concepts* Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick describes: “While our sex (female / male) is a matter of biology, our gender (feminine / masculine) is a matter of culture. Gender may therefore be taken to refer to learned patterns of behavior and action as opposed to that which is biologically determined.” (139)

The development of boys and girls is affected mostly by the biological features like chromosomes and hormones. This in turn leads to the differences in physical features. At the same time the social processes like interaction with parents, peer groups and the interactions with society in large also play a pivotal role in the gender socialisation process. It should also be noted that there is nothing like definitely masculine or feminine. The biological aspects like

chromosomes and hormones are sometimes inconsistent within a single person and they vary from person to person.

Cultural ideals are revealed through many ways and children's literature is one of them. Literature as a genre has its place in the development of children from the very young age. Critics like John Stephens, Peter Hunt and Jack Zipes studies extensively about children's literature. Judy Simons in her essay "Gender roles in children's fiction" says that boyhood and girlhood have been treated as separate, different and unequal in children's literature. She adds that eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century children's books are full of strong, active boy characters and much more submissive, domestic and helpless girls.

Males and females generally show certain characteristics and these characteristics are generally termed as gender stereotypes. For example men are more likely to be seen as strong competent and confident and women as warm, kind and nice. The most basic gender roles are that of the bread winner and homemaker. It is directly linked with the men-women binary relations. In a country like India gender roles are still most decisive. In some parts of India girls are not permitted to go out and be educated. India was also known for its female genocide even in the twenty first century. Parents are more likely to abort female fetuses and give up female babies. The increase in education for women and the increase in the number of women in the paid job sector helped to have a change in the attitude of the people. Over the years social power and the role of women have changed and the concept of gender became strong.

Comparable changes are taking place in the field of children's literature. The fairy tales for children like "Sleeping Beauty", "Beauty and the Beast", "Rapunzel", "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Rumpelstiltskin" etc were read and interpreted differently by the feminist readers. The feminists pointed out how the women in the story were treated. In the traditional tales women were either the helpless heroines or played the magical roles like witches and fairy god mothers. A. A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* is much read and admired by children all over the world. In *Winnie-the-Pooh* except Kanga all the other characters are male – Owl, Piglet, Rabbit, Christopher Robbin and Pooh. The character Kanga is a mother with all the motherly qualities – caretaking, nurturing and pampering.

In the picture books and story books for young children more male characters appeared in the books – as main characters and also in minor roles. Even in the illustrations showing a group of people or mob there were more male characters. Most of the time there was not a single female character portrayed in both the major and minor roles. Even with the anthropomorphic characters the issue remains the same. In the titles, in the pictures and as characters female characters appeared less frequently or never appeared. Even when the characters are neutral gendered mainly in the animal stories, the tendency is to refer the characters using masculine pronouns rather than using feminine pronouns. *Balarama* is one of the most popular magazines for children in Kerala. They don't have a feminine gender in their stories in the lead role. The famous titles in the magazines are "Mayavi", "Jampanum Thumpanum", "Soothran and Sheru", "Akku and Ikku", "Dishku" and "Sikkari Sanku". In all of these stories the lead roles are male characters. Even in the illustrations showing a crowd or a mob, women characters rarely appear. The major characters are anthropomorphic animals and the pronouns used to refer the animals are always masculine.

“Mayavi” first appeared in the 1984 issue of Balarama and still entertains children. In “Mayavi” the protagonist is a trickster or little devil who helps people from the dark wizards and Raju and Radha are his two human companions. Dakini is a close associate of Kuttoosan who practices magics and tricks against people. Except Radha and Dakini there are no women characters in the story. Dakini is often presented as a witch and she is devoid of emotions like compassion and love. She is the typical witch in the series.

Chhota Bheem is an animated comedy adventure series much enjoyed by children all over India. Bheem is a strong, intelligent and brave boy who is nine years old. He protects his kingdom Dholakpur from evil forces. It is Bheem who always leads and encounters with the enemies – both real and magical. Chutki, a nine year old girl is the close associate of Bheem and she just assists Bheem in his adventures. Children come to certain conclusions reading the literatures, watching the shows that are provided to them and they have their own ideas about the gender roles. From books children learn how men and women are like and what they are supposed to do according to their gender roles.

Didi Games is the network domain for online games for girls. Dress up, Cooking, Farm, Make up, Celebrity, Wedding, Baby, Shopping etc are the popular games in the site. All these games are generally asserted with the stereotypical image of the feminine gender. *Miniclip* is another site and the site offers games like Monster Trucks, Soccer, Penguin Rush and Archery King. *Miniclip* is boy’s favourite while *Didi Games* is the girl’s domain. The games like Barbie doll dress up and make up mainly focus on the outward appearances like clothing, make up, hairstyles and often the girls or women are so fit and in “perfect shape”. These games focus on the outward appearances like clothing; make up, hairstyles and women beauty accessories. There is not even a single Barbie who is fat. Attempts are taken to revise the style of Barbie and there are black Barbies.

With the advent of women’s movement changes had taken place in the area of children’s literature. Adults are conscious of the role of children’s books as an integral part of gender socialization process. There was more number of female characters both in the leading roles and in the supporting roles. There are conscious efforts from the publishers like Tulika, Young Zubaan, Anveshi, DC Books-Mango Series and Karadi Tales. These publishers try to publish books on women characters with heroic qualities accompanied with beautiful illustrations. Three books from three different authors are analysed - Suniti Namjoshi’s *Aditi and Her Friends*, Sudha Murty’s *Magic of the Lost Temple*, and Mahasweta Devis’s *The Why Why Girl?*

Aditi and her Friends is about a girl Aditi who have “the sword of courage” whenever it is necessary. The Aditi Adventure Pack consists of twelve series of books. The author has taken care to present more feminine characters in the series. Aditi’s friends are Beautiful Ele -an elephant, Monkeyji and Siril the ant. Beautiful Ele and Monkeyji are women characters and there are three sages who are also women. Traditionally sages are represented as men of wisdom and here the three sages are women of wisdom. There are three sages – the Island Sage, the Marine Sage and the Techno Sage. The stories use the elements of magic and fantasy along with the advanced technical knowledge. There is a runaway computer programme Little I, who has sought refuge with Aditi and her friends. Even the computer programme is addressed as “she”. There are male characters too – Siril the ant and Aditi’s father, grandfather etc. The book as a work of literature subvert the traditional gender roles of women as helpless, witches and

submissive. Instead the women characters are with heroic qualities and explore the world. They even go to the outer space and cyber space.

Aditi and her friends raise questions about identity and character. In the role play with friends in *Aditi and the One-eyed Monkey* Aditi says that “I can’t be owned. I’m not an object.” (54) Women were considered to be objects and the author puts forward her idea about womanhood. Namjoshi indignantly speaks against the unfair treatment that women had during the past years.

Sudha Murty’s *The Magic of the Lost Temple* is set in the contemporary time and space. The story happens in Bangalore and in the village Somanahalli. It is the story of twelve year old girl Nooni who has grown in Bangalore and lives with her grandparents in the village for six weeks. In the six week’s stay in the village she explores the village with her friends. The innocence and beauty of village life is beautifully described to young readers and love and care that nature deserves is emphasized in the book. Nuni’s grandparents are the typical Indian grandparents where the grandmother looks after the domestic jobs and grandfather takes care of the jobs outside. But Nuni’s parents are both working and settled in the metro city of Bangalore. The stereotypical gender roles are the same for Nuni’s parents – it is the mother who does all the household works along with her job in the company. But her child protagonist Nuni is adventurous, brave, intelligent and skilled. Nuni leads her friends to an archaeological exploration fighting the odds. At many places the book gives the flavor of the Famous Five Series and the village is replete with local legends, folklore and ancient traditions.

Mahasweta Devi’s *The Why Why Girl* is her first book for young children. She raises issues of gender, class and power through her works. Myona is the curious girl child who always interrogates to know more. Rather than Aditi and Nuni she is a ten year old tribal girl who belongs to the Shabar tribe. They are marginalized and exploited people and lives on the hills. Myona always raises troubling questions like “Why do we live in a leaf hut? Why can’t we eat rice twice a day?” Though the questions seem to be innocent and simple it depicts the hardships that a downtrodden girl has to undergo. The Shabara tribes are not allowed to enjoy many rights like the mainstream society. Through Myona’s questions the narrator Mahasweta Devi asks these questions addressing the society – how the tribes are deprived of human dignity.

Myona has questions about the nature too. “Why do the stars look small when they are bigger than the sun?” She questions the nature also. At the end of the story Myona is eighteen and she is a teacher. She encourages her children to ask questions so that they will be informed. Unlike the other two girl protagonists Aditi and Nuni Myona is a child, a female and a tribe too. When Aditi and her friends live in the magical fantasy world, Nuni is an urban girl who enjoys good education, good food and the best of everything. These are three different representations of female characters in the children’s literature. There are diasporic young adult literature like *Born Confused* by Tanuja Desai Hidier and *Indian Summer* by Pratima Mitchell. The works are about girl children who were born and brought up in USA and UK respectively. It shares the agonies of being a teen girl in two cultures.

The conscious and assertive efforts from the publishers are giving more titles to the genre children’s literature with less gender stereotypes. Most of the writers who are writing for children are women – Nilima Sinha, Suniti Namjoshi, Deepa Agarwal, Vandana Sing, Sudha Murty to name a few. Writers like Anita Desai, Anita Nair, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni have

written for the young. It is welcoming to see that the portrayals of girls and women have changed over the period. Children's books have improved in such a way that there are more balanced portrayals of the sexes in recent years. At the same time gendered portrayals still exist. Older books are still available. Grimm's and Perrault's collection of fairy tales are still the favourite of the adult readers. The now adult readers like parents and grandparents read these older texts to their children. These older texts are still available in print form with beautiful illustrations. Along with that the videos and movies of many of the fairy tales are available to children. Though there are changes in the story or there is amalgamation of two or more fairy tales, the main plot remains the same. The hero has to save the princess and she is ever helpless. The fairy tales and other age old stories are now available all over the world through internet and the online sites have the titles like – *365 Fairy Tales*, *365 Bed Time Stories*, and *Fairy Stories* etc. Indian children don't have a "Wonder Woman" to cherish yet, though they had Shakthi Maan.

The gender related images presented through literature, television shows, cartoons, children's books, videos and games influence children to conceive ideas about men and women. For a society to be conscious of gender equality the concept of gender should be instilled in the children at the young age itself. Discrimination based in gender should not be entertained and the empowerment of women and girls is a necessary foundation for a peaceful and sustainable world. Providing women and girls equal access to education and giving more voices to characters in cultural productions for children will help a society to be more gender friendly.

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Gender Equity for Social Development

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Abstract

The topic deals about female gender equities. There are many novels implements female gender. Here we take one of the beautiful novels “Home” which was written by Manju Kapur. She is an Indian novelist. Her most of the novels deals with the women’s struggle in society as well as family. Heroine of this novel belongs to upper class family but she faced several problems within her family members they are namely astrology, education, household works and profession. The society insists certain false rules and norms over the women for their security. So they fail to understand what the women really need. Through this novel we are going to present how women face numerous problems according to old belief.

Key words: *Women domination, equity, struggle, social impact.*

Gender equity is the process of allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly to both males and females. This requires ensuring that everyone has access to a full range of opportunities to achieve the social, psychological and physical benefits that come from participating and leading in sport and physical activity. It does not necessarily mean making the same programs and facilities available to both males and females. Through the novel “Home” we are going to say about significant of gender equity.

The story progresses at a fast pace and soon becomes entangled with the grand children of house, of whom, Nisha is the main protagonist. Yashpal was father of Nisha who falls in love with Sona and marries her after a raging emotional blackmail of his family. As luck would have it, Sona could not bear a child for ten long years and becomes an easy target for the usual bantering by the women of the family. Sona suppress under not bear a child hence she worshiped and prayed lot but nobody understand her nutrition deficit like that nisha infested with a disease that spoils all her beauty.

Yashpal falls in love with Sona and marries her after a raging emotional blackmail of his family. After their daughter she grows up, she starts going to college and gets romantically involved with a boy, however the affair fails and Nisha is left heartbroken and is her external beauty is bargained with the internal strength and confidence of Nisha and she becomes an independent business woman. After a lot of ups and downs, she at last marries a widower and gets settled into a Home. But they refuse their daughter Nisha’s love “here we can see people accept male love but who not even try to accept female feelings.

Nisha’s mother keep on denoted her birth under bad star, instead of her ability, under astrology Nisha Suffer more problems even in her marriage life, so for this cause she married widower as the step mother of a child. so due to the astrological belief she couldn’t marry her

beloved one. This kind of problem normally occurs with the female gender. According to astrology Nisha face big challenges even same gender of her mother not even find out her needs.

Manju has described the tumultuous growing up years of Nisha in a heart rending manner as Nisha is abused by her Cousin, Vicky and though the family elders have an inkling of Vicky's incestuous behavior, they do nothing, owing to family honor. so that Nisha sanded to Sona's sister house. This is one of the mammoth inequity in the novel, normally girls are feel secure within family but she suffer within her family members due to her step brother. Though Vicky did the all mistakes towards Nisha but she only punished by migrating her residence to her relative house.

We have tried to put a lot of issues in this book which are commonly encountered in a gender in equity and are usually kept under the carpet to protect family honor and name. A lot of scheming and bantering usually goes on behind the curtains while maintaining the outer sham of a big happy family. The author has tried to bring some of those issues to the fore and due to this Home does not remain a simple story of a Karol Bagh sari seller, but gets a more universal color and makes an invigorating family saga.

Her portrayal of women, particularly Sona and her obsession to become a mother, seems very real. And so is her wonderful transition of Nisha, from an innocent beauty to a strong willed woman. Even the male characters play a strong role in the storyline and are not receded to the background as usually happens in a women oriented book.

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“Girls Your Age Think only about Marriage”: A Marxian Analysis of Nawal El Saadawi’s Short Story “In Camera”

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Abstract

"How to control dissent? How to effectively render someone voiceless? How to dehumanize someone? How to put women in their place? How to punish her for showing dissent? These are the questions that plague Nawal El Saadawi's short story, "In Camera," that is taken from the book Death of an Ex-Minister. Originally written in Arabic, the work was translated by Shirley Eber. Nawal El Saadawi a writer, feminist activist and a doctor by profession, uses explicit, strident and radical style in the presentation of women and their predicament in a male dominated society making her a reckoning force in the Arab world.

Nawal El Saadawi has been labeled a controversial writer due to her powerful and intense portrayal of female mind and body. The narrative strategy adopted is achronological, weaving the present and the past together to present an apparently amorphous and disassociated description that bring back the three tier level of repression of women. Presented in third person narrative, Saadawi introduces the female protagonist, Leila Al-Fargani, a young student about 20 years of age, produced in court as an under-trial, after being held captive for “three thousand and twenty-five hours” i.e. 126 days. The accusation against her is that she had called the President of her land a “stupid” man. The legal judicial ethos is intended to reinforce the idea of peace, genuine respect for people and fairness. On the contrary, the battered condition of the girl- her inability to gaze at the brightlight, her incapacity to walk, and her inability to comprehend the activities around her, are all taken for granted when she is produced before the judge., the Court room, the police, the government, the administration and the prison all function as the RSA’s as Althusser’s points out, the Repressive State Apparatuses that help them continue their hegemony over others. The young protagonist thus finds herself imprisoned within this vicious non-physical form (of the State functionaries) and the physical form of (the prison and the court room) that functions by inciting and inflicting violence.

While this Repressive Apparatuses function in the public realm, the Ideological apparatuses function at the private realm. The court room where the story is set represents the judicial. The age of Leila, around 19 years in a sex-gendered society makes her vulnerable. The socio-cultural construct of man and woman that underlies gendered roles within the Arab society proposes assigns a definite role for girls such as Leila. As Teresa de Lauretis would view it, her, “Gender is (a) representation,” (3) in both the subjective and social sense. Her ‘gender’, ‘age’ and her status as a ‘student’ all require her to be interpellated or hailed as a ‘good’ subject that follows the accepted dictates of the society. Yet, her imprisonment and subsequent production in court in a battered condition only speak of the contrariness.

The reason she was taken into custody, the rape of the under-trial by ten men, her being produced in the court room after 126 days of being taken into custody, and the events that follow expose the vindictive nature of the administration and the government. The story opens with the intense pain that Leila experiences from the numerous instances of rape that she survives while in prison. The horrific details of the inhuman treatment meted out to her in prison; reduces her to the state of an animal. This imagery is extended when she is unable to recognize her father and mother from among the crowd gathered to watch the proceedings, for, her vision was affected due to the third degree wounds sustained from the attack in prison. She tries instead to smell out their presence inside the courtroom.

During the trial, she has flash backs of different events that happened to her up until the day of her court date. The memory of the courtroom that surfaces into the mind of Leila is the early account of her aunt who had been asked to strip in court to see where she had been beaten by her husband. On refusing to comply, the judge rejects her claim and ordered that she return to her husband. This memory in fact serves to only re-inforce Teresa de Lauretis's observation that, "The construction of gender goes on as busily today as it did in earlier times, say the Victorian era. And it goes on not only where one might expect it to-in the media, the private and public schools, the courts, the family, nuclear or extended or single-parented-in short, in what Louis Althusser has called the "ideological state apparatus." (3). A rupture of a destabilization of this structure is dealt with in the most brutal manner, in an attempt to dissuade any other rebels or dissidents.

As the trial begins the judge, and her name is called out, she feels:

Her numbed senses awoke and her ears pricked up to the sound of that strange name: Leila Al Fargani. As though it wasn't her name. She hadn't heard it for ages. It was the name of a young woman named Leila, a young woman who had worn young woman's clothes, had seen the sun and walked on two feet like other human beings. She had been that woman a very long time ago, but since then she hadn't worn a young woman's clothes nor seen the sun or walked on two feet. For a long time she'd been a small animal inside a dark and remote cave and when they addressed her, they only used animal names. (205)

Susan Brownmiller in *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* endeavors to place the phenomenon of rape within the context of social and biological realities, to reveal its political purposes, and to counter the persistent myths surrounding it. Primarily, however, she seeks to counter the notion that rape is a sexual act. Throughout this story, the perpetrators of rape do not fulfill a natural or biological need, but rather it is grounded in the political motivation to dominate. The systems of oppressions, the RSA's interlock and serve mutually rewarding ends. Leila Al-Fargani three tier level- the political, the judicial, and the social repressive apparatuses.

When the trial begins, the judge begins by saying:

Imagine, ladies and gentlemen. This student, who is not yet twenty years old, refers to Him, whom God protects to lead this noble nation all his life, as 'stupid.'

The word *stupid* fell like a stone in a sea of awesome silence, making a sound like the crash of a rock in water or the blow of a hand against something solid, like a slap or the clap of one hand against another.

Was someone clapping? She pricked up her ears to catch the sound. Was it applause? Or a burst of laughter, like a cackle? Then that terrifying silence pervaded the courtroom once again, a long silence in which she could hear the beating of her heart. The sound of laughter or of applause echoed in her ears. She asked herself who could be applauding at so serious a moment as when the mighty one was being described as stupid, and aloud too (207).

The judge thereby, makes the mistake of repeating exactly what Leila said about the President, and the spectators in the court room applaud Leila's honest opinion. In the deliberating room, the judge gets scolded by one of his aides due to the fact that he told some details about the case that should have been told privately instead of publicly. In the end, the judge like Leila gets accused for passing disrespectful comments about the President.

In the Arab nations, politics is mainly an all-male realm and the women who are interpellated within this system, remain silent on many such subjects. In the story, Leila's parents had also reinforced this opinion that that women should stay out of politics. This memory resurfaces as she sits in the courtroom, she begins to remember what her mother said about politics, "Politics is a dirty game which only ineffectual men play" (213). The gender discrimination that she faces becomes more pronounced when her father says, "If she had been a man, he would not be suffering right now... death was preferable for him and for her now" (210). During the trial, her father, Al-Fargani, kept thinking about how he wished his daughter had listened to him. In many the father feels that he was being punished as well.

The main incident of rape inside the prison keeps resurfacing within her mind. Subsequent to this, the men assault and beat her, and she ends up with extremely blurry vision, her poor lower body becomes torn, weak, and sore from their rude behavior. She specifically remembers one of the men saying, "This is the way we torture you women-- by depriving you of the most valuable thing you possess" (208). Leila responded by saying, "The most valuable thing I possess is not between my legs. You're all stupid. And the most stupid among you is the one who leads you" (208). The very word "stupid" that brought her to this prison and brought forth the trauma at the physical and psychological level gets repeated showing that Leila refuses to accept victimization. In her attempt to reconstruct and renegotiate through the apparent connections and disconnections, the personal refuses to be subdued by the RSA's. Despite the complicated stationing of the self in the receiving end, she decides to stick by her own decision to call a spade a spade.

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‘Green’ Conservation- A Three Dimensional Perception

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Abstract

Mother Nature”, a personification of nature considering its fostering aspects links the indigenous philosophies across the world. The interconnectedness of women and nature could be seen portrayed even in the mythical narratives and epics of the ancient period. The Mother Earth discourse and the relationship of women and nature used to be a strong representation of ancient literature, employed by the scholars and poets over the centuries. According to eco feminist school of thought, every living being is related to one another and forms an integral part of the Mother Earth. Many eco feminist thinkers stand for the recognition of nature’s voice and women’s voice by acquiring an in depth understanding of Nature as Mother. This paper attempts to bring forth the relevance of the interdependence of women and nature through the life and contributions of three eminent women activists, Wangari Mathai, renowned Kenyan environmental political activist; Medha Patkar, an Indian Social activist; and Sugathakaumari, an Indian poet and activist who were the initiators of variant ecological movements.

“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe” - John Muir

Nature, a source of enlightenment and happiness, personified as ‘Mother Earth’ links indigenous philosophies across the world. The concept of ‘Mother Earth’ used to be a powerful representation of ancient literature and mythologies over the centuries. The association of women and nature could be viewed as something which is of universal prominence. The correlation of gender and nature is diverse and is likely to vary with time as gender roles change with time to time. Another factor which equates a woman and nature is that both are victims of oppression. This idea is seen propagated by the eco-feminists of the age. Many thinkers of this concept stand for the recognition of nature’s voice and women’s voice by getting hold of an in depth understanding of nature as Mother.

There had been numerous articles and readings based on the ecological system and the cult of womanhood. Studies that discuss this topic in terms of religion culture and politics is also a part of environmental studies dealt by the scholars of different ages. Ecology is a multidisciplinary concept which leads to diverse thoughts and studies as ecocriticism, ecopolitics, ecoaesthetics, literary ecology and so on. Thinkers, environmental historians and scholars have seen to be adopted an interdisciplinary enterprise which is labeled as ‘environmental humanities’. Many ‘environmental humanities’ initiatives have emerged in the last few years. Behind every venture that should be a strong force to

kindle the light of success. Perhaps these forces would become a strong element of motivation to the successive generations. As stated earlier the linkage of women and environment is seen represented even in religious texts and mythologies by renowned scholars and poets. This union is seen to be a powerful representation of bondage between two stunning creations of divinity. This union is seen to be carried over since ages, when woman herself becomes the defender of nature. In this paper an attempt is made to bring forth a three dimensional perspective of defending the ‘Mother Earth’ conception through the contributions of three legendary women activists and writers who are known for their social involvement in ecological issues. To begin with, Wangari Mathai, renowned Kenyan environmental political activist; Medha Patkar, an Indian Social activist; and Sugathakumari, an Indian poet and activist who were the initiators of variant ecological movements.

Not a bowed head, but a head that never bows adds to the beauty of a woman. This statement was proved true to the world by Wangari Mathai through her boundless knowledge and humanistic ideologies, the first woman in East and Central Africa to earn a doctorate degree. The origin of Green Belt Movement was made possible by Mathai despite of all the impediments that she had to encounter amidst her endeavors. Born in a rural area of Kenya, she showed it to the world that she could conquer the pinnacle combating alone. She believed that the peace and existence of man is wholly dependent on the conservation of environment. Seeking a solution to unravel the problems of rural women was the major challenge that Wangari had to deal with. Being closely associated with nature, her instincts could sense that whatever women had lost is that which is associated with the environment. She strongly believed that the people belonging to the rural areas needn't suffer the destruction caused by environmental obliteration. For her nothing helped more than planting trees. This paved way for The Green Belt Movement. Wangari admits that if she chose some other source other than trees, there was least chance for her to succeed.

“Education, should not take people away from the land, but instill in them even more respect for it, because educated people are in a position to understand what is being lost. The future of the planet concerns all of us, and all of us should do what we can to protect it. As I told the foresters and the women, you don't need a diploma to plant a tree” (‘Unbowed: A Memoir’)

Wangari believed that the motive of education should be to increase the intimacy between man and soil. All her activities intended the conservation of environment thereby elevating the rural women folk; nurturing nature through enriching women. She solely believed in her deeds exploring all means in the prospect of preserving the green. Her deeds prove that the title of her memoir is pertinent, ‘Unbowed’. She was not willing to bow her head amidst all her pursuits, where she had to undergo racial discrimination and often a victim of male superiority right from her school days. Her memoir, her work on Green Belt Movement and other works is a manifestation of her resoluteness.

Another luminary, who is known for her forefront movements in environmental and feminist activities in Kerala is the Malayalam poet Sugathakumari. Being a well known poet, she played a pivotal role in the Save Silent Valley protest. Eventhough her

early works witnessed the quest of love, her latest works saw the increasingly feminist perspective and responses to social injustices prevalent in the contemporary social order. Her responses to environmental issues were seen portrayed in her poems and prose collections. In her poem 'California Kadukalil' ('In the forests of California') she expresses her ardent love and concern for her own homeland when she stands amidst variant species of trees which are unfamiliar to her. Here she portrays the secure feeling she experience just as she feels in her native soil when she finds herself with the trees in California. This implies that to value nature becomes indispensable for the tranquil existence of mankind.

The interconnectedness of women and nature idea can very well be demonstrated through Sugathakumari's perceptions. For her, woman, nature and soil, share the same traits. They are the victims of repression. Normally, in literary works by women, her ideas, to a certain extent tend to be directed by a male standpoint. Sugathakumari's works are an exception. Her words reflected the strength of her outlook. She possessed a unique moral alertness and compassion. She is also known as an environmentalist whose works adorned a space for the 'Mother earth'. A person with a sharp outlook, contributed not only through her pen, but also through her social activities which is very well noted in the Save Silent Valley protest.

She considers soil and nature as untainted and legitimate which is contaminated by the unclean hands of advancement. Her attitude towards the unhealthy practices which is seen prevalent in our society could be made out from her incisive responses. "Teacher", fondly addressed by her close associates, is indeed a mentor of all inhabitants dwelling in this magnificent environment.

Medha Patkar, a strategist of the people's movement 'Narmada Bachao Andolan', is an Indian Social activist who works on various political and environmental issues faced by the backward classes and also women facing discrimination. The movement 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' intended to cease the construction of dams on the river Narmada. The completion of this project was likely to plunge vast areas of forests and farmlands which would displace the inhabitants, mostly tribal communities who are reliant on the natural resources. She is yet another representation of the association of woman and environment. Different from Sugathakumari's efforts, Medha Patkar protested against the social disorder and injustices rampant in the society, against women and environmental issues through her potent involvement in various movements organized by her. She was indeed an epitome of vigor. Her 'Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan', National Alliance of People's Movements are noticeable instances. Her acquaintance with nature is mirrored in her approach towards the social issues and the vigor with which she deals with these affairs. According to her the culture of a particular group is important within the space where they are confined to.

As nature's spokespersons, the ultimate emotion they hold on to might be the same, but obviously the means would be different. The feeling that they possess would be similar, as the nature's instinct and a woman's instinct enjoys the same sensation. When Sugathakumari speaks through her pen apart from the social movements, Medha Patkar speaks for the oppressed and injustices by valiantly involving herself in various mass struggles across the country. A close analyzing of the woman nature relationship, reveals that, just as nature exchange blows unable to tolerate the subjugation, a woman

shows the same vigor when she defends herself against something. When Wangari decided to plant trees, she had in her mind multiple advantages. This benefits the rural Kenyan women folk who hardly had any exposure and by planting trees Wangari intended to fight against deforestation.

At times, confronting situations where decision making turn out to be crucial becomes inevitable in one's life, i.e., 'to be at crossroads'. So it is very important to know what decision he or she is going to take. It could be for ourselves, or for someone whom we associate with or for the society and so on. It is a universal notion that if a woman is emotionally inclined to situations that makes it evident that she is weak. And our society seem to exploit this very often. Submissiveness, empathy sympathy etc often exposes the vulnerable side of women. But these emotions and reactions are not the weaker side of women. On the contrary this proves to be their real strength. The three social activists cited in this paper are a true depiction of this.

There are many activists who are the propagators of the significance of nurturing the Mother earth. Many eco feminists view that the split that exists between the nature and culture could be healed only by the feminine instinct to foster nature's processes. Here the three women figures aspire to rear the environment by adopting their own strategy. The influence these people shower upon others is beyond limits. Their motive is not just nature preservation but emancipation of women, nature's equivalent. Aldo Leopold quoted, "Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land". This state of harmony is to be retained for the peaceful existence of living beings. Emergence of urbanization resulted in positioning man at the centre and all the elements of nature is meant to be conquered by man. As a result nature was exploited to a great extent. But today we human beings realize that this conception is erroneous and this insight tends to unite people all over to shield the Mother earth.

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Hannah Easton-A New Woman in *The Holder of the World*

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Abstract

Bharati Mukherjee is a well-known feminist writer in English Literature. She is one of the most influential literary figures of Indian women writers in English who is honoured as the "Grande dame of diasporic Indian English literature. She has been termed as an Asian-American writer, Indo-American writer, Indian Diaspora writer, writer of immigrant fiction and no-fiction, and American writer of mainstream today. She has written numerous novels which mainly focus on the difficulties faced by the woman expatriates. The psychical journey of the female hero not only leads to probing of the self but also makes her recognize the other side of herself. In this process of inward journey the protagonist has to encounter several hurdles and pitfalls. Her characters are very bold to adapt the new culture and new circumstances. They are fighters and survivors. The Holder of the world is the remarkable novel which deals with the tremendous transformation of a female hero Hannah Easton. This paper scrutinizes the progression and transformation of Hannah Easton as a new woman in The Holder of World.

Keywords: diasporic, hurdles, immigrant

Bharati Mukherjee's *The Holder of the World*, the main character Hannah Easton is subject to many traumatic experiences. It is the best unique fiction. From her childhood until her adult life, she is forced to deal with many situations. These awful experiences are responsible for shaping her attitude towards life. Although these occurrences affect her attitude towards life, she has not yet developed a true sense of herself. By the closure of *The Holder of the World*, Hannah Easton is finally able to discover her true identity as a result of her experiences around the world. The novel has a wide canvas that sweeps across continents, cultures and religions. The west meets the East and the New World falls in love with the Old World. Hannah Easton, the citizen of the New World, undergoes the process of translation in her journey from the West to the East. Sharukh Hussain in his article 'Indian Women Writer in Britain and America novels on the Asian Experience: journey to the Promised land' has described journey as:

“ A move from one country or city to another, the experience of meeting people, strange environments and all the paraphernalia that goes with the actual, physical movement from one place to another. In short a substantial change of both landscapes-mental and physical”

Unlike the other protagonists of Mukherjee's novels, Hannah Easton travels not from East to East but just the opposite, from West to East. The novel is about time travelling. The opening lines of the novel "I live in three time zones simultaneously, and I don't mean Eastern, Central and Pacific. I mean the past, the present and the future"

Hannah Easton, the protagonist in *The Holder of the World*, was born in Salem, Massachusetts in the 17th century. At a very young age her father died from a bee sting and her mother deserted her to live with a Native American whom she adored a Native American lover. Hannah's early life surrounded as she is by the harsh world of Puritan simplicity, echoes of Christian service, charity and hard work. A Nipmuc woman takes Hannah, the deserted child and places her at the doorstep of the Fitches' farm. Robert and Susannah Fitch become the foster parents of Hannah. She becomes Hannah Fitch. It is her first translation. Hannah Easton feels that she is never meant to live in the Puritan world, because she witnessed her mother abandon her for an Indian lover. She tries desperately to keep this dark secret from the people of Salem. Hannah always looks at herself as a "...worthless sinner and the daughter of Satan's lover" (Mukherjee 42).

She is orphaned when her widowed mother ran off with her Native American lover under the cover of massacre, Hannah nearly goes mad keeping her mother's secret from her Puritan rescuers and is happy to escape with the only sort of man who would marry her. Her memories or her mother's abduction by her Indian lover and her disappearance into the wildness, physically breaking the barriers of her Puritan society, remains her mind forever. This later helps her to embrace the new, exotic world of Mughal India in it's entirety for it is the world that she is in search of. The unpredictable happens at the age of twenty one when Gabriel Legge bursts into the life of Hannah. Hannah Easton marries Gabriel Legge and moves to England. A journey of Hannah Easton is not by Chance or forced one. It is more an escape from the rule bound, claustrophobic influence of Puritan world. Hannah's early life points most emphatically a fascination for passion and feeling, which she weaves her colourful, bright tapestries:"the embroidery is the embodiment of desire" a desire to escape from the dull, grey of Puritan outpost.

" A twelve year old puritan orphan who had never been out of Massachusetts imagined an ocean, Palm trees, thatched collages, and black skinned men casting nets and colourfully garbed, bare-breasted women mending them: native barbs and on the horizon, high masted schooners..., through bright-green foliage, a ghostly white building it could even be the Taj Mahal – is rising" (44).

Her journey to England is a significant in the sense, she moves from the colony to the colonial centre. It dawns on Hannah that Gabriel has "no land to root him and not a goat's worth of family fortune". Hannah's married life in London itself a testament to the total absence of passion, personal involvement and love between her and her husband. While in England Hannah Easton feels a void as well. Being a Puritan American in England fueled her sense misplacement. Eventually the reader is put under the impression that Hannah is beginning to develop a sense of identity and a sense of happiness after her first few months in England, Mukherjee states Hannah polished her correspondence, observed the world that passed outside her cottage, tended her garden, content, too, with the harmonious arrangement of houses and gardens all around her and with the tidiness of the meadows and the shallow placidity of the little ponds just beyond—and fell, briefly in love (78). This attitude of contentment departed with the death of Gabriel. Gabriel died during a sea voyage, and Hannah is forced to live alone. At the

age of twenty three she becomes a widow, a mere prelude to her real widowhood later. She becomes a popular healer of scalped heads. Hubert, a researcher in Royal society, offers her the job of governess in Cambridge. But Hannah's alternative prospects of life are cast off by the sudden reappearance of Gabriel. After a few years Gabriel mysteriously returned to England, and he took up employment with the East India Company. Gabriel and Hannah moved to a city on the Coromandel Coast of India. "She wanted to earn, not inherit, dignity. She moved on without regrets" (90). Eventually Gabriel tells Hannah that he wants to join French sailing crew and become a pirate. Gabriel pursues his dream and Hannah is left alone in her isolated home for months at a time. As her husband ventures into the interiors of a sub-continent, she is supposed to limit herself in the four walls of the house because of the ploy that there were, "incommodious facilities for whytte women of gentle byrthe"(142). However Hannah has recognized the wilderness of this land, which calls out to the longings of her mind, and she cannot be contained any longer. First enclosed in Puritan Salem, then insular England and finally in Fort Sebastian where petty politics for power and position designs every relationship, Hannah comes to an understanding of that unspeakable night when her mother had run away from a stifling puritan widowhood to the charm of open spaces. Hannah is bewildered by this odd customs. She encounters on the Coromandel Coast. She has a particularly hard time accepting the fact that the English men casually have affairs with local women called bibis. This odd factor is responsible for her questioning of the English society. Gabriel is no exception to the English infidelity. "Wherever he traveled, he planted his seed" (143). While in India Gabriel leaves the East India Company and becomes a pirate and Hannah is once again left alone. To fill this void Hannah Easton becomes the mistress of a Hindu king.

During a massive storm Hannah and her maid Bhagmati nearly drown in a flooded river. Luckily she is saved by the King Jadav Singh's soldiers. Hannah and the king form a deep friendship and she eventually becomes his mistress this is how Hannah earns the name the Salem Bibi. The Bibis are characterized by their sheer fleetingness and inability to tie down the English man for a lasting commitment. From the women's point of view, the bibi is an object to be at once ignored and over-looked but also to be suspiciously avoided. To Hannah's friends "a bibi is an annoyance, but not a threat"(131). The bibi, Hannah is told has to be admitted as a natural consequences of married life for "accommodation was synonymous with expatriate femininity."(134). The reader now sees that Hannah attempts to develop her identity by becoming a Bibi. She becomes a bibi to Jadav Singh. Hannah's yearning, her desire to attain a kind of passionate salvation as a way of recreating her mother's choice in the forest is largely fulfilled in her encounter with Raja Jadav Singh. Her courtship with the Raja indicates a relationship based entirely on Indian, "Eastern" values and morality with little reference to the life left behind. In fact, as Hannah admits herself, she had left Gabriel for having a bibi but within a few months, she willingly becomes one herself, suspending all morality, all expectations of conventional relationships. Jadav Singh offers Hannah a life of limitless possibilities of passion with abandon and sensuous pleasures undreamt of in the English world. It is this experience of being overwhelmed in love of being possessed to the point of distraction that Hannah embraces with the totality of her being and little moral speculation. She enjoys her new identity. Hannah delves for new roots and with her fine quality of adaptability; she steps into the new world of Hinduism. She and Jadav Singh woo each other ignoring the sword of Damocles, the Nawab Haider Beg, Governor of Aurangzeb's state. The Nawab dispatches his most ruthless commander, Morad Farah, to arrest Raja. Jadav Singh puts Hannah and her caretakers and good companion Bhagmati into a palanquin. On the way to Nawab, the Raja attacks Mughal army. While fighting

this war he is severely wounded and Hannah uses herb treatments that her mother taught her to save the king's life. Even though Hannah's intentions are noble, she fails in restoring the king back to normal. It is at this point where the character of Hannah Easton is able to develop her true sense of identity. The fact is this, Hannah is able to finally comprehend that she is not British or Indian, but rather she is a New Englander. She is able to understand that she is no ordinary person rather that she has led an extremely unique and special life. Hannah kills Morad Farah and saves his life. She brings him back to Panpur. The act of taking Indian lover is something so courageous and great that it elevates Hannah to the status of goddess. In Hannah's character, we find adaptability she proves to be,

“A pure product of time and space, her marriage and her training, exposed to range of experience that would be extreme even in today's world but none of it, consciously, had in or affected her outward behavior”(220).

Cultural translation helps Hannah to expand herself and to face life boldly. She returns to Salem with her child named Pearl Singh and finds her mother in a workhouse for the mad in Providence Plantation. She runs a multi-ethnic, multi-racial family with her daughter whom people call 'Black Pearl', her mother and her five Nipmuc Children. Hannah takes out a life as a Nurse, a Veterinarian and a Doctor. Though responsible and respectable citizens avoid her services, her clients stay back to listen to her stories. Hannah Easton discovers herself by the end of this novel as a result of her travels around the globe. Her relationship with the various people she meets affects the way she looks at life. She observes other people's trials and tribulations and then examines her own. Hannah Easton leads an extraordinary life and her experiences in New England, England and India all work to help her answer the question—Who is she and what has she done to make her life worthwhile? Hannah Easton leads an extraordinary life of courage, passion, and will power. She finds herself by combining these three vital aspects. At the commencement of this book Hannah is just a young girl ashamed of her past and her heritage by the end she is a grown woman who accepts her life and develops a sense of identity as well as courage. Like any other feminist writer Bharati Mukherjee's women characters offer “a formal challenge to patriarchal thought, social organization and control mechanism”. In the novel, we can see two advantages of women's liberation, which Bharati Mukherjee thinks, is not only 20th century phenomenon but are prevalent in the epic period as well as seventeenth century. First it allows the women to realize their potential as individuals in the wider society. Secondly it is the only means by which it can attain personal recognition. There is little description of Hannah's life. Once she crosses the border and establishes herself in the palace of Jadav Singh. No doubt Singh is killed but even before his death the attitude of the other women in his palace and especially that of his mother makes it clear that Hannah's attempt to assimilate her in a culture that considers her as something unclean is bound to fail.

In conclusion, Hannah, the puritan girl from Massachusetts, travels the globe, crosses three continents, straddles cultures and translates herself. Literally and metaphorically, she crosses geographical boundaries, racial distinctions, religious barriers, cultural differences and linguistic hurdles. Her journey is also a quest for liberation and her journey continues till she reaches the ultimate fulfillment of her passions. By creating the western protagonist like Hannah Easton, Mukherjee has attempted to widen the scope of her fictional world. Hannah's journey to India is fraught with images of adventure, action and passion. She returns to her native land, not as a reformed American but a rebel living on the fringes of society. Her life succeeds in

questioning and discovering new ways of defining reality in a world which is essentially orthodox.

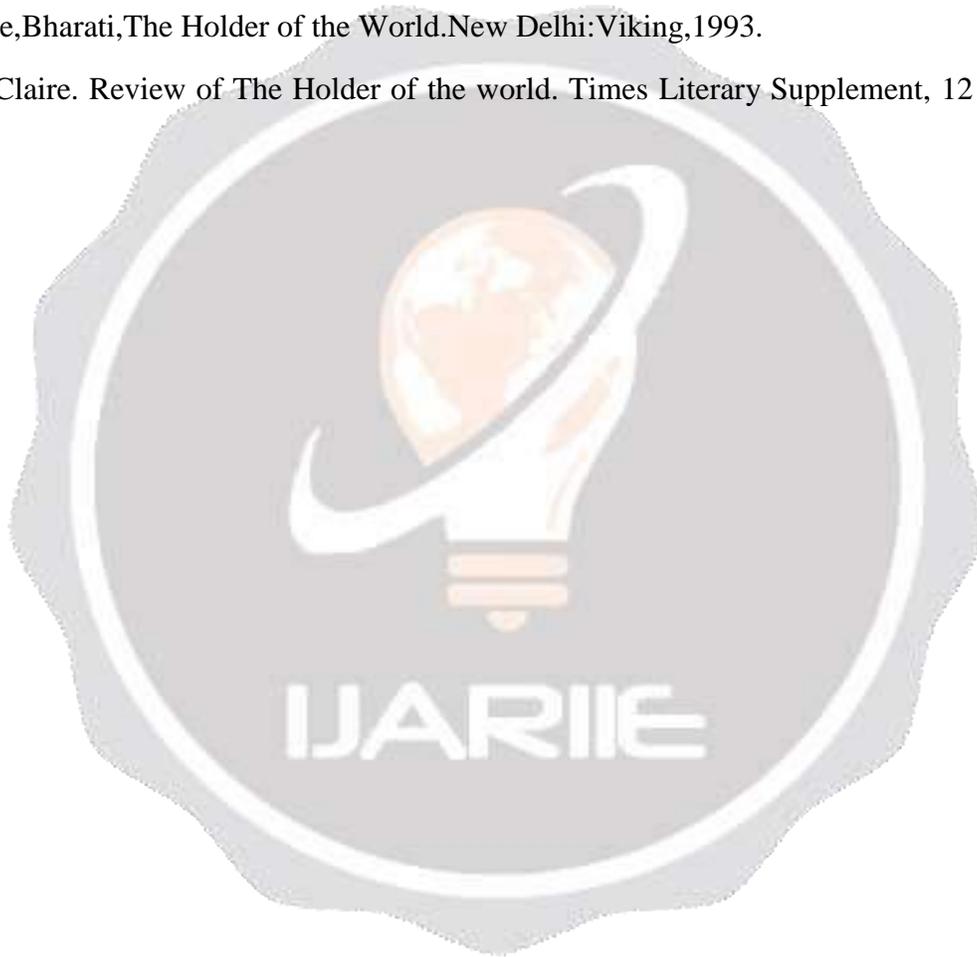
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Indian Marriage System and Married Women's Quest for Identity in the Indian Feminist Novels *Ancient Promises* and *That Long Silence*

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Abstract

In orthodox Indian marriages, a wife is expected to take the role of submissive homemaker, who is to be at home to look after the affairs of the family without an exposure to outside world. The female protagonists, Janu in Jaishree Misra's Ancient Promises and Jaya in Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence enter into wedlock only to realize that they have to live the rest of their life as the shadow of their husbands without an identity of their own. Janu sacrifices her teenage love and marries a person from reputed Marar family, handpicked by her parents in order to preserve the prestige of her family. Though she finds herself in a loveless marriage, she tries her level best to fit into the mould of a true, meek and submissive wife and as a result her individuality gets annihilated. Jaya's situation is not that different. Marriage brings a complete transformation in her personality. From bold Jaya, she becomes submissive Suhasini, who suppresses her talent as writer and devotes herself to the comforts of her husband and her children. She keeps on changing herself according to her husband's likes and dislikes and in this process, she compromises her needs and desires. In both the novels readers can witness the female protagonists' struggle to find a space of their own. The tradition bound institution of marriage makes both the married women literally voiceless. Towards the end of the novel, Janu emerges as a bold woman who achieves self-identity and independence by breaking the bond of marriage. Whereas, Suhasini retrospects her married life spanning seventeen years and emerges from the shadow of her husband to become Jaya, the woman of individuality, but by remaining within the confines of marriage. The paper is an attempt to study the plight of the Indian women who are forced to conform to the traditional system of marriage and their quest for identity in the light of Indian feminist novels Ancient Promises and That Long Silence.

Keywords: *Orthodox Indian Marriages, Married Women, Quest for Identity.*

According to Indian Tradition a wife is expected to possess virtues like “Karyeshu Mantri, Karaneshu Daasi, Rupeshu Lakshmi, Kshamayaa Dharitrii, Bhojyeshu Mata, Shayaneshu Rambha, Shat Karma Yukta, Kula Dharma Patni.” So in Orthodox Indian families from early childhood itself, a girl is conditioned in such a way so as to acquire all the qualities that are required for her to become an ideal wife in future. Thus a girl is brought up with the conception that she cannot be a good wife unless she remains submissive to her husband keeping in tune with his feelings, likes, dislikes and desires and thereby merging her identity in that of his identity.

The novel *Ancient Promises* by Jayasree Misra is a realistic portrayal of the status of an Indian wife, who sticks on to tradition, in the contemporary society. The protagonist of the novel Janu is a Malayalee Nair girl born in Kerala but raised and educated in Delhi. In spite of her Delhi upbringing, she is constantly reminded of her roots and values. Her parents uproot her from Delhi to Kerala in order to nip at the bud her teenage love for Arjun, a cricketer in a local school in Delhi. So, at the age of eighteen, out of filial obligation and also to maintain the prestige of her family, she agrees to marry a person named Suresh who is much older than her but from the reputed Marar family. She says, “I looked around me, here were all the faces that I had loved virtually from the moment I was born. It would be so easy to make everyone happy...” (62). Besides, her mother’s words “The reputation of families were carried on the shoulders of their daughters”(46-47) must have entrapped her to say ‘yes’ to this marriage proposal. In the words of Anuradha Roy “The emphasis on family honour is a subtle patriarchal strategy to enslave women to a fixed code in which maintenance of the honour becomes the supreme goal” (119).

Mrs. Kannan Menon in one of her articles remarks: “One does not even know whether the person one is supposed to wed is good-natured or otherwise, good-looking or not; and so on. A woman’s duty is to present at the fixed hour of marriage in the prearranged place and then to suffer all the harassment, privation and frustration caused by that husband”(44). At the time of wedding ceremony itself Janu realizes what is in store for her once she becomes a wife. The ceremony makes her understand that she is supposed to play the submissive role by following in the footsteps of her husband. Janu says, “While walking around the flickering vilakku at the temple with my head bowed, I’d plenty of time to observe his feet as he walked ahead of me. I’d felt a sudden lurching realization that I was getting more time to familiarise myself with the feet of man I was marrying than his face!”(84).

The novel *That Long Silence* which won the prestigious ‘Sahitya Academi Award’ for the author Sashi Deshpande portrays the plight of an Indian wife who is leading a dull and monotonous married life which has lost its freshness. The protagonist of the novel Jaya is an educated middle class girl who is brought up in a family atmosphere that gives much importance to tradition and values. Like Janu of *Ancient Promises*, she also enters into an arranged marriage at the insistence of her Dadda and Ramukaku, to Mohan, an engineer by profession but who sticks on to tradition. Before marriage Jaya had an optimistic bend of mind thanks to her father’s encouraging words “I named you Jaya,” he said, “Jaya for victory” (15). After marriage her husband renames her “Suhashini” wanting her to be always, “Soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman.”(16). Marriage brings a transformation not only in her name but also in her personality. From bold Jaya she becomes submissive Suhasini who is ready for compromises and sacrifices to become an ideal wife.

Suresh has been looking for a bride who is pretty, young, fluent in English and who is ready to adjust. He agrees to marry Janu as she possesses these qualities. Nothing else is important to him. In the same way Mohan wishes his wife to be modern and educated, but also expects her to have traditional qualities like submissiveness and flexibility. So he marries cultured and convent educated Jaya in order to elevate his social status. He decides to marry her when he sees her speaking English fluently. Later he tells “ You know, Jaya, the first day I met you at your Ramukaku’s house, you were talking to your brother, Dinkar, and somehow you sounded so much like that girl, I think it was at that moment that I decided I would marry you.

(90). In his opinion his mother was an ideal wife and an epitome of feminine virtues. He says, “My mother never raised her voice against my father however badly he behaved to her” (83). He expects the same submissiveness from his wife as well.

Janu is not comfortable in the Marar family. The problems she has to face are numerous. She is being treated as an outcast by her in-laws. To add to her woes, her husband Suresh does not have any concern for her. He is more concerned about his business. He is an expert at “the art of escape”. In the guise of business tours he always gets detached from his wife. She tries her level best to fit into the mould of a true, meek and submissive wife and as a result her own identity becomes a question mark. To become a typical Kerala home maker she changes from Jeans to Saree and from her free speaking English to little known Malayalam. Speaking in English is regarded as stylish and her brand of Malayalam often invites sarcastic laughter in the Marar house hold. Soon after her marriage, her mother-in-law reminds her: “Like it or not, you now live in Kerala, so I suggest you drop all these fashionable Pleases and Thank Yous” (80). As a result she limits her vocabulary to monosyllabic words. Her hope that the arrival of a child will change the attitude of the family gets shattered when she delivers a mentally retarded child Riya. She realises that Riya is an unwelcome and undesired child in the Marar family. The child does not get any attention and care from Suresh either.

After her marriage, Jaya, who used to consider herself to be independent and intelligent, shapes herself to suit her husband’s model of a wife. In order to please her husband, who wants his wife looks modern, she even transforms her appearance. She gets her hair cut and wears dark glasses. She sacrifices her desires and comforts for marital harmony. In her own words “If Gandhari, who bandaged her eyes to become blind like her husband, could be called an ideal wife, I was an ideal too. I bandaged my eyes tightly. I didn’t want to know anything” (61). She even discards her writing career as she does not want to do anything that hurts Mohan “ . . . because I had been scared – scared of hurting Mohan, scared of jeopardizing the only career I had, my marriage’ (144). Besides, she keeps on remembering Vanithammai’s advice “a husband is like a sheltering tree. Keep the tree alive and flourishing even if you have to water it with deceit and lies” (32) and Ramukaka’s words, “Remember, Jaya, the happiness of your husband and home depends entirely on you” (38). In this process, she feels that she has no identity, no status of her own. When the editor of a magazine asks her to give them her bio-data, she feels that she has nothing meaningful in her life. She thinks of only irrelevant facts: “I was born. My father died when I was fifteen. I got married to Mohan. I have two children and I did not let a third one live” (2).

The protagonists of both the novels find themselves in a loveless marriage. Janu’s husband never tries to be her companion by providing her emotional, moral and physical support. He never responds to her worries and feelings. She says, “He didn’t seem to notice at all . . . that there were hundreds of opportunities like that one, missed carelessly and without thought for the price we would have to pay later. Tiny little chances to ask each other how we were feeling. To talk and share our thoughts and learn to become friends” (90) Their physical relationship is also devoid of love, fun and exchange of words. Janu says, “It felt awkward to be kissed by a mouth that had not verty much to say to me up to that point” (87). Jaya’s case also is not different. As a husband, Mohan never tries to understand his wife, her emotions and her psychological needs. She finds in her relationship with Mohan nothing except emptiness as she tells Mukta: “...

nothing between me and Mohan either. We lived together but there had been only emptiness between us” (185). She realizes that despite seventeen years of married life, they have not become one, only their bodies occasionally meet, not their souls. She says about their physical relationship as, “The only words between us had been his question ‘Did I hurt you?’ and my answer, ‘No’. Each time, after it was over, the same question; and my reply too, invariably the same – ‘No’” (95).

Mohan’s greed for money and other material comforts lands him in charges of corruption and an inquiry is in progress. He plans to move to Dadar flat to escape from the public and shame. He asks for Jaya’s approval. Without any protest Jaya follows him like, “Sita following her husband into exile, Savitri dogging Death to reclaim her husband, Draupathi stoically sharing her husband’s travails . . .” (11). She thinks: “Two bullocks yoked together . . . it is more comfortable for them to move in the same direction. To go in different directions would be painful; and what animal would voluntarily choose pain?” (11-12).

As the Marar family is not concerned about her and her daughter, Janu decides to take things in her hand. For the sake of Riya she decides to leave abroad to continue her studies so that she can take Riya and treat her. She leaves for Delhi to attend the interview for Scholarship where she accidentally meets her Arjun. Their pent-up feelings aroused and they realize that they still love each other. She goes to Arjun’s house and there she succumbs to her love for Arjun. Thus she enters into an extra-marital relationship with Arjun. But she does not feel any prick of conscience for cheating her husband. She decides to end her ten years married life with Suresh in order to start a new life with Arjun.

Since it is a life of compromises and sacrifices it steals the warmth and fragrance of Jaya’s married life as well. Like Janu, she is also driven towards extra-marital affair with a middle aged man named Kamat, her neighbour in Dadar flat, who criticizes her writing in an encouraging way which in fact instills a positive energy in her. Jaya feels that she has an individuality only in the presence of Kamat as she says, “With this man I had not been a woman. I had been just myself – Jaya. There had been an ease in our relationship I had never known in any other. There had been nothing I could not say to him. And he too . . .” (153). The relationship reaches the verge of physical relationship but the value bound wife in her reminds her that she is Mohan’s wife and thereby saves her from committing the sin of adultery. Kamat dies unexpectedly and knowing his death Jaya leaves him deliberately for fear of social disgrace.

In the verbal battle between Janu and Suresh that ensues Delhi episode we see a bold Janu who has mustered courage to tell her husband that “Suresh, I want a divorce” (213). In order to thwart her plan Suresh refuses to part Riya. So Janu is forced to leave for England without Riya, where she spends one year studying and reliving lost moments with Arjun. But she is not able to reconcile with a life without her daughter. She leaves England to return to India and fight for custody of her daughter. Suresh reconciles himself to a divorce, hands over Riya and the novel ends on a happy note with Janu starts enjoying a fresh lease of life with her Arjun and her daughter Riya.

Jaya also enters into an altercation with her husband when Mohan justifies his corruption stating that he did everything only for the comforts of Jaya and children. Jaya gets annoyed as

she could not accept her husband's fake reasons. He finally accuses her of not being supportive to him at times of difficulties. "You've never been here. Servants, neighbours – you've grabbed at anyone, at any excuse to avoid me" (116). She blames Mohan for ending her writing career. She even feels to add that, "I've sacrificed my life for you and the children" (120). Out of her despair, she even burst into laughter. Utterly shocked Mohan leaves home. Mohan's absence makes her to enter into a re-examination of her married life of 17 years, where she finds herself as an unfulfilled wife who has been leading a dull and monotonous married life by smothering her individuality. In her attempt to rediscover her true self, she emerges as an individual with a distinct identity, who rejects the idea of marriage as "two bullocks yoked together". She says "Two bullocks yoked together-that was how I saw the two of us the day we came here, Mohan and I. Now I reject the image. It's wrong."(191)

Janu's quest for self identity makes her bold who no longer is ready to suffer as traditional Indian wives do. Her rebellion craving for individuality and a space of her own prompts her to take an unconventional step by walking out of her marriage. In the novel Janu actually begins her narration "my marriage ends today" (3). Thus Janu regains her identity the moment she decides to quit her marital entrapment. Unlike Janu, Jaya does not seek divorce from Mohan and thereby put an end to her married life. She transforms herself to a woman of individuality and identity but wants to remain within the confines of marriage. As Deshpande in her article on *How to Read – or Rather, How Not to Read the Writing of Women* says, "Jaya decides to continue with her marriage, it is not because she is accepting the traditional role of a wife; on the contrary, she has rejected all the traditional ideas of roles in the course of her thinking. As she says, she has begun to see the world differently. And therefore, she goes back into the marriage a changed person, knowing her life can never be the same again."(14). So towards the end of the novel we can see the reincarnation of bold Jaya from the ashes of submissive Suhasini.

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Influence of Mass Media among Tribal Women in Coimbatore District

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Abstract

Mass media is a significant driving force in modern culture in this century. The role of the mass media in shaping the society cannot be underestimated while the society developed itself from one society to another; same does the media from radio, television, newspapers and presently the internet. Mass media is a powerful influencer in the present go of life bringing changes in the life styles of the people in all kinds of society. Starting from book to internet it has catalytic action to the wide population. It acts as a mass mobilizer irrespective of literacy and distributes message abruptly. There was a time where the rural India had no chance to think over a daily newspaper, whereupon there was a wide gap for the media to reach the rural. Nevertheless now rural culture with urban taste prevails at some extent however there is still a long way to create awareness among the rural compared with the urban society. Similarly the tribes living in socially isolated places possessing certain qualities and characteristics that make them have a unique cultural, social and political entity too have started accessing media for various purposes dictated by their interest like usage of television, radio, newspaper and now internet and smart devices. Mass media-especially the television has influenced the women to certain extent in their pattern of living, educating themselves in various fields and also provides a space in adapting to modern culture. Hence there has been a change fetched in the living and communication pattern of the people which has brought the need to understand the influence of media among tribal women and analyze the extent of influence. Thus the present study aims to describe the changes in the cultural practices like dance, music, dress and so on due the access of mass media and its impact on the tribal woman. The study was conducted among 41 respondents using random sampling procedure in Coimbatore district. And accordingly simple percentage method was adopted for the analyses of data. Thus from the outcomes of the study, mass media has created a high degree of influence even among tribal women. And it is clear that media have broadened the vision and outlook of the tribal women in modern society.

Keywords: Mass media, tribes, tribal women

Media is a forerunner of globalization. Media in all forms plays a vital role in society. From the spreading of newspaper after printing technology become viable from its previous complex forms in 18th century, to the smart gadgets. The study on media is not a new concept, but then to take this spot is not without a reason. Media, the most effective driving force of modern civilization in this century. When the society developed itself from one stage to another, same does the media. From this we can easily assume, that society decides the media. To put it simply, society is the one which decides media and it constructs what kind of media it want.

Whereas media like TV radio, print media, internet can reflect the society and through that it can impact society also.

Tribe is a common term which used to denote the people of the land i.e. ‘son of the soil’. But still there large number of alter opinions and views about the term, in which the people to be denote. In India politicians including people working in public sphere call them as “Aadhi vasis”. Tribal people constitute 8.6% of the nation's total population, over 104 million people according to the 2011 census. As tribes is least one on the list. The media not even spared them. In fact the impact of media is extremely lies on tribal people these days. The perception, opinion and attitude towards the various things also media takes the greater part.

Among the different types of tribal group Irula's are the prominent and important tribal community in a considerable numbers being the 7th largest populated tribal community in Tamil Nadu with about 9116 living in Tamilnadu. Irular live in two south Indian states– Tamil Nadu and Kerala. In Tamil Nadu they live in the Nilgiris, Coimbatore and Erode districts. In Kerala they live in the Palakkad district and Attapady and Walayarpanchayats.

The tribal women are more exposed to television than any other means of mass media. Though they are aware of it they prefer television to the other (radio, newspaper, and internet). Their day is not completed without television and it has become a major role in the life of tribal people. So it is necessary to see to what extent this media has its role among the tribes especially the women.

A study of the review of literature is as follows:

Anita Saurabh (2012) in her study reveals that the women believe that communication medium has both positive and negative impacts. The positive impact includes increase in awareness and gain of more confidence to come out of their houses and develop their status in social, political, and economical fields. An important impact was the gain of knowledge regarding rights among women. The negative aspects are the increase in craze of western culture resulting in loss of Indian traditions.

Viduthalai P, Kadeswaran S and Natarajan V (2013) their paper aims to discuss the cultural background of Malayali tribes located in Salem district, Tamil Nadu and their viewing experience of various mass media. The study reveals that most of the tribal people are exposed to television rather than the other media like newspaper and radio. A free television scheme for every home, a governmental scheme led to the use of television in these villages. Most of them treat the media as an entertainment and recreation medium only.

Vijaykumar Meti (2014) in his research aims to find out the impact of television on the tribal community Hakki-Pikki of Karnataka. The study reveals that television is their main source of information, education and entertainment. Here we can see an important aspect, that though they are illiterate, their urge to the informative and educative programs. The findings also bring out the group of people is evolving changes in their lifestyle through their television viewing habits and focuses on how television, has helped in increasing general awareness among the tribes. However, a considerable percentage of respondents are not sure whether it has a positive improvement in their lifestyle. Majority feel the entertainment programs affected them most while most respond there is a balance between entertainment, information and educational programs.

Objectives of the study:

- To analyze the cultural practice among the tribal women (irulas) in the selected rural area of Coimbatore district.
- To examine the impact of mass media among the tribal women in the selected study area.

Methodology:

The study was conducted in selected tribal village of Coimbatore district. Coimbatore district was purposefully selected because it is 7th the largest populated tribal communities in Tamilnadu with a population of 9116. For the purpose of the study 41 tribal women (irular) were selected randomly. The selected data has been arranged by using simple percentage method.

Analysis and interpretation:

Table No.1: Distribution of the respondents based on different characteristics

S.no	Characteristics	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Age	11-20	4	9.75
		21-30	22	53.67
		31-40	13	31.71
		40 above	2	4.87
2	Education	Primary	4	9.75
		High school	31	75.60
		Degree/diploma	3	7.33
		Illiterate	2	4.87
3	Occupation	Employed	4	9.75
		Student	13	31.70
		House wife	24	58.55
		TOTAL	41	100%

From the above table we find **53.67%** of the respondents lie below the age group 21-30, **31.71%** of the respondents belong to the age group 31-40 and **9.75%** lies in the age group 31-40, **9.75%** lie between 11-20, and **4.87%** lie above the age group of 40.

Table No 2: Distribution of respondents based on the practice of customs

S.no	Characteristics	Category	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Tribal language	Yes	38	92.68
		No	3	7.31
2	Customs	Dance, song	41	100
3	Worship	Idol	40	97.57
		Nature	1	2.43
		TOTAL	41	100

From the above table we find all the **92.68%** of them practice their language, and customs like dance and song are practiced every year by all of the respondents. About **97.57%** of them worship idols and **2.43%** nature.

Table No 3: Distribution of the respondents based on food habits

S.No.	Desirable Food	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Kali, varagu	5	12.19
2	Rice	11	26.83
3	Normal food	10	24.39
4	Modern food	15	36.59
	Total	41	100%

The above table assumes a high proportion of the respondents **36.59%** prefer to take modern food, **26.83%** prefer rice, and **12.19%** of them desire to have food like kali and varagu, and **24.39%** of them prefer normal food.

Table No 4: Distribution of respondents based on the preference of mass media

S. No.	Means	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Television	28	68.29
2	Radio	7	17.07
3	Newspaper	6	14.64
	Total	41	100%

The above table infers that about **68.29%** prefer to watch television, **17.07%** radio and **14.64%** prefer newspaper.

Table No 5: Distribution of respondents based on the type of channels watched

S. No.	Channels	No.of respondents	Percentage
1	Entertainment	31	75.60
2	Reality shows	7	17.08
3	News channels	3	7.32
	Total	41	100%

From the table we find that most of the respondents **75.60%** are interested in viewing entertainment programs, **17.08%** watch reality shows and **7.32%** were interested in news channels.

Media proved to be exclusive through which the findings gave way for it. Television has become a part of people's life. The tribal women could not spend a day without television. Television is watched by every one where its main purpose is entertainment. People now a day are more prone to dubbed serials and reality shows. A point to be noted here is they are very much attracted to the physical outlook of the artists. For instance, the type of saree worn by the artist is very much keenly noted by the women and they even discuss about that and tend to change their way of dressing. This is very simple example of their changing attitude directed towards the common mass not only the dressing the food habits of the tribal women at high

proportion prefer to intake modern food like noodles, pasta etc. Thus, it is to be found that television has become a strong medium of identity generality among the tribal women.

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Margaret Drabble's Female *Bildungsromane*

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Abstract

Historically, male writers have used the journey motif to describe a hero's struggle from innocence to experience, childhood to adulthood, immaturity to maturity and identity. Having completed the journey and, along the way, discovered something profound and meaningful about themselves and their relationship to the physical and metaphysical world, these heroes usually return to their point of their origin. The question arises, what of the journey of the heroine? What theories are available for her story rather than his story as it unfolds from within the material. In short the implicit absence and yet explicit presence of gender wholly articulates the degree to which theories of the Bildungsroman and Kunsterroman have traditionally been male-oriented. Bildungsroman represented dominant genre- male. The conventions of the classical male Bildungsroman are implicitly violent, violence usually directed against women. This paper attempts to read the works of Margaret Drabble that articulate the struggles of women and women writers.

Historically, male writers have used the journey motif to describe a hero's struggle from innocence to experience, childhood to adulthood, immaturity to maturity and identity. Having completed the journey and, along the way, discovered something profound and meaningful about themselves and their relationship to the physical and metaphysical world, these heroes usually return to their point of their origin. The question arises, what of the journey of the heroine? What theories are available for her story rather than his story as it unfolds from within the material. In short the implicit absence and yet explicit presence of gender wholly articulates the degree to which theories of the *Bildungsroman* and *Kunsterroman* have traditionally been male-oriented. *Bildungsroman* represented dominant genre- male. The conventions of the classical male *Bildungsroman* are implicitly violent, violence usually directed against women.

Marriage, housework and community relations represent important stages in the formation of the identity of the journeying heroine largely because the bourgeois family has become the social, political, economic and moral place that most physically and emotionally interpolates the heroine to behave in normative ways. Historicizing the family provides important insights into the reactions of Drabble's heroines in relation to marriage, housework, and community. For Sarah Bennett in *A Summer Bird Cage*, marriage looms large on the horizon of her journey to identity. For Emma in *The Garrick Year* questions of identity are shaped by domestic journeys which are in turn shaped by the contradictions and struggles forced upon women who try to merge public with private lives. For Rose in *The Needle's Eye* the journey involves a consideration of the relationship between the individual and the community.

Drabble's interrogation of bourgeois family ideologies – and historically produced idealist fictions of female development such as courtship and marriage – begins with her first novel, *A Summer Bird Cage*, published in 1962. The text's articulation of a young middle-class woman's dilemma between marriage and work crystallizes the ideology of an emergent women's movement. The literary production of this new character, Sarah Bennett, signifies the emerging historical identity of university women whose horizons as the 1950's became the 1960's extended beyond the narrow confines of conventional roles. *In Contemporary Novelists*, Bernard Bergonzi writes:

It is Margaret Drabble's particular contribution to the contemporary novel to have devised a genuinely new kind of character and predicament. There are of course numerous women writers who write from a feminist viewpoint, but Drabble differs from them in writing about young women who are not merely intelligent, educated, more or less attractive, and sharply observant. They are also mothers, and their involvement with their children cuts sharply across their concern with a career, and their desire for emotional freedom. For many the mother and the emancipated woman are two sharply different types; Margaret Drabble has shown that in the modern world the two roles are often combined in the same person (373).

Marital equality, sexual equality, and careers combined with motherhood became the new socio-economic and political horizons. Appropriating the *Bildungsroman*, historically used to perpetuate conventional ideologies of female behavior about marriage, adultery and sexuality, Drabble for example has Sarah refuse to duplicate conventional bourgeois life and morality, a refusal that signifies what Eagleton, in *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory*, calls a moment of "paradigmatic significance" (55).

On a first reading Sarah Bennett's journey of development throughout *A Summer Bird Cage* follows the same path as those of the heroes in the classical *Bildungsroman*. Yet in many ways the novel with its new kind of heroine and her new horizons, radically differs from the classical male *Bildungsroman*. Symbolically, it begins the journey of the daughter's rebellion against the interlinked structures and systems historically produced by the domination of powerful father's texts and textual ideologies. The novel begins, in fact by tracing Sarah's journey of development from the moment after she has left university. On her journey to identity, Sarah encounters a number of marriages that range from the ideal to the real. She sees marriage as a one-way ticket to doom. She is a witness to Gill and Tony's marriage. Tony's career is bought at Gill's expense. He walks out of her life affronted by the fact that his docile wife has suddenly evolved into an aggressive careerist. The two women, Sarah and Gill turn to each other for companionship, compassion and understanding lacking in their relations with men. Finally Gill and Sarah move into an apartment together. The romantic ideology of the happy family in which a woman's identity dovetails with the family and with the end of the novel remains what Sarah calls the "doom of womanhood" (25).

Drabble's second novel *The Garrick Year* dramatically revises the classical *Bildungsroman*. The protagonist Emma Evans is a middle-class university educated housewife and mother of two children. Her journey is not a flight but abduction, an uprooting. Emma's first person narrative charts her defeat, how she relinquishes her job prospects and begins her drama of domesticity, the script from which all other journeys begin and end. Houses are like businesses, and running a family is very much like running a business. The home itself becomes a factory, a site of domestic production. In short, the journey of David to economic freedom

away from home is also the journey of Emma to economic enslavement within the home. The home becomes the site of her unpaid production. Ironically, she finds herself employed within the home, in a job “without compensation”(232), employed to do the most important tasks that maintain the survival of both home and business, child and adult. Her domesticity makes her look upon a female body as a fragmentation of an object of desire, object of nourishment, and object of profit. To what extent does domestic labour benefit capital? Put another way: how are domestic journeys beneficial to capital?

Drabble’s *The Needle’s Eye* completely reverses the *Bildungsroman* convention of beginning with childhood. Rose Vassiliou’s memories of her childhood – is all about the abduction, search and location of Rose’s children that provides a narrative coherence to the novel and parallels Rose’s own journey back to her childhood, a childhood strangely bound up with the life of the mysterious Noreen. The beginning of the real journey for Rose is initiated this time not by a friend, a sister, a mother, but by Rose and Christopher’s oldest child, Konstantin. Having made the imaginative journey to Noreen, Rose must now make the actual journey.

Margaret Drabble’s novels are female *Bildungsroman* and *Kunstlerroman* . as Margaret Morganroth Gullette says in her fine chapter on Drabble in *Safe as Last in the Middle Years: The Inventions of the Midlife Progress Novel*(1990); “ Of course, the *Bildungsroman* was in her literary form”(87). Young and old heroines, endlessly travel physically, psychologically but with faltering steps toward a sense of identity.

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Natural Elements, Landscapes and Women in Joy Harjo's Poetry

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Abstract

Native American poetry has always been infused with symbolic representations from nature because of the deep seated connection that the Native Americans believe exist between humans and Nature. To them, many borders that modern man perceives between the natural world and himself are non-existent. To them, Nature does not represent the unknown or the other. It is part of their every experience and emotion. There cannot be a better example than the poetry of Joy Harjo to explain this phenomenon. The natural landscape, the elements like the wind, the earth, and the sun are all an integral part of the process of living and are considered sacred and spiritual. This paper will try to analyze how the landscape and these natural elements come together in her poetry and how these elements are inalienably conducted to Harjo's notion of women and of survival.

Keywords: *Native American poetry, juxtaposition of the mythic and the modern, the landscape and female identity.*

The landscape in Harjo's poems is a juxtaposition of the mythic and the modern; natural elements and man-made ones. The landscape which continually shifts between the mythical world and the physical world serves to narrow the space between the material realm and the spiritual realm. The shifting landscape is also a reflection of her own life and shifting culture which is founded on the two opposing traditions of the Native and of the West.

Donelle Dreese rightly says that Harjo's poetry culminates "...in a writing style that incorporates elements of both her Native culture and the Western culture in order to produce a unique voice with a mystical and adaptive sense of place" (38). In one of her best known poems, namely *She Had Some Horses* she develops the theme of a woman's struggle in shaping her identity when confronted with the contraries of her Native American beliefs and an alien environment of modern American culture.

...She had horses who liked Creek stomp dance songs.

She had horses who cried in their beer (Green 145).

In these lines, she brings together the Creek dances with a modern day beer drinking party. This is a reading on the superficial level which works in some places. But on a deeper level, the repetition of the phrase "She had horses" takes on a mythical hue because of its chant like quality. This mythic chant as well as the image of the horse, which is one of the many important images of numerous Indian tribes, is continually juxtaposed with images of life in

twentieth century America and the aggression associated with it. This is best brought out in the lines:

...She had horses who got down on their knees for any savior.
 She had horses who thought their high price had saved them.
 She had horses who tried to save her, who climbed in her
 bed at night and prayed as they raped her (Green 146).

This poem and these particular lines depict the kind of violence and strain that ensues when two different worlds and landscapes are yoked together. The horse which generally symbolizes power and strength can be read as a mirror image of Harjo herself with the strength to resist the traditions and the dominant culture of Modern Americans; the strength which allows her to follow her own Native American heritage. Pegge Bochynski, a critic in her review of the collection of poems comments that:

The Western perspective views the modern world as split between the sacred and the secular. From the Native American point of view, there is no division. In "She Had Some Horses," the spirit animal transcends time and place, bridging the divide between the past, where American Indians lived as a free people, and the twentieth century, where minorities are oppressed by the dominant white culture... there is also an underlying reality where unity is possible... It is a realm where contradictory views of the world can become one, and it is a place where the spirit and material universes embrace each other. The horse, a creature of both worlds, makes the meeting and resultant union possible.

This complex landscape also becomes a site from which a person's identity or self is developed. This process of identity creation as connected with the landscape is very evident in the poems which have a feminist streak in them. In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Joy Harjo when asked about the woman-orientation of Indian cultures, made a statement that most Indian tribes have foregone this woman-centeredness and become male-dominated. But at the same time she points out that "...generally women were, are, recognized as physically, electrically, whatever, more grounded, in tune with the earth..." This concept of tuning in to the landscape by the woman to define herself is brought out beautifully in her poem *Fire*:

look at me
 i am not a separate woman
 i am a continuance of blue sky
 i am the throat
 of the sandia mountain
 a night wind woman
 who burns
 with every breath

she takes (Green 133).

This inter-connectedness of the setting with the personality of the persona is also reflected in her poem *Remember*. In this poem, Harjo seems to ask the persona to remember his/her native heritage, a heritage which is founded and sprung from the earth, the plants, the animals and every other natural element. This poem, like many Native American poems, identifies the female or the feminine with the earth and the moon which represent life, death, and seasons and so on. They become symbols of continuity, the future. This beautiful landscape is jarringly compared with the modern world in these lines:

Remember the moon, know who she is. I met her
in a bar once in Iowa City (Green 137).

This idea of the bar may be a reference to the fact that the Native American traditions have survived after all the trials and tribulations and that Native Americans have been thoroughly integrated into the mainstream that they can be found even in bars in Iowa. It is this juxtaposition of the modern with the mythic which serves to stress on the fact that Native Americans are slowly losing out on their native traditions. It is because of this that Harjo's poetry also takes on the role of sustaining these traditions. In the same poem, the woman is also compared to or identified with the "wind" because the wind may be considered a carrier of native tradition, culture and heritage to all those natives scattered all over the landscape just like the woman and her voice can carry on life through many generations. Her poems, thus, are a powerful exploration of womanhood's most intimate moments. They speak of women's despair, of their imprisonment and ruin at the hands of men and society, but also of their awakenings, power, and love.

It is because of this that Laura Cottelli mentions that "Just as her own position is constantly intertwined with the historical path charted by her own tribe, so the urban cityscape also becomes congruous with the natural landscape and the dialogue of love and thought becomes continuous with the myths of tradition" (Porter & Roemer 283).

When talking about the landscape and natural elements in Joy Harjo's poetry, it also becomes important to focus on the humor and the irony present in her works. As Jim Ruppert echoes what Paula Gunn Allen observes, "these two discursive strategies are particularly effective methods of expressing the contradictions and dichotomies that shape the lives of Native Americans today, as individuals and communities blend "tribal tradition" and "contemporary experience"." In her poem *Anchorage*, the persona's depiction of a land where Native Americans face an "ache in which nothing makes sense" (Green 151) when juxtaposed with Henry's story can be used as a perfect study for the coming together of humor and irony. Henry's story is told in a humorous way which draws laughs from the listeners but underlying that story is the irony that what Henry seems to be joking about is a matter of his own life and death. The last lines are perfect examples:

Everyone laughed at the impossibility of it,
but also the truth. Because who would believe
the fantastic and terrible story of all our survival,

those who were never meant to survive? (Green 152).

Earlier in the poem, Harjo also points out the violence that is part of the modern landscape which is depicted by “glaciers” and “boiling earth”, a city made of “stone, of blood, and fish.” This is indirectly contrasted with the quiet and peaceful “Chugatch Mountains” and “whale and seal”. Hence, Harjo’s use of landscape plays another role as well. It seems to foreground the survival instincts of the Native Americans. Like Henry, they are continuously shot at but always seem to bounce back and survive.

Hence, Joy Harjo’s poetry is filled with the beauty of native myths put together with the tragedies of the trials and tribulations of the Native American people and how a harsh modern city landscape which is representative of the violence inherent in man can be overcome and transformed by the love, the hope and the survival instincts of the Native Americans just like the material world has to be finally transcended by the spiritual. Her poetry becomes an affirmation, a resistance and most of all a form of beauty and survival.

Through her ruminations on the landscape, the natural world and the place of women, what finally arises is the theme of love and as Dreese mentions, “Through love, the mythical and the modern can coexist, and all that inhabits the world can be held together.” (40). Thus, Joy Harjo’s poetry is basically poetry of love. In her own words or as she says in her poem *Perhaps the World Ends Here*, the kitchen table which is symbolic of the earth will finally be a place where everyone can live and breathe freely, express their joys and sorrow, grow into good human beings and where everyone can partake of the “last sweet bite.” (Green 135). And as Joy Harjo herself says, “Ultimately a poem has an electrical force field which is love... A poem may be about death or destruction or anything else terrible, but I somehow want it to resolve, and in some manner I want the resolution of that poem to be love” (Moyers, 1996:47).

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The Portrayal of Female and their Voices in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

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Abstract

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is an author who mainly is concerned with the ongoing effects of colonization in Africa, and more importantly Nigeria. "We should all be Feminists" was a TEDX talk that was given by Adichie in 2012. The speech addressed a feminists beyond race or class, took on a very different life she shared her experience of being an African feminists, and her views on gender constructions sexuality. Half of a Yellow Sun received the 2007 Orange prize for fiction. Many of the critics praised Half of a yellow sun and predicted that Adichie would be hated as a significant writer of the 21st century. The novel was well received by critics and included in the Newyork times "100 most notable books of the year". The novel takes place in Nigeria, where the author was born. The story is told through three different points of view and it is the combination of politics and personal relationship, charged with the brutal conflicts that occur around the main characters. The story begins in somewhat peaceful and almost idyllic setting. Family relationships, love affairs community involvement, and the conflicts between the traditional tribal ways of life versus the more modern and often more corrupt, manner of life in the cities are fully explored. In the Adichie's novel it is explored that how she struggles to give African women a proper place with dignity denied by patriarchy and other forms of subjugation. This is done through examining the state of personal or individual lives of characters such as Kainene and Olanna in Half of a yellow sun. This is because the African writer whether man or woman, is inevitably a public figure adopting a public stance, functioning as the eye, the conscience and intelligence of the society.

At somepoint I was a
Happy African feminist
Who does not hate men
And who likes lip gloss
And who wears high heels for herself
But not for men. - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

In the Adichie's novel women are explored that how she struggles to give African women a proper place with dignity denied by patriarchy and other forms of subjugation. This is done through examining the state of personal or individual lives of characters such as Kainene and Olanna in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This is because the African writer, whether man or woman, is inevitably a public figure, adopting a public stance, functioning as the eye, the conscience and intelligence of the society

In the *Half of a Yellow Sun* women are depicted as resource and progressive. They give direction when and where necessary and guide their men and society in time of difficulties. Those women who are not progressive are drawn in the negative light. Adichie uses characters like Alice to state her position on mistress, concubinage and being second wives. Alice is depicted as eccentric and anti social. She is always sheepishly taking herself to very unfulfilling male relationships. She complains of the army officer who dupes her when she lures Odenigbo while Olanna is at Orlu. Adichie uses the characters of Alice to rebuke women who betray other women in infidelity or in polygamy.

Infidelity on the part of the men is a serious challenge women have to often grapple with in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Mrs. Ozobia is a victim of negative masculinity since her husband had a mistress, a Yoruba woman for whom he has bought a house in a neighbourhood where Lagos socialites live. 'A Yoruba goat from the bush with two children from two different men. I hear she is old and ugly' (218), these lines describe the share in loathing women who take other women's husbands. Mariama Bâ in *So long a letter* (1980) captures correct in the marriage institution. When she submits that for the sake of variety men are unfaithful to their wives. Such actions are a source of humiliation to the wives. It is out of such humiliation that Mrs Ozobia when telling her daughter 'Olanna, about the father's mistress:

Her mother held a glass of tonic water in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. She was crying. She was telling Olanna about her father's mistress. 'He has bought her a house in Ikeja, her mother said, 'My friend lives on the same street.' Have you talked to him?' Olanna asked.
'What am I say to him' Gwa ya gini? ... 'There is nothing I can say to him I just wanted to let you know what is happening so that they will not say I did not tell somebody' (217).

Mrs. Ozobia's confiding to a woman could point to the idea that it is co-operation amongst women that will aid in their liberation from patriarchal chains. When Mrs. Ozobia says '...so that they will not say I did not tell somebody' (217) suggests that the society does not approve chief Ozobia's behaviour. The above incident points to the desperate situation women find themselves when playing the role of wives. When Mrs. Ozobia informs the daughter that 'there is nothing she can discuss' with the husband about his infidelity it confirms her inferior position in the arrangement. She is almost confirming that she fears the husband and so he can do whatever he wishes. Such fears imply the unequal gender relationships that characterise marriage and the position of African women in patriarchal societies. The fears Auntie Ifeka has about uncle Mbaezi getting involved in affairs with other women demonstrates the prevalence of male infidelity and the negative effects it has on a married woman. Despite male infidelity women are positive about life as is shown by Auntie Ifeka, Mama Dozie, Edna whaler, Kainene and Olanna.

The desire for children is explored through the characters of Olanna, Arize, Odenigbo's mother and Anulika among others in *Half of the Yellow Sun*. It is the desire for a child and a grandson that drives Odenigbo's mother to force Amala into sleeping with Odenigbo and this leads to the near collapse of Odenigbo's relationship with Olanna. To mama, Odenigbo, a spoiled woman is one who cannot bear children. She says, 'No -body knows if she can have children. Do you know? Does anyone know?' (198) mama's concern grows out of the

significance attached to children in Igbo society and by extension Africa she seriously wants to have a grand's on she complains that those girls who go to university follow men until their bodies are useless to have children. She says no wonder my son has not married while his mates are counting how many children they have (97). The situation described her resembles what happens in Nwapa's *One is enough* (1990) where Amala's relationship with her husband in Nbiora is strained by mother-in-law who accuses her of being barren. Then after concluding that childlessness is apparently a permanent source of frustration to the African women as portrayed in the above examples.

Children take care of parents and on the family name. This explains why women and society are controlled by the desire to have many children so as to carry the family name and enlarge the husband's Umunna. This in itself point to the patriarchal nature of Adichie's society that ties a women to the husbands Umunna by virtue of having mothered boys.

In an effort to bring about change in the institution of mother hood, adoption is suggested as a more progressive way to tackle childlessness. Olanna adopts Amala's child and cares for her because the mother reject her immediately she is born. The same happens with Mrs Ozobia is that Auntie Ifeka her breasts dried soon after they were born. As a result, Olanna thinks that Auntie Ifeka was a good as her mother. It is Auntie Ifeka that Olanna runs to when she has problems with Odenigbo. Olanna also feels glad when the nurse asks her how many children she has. Her feelings emanate out of what society demands from women: motherhood.

A similar societal obsession with the desire to have children is what makes Arize's mother-in-law disgrace her by demanding to know how many abortions she has had before marriage. Nnakwanze also is worried when Arize does not become pregnant the first, second and third year of marriage. Arize's 'misfortune' is a source of oppression from her mother-in-law. It is what Amala suffers in the hands of Odenigbo's mother, in that Odenigbo's mother wants to use her to get a grandson. Such a situation puts women a lot of pressure curtails their freedom and makes them slaves of societal demands and desires leaving them without a choice of their own.

The character of old woman (mother-in-law) in the text shows that patriarchy has conditioned women to accept demands put across by the male order. In accepting the patriarchal demands and forcing fellow women to follow suit they have become perpetrators of their own suffering. Through the characters of Ifeoma, Olanna and Kainene, Adichie shows that motherhood can be revised in order to stop women oppression and suffering in the characters of Kainene and Olanna. Adichie revises the perception that women should have on issues of motherhood. Whatever is captured in half of the yellow sun in terms of women and motherhood is progressive.

Kainene and Olanna do not value motherhood so much and Kainene remains in her relationship without a child for the entire life of the novel. Olanna adopts Amala's child. Kainene and Richard are happy and prosperous despite childlessness. This the world that Adichie proposes whereby women are less burdened by their biological duties of mothering.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun* Adichie depicts daughters who reject to be tools of male aggrandizement through the episode where Ozobia uses his daughter Olanna to get a contact from the minister of finance; chief Okonji. Olanna is uncomfortable about it:

She wondered too, how her parents had promised chief Okonji an affair with her in exchange of the contract. Had they started it verbally plainly or had it been implied? ... Her father stabbed at his avocado. 'I see' (32-33).

This extract points to the question of daughters used as sex entice mentis as Kainine later Observes:

'The ten percent is standard, so extras always help. The other bidders probably don't have a beautiful daughter? kainine dragged the word out until it sounded doing, sticky: beautiful- she was flipping through the copy of Kogos life, her silk robe tied tightly around her skinny waist. 'The benefit of being the ugly daughter is that nobody uses you as sex bait,' ... (35).

This demonstrates the use of women by men in the society represented by Adichie for material gains. When the parents conspire to have Olanna get sexually involved in the finance minister they paint an ugly picture of daughters who have no choice of even sexual partners. Olanna's father did not receive her choice of Odenigbo positively. The narrator identifies that all is not well with Odenigbo as Olanna's finance and notes, 'her father only wanted to gall him and show now unimpressed he was by a senior lecturer from Nsukka' (32). Such wish of parents to control Olanna's choice of partners is explored when Olanna talks about her mother and the different options they hold over her choices.

Adichie brings up a situation where Olanna rebels to suggest that women should stand their grounds on issues of personal choice .Personal choice points to characters autonomy and some degree of liberty on the part of women .Eberechi suffers during the war in that she is used as sex bait and denied her right to choose a partner. Such an act is a total disregard of her humanity and denies the young girl her basic rights. Adichie highlights these episodes to herald positive change for the betterment of women's welfare. In commodifying daughters, Adichie is condemning the differences of being the owner of property, the heir (for boys and men) and being the property (for daughters and women) and thus suggesting a revision to the existing gender parities.

Arndt (200) in an interview with Ogunyemi highlights how women find solace in unattached living. She explains recent studies which hint the young women find concubinage a better deal than marriage in both Nigeria and Kenya. Half of the yellow sun investigates concubinage through the characters of chief Ozobia and the Yoruba woman he is keeping in one of the Lagos neighbourhoods. The personalities of Kainene, Richard, Susan, Olanna, Mohammed, Ugwu, Eberechi, Alice and the army colonel are examined and how concubinage is a possible source of female oppression and exploitation. The narrator observes:

She seemed more like a mistress: her brazenly red lipstick, her tight dress, her smoking. But then she didn't smile in that plastic way the mistresses did. She didn't even have the generic prettiness that made him inclined to believe the rumour that Nigerian politicians swapped mistresses (57)

Women are so marginalized that being in dignified social spaces unaccompanied by a man is 'abnormal'. Going to such places for Kainene is a pointer that she has a choice and thus she is exercising her freedom. Adichie highlights the episode above to show that the progressive contemporary woman has the ability to be in social gatherings unaccompanied. Adichie discredits those women who are perpetuating practices that degrade and oppress fellow women like Alice, Amala, Nnankwanze's mother and Odenigbo's mother. Although African scholars like Emecheta, Aidoo, Nwapa, Frank and Mariamma Bâ argue that wifehood and motherhood are the major sources of oppression, it is palpable from this study that other relationships with men are also oppressive.

In search relationships women, unconsciously exploit fellow women as they cohabit with their husbands and that way such women help the institution of patriarchy to continue subordinating them. In such observations Adichie wants the conscience of the women in such liaisons to be pierced so as to lessen the suffering of the fellow women.

This research will discuss the themes and highlights the struggles of women in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels. Adichie in *Half of a yellow sun* sees women as progressive elements in society in the sense that they are the promoters of their society during very trying times like during the Biafran war. Women desperately and continuously search for food and medicine during the war and that way sustain their communities. Kainene introduces the idea of growing crops to feed the refugees during the time when there is no food forthcoming to the Biafrans. Olanna goes ahead to try and get an alternative job for her husband who appears withdrawn as the war presses forward. She also starts a school to teach the children such that there would be continuity after the war.

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Redefining Women's Cookbooks as Life Writing: Studying Maya Angelou's Cookbook *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table* as an Articulation of Black Identity

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Abstract

Women and her writings have long remained invisible and essentially peripheral in history. However the late 20th century witnessed an examination of the position and role of women, giving them a long overdue place in the historical narrative about societies. This brought in a profound transformation in world historiography since the late 1960's. This was made possible through the creation of disciplines like women's studies and gender studies across the globe. A vast array of studies dealing with a variety of subjects have been published ever since - from marriage, the family and many other stories about women's private life to their role in the public sphere. The most recent addition to these areas of research is a new sub-discipline which explores the relationship between women and food. Some of the most interesting and exciting studies in this field have dealt with the role of women in the kitchen; the links between female cooks and both the food industry and dietary changes; the kitchen as a space of gender identification; and the role of cookbooks in shaping the discourse on women and the family.

Studies on women often zoom in on their role in politics and in public life in general, thus downplaying their kitchen duties, which seemed to symbolise women's subordination and oppression by their patriarchy" (Haber 4). Women's history has however, recently become more inclusive, and historians are now turning their gaze towards the connections between women in the kitchen and the rest of the community. Food itself has become a more common topic and seems to have recently acquired the veneer of "serious" academic scrutiny. However writers have still not been relieved of their inhibitions and apprehensions and feel bound to justify their choice of topic expressing their intent to make women's private lives more visible. Janet Theophano, for instance examines cookbooks throughout American history, and states the purpose of her book, entitled *Eat My Words: Reading Women's Lives Through the Cookbooks They Wrote* (2002) as "twofold: first to make some of these materials known to both scholars and general readers; and second, to open a window into the lives of women of distinct classes, cultures and historical periods who would otherwise be unknown to us" (2). Many writers still feel that their chosen topic on women and food needs to be recognised as a valid field of research.

Recent studies on women and food show that they add much to our understanding of what it has meant to be a woman and moreover of how class-defined norms are imposed onto women and their families. Analysing how women have been defined and represented suggests a dialectical aspect - the discourse on women has long conveyed the notion of the home - and the

kitchen-as the ideal place for women,but more recently it has also expressed how women have re-appropriated and re-defined their role.

Consumed on a daily basis,food is a 'taken for granted' culture of everyday life and is at once both an individual and collective enterprise.Food is however much more than mere sustenance and a means of survival.It is a key factor in how we view ourselves and others and can be considered a form of communication,which is broadly defined as 'the process by which we understand the world and our attempts to convey that understanding to others through both verbal and nonverbal language (Greene and Cramer X).Food can either be understood as a form of nonverbal means of communication,preparation and consumption of it.As Roland Barthes writes,food is: "A system of communication,a body of images,a protocol of usages,situations and behaviour.Information about food must be gathered wherever it can be found:by direct observation in the economy,in techniques,usages and advertising;and by indirect observation in the mental lives of a given society" (Counihan & Van Essterik 29).

The narrative found in recipes provides explanations of food-related practices of the cookbook author's native culture.As a result,recipes function as a "system of communication,or a code that expresses patterns about social relationships.In turn social relationships form culture which can be understood as the manifestation of the values and beliefs of a community that are constantly negotiated and renegotiated through shared practices.Food is part of culture;as culinary historian Massimo Montanari asserts,'food is culture when it is produced ... when it is prepared . . . when it is eaten'.Cookbooks are a medium that influences how food is produced,prepared and eaten,thus studying its text is a way to study culture and ultimately a quest for meaning.

Recipes,with its cooking instructions and surrounding narrative-title, headnote, serving specifics,images etc-relay personal anecdotes,professional training and food related experiences that draw the reader into the text and appeal to authenticity,making the text more than a typical manual.Cookbooks become a way to relate to others from different perspectives,languages and communication patterns.We cannot ever expect a more transparent genre in literature. As M.F.K.Fisher,the American food writer says ,"a recipe is supposed to be a formula,a means prescribed for producing a desired result ...There can be no frills about it,no ambiguities . . . and above all no 'little secrets'".

Throughout the history of culinary writing in America, there have always been publications concerning groups other than the white majority,though rare till the 1950's and 1960's.Most scholars examining the relationship between women and food correctly include books and food related publications written by authors from various groups in their studies,which commonly contain references to Chinese,Italian an African-American cuisines.The authors of ethnic cookbooks published in the 1940's and 1950's often made an effort to convince Americans that their food was worthy of interest while,also being careful to Americanise their recipes for an audience not necessarily open to outside influences during the Cold War.Today,ethnic cookbooks are common place and they celebrate different cuisines and eating practices,displaying the increased role played by various communities in the nation and the growing interest for culinary diversity also expressed in the recent American trend known as 'fusion cooking'.

Even though the first African American cookbook dates back to 1881, the contribution of blacks to cooking was an insignificant part of culinary publications until the 1940's, just as their impact on culture and the economy was largely absent from the historical narrative about the US before the 1960's. Their cooking was part of an oral tradition and was passed on primarily within kinship and local community network. Though there were Black publications such as *Ebony* magazine which had regular food columns including recipes that were part of the black culinary tradition alongside the standard American ones, they aimed merely at the black bourgeoisie, and did not question the consumer society or the bias in favour of traditional and clearly separated gender roles. The recipes they contained often used processed and prepared foods, and their authors would sometimes encourage women to stay home with their family. Black women who had always worked outside the home, wanted to have the same privileges as white women.

As the 1960's progressed and activists in the black struggle for rights and recognition increasingly questioned the hegemony of Whites and their culture, African American cookbooks took on a different agenda. One aim of black cookbook writers was to keep black culture alive and to give it its rightful place in the culinary narrative of the US, and especially of the South. The labour of black cooks has not been recognised or even mentioned by most southern cookbooks and black writers wanted to rectify this; they were paying homage to their ancestors—especially women—whose memory had mostly been erased and set aside as unworthy. They sought to show the positive qualities of black cuisine (in terms of diversity, taste and nutritional value) and, by extension, of African American culture, thus countering negative stereotypes. Some cookbooks took a militant stand by promoting 'soul food' (a combination of southern cooking and recipes that originated during slavery, when black slaves learned to cook whatever ingredients they could find to supplement the meagre diet provided by their masters, along with the foods that the whites did not appreciate like lower cuts of meat and such vegetables as turnip/mustard greens, and a source of pride and strength) at a time when blackness was being praised by the Black Power Movement. Some cookbooks also helped urban blacks to reconnect with their rural origins. They also served to reinforce the notion that African American culture was alive and thriving. The diasporic dimension of these cookbooks could also be pointed out, as they diligently show the international aspects of black culture and food, reconnecting black American cuisine with its African past and with the movements associated with the slave trade. As Sherrie Inness remarks, "cookbooks are not static; they evolve with the times, reflecting larger culinary and cultural changes in the society". They also provide an idea of the place and acceptance of a particular group in the nation, which is so very true for African American and other ethnic minorities. Ethnic cookbooks in general reflect conceptions of gender and class, and must also be examined within the context of the political and cultural histories of the authors' communities.

After the 1950's, at a time when ethnic consciousness was growing, many authors militantly defended the cooking of their own community, the role that minority groups played in the construction of the nation and its food traditions. These authors also rejoiced in their own culinary heritage and publicised it. They served as a way for these ethnic groups to recall and revive their own culinary folkways. This was true especially for African Americans whose culture had long been despised, and who, perhaps, had lost some of their culinary memory when they became urbanised during the long migration out of the former Slave South (from the late 1870's to the mid 1960's).

The mosaic of anecdotes and recipes throughout her large autobiographical oeuvre do place Maya Angelou squarely within the African American communities of which she was a part during her life. Memoir is often as much about the community as it is about an individual, Angelou's texts, including her culinary memoir, are no different. The form of culinary memoir allows Angelou to illustrate materially the number of communities of which she has been a part and the friendships-traumas-she experienced. She extends the tradition of African autobiography by incorporating the long and often neglected tradition of women's cookery and story telling into her serial memoir project, representing a 'we' rather than an 'I', thereby suggesting that they are impossible to separate from one another.

While Angelou does explain that she is uninterested in writing about writing, she writes easily and often about food. Her focus on the culinary, on the communal, allows her to not write about writing, instead to write about another way to tell stories and to represent communities central to her stories. *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table* because of its self reflexive tendencies, is an essential work of Angelou's literary oeuvre. There is a tripartite narrator in the memoir which allows Angelou to be the witness who sees and records events, including recipes that have been handed down over time; the protagonist who participates in the narrative action of the passages presented from the memory; and the reflective/reflexive consciousness, in a certain amount of control over the information presented—in this case, both the stories and recipes—and able to dictate in large part how that information is presented to the reader. Angelou's identification as an African American is central to the tradition of African American autobiographical texts in which she writes, particularly because of her position as a member of a racialised community. Angelou frequently employs a 'communal voice' in addition to her personal voice, ultimately speaking for a whole generation. Reading the multiple voices of the narrator as elements of the tripartite narrator helps to delineate the distinct perspectives that are simultaneously at work in any memoir.

Maya Angelou has published two cookbooks full of personal anecdotes. Anecdotes make up roughly half of her first culinary memoir *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table*, ranging from her experiences cooking in Italy to reminiscing about the lemon meringue pie that her grandmother used to make. The stories in each section come first, followed by the recipes. This pattern mirrors the formula presented in the first anecdote told in the memoir: "If we wanted Moma's Lemon Meringue Pie, we had to listen to the story" (Angelou 3). There seems to be one recipe in this book for each year of Angelou's life. Reading cookbooks as life writing, folklorist Janet Theophano points out, is not an unlikely way to read them because, "Cookbooks are celebrations of identity. Connections to people, places and the past are embedded in the recipes women kept.... often cookbooks have served as a place for readers to remember a way of life no longer in existence or to enter a nostalgic re-creation of a past culture that persists mostly in memory" (8).

Cooking, as Maya Angelou herself suggests, is a natural extension to her autobiography.

Angelou also ensures to that the reader is made aware of the centrality of the memory to cooking. Many of the excerpts presented in *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table* seem to be repetitions, indicating that she is not solely invested in presenting new material but in examining the recursivity of memory, in considering the effects of context on story telling. Hence every story is never simply retold but is reshaped, reimagined and revisioned. For eg, the section 'Independence Forever', provides an anecdote about Angelou's grandmother, Anne Johnson Henderson or Moma and her entrepreneurial spirit. Here Angelou recounts the tale of Moma's desertion by her husband, and how she was 'left with a two-room shack, a lively four-year old

who would later become (Angelou's) father, and a two-year old boy who was crippled' (57). The emphasis here is on Moma's agency, her resourcefulness and her cooking. Moma was able to think of a need that she could feel with her cooking and ultimately was to build a hut which later became the store where Angelou spent a great deal of her childhood and where the African American community of Stamps, Arkansas, purchased their goods and congregated socially. The import of this anecdote geographically configures the culinary-and, by extension, the material world-as resting between two established places. The expansion of traditional forms of life writing is spatially rendered here, as Angelou and her grandmother present safe spaces for African Americans to gather together to fortify themselves. Angelou reinvigorates available space for African American life writers, coming together to construct new forms for self representation out of the traditional narratives.

The structure of the anecdotes in the memoir provides a narrative recipe for intergenerational independence. As Susan Leonardi explains, 'like a narrative, a recipe is reproducible, and further, its hearers-readers-receivers are encouraged to produce it and, in reproducing it, to revise it and make it their own. And unlike the repetition of a narrative, a recipe's reproduce however, can have a literal result, the dish itself'. The etymology of recipe in the word receipt, points out, such written records also become a witness to something receipt and passed down through generations. Angelou, through her culinary memoir, presents herself as a witness to her family's past to which the readers too become witnesses. When Maya Angelou considers the role of culinary in her past, the potential for the serial processes of gathering, processing, cooking and eating in a community leads her toward the culinary memoir as a natural mode of self expression.

Cookbooks may provide social commentary, political views and/or cultural celebration. They take on different styles and formats and may be read as guides for cooking a specific recipe or sources on a specific cuisine or region, but also as literature. For some readers, cookbooks are perceived as novels such that 'without ever preparing a dish, reading with one's imagination is a satisfying act' (Theophano 272). Cookbooks can also provide inroads for analysis of women in a given society for gender construction and of masculinity. They are a celebration of food and community, and they demonstrate how women were often able to re-appropriate the kitchen and to deconstruct /reconstruct some of the definitions of womanhood and domesticity imposed upon them. The kitchen can be seen as a place of oppression, but it is also described as a space for solidarity and creativity. The relegation of women to the kitchen in many ways created bonds of womanhood that often nurtured solidarity and kinship beyond family ties, and sometimes beyond class and racial lines.

As Inness points out, 'cookbooks were more than a place to record recipes; they were also sites to discuss political issues and included lessons for social change'. Cookbooks may first appear as trivial sources to exploit in the writing of women's history, but they are unique sources, never to be neglected, as they have the potential to add significantly to historical discourse and analysis.

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Restructuring Women's Roles in Literature: Volga's

The Liberation of Sita

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Abstract

*Women were suppressed even from the ancient days even if she belonged to a royal community. Even Sita, the wife of Ram and the queen of Ayodhya faced suppression by men. Volga (Popuri Lalitha Kumari), a Telugu feminist writer retells the story of Sita after coronation of Rama in *The Liberation of Sita*. *Vimuktha* in Telugu is translated by C. Vijayasree and T. Vijaykumar into *The Liberation of Sita*. Ram abandons Sita after being coronated, then Sita embarks arduous journey of self realization .On her way she meets Surpanakha, Renuka, Urmila and Ahalya- extraordinary women who have broken free from all that held them back: husbands, sons and their notion of desire, beauty and chastity. These minor women characters steer Sita towards an unexpected resolution. Meanwhile Rama too must reconsider his roles as the king of Ayodhya and as a man deeply in love with his wife. A subversion of India's popular tale of morality, choice and sacrifice, *The Liberation of Sita* opens up new spaces within the old discourse, enabling women to review their lives and experiences afresh. The present paper focuses on how Sita breaks her shackles and liberates herself.*

Key words: *Self liberation, Self realization, Self identity, search for truth.*

Popuri Lalitha Kumari was born on 27 November, 1950 in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India. Popuri Lalitha Kumari, popularly known by her pen name as Volga is a Telugu poet and a writer well known for her feminist perspective. She won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 for her short story compilation *Vimuktha Kadha Sampudhi* in Telugu. Her work initiated debates across the country about feminism, in times when the idea was hardly accepted. Her novels, articles, poems portray women with modern progressive ideologies .her first two novels *Sahaja* (1986), *Sveccha* (1987) speak how marriage bind a woman and shackles her freedom. Her works include *Rajakeeya Kathalu* ,*Neeli Meghalu*, *Maaku Godalu* *Levu* and some translations like Saadvi's *Women at Point Zero* (1975) , Agnes Smedley's *The Daughter of The Earth*(1929).She has won the Award for the Best Story Writer(1998) by the government of Andhra Pradesh ,Best Woman Writer (1999) by the Telugu University,Lok Nayak Foundation award(2014).

Volga's *Vimuktha* ,translated as *The Liberation of Sita*, is a slim collection of five short stories .It has won the Sahitya Akademi Award for the year 2015.Each story is independent and yet connected. In each of them Sita learns a lesson that facilitates her liberation. Surpanakha, Renuka, Urmila and Ahalya, the minor characters in Valmiki's epic assume a major role in educating Sita. It is a subversion of Valmiki's Ramayana which speaks of lives of women toppled in the journey of Dharma, rather than the righteousness and the upheld Arya Dharma of

Ram. Volga attempts in 'Revisionist Myth-making i.e. to look back with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from new critical direction .She revisions Ramayana with a feminist perspective.

'The Reunion' – takes Sita to the 'demonness' Surpanakha herself, the sister of Ravana. Sita's thoughts have circled around her ever since Rama mutilated her for declaring her love for him. Sita has reflected that she and Surpanakha are similar, despite being of rival kingdoms and races, in that they have been both been marred by Rama's love. Sita finds Surpanakha in a forest home amidst a beautiful garden she has cultivated, through which she has conquered her feelings of rage and retribution. Surpanakha teaches Sita that joy need not depend on a man or anyone at all. Surpanakha having conquered her rage and revenge realizes that beauty is not a physical attribute but the truth of nature. They are stricken with a bond of sisterhood not as victims of patriarchy but as two mature women in pursuit of self realization.

In 'The Music of the Earth', Sita meets Ahalya whom Indra lusted and disguised himself as her husband Gautama in order to fulfill his desires, how Gautama disowned Ahalya once it became clear what had happened and how Ahalya turned into a rock as a result. But the Ahalya Sita meets is full of life and wisdom. She counsels Sita on the power of men in compelling women to question their fidelity and the meaningless of such questioning to begin with. When Sita defends Rama proudly as a seeker of truth and his love as true, Ahalya points says that an enquiry on her fidelity is itself distrust.

In 'The Sand Pot' she meets Renuka who tells how paativritayam or fidelity of a married woman is as fragile as sand pot .a flee ting desire for gandharva makes her an adulteress in the eyes of her husband who then order their son to behead her and Parasurama obeys .It is therefore futile for a woman to anchor her identity her marital status or in her motherhood .This is reflected when Rama gives an opportunity to return to the royal household on a condition that she declares her innocence in the royal court. But Sita denies it and chooses to join her mother – Mother Earth.

'The Liberated' offers the account of an encounter between Sita, after the vanavaasa and Urmila ,who lives in self imposed penance .Urmila breaks out her silence after fourteen years ,and tells Sita how she felt abandoned and dejected when Lakshman left her to accompany Ram into the forest. This self imposed exile turned her wrath into a quest for truth. She saw that love, hate, jealousy and respect are but shades of the same condition-dependence on others .she struggled with all these and arrived at a state of inner peace.Later in Valmiki's ashram Urmila meets Sita in an hour of despair and asks her to liberate herself from Rama, and each of the trials that she met were meant to liberate herself and to secure herself. She asks Sita to look within herself to find the truth that she is Sita.

'The Shackled' reads like an extended interior monologue of Rama.Held captive in the prison of Arya Dharma, Rama has no personal freedom. He was free only during the period of banishment in the forest with Sita .It freed him from the rigid frames of royal power. He says that with the political power and exalted nobleness he had lost power over himself and he had lost his family. Eventually when Sita hands over the children to ram as heirs to his throne, she liberates herself .But Rama remains shackled.

Volga's re-visionist myth making thus opens new spaces within old discourse, enabling women to view their life and experiences from gynocentric perspectives. They recreate a world

of freedom in which they not only willingly bear the responsibility of their own survival, but also have a sense of joy and complete freedom. Women are no longer means to serve someone else's ends, nor are they merely the prizes in men's quests. On contrary, they are questers seeking their own Salvation.

Volga wondered why Sita and Surpanakha could not be friends and that's when she felt like writing a story about Surpanakha's pain. She also feels there must have been other women who joined Sita in her journey. Sita must have struggled hard with herself to leave Rama. Merely being angry with him would not have been enough to separate her from him. According to Volga, there are many women before Sita who were victims of insults, rejections, curses and neglect by the world, husbands and families. She says her stories are for these women. *The Liberation of Sita* suffers from the stiltedness from which all translations inevitably seem to suffer. But the lyricism of the original Telugu nonetheless carries through. But given that, one also has to reflect on the injustices that often seem to come, paradoxically, with searching for justice through narrative. *The Liberation of Sita* is not a simple

'*The liberation of Sita*' belongs to a genre of feminist revisionist myth making and its wronged women abandon the narratives written for them by men to write their own. It definitely comes against the male domination and blind propagation of Dharma. It is a perfect take on the inner strength and resilience of women and how they don't always need a man to feel themselves complete. Even then Sita is bound to an image of sacrifice and withdrawal which has always been expected out of women

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Search for Identity of Haitian Women in Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

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Abstract

*The lives of women and their relationships are mainly focused by the black writers such as George Lamming, V. S. Naipaul and Edwidge Danticat. As an astonishing young writer Edwidge Danticat has become one of our most celebrated new novelists. She is a Haitian-American writer. Her work, a partly autobiographical novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* was published in 1994. This novel gives voice, depth, and anguish to the loving, bittersweet ties that bind her to her circle of women. She evokes the wonder, terror and heartache of her native Haiti. She endures the strength of Haiti's women with a witness to her people's suffering and courage. At the age of twelve, the protagonist, Sophie Caco is sent from her village to New York, to be reunited with her mother. In New York she was exposed to a culture that differs from Haiti. The novel portrays the different stages in women's life. It also explores the character's physical and mental trauma in Haiti tradition and their search for identity. This paper presents the complete depiction about the experience of Haitian women.*

Key words: *Haitian Culture, Self identity, Self expression, Testing, Depression, Nightmare, Feminism.*

Edwidge Danticat was born on 19th January 1969 in Haiti. She was raised by her aunt and at the age of twelve, she reunited with her parents in U.S. She holds a degree in French Literature from Bernard College and an M. F.A from Brown university. Her short stories have appeared in over 20 periodicals. She has won awards from Seventeen Magazine and from Essence, as well as a James Michener Fellowship. She is also the author of a short story collection, *Krik? Krak!* Although Danticat resides in the United States, she considers Haiti a home. To date, she still visits Haiti from time to time and has always felt as if she never left it.

Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, explores the centrality of the mother-daughter relationship to self-identity and self-expression. The novel describes how family values and virtue of women are very important to the Haitian culture. "Testing" has been a Haitian tradition for centuries. During earlier times, Haitians associated the idea of virtue with a woman's virginity. The major conflict of the novel is the main character's battle with her inner self.

The narrator Sophie Caco is a young girl living in Haiti with her aunt and grandmother. She relates her direct experiences and impressions from age 12 until she is in her twenties. At this point, Sophie is unexpectedly summoned by her mother, who immigrated to the United States. The two live in a slummy neighbourhood but are supported by her mother's

various jobs and through support of her Haitian lawyer boyfriend Marc. Living with her mother in New York, Sophie discovers the trauma her mother experience inclusive of violent nightmares reminiscent of her experience prior to fleeing Haiti. Martine encourages the girl to study hard. Despite her mother's warnings to focus on school and no men, she falls in love with Joseph, a musician who lives next door to them.

Sophie is caught one night by her mother when she returns home late. Her mother in turn begins testing her constantly to make sure she is still a virgin. Depression causes Sophie to act irrationally. One night she decides to impale herself with her mother's spice pestle so she can fail the test. When she fails her mother's test, she is thrown out of the house. She then elopes with Joseph and they marry. Sophie begins to feel frustrated and confused, both by anxieties and responsibilities. To get away from it all, she flees to Haiti along with her infant daughter, without a word to her husband, Joseph, who is away touring. Martine also comes to Haiti. Sophie hadn't spoken to her mother since her mother had thrown her out the house when she had failed the virginity test. That was about two years earlier. It is during that trip to Haiti that both mother and daughter reconcile. They return to New York and all seems well, until Sophie's mother becomes pregnant by her fiancé, Marc, and in turn commits suicide.

Sophie is a young girl thrust from her familiar environment into a situation that makes her grow up super quickly. But her development takes a long, slow, and painful arc. She has to grapple with a hyphenated existence (Haitian-American), knowing very well that her mother wants to keep her isolated from mainstream American culture. She also has to face the painful facts surrounding her birth and accept that as long as she's around, her mother will still feel the psychological pain of that old violation. Finding the value in herself under these circumstances feels impossible, but Sophie knows where she has to go to figure out who she truly is: home.

Arriving in New York, Sophie must assume the full weight of her mother's, aunt's and grandmother's dreams. She is the only child and only daughter, on whom they have pinned all their hopes of redemption. Yet the language that Martine uses to explain to Sophie the rules of this new world is a testament to the strength of the Caco female line. Martine's exhorts that Sophie should gain her identity.

“You are going to work hard here and no one is going to break of your heart because you cannot read or write. You have a chance to become the kind of woman Atie and I have always wanted to be. If you make something of yourself in life, we will all succeed. You can raise our heads” (Danticat 44).

Likewise, Sophie's success in the new world will be a gendered one, as she attempts to become the woman that her mother and aunt could not be. Woman is simultaneously a strict and fluid category, a descriptor and a realm of possibility. But it is also a difficult heritage in a world controlled by largely absent men. The rules of this world, and the enormity of Sophie's inheritance, are suggested by the events of her first night with Martine. Wondering how it is that she does not have a father, Sophie becomes suddenly aware of her mother thrashing in bed. Atie's euphemistic stories with Martine's mute horror, contains Sophie's first hint of the difficult reality of womanhood for Martine and Atie, and of the tragic of her own origin.

A critical difference between Haiti and America is exposed by the nature of Martine's work. After sending Sophie to New York, Atie returned to Dame Marie to take care of Grandmè Ifé, her aging mother. Meanwhile, in New York, Martine works at an old folks' home, cleaning up after parents whose own children have abandoned them. The nursing home is a cruel parody of the American attempt to build everything bigger, better and more efficient, exposing the nagging inhumanity of this effort. Sophie is getting a double dose of anxiety in her new homeland. She's hitting the ground at a place and time where to be Haitian-American is particularly difficult. Sophie will have to endure prejudicial comments from white Americans, including the sense that she's dirty or contaminated. On the other side of things, there is a kind of protective self-segregation that will keep Martine and Sophie reliant on the Haitian community in Brooklyn. Martine wants Sophie to learn English quickly.

The relationship between Sophie and Martine is crucially symbolized in the events of Testing. Furious and worried at catching Sophie out late, Martine falls back on her mother's own practice of testing. Though its purpose is different, the mechanics of testing nonetheless suggest the violation of rape Sophie deliberately breaks her own hymen with an inanimate object. Sophie's act is simultaneously an act of violence and one of will. Paradoxically, it is also an act of liberation, freeing her once and for all from the dreaded practice of testing Sophie's action adds to the novel's continual comparison of violence done to women by men versus violence done to them by other women, by adding a third category, violence done to the self. Sophie has asked her mother why Martine performed virginity tests on her, even though she and Atie hated them so much. Martine tells Sophie that she will speak of it only once (don't ask again, kid), but Sophie's concerned for Brigitte. She doesn't want to continue this cycle of violation with her own daughter, and she feels that she might need more than one explanation to lift herself out of it.

Sophie's first day back in Dame Marie is a study in fragments, as the memory of place triggers scenes from her past. Ifé introduces Sophie around Dame Marie when she returns with Brigitte. Before Sophie can even self-identify, her grandmother claims her for Haiti. While she may have spent the last decade in the U.S., it's clear that Sophie's roots can never be shaken—for better and worse. Sophie wishes her daughter should not undergone all the sufferings that often get by Sophie and the old women in Haiti.

“I looked back at my daughter, who was sleeping peacefully. It was a good sign that atleast she slept a lot, perhaps a bit more than other children. The fact that she could sleep meant that she had no nightmares, and maybe would never become a frightened insomniac like my mother and me” (Danticat 193).

Sophie's meeting with her sexual phobia group represents the novel's first attempt to incorporate canonical support groups and psychotherapy. The group's vocabulary and rituals firmly locate its members as 'modern' women, using a range of modern tools to confront the pain and humiliation of their past. Sophie knows that part of her healing will happen when she loses her anxiety about becoming an abuser herself. Her therapy group encourages her, through ritual, to let go of her obsessive attachment with the pain that her mother felt and passed on to her—to begin to forgive. In doing so, Sophie is already one step ahead of the women in her family who came before her. Sophie's counseling session evinces a clear awareness of her situation and an honest consideration of what is happening. The novel's continual willingness to play with

situations and narrative styles keeps provincialism at bay, forcing the reader to encounter Sophie on her own terms as an inquisitive, introspective, intelligent woman.

Although Martine never seeks the help she really needs to deal with her psychological suffering, it's clear that she's tried to settle something about her identity. This comment is an interesting about-face for Martine, who seemed so against Sophie hooking up with Joseph, who is African-American. She has a kindred feeling for the suffering expressed in Negro spirituals, a genre of music that is not part of her birth culture. When Martine first arrived in New York, her surprise at the abundance of food and her deep fear that the food would run out translated into a weight gain of sixty pounds. Likewise, Sophie's unwillingness to allow herself the satisfaction of pleasure is echoed in the denial, guilt, desperately bingeing and purging of bulimia.

At six in the morning, Marc calls back, sobbing. Martine is dead. Marc had found her in the bathroom in the middle of the night in a pool of blood, still breathing. She had stabbed herself in the stomach seventeen times with an old rusty knife. She died in the ambulance, after telling him in Creole that she could not carry the baby. Sophie's trip to Haiti for her mother's funeral takes on the full mythological significance of a third and final return. Sophie's first experience of Haiti, in Section One, was tied to the innocence and asexuality of childhood, and marked by her mother's absence. Her return in Section Three was a chance to confront the problems of her adult sexuality as well as the violence of the countryside and of her family's past. The third trip is bittersweet, spanning the difficulty of Martine's death and the final promise of Sophie's liberation. As they arrive, Sophie's honest grief is set against Marc's discomfort. Having cultivated his Haitian identity from afar, Marc is no longer sure how to be authentic in the home country. Meanwhile Sophie, with no pretence to abandon, can directly engage with the landscape and her history.

Danticat wants us to understand that she's not just artificially stacking the odds in the favour of female characters in her book. She's got a deeper reason for doing so. In the folktales that Sophie recalls and the stories told by the women in her family, the characters and motifs are decidedly feminine. Danticat claims that this is because all Haitians are daughters of the land. Perhaps it is also because the experience of the women in this work sums up the human condition so well: complex and difficult, filled with beauty, terror, and a deep, longing sadness for freedom.

The title of the book comes from the very last reflection in this novel. "I come from a place where *breath, eyes, memory* are one, a place from which you carry your past like the hair on your head" (Danticat 234). These are Sophie's concluding words, as she tries to reconcile herself to the loss of her mother and to confront the terror of the past. She understands that Haiti is an integral part of who she is because of what she has experienced there herself and what she has inherited from her mother through stories and secondary memories. Sophie can't escape any of it—the good or the bad—since it is a visceral part of her. It's quite literally in her DNA, a basic part of her identity that she can't shed and will live with every day of her life.

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Shifting Paradigms: A Feminist Reading of K R Meera's *Hangwoman*

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Abstract

K R Meera is one of the most powerful voices in contemporary Malayalam literature, whose fame crossed the regional boundaries, after the publication of Hang Woman: Everyone Loves a Good Hanging, translated into English by J Devika in 2014. In Hang Woman (Aarachar, 2012) Meera chronicles the legacy of executioners in India. The novel retails the story of Chetana, the youngest member of the Grddha Mullick family, who is appointed as the first female executioner in India. Twenty two year old Chetana, has come a long way from being a submissive daughter to a self sufficient and tenacious hang woman. She shrugs aside her tyrant father and unscrupulous lover, which marks her protest against women's exploitation. The novel portrays the different faces of woman in the broader canvas of history from whom Chetana has drawn energy and vigour, thus creating a space of her own. The protagonist breaks down the labyrinth of pre-fixed definitions and pre-set norms that defined woman. This study will delve into the change in the subservient position of woman in the society and explores the issues of gender that determines the status and power of male and female. In fact, the novel is not an outcry for abducting freedom and independence from the male patriarchy instead it is a proclamation of her identity. The paper intends to demonstrate the dismantling of the typical female stereotypes, giving way to emancipated woman of strong will and ideologies.

“Humanity is male and man defines woman not in itself but as relative to him, she is not regarded as an autonomous being” - Beauvoir

This autonomous status of women from time immemorial has continued to remain in the secondary position in the male dominated society. The subservient status of women is enforced by the social tradition and educational system which is controlled by the patriarchal society. The secondary status does not allow them to share their spaces in social, political, professional or intellectual planes. The women are eschewed by the society to remain timid and helpless which give rise to persuasive social evils. At this point women have taken a stubborn stand to emerge as a liberated being. Their existential struggles pave way to the emergence of “New Woman”. The hegemonic and conventional norms are violated by the new woman who asserts their individuality and search for occupation to demand freedom of choice and autonomy. After a long time Malayalam literature witnessed the presence of a powerful and strong willed new woman

through the character of Chetna created by K R Meera. In *Hang Woman* Meera explicates the psyche of the first female executioner who asserts her individuality in a male dominated society, which only accepts the “stereotypical representation of women as weak/vulnerable, seductress, obstacle, sexual object or a procreating device” (Pramod K Nayar 83).

“The hegemonic monopoly of patriarchy is further reinforced with the manipulated process of seclusion of women from social life during the deteriorating political condition of the medieval woman” (Nisha Singh 124). Ideologies which govern the society have prefixed the notions about women as innately weak and emotional. They enjoy dependence and are pretexted as having a limited capacity to work. Meera’s protagonist Chetna Grddha Mullick transcends the marginality and marches towards emancipation and selfhood. Chetna, who is the youngest member of the executioner’s family, is appointed as the first female executioner. Her father Phanibhushan Grddha Mullick, who is eighty years old has an account of 451 hangings, is too old to execute death sentence. Since her brother’s limbs have been chopped off, the duty of hanging is thrust upon the shoulders of Chetna.

Simon de Beaviour perceives that “one is not born a woman, but becomes one” (1). Despite of her gender, Chetna perfectly fits into a male dominated profession. Even the Government advertises thus: “Qualification: Application should be an adult, over five feet four inches. Only males need to apply” (57). During her interview with Sanjeev when asked “This is work that can throw even men off balance. Do you think that a woman like you Chetna, is capable of it? Chetna replies that “There is nothing a woman cannot do” (87).

Chetna has been proficient at fashioning noose using the umbilical cord right from the time she was in her mother’s womb. By the age of five she could make perfect nooses. In idle moments the women in the Grddha family “obsessively making and unmaking nooses as they talk, whether their sari or a dupatta”. Grddha Mullick takes pride in the very long cultural and historical legacy “right from the times when the Nanda kings ruled the land” (11). And proclaims that “this is our profession we kill for the sake of justice” (13). Chetna draws inspiration and energy from a plethora of women characters around her. Her will is strengthened by the stories of the past as told by her grandmother Thakuma. Her character is shaped by the legends of the past as told by her grandmother. She does not like to be a silent victim of the injustices meted out to women by the male patriarchy. She asserts herself and becomes the symbol of women’s strength and empowerment. After completing twelfth standard Chetna joined as a proof reader in Anjaneya Prasad Yadav’s Sri Maruti Press. Anjaneya Prasad’s son Maruti Prasad tries to molest her and she defends:

When two hands slid under my armpits and spread themselves on my breasts. Because the stink of paan and the reek of sweat invaded my nostrils suddenly, I knew it was Maruti Prasad, Anjaneya’s son, without even looking. I turned around calmly and gazed into his eyes. I was neither fearful nor nervous. Instead, laughter bubbled up in me. Setting aside the writing board, I stood up. Like all the other Grddha Mullicks, I too am unusually tall, and have a strong, well-built frame. He was a couple of inches shorter than me when I stood up. Very slowly I

took the dupatta of my chest. He gawked greedily at my breasts. I tied a noose in the bat of an eyelid and, smiling at him, put it around his neck like a marriage garland. Before he could pull me closer, I had tightened the noose, passing the other end of the dupatta through the window bars and pulling it tight. His mouth gaped open. His eyes popped. His tongue protruded and paan juice flowed from it like blood. He struggled hard. But I took all that force on my left arm. He thrashed about desperately, his eyes bulged and his tongue hung close to his chin. Slowly, I eased my grip. He collapsed, panting, barely conscious (8-9).

Amidst the great debates on the need of capital punishment, appointment of a female executioner becomes sensational. Media flock their attention on Chetna for taking up an unfeminine profession. The conventional attributes of femininity is questioned. With the change in the individual roles and the identities, the image of women changed from an automated-self and as procreative machine to a self-sufficient and emancipated individual.

In the male's world men and society expects all the women to confirm themselves to their strictures. Women's free and independent existence becomes intolerable to them. They resist women's demands for equality. The fact is that women have always been viewed as incapable of any serious tasks (Sandhu 195).

Sanjeev Kumar Mitra, a journalist of CNC, inerts his power to control Grddha Mullick's family. On his first visit to Grddha's family Sanjeev had an unexpected experience from Chetna. Chetna is agitated to see her limbless brother, being photographed by Sanjeev. He has tried to make her brother a commodity for his journalistic purpose. Infuriated Chetna smashed his camera. "An intense rage flared up in my blood. I dashed into the room, snatch the camera and flung it on the ground. It hit the floor hard, bounced turned upside down and lay still on its side" (26-27).

The relationship between Sanjeev and Chetna is that of a conflict between love and hatred. The inner consciousness of Sanjeev does not allow him to accept her and give her an equal status. This results in his attempt of making her under his control, both physically and emotionally. She remarks: "The pain I felt when you mangled my body- it is still there. How can a woman love a man who has not offered her a loving touch?" (325). In fact, he uses her as a medium for sensitivising the issue thereby increasing the TRP ratings. As a commodity he attempts to make profit from Chetna's identity as a female executioner. He introduces her in his show as: "Welcome again to *Hangwoman's Diary*...we have with us in our studio today along with Chetna Grddha Mullick, who has been deputed to hang him, Protima Ghosh, mother of Rameshchandra Ghosh, the last convict who hanged at the gallows...." (126).

Chetna breaks free from the shadow of her avarious father and unscrupulous lover. She pulls the lever and becomes the first female executioner. Chetna becomes the spokesperson who remains to be scapegoats of sexual repression, poverty, race, caste and gender differences. The independent voice of Chetna articulates:

Just like at the gallows, I burst out laughing. The grains of sand made a grating sound inside the silk cloth. I held it tight with hands slimy with death. Thus my

name and my life became undying in Bharat and the whole world, in the name of love, soil and death. I knew well that no one would stop me. Rain, soil, light and history stood waiting for me. (432)

The novel concludes with a strong blow to man's atrocities against women who treated them as objects for voyeuristic pleasure and specimens of sexual gaze. After the successful accomplishment of Jatindrath Banerjee's execution, Chetna comes to the studio of CNC for live demonstration of hanging. Her specimen in the studio is her tyrannical lover Sanjeev. Sanjeev stands on the platform. "Our bodies were so close, they nearly touched. I lured him with the noose as if it were the marriage garland ... When I took the glasses of his nose, I whispered, 'I want to fuck you atleast once ...'" (430). "The noose was tightened on his neck and he screamed 'Amme!' Ma, mati, manush, I answered. His legs danced in the air . . . His tongue stuck out. His hands stuck closer to the body and scratched his thighs in sheer agony. I beamed into the camera, pulled off my mike and threw it down. Picking up my old bag from under the table and slinging it on my shoulder, I walked out" (431).

We women never achieve anything by ourselves. Our lives are bound to each other like the links in a chain. One completes what someone else has begun in some other time. The one who begins does not ever complete it and those who complete it do not begin it. (427)

K R Meera has begun a new tradition which in turn has a long way to move on. The writer refuses to create woman characters that are magnifying mirrors for colossal male egos, eternally bound and constrained in the images constrained of them from a male point of view.

Shifting Trends in a Woman's World

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Abstract

A woman's world has always been under constant scrutiny down the ages. Irrespective of countries, communities and other demographics, a woman's identity has been the subject of many. The elusive world of a woman is not yet fully understood by anyone perhaps. With all her desires, ambitions, aspirations, hopes, and sometimes failures, disappointments altogether with her unconditional love, she still continues to be an enigma. While fulfilling her family obligations, she brings out the best in her, whether she is attending to an ailing parent, doting on her child or just being kind to her husband. Her well meaning intentions are misunderstood sometimes and often misconstrued. However, the fact cannot be denied that she is a real icon of her own making.

Keywords: *Woman's world, family obligations, icon.*

The paper focuses on the hidden dreams of a woman and her unfulfilled desires which find an expression at some point in life. It is the story of a woman at crossroads. The paper deals with a woman's story in Preeti Shenoy's novel, *The Secret Wish List*. Despised by her brother, sidelined by her parents, she is bereft of hope. The air of finality in the words of her own kith and kin hurt her deeply. She knew that life would never be the same again for her. With nobody to offer her hope and solace, she stepped out of the comfort of her home into a new world of uncertainty. This is the story of Diksha in Preeti Shenoy's *The Secret Wish List*. The story begins as a story of a school girl named Diksha who is slighted and hated for her involvement with a boy in a school programme. Having been caught offguard with him, she is being condemned by teachers, her own parents and her brother for life. Her brother is Rohan. It all began as a prank by Diksha's best friend Tanu who wrote a note for Ankit, a much sought after boy in school.

As the note Tanu wrote was in Diksha's house, Ankit mistook it to be Diksha's note much to Tanu's dismay and Diksha's surprise. The involvement began from then on and Diksha found herself enjoying the attention until both Diksha and Ankit were caught red handed at night during a school programme. With the family honour at stake, Diksha's parents decided to shift her to another school in Kerala. This added to Diksha's agony and demoralised her. After schooling, she was forced to marry a businessman called Sandeep. Diksha steps into a new world. She has a son whom she names Abhay.

The growing discontent in her marriage is evident. She feels quite claustrophobic in her new home. Sandeep turns out to be cold and reserved. He has no time for Diksha. While Diksha tries to forget the past and seek solace from Sandeep, Sandeep is engrossed completely in his office work. There are so many things that Diksha wants to tell Sandeep but to no avail. For

instance, Diksha wanted to tell Sandeep about how she was able to renew her old contacts-Tanu for instance after many years. Sandeep just does not seem to have the time for her. Even Abhay, the son is not given the attention he deserves. Things reach such a state that her friends and well wishers tell Diksha that she has not really lived her life.

One day at her cousin's Vibha's house, Diksha draws up a secret wish list which lists out all her unfulfilled desires. In the secret wish list, she also expresses a desire for an involvement outside her marriage. Years roll by and through her friend, Tanu she manages to renew her friendship with Ankit. She also enrolls herself in a Salsa Class to vent her feelings. She finds Ankit to be the same person, she found him to be years ago. Ankit reciprocates her love warmly. In between, Diksha is caught offguard in the Salsa dance class, dancing with the salsa instructor, Gaurav. She is severely reprimanded by Sandeep. However, this incident does not stop her from pursuing her passion which was salsa. Her involvement with Ankit continues.

One day, Sandeep takes Diksha to Maldives as Sandeep leaves for Korea on a business trip. Diksha enjoys the breathtaking view of Maldives immensely. When Sandeep reaches home, earlier than usual, Diksha is away at Maldives. Diksha's absence infuriates Sandeep and Diksha has to rush back from Maldives. When she is back, she is not the same Diksha that Sandeep knew her to be. Diksha confronts Sandeep and tells him openly about her involvement with Ankit. Sandeep is so shocked that he immediately calls up Diksha's parents for a meeting. For the first time, Diksha speaks up. She says "This is my life. I am determined to really live it and follow my heart's urging which I have ignored and tried to suppress for so long" (249).

She confronts her father and tells him, "I did tried hard papa. I tried to be happy in the life that you wanted me to lead. I tried to do all that you wanted me to do. All I wanted was acceptance from all of you, which I never got" (252). Then Diksha tells her mother, "I yearned for you, ma. To take me in your arms and to tell me that it is going to be okay and that all of us make mistakes. But you never did anything like that" (252). It was natural for Diksha to vent her feelings to a mother who had chosen to alienate herself from her own daughter. On Diksha's part the alienation was so far-reaching that she felt like a stranger to her.

Peg Streep in her article entitled, 'Toxic Patterns in Mother- daughter Relationship' says, "It's true enough that all daughters of unloving and unattuned mothers have common experiences. The lack of maternal warmth and validation warps their sense of self, makes them lack confidence in or be wary of close emotional connection, and shapes them in ways that are both seen and unseen" (2) Streep goes on to say that daughters are hardwired to yearn for proximity to their mothers. Diksha not only lost her identity but her sense of self-worth. Having being coerced into a marriage, much against her personal wishes, she was left to fend for herself.

As far as her husband Sandeep was concerned, he had very little to offer her. Diksha tried her best to live out her dreams in the arranged marriage. Unfortunately, Sandeep was too busy to even think of Diksha, much less be with her even. Sherry Turkle has written a book entitled *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital World* where she deplores the absence of meaningful conversation among people in the modern world. She says that basically people are hardwired for conversation and conversation is something which brings people together and helps them open up to one another. But people are so engrossed in their everyday lifestyle that

they fail to respond to feelings and emotions of their loved ones and most of the thoughts are unspoken. This is what happens in Diksha's life. Sandeep is either in his office or if he is at home, he is in front of the television completely oblivious of his wife's emotions and feelings. Sherry Turkle says "face-to face conversation is the most human and humanizing thing we do"(3). Having been deprived of her husband's attention, she had to seek solace and comfort outside the confines of her so called home. Ironically, the outside world gave her whatever she wanted—love and attention.

Interestingly, only the mother-in-law of Diksha seems to understand her daughter-in-law. She refers to her as a good wife and a good mother and that if only her son had paid her some attention, this marriage could have been saved. There is a kind of emotional intelligence which comes into play here, wherein a mother-in-law perceives what Diksha's own parents do not perceive. This is what Diksha's mother-in-law has to say about her. 'Diksha has been very sweet and kind to me and has been there for me even during the time my son hasn't.'(253). Daniel Goleman was the first person to use the concept of emotional intelligence wherein he implies that if only people were empathetic and understood emotions of a hurting person and then responded appropriately, many homes could be rebuilt and many relationships could be revived.

The story entitled *The Secret Wish List* by Preeti Shenoy ends on a note of a resignation on the part of all the onlookers- Diksha's husband, her parents and most importantly, her mother-in-law who had the audacity to support her daughter-in-law and say "I have seen the whole picture. I cannot blindly support my son. I know all that he has put you through"(254). This is the story of a woman at crossroads who finally finds a home where her heart is.

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Shobha De's *Sultry Days*: A Voice of the New Indian Woman against Patriarchy and Male Hegemony

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Abstract

*The wave of so-called feminism has moved the recent trend of Indian writing in English has ushered new mode of expression in Indian writing in English. The depiction of hapless condition of women, including their marital conflict and status has been a very trendy phenomenon now. Women's life, attitude and status are now rapidly changing with the passage of time. These changing perspectives of woman as individual have been vividly focused in De's novels. Like other women novelists-- Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapoor, Anita Desai, Shobha De brings out the changing image of traditionally confined women, especially married women. But she treats the theme differently. She feels that a true change should emerge from the psyche of women. She holds cudgel against the age old patriarchal culture. Her novels are preoccupied with the feminine issues of marriage, frustration and divorce modern women face. In her novels she points out how married woman becomes victim to male egoism and how she sacrifices herself for family where from she gets nothing but pain and despair. She works not for herself but to satisfy others physically as well as mentally. Shobha De's *Sultry Days* is one of the most striking attempt in propogating the idea of female subjectivity. In this novel, a victimized woman is presented as face life in a struggling yet confident manner. The novel infers that a woman with a fully integrated personality can solve many problems in her life and she need not be a victim, a fact manifested through the powerfully drawn character of Nisha Verma.*

In 1928 Virginia Woolf delivered a modest lecture called "A Room of One's Own". Nobody could have foreseen at that time that one day it would give rise to a new thinking on issues pertaining to the status of women. Virginia Woolf said that they are "too simple" and that "so much has been left out, unattempted". (Woolf ,105) Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* nurtured the feminist ideology, it was in the seventies and eighties of the present century that various issues touching women were considered systematically. A positive sense of feminine identity has found recognition now and women are stepping out of the rigid sex role assigned to them traditionally.

Indian women novelists have concentrated on women's problems in their works and have given vent to a protest against male domination. Shobha De is emerging as a feminist writer today and her writings are gaining popularity for their inclination towards this fair sex and the graphic depiction of their pursuits and attitudes. These raise a protest against the male dominated Indian society where the women are denied the freedom to act according to their will and continue to cherish their own dreams in futility. Women are treated as a subaltern and mere man's shadow-self. They are considered the otherness of man and not one with men or individuals. However the role of women in society has been changing with each decade of a century, always with a good deal of social conflict and ideological struggle. These have left a

great influence on sexual mores and social codes of the prevalent society which in turn is well embodied by Shobha De in her characters. She voices against the male culture and strongly detects the marginalization of women. She does not believe in describing her women characters as love slaves or mere helpmates at home. In her novels she mirrors her own feminist and sexist mind set. Her novels characterize the new Indian woman's voice. 'New woman' wants to explore self-identity, seeks freedom in all phases of her life, reinstate the conventional representation of Indian woman. The need for women to seek their individuality is the message in her novels.

Sultry Days by Shobha De is the most striking attempt in propagating the idea of female subjectivity, which is not just a slavish succumbing to male dominance but every woman is a staunch feminist in her heart resisting male injustices. In her novel, a victimized woman is presented as face life in a struggling yet confident manner. The novel infers that a woman with a fully integrated personality can solve many problems in her life and she need not be a victim, a fact manifested through the powerfully drawn character of Nisha Verma.

Nisha initially worked in an advertising agency subsequently adopting the career of a journalist. During her college days she met Deb or Dev, referred to as God in the novel, a freelance writer with a working knowledge of German, French and Spanish. He had won scholarship to Columbia but failed to avail it because his father couldn't afford the air -fare. God was a talented man who could cook and sew, write poems, quote from the Upanishads and had an ear for music as well. Nisha was favorably impressed by God's ways like other young girls were and would spend a lot of time with him buying him plenty of gifts. To quote the novelist, "I learnt very quickly that I had to bury whatever little ego and pride I had if I wished to hang around God. His attitude towards girls was simple- use them and leave them. There were enough takers around- bold girls whose jaws never stopped working on the thick wads of gim in their mouths".

Nisha's encounter with God brought to light several stark realities about life and society. God belonged to the very ordinary strata of society living with parents and brother in a dingy one room apartment with hardly any privacy. Comrade, his father was a union leader. Nisha's class was much above that of God's. Her father worked for a multinational company, their life revolving around company dinners and parties. Nisha's parents were fond of dressing up elegantly. In short they stood in rich contrast to God's parents. It was certain that Nisha was relishing her associations with a family hailing from a different class, admiring their sense of togetherness in spite of the fact that they subsisted just above the poverty line. She had everything at home but it was the sense of belonging that brought her close to God and his family.

The novelist has described a few other situations to prove that people were tired of their class and occasionally they enjoyed an interaction with members of the other classes. De tries to portray through her characters the metropolitan social life and cultural cross-fertilization. However, the novelist cannot restrain from writing about the problematic lives of Indian women residing in the metropolis. Shobha De's observation coheres with Cora Kaplan who claims, Literature has been a traditional space for the exploration of gender relations and sexual difference, and one in which women themselves have been formidably present.

Kaplan also affirms that gender and class go together and when these two terms are interpreted in union then our analysis of them is totally transformed. Such a transparency in man and woman relationship constitutes the main fabric of *Sultry Days* in which the novelist has

portrayed a variety of women belonging to different classes and has shown diverse attitudes in each. First there is God's mother who adopts a reticent view of life. She is compromised to whatever she has lives life courageously and never thinks of revolting. Then there is Mrs Verma, Nisha's mother who in the beginning is quite contented with her married life. However, she is emotionally shaken up when she discovers her husband's infidelity having extra marital affair with a Sindhi divorcee. Mrs Verma becomes rather moody but soon she gathers up all her courage preparing to face life boldly deciding to take up a job and when Mr Verma furiously reacts to this idea, Mrs Verma is blunt enough to tell him that her determination to work was final and she was not at all bothered about others. To quote the novelist, "And you want me to bother about them? Why should I? Why should I bother about you either? You can go to hell with your pompous talk and empty boasts. I am sick, do you hear, sick of living this false life varnishing my nails, setting my hair, wearing those silly saris and smiling through your office parties pretending nothing was wrong with my life. Well- It's my turn now. And you can listen to me for a change. I will go along with Pratimaben with anything I choose to do. And the first one is that I'm taking a job"

Through the portrayal of Nisha, Shobha De throws ample light on the psyche of single woman. Nisha's home was an unhappy one. They lived together, yet they pursued their own paths. Nisha's social life was dominated by girl friends, divorcees, widows and other singles. *Sultry Days* ends on a note of optimism for the women folk belonging to the upper-middle-class Indian milieu. Nisha learns to be courageous from her mother and both the women begin to sustain the men in their lives.

The novel presents before us a world of glamour, affluence, advertising, models, film stars and many other glittering aspects of the so called high class society. For a moment the reader is blinded by the glitter and soon through gradually hollowness, the artificiality, the pangs and the inner fragmentation of such a falsified life strikes them with a cathartic revelation. Episodes which had initially frustrated the readers with their atmosphere of unreachable luxury, ultimately purge them into reality through the epiphany after epiphany. For example, while hollowness of the class difference is shattered consistently, the folly of accepting the slavish subjectivity of women to male dominance is brought out, at the same time the feminine consciousness with its sustaining and pathological impact on family, community and society is proved time and again. Cora Kaplan stresses this fact in the following words which may be suitably applicable to *Sultry Days*: "The psychic fragmentation expressed through female characters in women's writings is seen as the most important sign of their sexual subordination more interesting and ultimately more meaningful than their social oppression.

Female subjectivity is one of the most regressive elements in a social set up. The women long for love, dependency and the material and emotional comfort of fixed class identity. At the same time there is the ardent desire to be autonomous, so she is torn between the two and suffers quietly In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* discussed the psychic life of women as a crucial element in their subordination and freedom. It is important to change the perception of the society, and then only the emancipation of women can be a success at different levels. The people in the society need to accept the truth that there is a discrepancy in the ideology and the practical implication of the same. To emphasize on the upliftment in the status of the women, the laws need to be strict and also implemented in judicious manner.

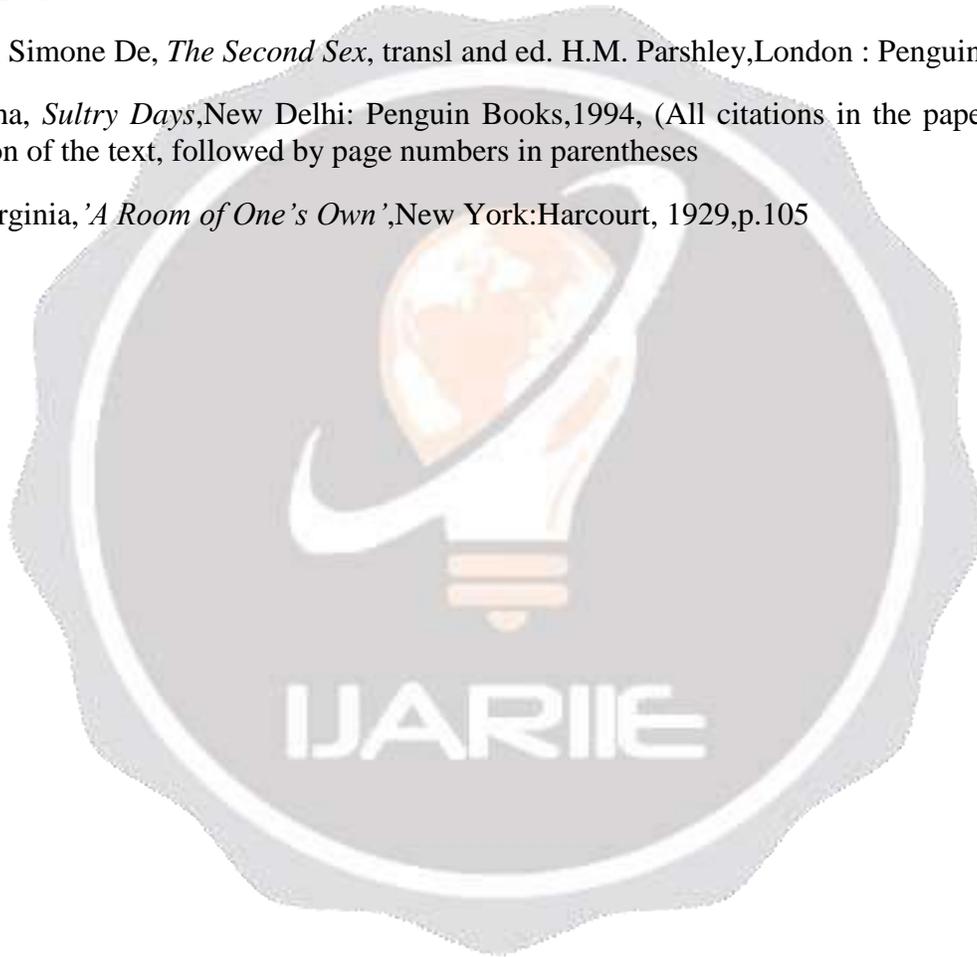
Women empowerment can only be possible if the women come together and decide to self-empower themselves. A movement for women emancipation needs to gain momentum which makes a woman a strong being instead of being the others. Simone de Beauvoir has given a full length commentary on the plight of women today. It is worthwhile to quote the author on this subject. The women of today are in a fair way to dethrone the myth of feminity, they are beginning to affirm their independence in concrete ways; but they do not easily succeed in living completely to lift of a human being. Reared by women, which still means practically subordination to man; for masculine prestige is far from extinction, resting still, economic and social foundation.

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State of Survival: Pakistani Women's Resistance to Male Chauvinistic Society as Pictured in Pakistani Poems

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Abstract

Women, the most powerful being of God's creation have to put-up a strenuous effort to extricate her from the social structure created by men to hold back her advancement and power. Male chauvinistic society wants women to be dependent always. Culture and Traditional norms never allow her to explore the possibilities. Women's identity in patriarchal society is obtained through the lives of her husband and children. But the superhuman power which women posses are kept in control by male chauvinistic society in the name of tradition and values. In the domain of patriarchal culture, women are a social construct, a site on which masculine meaning gets spoken and masculine desires enacted. Feminism is generally seen as the struggle of women against all patriarchal and gender oppression and the struggle for equality for women. In the poems of Kishwar Naheed, Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Maki Kureshi, readers are able to visualize Pakistani women's misery. This paper focus is on Pakistani women's physical and mental trauma caused by isolation, infanticide and societies skeptical nature about her chastity as depicted in "I am not that Women", "Loneliness" and "The Kittens".

Pakistani literature is closely linked with cultural, social, economical, political and religious aspects of the Pakistani society. Pakistani poets derived their fashion from British brand, native Urdu poetry and a kind of anti-romanticism from Australian poetry. The language structure of their writing is incredibly cushy. Largely, Premise of Pakistani writing is associated with misery of women, predominantly from early twentieth century. Women in Pakistan have been enduring harms such as female infanticide, vani (child marriage), honor killing, marriage to Quran, lack of educational and employment opportunities. Numerous feministic and other such movements and ideologies developed over years paved way to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employment. They even started writing about their own troubles in male chauvinistic society and they productively altered the construction of the society. There have been a mushrooming growth of male writers, who favors' women liberation. Owing to the impact of their works, modern people had began breaking all the cultural and traditional norms to give her emancipation. Kishwar Naheed, Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Maki Kureshi, have depicted about Pakistani women's misery due to the struggle in the patriarchal society. Their poems deal with the torment of women physically and psychologically.

The status of Pakistani women is one of the systemic gender subordination. It varies considerably across classes, regions, and the rural/urban areas. There is a division due to uneven socio economic development and the impact of tribal, feudal and capitalistic society. They have to struggle against their double colonization because of the particular politico-religious system which is hidden but working very actively behind the social system of Pakistan. It is very important to know that the freedom from oppressive social system is not easy for the women of

Pakistan, even if they have achieved a certain level of education and economic independence. This is due to the density of women in Pakistan is embroiled with the religious and political ideology of Pakistan and the ideology of legal equality of women is cursed mostly by the dictators, developed in the name of Islam. Child marriage, dowry system, marriage to Quran, honor killing, female infanticide, education, employment opportunities are some crucial troubles faced by those women

Women, the most powerful being of God's creation have to put-up a strenuous effort to extricate her from the social structure created by men to hold back her advancement and power. Male chauvinistic society wants women to be dependent always. Culture and Traditional norms never allow her to explore her possibilities. Women's identity in patriarchal society is said to have obtained through the lives of her husband and children. But the superhuman power which a woman posse is kept in a control by male chauvinistic society in the name of tradition and values. In the domain of patriarchal culture, a woman is a social construct, a site on which masculine meaning gets spoken and masculine desires enacted. Feminism is generally seen as the struggle of women against all patriarchal and gender oppression and the struggle for equality for women. Feminist movements, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experience. It has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues concerning gender.

Seven defining movements helped Pakistani women to have the benefit of equality in family, education and empowerment. They fight against Islamisation for child marriages and forced marriages. Women like Benazir Bhutto, began to contest in election. They began to work in different fields like A judge, A climber, A fighter pilot etc... Malala became a great inspiration for Pakistani women due to her courageous struggle for education. Pakistani women of present day enjoy a better status. They are contributing in every field of life. Women are educated and the job opportunities are also high. Women's empowerment has more than one component: their right to make decision; their access to opportunities and resources; authority to be in charge of their own lives, both inside and outside home. By such changes women attain self-confidence and independent nature. Honor killing, female infanticide, marriage to Quran, child marriage are sinking in the so called modernization. Before liberation, Pakistan has been constructed only to accommodate the needs of men, soon after Pakistani women's proclaims, 'They are here, and here to stay', similar accommodations are made for women too.

The poem, "I am not that women" renders the hidden sentiment of women before emancipation. Women before liberation have tackled many problems physically and mentally. They are forced to be inside the four walls of the home in the name of culture and tradition. They have been treated as the commodity and a child bearing machine. She is sold for so called male in the name of dowry. Naheed scripts the frustration of women in her poem as,

*"I am the woman
whom you bought and sold
in the name of chastity
not knowing
that I can walk on water*

when I am drowning”

Women are not permitted to have their own suggestion and opinion. She is forced to sacrifice all her desires for the sake of family. Though she sacrifices for her family, she is depicted as “stain on the wall”. The poem, “The kittens” depicts the suffering of women due to female infanticide. She personifies kittens as female children. She transmits her impression in this poem stating that female children have been killed without any courtesy. She enhances her opinion stating that if they are not killed they will experience the agony of being suppressed by the arrogant male prejudiced society.

Kureshi portrays the killing in his poem as

*“... warm water
is advised to lessen the shock.
They are so small it takes only
a minute. You hold them down
and turn your head away...”*

In the poem, “Loneliness”, Faiz wants women to be liberated from norms and conditions both mentally and physically. As a revolutionary poet, he has done the eminent work of sowing seeds for the feminist ideas. He tries to make women understand that she is a durable being in the earth and she has a supreme skill of reaching the pinnacle of victory. He provokes the isolated women not to be reliant on no one. And he states that dependency leads to disappointment, making them lose their self-confidence and originality. These ideas of the poet are found in the lines as

*“... Lock your dreamless doors!
No-one will come here now
no-one
no more.”*

Naheed concludes her poem with an optimistic remark that the women have a tremendous change from the past. They are able to lead their life as they hope. Now, “women are not the one who men think” is the suitable slogan that occurs in the present epoch. Women are attaining enormous elevation in all the fields and gender discrimination has been sinking. She has given soul to these ideas in the following words:

*“Now it is time for me to flower free,
The women on the poster,
half-naked, selling socks and shoes*

No, no I am not that women!

Thus, in the poems of Pakistani writers, we are able to spot the progress of women in all the stages. “The kittens” symbolize deep endurance of women due to female infanticide. ‘Loneliness, is a poem which reveals women are to be self-regulating and they must not be reliant on anyone. “I am not that women” depicts that women started breathing the fresh air of freedom. By these poems we are able to recognize the agony of women in male subjugated society and their progress in emancipation from restriction. The ideas of the poet expressed in these poems depicts the journey of women in the Pakistani society from salvation to empowerment. In a way it also deals with the universal theme portraying the entire women society through the portrayal of Pakistani women society.

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The Journey towards Actualization-Women's Search for Self in Non Traditional Writings

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Abstract

Women have been found to use personal and non-traditional writing forms as part of spiritual quests, quests for identity, quests for better living and as means of self-growth. Margo Culley has observed that women reveal a sense of self-worth and self-respect in such forms of writing. "Even the most self-deprecating of women's diaries are grounded in some sense of the importance of making a record of the life. (1985:8) Women who have bogged down by conventions of femininity since the seventeenth century have broken these conventions through letters, diaries, memoirs and journals to provide coherent images of "self." Such non-traditional forms of writing which have been relegated to the margins of literary achievement are, however, exacting projects of great significance to their subjects. A huge amount of female literary talent has been channeled away from public forms of writing owing to the bias the female gender faced. Forced to give an outlet to their creative drive women took refuge in surreptitious or 'unimportant' productions such as writing diaries, letters, journals and memoirs. Such writings were deemed non-canonical and non-traditional forcing women to avail genres considered marginal to express themselves. They helped women vindicate themselves and express their opinions on spiritual and secular experiences. It has been found that because the domestic sphere served as a background much of the writings were of the interruptive mode characterized by breaks and ellipses representing the interruption in their thought processes. Many women found non-traditional writings to be powerful tools to combat suffering and frustration.

Key words: margins, non -traditional writings, breaks and ellipses, vindicate

"It is not that everything women do as poets is different from what men do or that women use words in ways that men don't or can't, but that many of their ways are different and that their ways are for the purpose of expressing in art their real selves, not the selves that have been created for them " said Suzanne Juhasz (1976:202).

Women's experiences have rarely been a direct focus for theoretical consciousness, leaving a whole range and spectrum of human life to be explored, depicted and understood. A huge amount of female literary talent has been channeled away from public forms of writing owing to the bias the female gender faced. Forced to give an outlet to their creative drive women took refuge in surreptitious or 'unimportant' productions such as writing diaries, letters, journals and memoirs. Such writings were deemed non-canonical and non-traditional forcing women to avail genres considered marginal to express themselves. They had to resort to vulgar forms of expressions owing to the androcentric male defined categories of writing.

Diaries, letters, journals and narratives of women have recorded women involved in activities related their families and homes and land. These private recordings play a crucial role

in throwing light on the social, economic, emotional and geographical conditions of women who used forms of writing amenable to them.

Early autobiographical narratives such as Alice Thornton's *A Book of Remembrances* written in the seventeenth century records with frankness and detail the sufferings experienced by Thornton. Records of illnesses, loneliness, difficulties in reconciling herself to God's will and rage at slanderous gossip are recorded in the narrative. The narrative throws light on a strong woman who boldly expressed her feelings and at the same time gained solace, almost serving a therapeutic purpose in her life. The image of "self" reflected in her text is one of passive submissiveness. However, on the other hand, the determination of Thornton to record her life to vindicate herself and her family despite her hardships is commendable. Frank and graphic details of the perils of child birth, marriage, sickness, pregnancy and other domestic and everyday happenings are recorded faithfully making her narrative realistic and throwing light on little known life of seventeenth century women. Thus, this document is invaluable to historians and sociologists as it is a reflection of facets of life in the past.

Captivity narratives written in the seventeenth century also reflect women's responses to new world landscape. Mary Rowlandson's autobiographical narrative is an orthodox Puritan document meant for the public that "God might have his due glory." The narrative, a detailed account of a white woman's journey through vast and desolate wilderness graphically describes Rowlandson's spiritual and psychological struggles. Her private experiences recorded, says critic Annette Kolodny, (1985:94) are a symbolic expression of the state of the larger community. Recordings of women like Rowlandson's in narrative form become invaluable material to New England divines to teach congregations that they must fear God. According to Leslie Fiedler these narratives written by women express anger and poignancy at being forcefully removed from their families (1968:90). Such narratives remained popular as they provided women readers and writers a safe vehicle through which to confront unhappy experiential structures of their westward progress.

Writing diaries was another well-established tradition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Although limited to the aristocracy and educated bourgeoisie the tradition formed a salutary reminder of alternate literature that allowed women to realize their expressive potential in a society that repressed their expression. While some women were anti-feminists (Lady Chudeleigh) some like Hester Thrale were openly vociferous about the need for self-expression in women. Her collection called *Thraliana* was a repository, "a place to relieve an overburdened consciousness." "I made the *Thraliana* my confidante, my solitary comfort and repository of every thought as it rose", she wrote (1778:799). Her diaries prove that women used the diary not just to explore the varieties of female self-hood in persisting models but also to promote an alternative series of identities for themselves. Thrale's diaries attempt to organize and elaborate on male patriarchal principles while she establishes a literary space to exercise her wit and celebrate her managerial skill as wife and mother. Male incompetence is exposed while her own efficiency as intellectual pivot of the household is highlighted.

The art of letter writing or epistolary writing came naturally and easily to women. Letters, like conversation were increasingly valued for their 'authentic' and natural qualities. This belief put female letter writers in a privileged relation to the letter genre as it was a form that did not require a pedantic style that male canonical forms required. Letter writing was another medium which proved to be a kind of refuge from the conundrums of domesticity for women of the

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A study of letters of Abigail Adam Smiths, Martha Jones, Mercy Otis Warren reveal the lives of women involved actively in education and politics while leading domesticated lives. In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century England, letter writing helped to develop and maintain networking among families.

Women such as Margaret Cavendish used the letter genre to voice her opinions boldly to propagate her ideas to the audiences who received her letters. On the other hand, Mary Montague of the eighteenth used letters to describe the condition of women of her society. Obstacles and difficulties faced by women are dealt with in striking detail. Her letters also advice women to be educated if they were to meet with happiness. Author Jane Austen's little known letters reveal this unique role letters could play. Her letters have been considered to have been highly controversial as they transgressed the received notions of what a totally different "self" than that she projected in real life could be. E.M. Forester opined that he detected "ill breeding" in Jane Austen's letter which is a surprising picture differing from what the writer was reported to have been known to the outside world. The letters also illustrate that women "fostered their own solidarity "in the early nineteenth century forming a sort of sisterhood, networking women across districts. It is also clear that Austen made use of different discourses to suit the varying shifts of topics in her letters. Use of allusive, dense and bulletin- like prose, vivid descriptions of balls and people are found by turns in her letters.

Women have been found to use personal and non-traditional writing forms as part of spiritual quests, quests for identity, quests for better living and as means of self-growth. Margo Culley has observed that women reveal a sense of self-worth and self-respect in such forms of writing. "Even the most self-deprecating of women's diaries are grounded in some sense of the importance of making a record of the life. (1985:8) Women who have bogged down by conventions of femininity since the seventeenth century have broken these conventions through letters, diaries, memoirs and journals to provide coherent images of "self." Such non-traditional forms of writing which have been relegated to the margins of literary achievement are, however, exacting projects of great significance to their subjects. They helped women vindicate themselves and express their opinions on spiritual and secular experiences. It has been found that because the domestic sphere served as a background much of the writings were of the interruptive mode characterized by breaks and ellipses representing the interruption in their thought processes. Women's everyday lives have been considered to be fragmented and dispersed, and caught up between a career, domestic chores, shopping planting, and other incidents often deemed episodic. Deana Metzger speaks about women's lives being interwoven in insistent cycles of birth, existence and death. The only way to understand a woman or her writings would be to understand that a woman's standpoint is different from man's. Only then can one understand the patterns of her life and writing (1977:7).

Many women found non-traditional writings to be powerful tools to combat suffering and frustration. Emily Dickinson's letters became emotional props enabling her to escape from her self-elected solitariness. Forten's diaries became a testing ground where she could gain confidence as a poet and as a public figure. Women's personal writings serve as a window to social, historical and cultural concerns of the past and also as a link to the present and future. As forms of self-inscription diaries, letters and journals allow questions regarding epistemological and critical assumptions.

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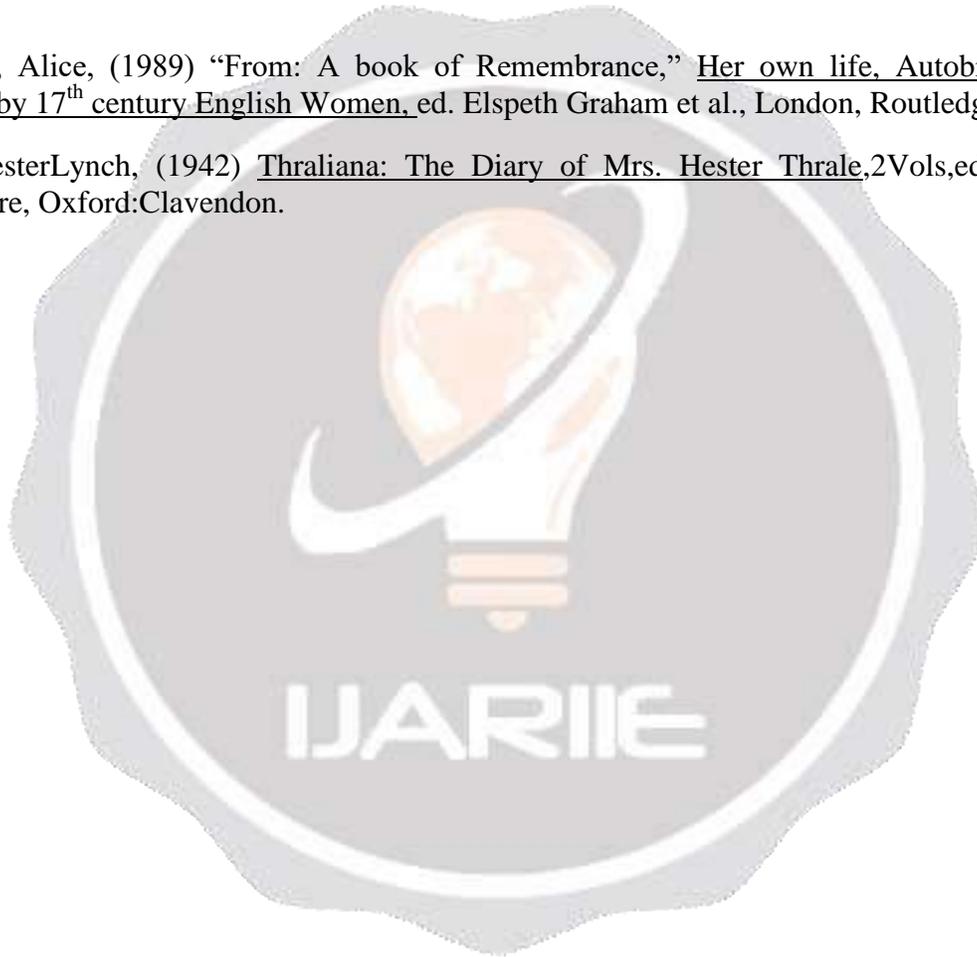
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The New Woman in Literature

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Abstract

The focus of the paper is to throw light on 'new woman in literature'; the woman Miss Greta Waud in David Ebershoff's novel The Danish Girl who triggers, shapes, guides and helps in resolving of the gender identity conflict of her husband, Einar Wegener. The paper illustrates the acceptance of gender transformation of Einar by Greta and support rendered by Greta herself in the gender transformation of her husband. Therefore the acceptance of gender duality leads to acceptance of gender transformation. The paper records the fact that the monotony faced by women in marriage is transcended by Greta and she answers to the internal struggles of her spouse. The paper brings out the clarity in Greta's cleverness in distinguishing intimacy and intellectuality. It enhances her to sort out the initial and deep traces of sexual intermediacy found in her husband. The paper also observes that, the new woman to be acquainted with emotional balance which ultimately enables her to achieve double success; success in fulfilling her husband's awe for gender transformation, by helping him in his gender reassignment surgery and success in her passionate career. The paper also throws light on Greta's modernity in her thought processing which has enabled her to outwit crude thinking. She involved herself in giving shape to her husband's quest for identity and helping him to retain self-respect and dignity. 'Acceptance' of transgenderism, being it the need of the hour is found shaped by Ebershoff's new woman Greta, which in turn stands as the objectives of the paper as well.

Keywords: *New Woman, acceptance, emotional balance, modernity and gender transformation*

In the novel *The Danish Girl* by David Ebershoff Greta Waud, the new woman exhibits her novelty in all her endeavours. She supports her husband in his gender transformation. Greta was able to render support to Einar by identifying his differences. Greta identified the woman 'Lili' intertwined in her husband Einar Wegener's body. Her support was embraced by Einar's body, mind and soul. Her support was for Einar a comfort zone, allowing him to exercise his desire. "All she wanted to do was to allow him his desires" (Ebershoff 25).

Greta's support helped in preparing Einar to admit his differences for which he initially hesitated. Though Einar had the longing to reassign his gender, it got its shape only in the companionship of Greta. Greta's companionship lacked dominance but not confidence. "Would you like to go as Lili?" She asked because she guessed it was what Einar wanted" (Ebershoff 25).

Greta did demystify to herself the real nature of ‘transgenderism’, that seemed to be haunted in Einar’s anatomy. She did arouse in him the protruding X chromosomes. “Greta said, her voice soft and careful and unfamiliar, ‘Why don’t we call you Lili?’” (Ebershoff 13). Despite arousing Lili, Greta also admired Lili’s beauty and she always dared to express Lili’s beauty. “‘You’re so beautiful I want to kiss you,’ . . . Greta was so excited that she took Lili in her arms and waltzed her around the apartment . . .” (Ebershoff 50).

Lili who had the will of her own was not restricted by Greta. Lili was accepted by Greta without any interrogation. Greta remained as the first and the greatest companion to Lili.

It never ceased to startle Greta, finding her husband like that, waiting with the neckline of a dress open across his pale shoulders. She never once said anything to Einar, or to Lili. Instead, she would always welcome Lili as if she were an amusing foreign friend. She’d hum and gossip as she helped Lili into her shoes. Greta would tip a bottle of perfume against her forefinger and then run her sweet fingertip down Lili’s throat and up the inside of her arm. She would stand Lili in front of the mirror and whisper, her voice the soft intimate voice of wedlock, ‘There now . . . so very pretty’ (Ebershoff 73-74).

Greta’s flair for fashion extended to help Lili in her attire too. Her act of supporting Lili is found incredible. Greta’s incentives made her accessorize Einar with her own ones’; she lent Lily, her rope of pearls, brown skirt, white blouse, shoes etc. Lili too depends on Greta’s support solely and she wholeheartedly acknowledges it. “Lili looked at Greta, in her black dress, and felt grateful for all that lay ahead of her. Out of nowhere had come Lili. Yes, thanks were due to Greta” (Ebershoff 51).

Greta plays the role of a protector in *The Danish Girl*. As a guardian angel, she protects Lili from all the offending sources. The role of protecting Lili can be considered as Greta’s greatest degree of accepting the third gender which again proves Greta to be a new woman in literature. “And yet Einar knew that he and yes, Lili too, needed Greta” (Ebershoff 84) illustrates that the perseverance that Greta had for Lily neither made Lili nor Einar leave or deny Greta. The role of a woman in accepting, protecting and fashion partnering and supporting gender transformation of her husband is so fresh sounding in literature.

Majority of the People who find transgenders as a taboo to the society rarely make an attempt in understanding the significance of the minority transgender community. As a result of it the transgender community is made voiceless. But Greta, the new woman has voiced out the struggles of the transgender community in the novel, *The Danish Girl*. Despite knowing that she would lose her husband, Greta helped Einar in his gender reassignment surgery thus giving life to the woman in him. The prudence of Greta is resonated in one of her conversations with Einar. “‘If you want Lili to stay – with us, I mean – then I think a doctor should know about her.’” (Ebershoff 100). In the same conversation Greta also cast her fondness for Lili. “‘I love Lili as much as you do, more than-’ but she stopped herself. ‘The doctor can help her.’”(Ebershoff 101).

Greta never invaded Lili’s privacy. She guaranteed Lili the freedom to exercise her sexual orientation and gender identity. Greta’s forward thinking has freed the transwoman, Lili from harassment and homelessness. Without due preparation Greta made Lili activate her acts to rights and treatment which tops the list of ‘wants’ of every transwoman. Addressing a transwoman with

a female name remains alluring for them. Consequently Greta addressed the transwoman in Einar with a female name (Lili) and this act of Greta really brought in a true bonding between both of them.

The love acquaintance with her husband Einar made Greta exhibit love in a sensible manner. She strikes an impeccable balance between the emotional quotient and intelligent quotient. Her balancing of emotions gave way to live the passion of her and of her husband's. She devised herself to be a tool to entangle Einar's gender identity conflict. Greta's support to her husband took various forms; the triggering force, shaping sculptor, guiding source and helping hands.

Greta acknowledges Lili by giving life to her in the paintings. She also enriches her caliber by employing Lili as the subject of her painting. Greta acknowledging Lili was acknowledged by a Parisian art journal. "A wild and rhapsodic imagination,' . . . 'Her painting of a young girl named Lili would be frightening if it wasn't so beautiful'" (Ebershoff 65).

Greta gave room to Lili to be at ease in her companionship. She has experimented and gave out results for what a woman is capable of. Her mental discourse is tremendous which can be certified 'brave' by the readers. The new woman's wise acts can be compared to the lines of Claramma Jose inscribed in her book *Feminisms: An Introduction*. "In fact, it was conveniently assumed that if the interests of men were taken care of, the interests of women would automatically be covered too" (23). Greta did take care of her man's interest in which automatically hers' got covered too. Her preference for Einar's interest resulted in the birth of Lili, who actually brought accolades to Greta's painting carrier. It is truly reciprocation with nil awareness. Both of their destinies were shaped by the new woman, Greta.

She has recodified and has broken the monotony of 'the life in marriage'. She has transcended herself from a domestic engineer to a superwoman. Greta seems to be empowered enough to accept people as they are as it happened in the case of her husband. She never went against the law of nature. "Why, without her, Einar would never have found Lili" (Ebershoff 63), affirms Greta's clever intelligence.

As an artist, Greta had great affinity with the subject of her painting, 'Lili'. "Nothing made her happier than painting Lili" (Ebershoff 75).

Despite being an independent career woman, she did act wise as a sensible human being. Lili who got evolved from Einar's body was accepted with differences and without regression by Greta. The modern thoughts of Greta in accepting the differences transformed her from an amateur artist to a great painter through Lili who Greta patronized as her 'muse'. Greta the savvy, shaped Lili to pursue dignity and self-respect.

Greta the independent woman has been a depending force for Lili as it is flashed in the interrogation between Einar and Greta where Einar asks Greta, "How do I look? Tell me, Greta – how do I look?"/ 'Very pretty.' / 'Am I really a woman now?'" (Ebershoff 238). The new woman has therefore manifested her eminence in understanding, accepting and recovery of transgenderism.

Every transgender needs the new woman, Greta for the well being of their community because Greta helped Lili with devotion and not duty bounded. Therefore, the acceptance of

transgenderism, being it the need of the hour and as well the objective of the paper has been interpreted in various facets of the paper through the new woman, Greta.

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The Portrayal of Undaunted and Dynamic Roles of Women in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

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Abstract

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a young Nigerian writer enchanted the readers through her incandescent style of writing. Her novels emphasizes on the importance of emotional intelligence of women which extirpate the insecurity in women. This paper focuses on the twin sisters Olanna and Kainene, who are facing hardships in the civil war that broke out in Nigeria during 1960's. The inhabitants of Nigeria are Igbo people who led the secession due to cultural, economical and religious domination of Nigeria. A republic of Biafra induces the Nigerian Civil war. The roles of Olanna and Kainene are exemplary, unflinching and supportive of Nigeria's independence and promoting peace in the society.

Keywords: *Biafra, Secession, Sisterhood, Resistance*

Young Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is one of the most famous Afro American women writers of 21st century. She has written three novels and short stories. *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), *Americanah* (2016). *Thing around your Neck*, I would like to concentrate my paper on her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*. She has received orange prize award for the novel. Adichie is a fearless writer portrays the Nigerian civil war that took place in the early 1960's. Nigerian civil war is also known as Biafran War. Biafra represented the Igbo people who demanded Nigeria to be republic and to be free from the dominated federal government. The conflict arose between cultural, economical, ethnic tensions provoke the war which mercilessly took away the lives of two million Biafran civilians. The novel is divided by war and united by love, which depicts the war and its tremendous disturbance among the people of Nigeria. The trials, tribulations and deaths are recurrent. Even though the people endure sufferings due to the clashes between Northern and eastern part of Nigeria, the victims emanates to face the struggle and fight for the freedom of Nigeria. Adichie brings the two roles of women who are brave and supportive in embellish women as well as bring harmony to the society. Afro American literature and the writers are basically Africans, but they produce their literature in the United States. The themes of Afro American literature are Racism, slavery and equality. Women writers like Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, and Alice walker were the prominent writers who brought out a remarkable change in the society by their writings.

Olanna and Kainene are twin sisters. They belonged to a royal family. Olanna's father plans to get married to her in a wealthy family. But Olanna refuses the marriage and depart from her home. She is a professor and she left her family for leading a peaceful life with Odenigbo. A mother from aristocratic family does not care for their children. They leave the children under the care of either servant or a relative. Both Kainene and Olanna were brought up by her Aunt Ifeka. They wished Aunt Ifeka would be their mother.

Olanna examined the plain face and wished, for a brief guilty moment, that Aunt Ifeka were her mother. Aunt Ifeka was as good as her mother, anyway, since it was Aunt Ifeka's breasts that she and Kainene had sucked when their mother's dried up soon after they were born. Kainene used to say their mother's breasts did not dry up at all, that their mother had given them to a nursing aunt only to save her own breasts from drooping (HOYS 39).

Therefore Olanna renounced the life given by her parents, a life of aristocracy. But she yearns to live her life peacefully by loving and caring for her family. Olanna stays with her aunt Ifeka and she decided to spend her time with students in the university. Adichie brought the characters Olanna as well as Kainene as an educated and powerful as men in their families. Olanna found a way and guided the Nigerian society by her education. Kainene manages business with her father. 'Kainene is not just like a son, she is like two' (HOYS 31).

Nigeria's Government has been handed over to military since the Prime Minister and premiers from north and west were dead. The Igbo people waited for the positive response from the Government to put an end to the corruption. The enraged northern Hausa people killed many Igbo people in the north. The riot takes place. Eastern Nigeria demanded republic for their region as Biafra. This led to civil war between Biafra and the remaining regions of Nigeria. Therefore the Igbo people were continuously harassed by the Northerners. Olanna loses the entire family of Aunt Ifeka in the coup. Mohammed helps Olanna from the mass killings by the northern people. 'He said, Igbo people are lying on airport road' (HOYS 147). Olanna felt remorseful after looking at the child's head in the calabash.

Olanna looked into the bowl. She saw the little girl's head with the ashy grey skin and the plaited hair and rolled-back eyes and open mouth. She stared at it for a while before she looked away (HOYS 149).

Olanna is physically and psychologically affected by the deaths of her beloved Aunts family. She is not able to walk and her legs become numb due to her psychological depression. Even though she lost her family in the riot, she stood up initiated and gathered all the staff members and students to demand secession in Nigeria for the peace in the nation. She fought back her emotional conflicts and insecurities and stood up as a strong woman to fight for Biafra. "Biafra is born! We will lead Black Africa! We will live in security! Nobody will ever again attack us! Never Again! (HOYS 163).

Due to the civil war, the Eastern part of Nigeria starves due to famine. The people especially children were devoid of food, and they were turned as refugees. "Women knocked on the door often to ask if there was any work they could do in exchange for food. They came with their thin, naked children" (HOYS 285). Northern people attacked schools and all the

demolished schools were turned into refugee camps. Olanna and Ugwu made a point in helping the children to be educated.

Ugwu arranged three benches on the veranda for Olanna's class, we will teach mathematics, English, and civics every day,' Olanna said to Ugwu and Mrs Muo kelu a day before the classes began. We will teach them to speak perfect English and perfect Igbo, like His Excellency. We will teach them pride in our great nation (HOYS 291).

Poverty strikes in the eastern part of Nigeria. Children engulfed rat and cockroaches for the consumption. Olanna and her family suffer from the poverty, where they don't have meal per day. Even in that situation, Olanna does not lose her hope, and she was ready to support her family, by making soaps. She shares her food from the refugee camps to the other families. The children and adults are dying out of hunger. Kainene provides protein tablets to the dying children to fight against Kwashiorkor. Kainene and Olanna take care of the refugees in the camp.

Alice is reserved and keeps herself away from the public. Olanna comes to know about Alice who is interested in music and arts. She never engages or talks with the people around. Olanna took great concern and had been kind with Alice. Alice comes out of her unsociable attitude and shared her life experiences with Olanna.

I am not really from Enugu. I am from Asaba. I left after I finished at the teachers training college there and went to Lagos. I was working in Lagos before the war. I met an army colonel and in a few months he asked me to marry him, but he did not tell me that he was already married and his wife was abroad. I got pregnant. He kept postponing going to Asaba to the traditional ceremonies. I was with him in Enugu when his wife came back just before the war started and he left me. Then my baby died (HOYS 335).

Similarly Gloria Naylor, an Afro American women writer in her novel, *In the Women of Brewster Place*, the character Mattie takes care of suffering women who fails in their marriage life. Eugene and Ceil are husband and wife, Eugene forces Ceil to abort her baby in her womb for his joblessness. The fight between Eugene and Ceil raises, and Eugene leaves the child and Ceil alone. "She felt pain in her stomach. She lost her baby from the womb; she saw the watering blood in her legs" (97). Eugene without any responsibility leaves Ceil in a critical situation. Mattie takes care and consoles physically and psychologically depressed Ceil. Furthermore, Olanna comfort Alice and be friendly with her.

Kainene is a challenging character who is physically and mentally strong woman. She bravely protested the sexual abuse faced by a little girl in the refugee camp.

Kainene push at Father Marcel's chest with both hands, shouting into his face, showing him so hard that Ugwu feared the man would fall. How could you stay here and let him spread the legs of starving girls? How will you account for this to God? You both are leaving now, right now there were tears running down her face. There was something magnificent in her rage. (HOYS 398)

Adichie in her work, *We Should All Be Feminists*,

Gender as it functions today is a grave injustice. I am angry. We all should be angry. Anger has a long history of bringing about positive change. But I am also hopeful, because I believe deeply in the ability of human beings to remake them for the better (21).

Adichie's anger is reflected in the character Kainene when she witnessed the injustice in the life of poor child.

Kainene is the embodiment of Sacrifice. Kainene and Inatimi planned to go for a trade across the enemy line, because to get things for the hunger people in the camps. She took risk and travels for the welfare of the people. Kainene found dead by the attack of the opponents. Kainene sacrificed her life. Olanna and Kainene play very important role and set as an examples for all the women to be revolutionary and supportive of the society. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie blends together an historical and emotional truth of Nigeria, who brought to light about the women participation in the war. There were many women supporters and warriors who fought and participated in the war which is disclosed by the Male Patriarchy.

“Our People say that we all reincarnate, don't they? She said. When I come back in my next life, Kainene will be my sister” (HOYS 433). The characters reincarnated and became stronger through their sufferings. The sisterhood between Olanna and Kainene inspires the younger women in the society. Kainene and Olanna can be compared to Good Samaritan in the Bible. The priest and Levite do not care and not show any sympathy towards him. They just leave him wounded and go away. But the Good Samaritan does not do that. He feels pity for the wounded man shows sympathy and takes care of him. Kainene and Olanna are more human and bring peace in the lives of suffering women in the society.

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The Problem of Identity Formation in Jamaica Kincaid's Novel *The Autobiography of My Mother*

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Abstract

The Autobiography of My Mother, Kincaid's 1996 novel, focuses on the character of Xuela ClaudetteRichardson. She is a Dominican woman of mixed ethnic origin (Scottish-African on her father's side and Carib on her mother's side). Xuela examines her relations with the colonial culture fleshed out in the person of her opportunist father Alfred Richardson. He is an ex-policeman and magistrate who amassed a sizeable fortune by humiliating and robbing others. He is the embodiment of the colonial presence. Since Xuela lost her mother when she was born, and was abandoned by her father (who disposed of her by committing her to the care of a woman who washed his dirty laundry), Xuela is left exposed and vulnerable to the habitual brutality of colonial life which leads to her self-destructiveness and moral deformity. She refuses to love anyone but herself and aborts every child she conceives. She eventually marries a white doctor Philip, having poisoned his first wife Moira, but doggedly refuses to reciprocate his love and treats their relationship as an occasion to set it with the white colonizer's race. The *Autobiography of My Mother* presents a whole range of perspectives on the problem of identity formation by dramatizing the cultural construction of Xuela's and her father's subjectivity. Both of them are Creoles with hyphenated identities- Scottish-African in his case, Scottish-African-Carib in hers. Both of them are aware of the fact that identity is not a given, that it is a matter of choice and a political stance. It is not physical phenotypes but behavior, loyalties and values are what make a person either black or white. *The Autobiography of My Mother* is an important book that contributes to the depiction of sociopolitical and discursive texture of the Caribbean. The novel enlarges the study of racial and social relations with a new female perspective that highlights the representational interdependence of race, class, and gender.

The Autobiography of My Mother unearths the intricacies of identity formation and dismantles ideological foundations that paved the way for racial exploitation. Kincaid challenges the postcolonial concept of race by showing that racial identity is a shifting category conceived through interaction with other categories of identification such as class and gender. Kincaid is incessantly preoccupied with the issue of power, which she links with the concept of race. For Kincaid race is not an essence in itself but shorthand for something broader, an imbalance of power. Identity comes into being as a result of the continuous process of racial, cultural, religious and linguistic mixing called Créolisation. Multiculturalism and cultural syncretism marked out a new field of analysis of the nature of cultural identity that at our present historical juncture seems to be unstable, mutable and never completely finished. The ancestry and roots are the foundation of identity.

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on her father's side and Carib on her mother's side). Xuela examines her relations with the colonial culture fleshed out in the person of her opportunist father Alfred Richardson. He is an ex-policeman and magistrate who amassed a sizeable fortune by humiliating and robbing others. He is the embodiment of the colonial presence. Since Xuela lost her mother when she was born, and was abandoned by her father (who disposed of her by committing her to the care of a woman who washed his dirty laundry), Xuela is left exposed and vulnerable to the habitual brutality of colonial life which leads to her self-destructiveness and moral deformity. She refuses to love anyone but herself and aborts every child she conceives. She eventually marries a white doctor Philip, having poisoned his first wife Moira, but doggedly refuses to reciprocate his love and treats their relationship as an occasion to settle with the white colonizer's race.

The Autobiography of My Mother presents a whole range of perspectives on the problem of identity formation by dramatizing the cultural construction of Xuela's and her father's subjectivity. Both of them are Creoles with hyphenated identities — Scottish-African in his case, Scottish-African-Carib in hers. Both of them are aware of the fact that identity is not a given, that it is a matter of choice and a political stance. It is not physical phenotypes but behavior, loyalties and values are what make a person either black or white.

Alfred, named by his Scottish father after Alfred the Great, gives preference to his paternal lineage. He disowns his maternal African heritage. He fails to appreciate his mother Mary. For him she must have mended his clothes, cooked his food, tended his schoolboy's wounds, and encouraged his ambitions. Her surname is unknown. She is one of the African people. Alfred believed that African people came off the boat. They are already demonized, mind blank to everything but suffering, while the white man came off the boat, seeking to fulfill a destiny, a vision of himself. Xuela's father despised all who behaved like the African people; not all who looked like them but all who behaved like them. For him they were defeated, doomed, conquered, poor, diseased, head bowed down, mind numbed from cruelty. For him race is a matter of social status. Blackness is not anchored in bodily characteristics but is determined by subaltern social position, non-rational worldview and pagan beliefs. As he relentlessly toils to raise his social standing through the multiplication of earthly possessions, he suppresses Obeah beliefs and practices and takes great pride in becoming a very religious person because, to his mind, social advance obliges to moral elevation. According to his daughter's contrary opinion, "the more he robbed, the more money he had, the more he went to the church, it is not unheard of liking. And the richer he became the more fixed the mask on his face grew." (TAMM 40)

The metaphor of the mask was presumably borrowed by Kincaid from Frantz Fanon's seminal study *Black Skin, White Masks*. It describes the phenomenon that Fanon called 'Negrophobia' — the collective Caribbean unconscious that equals black with ugliness, sin and immorality. In Fanon's view, black people in West Indies "internalized" or "epidermalized" the racist views of their own selves, believing that one is Negro to the degree one is wicked, sloppy, malicious, instinctive. Therefore, Fanon contends provocatively, all the black man dreams about is to rid himself of his black identity of an inferior.

The acquisition of wealth grants a black man entry into the genteel world. Alfred's rise to middle class status results in his "lactification," to use Frantz Fanon's term again, and even though he becomes an alienated mimic man, totally unable to see through his sham identity, he succeeds in deploying the bourgeois culture as a means of stripping himself of his race. Though his appearance- his red hair, grey eyes, pale skin and elegant white clothes underscores his

elevated social status, the novel makes it abundantly clear that it is his upward class mobility that defines his racial affiliation. Alfred's social trajectory from "black" village policeman to "white" landowner and magistrate illustrates that race is a variable category contingent on other identificatory categories such as class.

While the father allies himself with the myths of white civilization, education and refinement, Xuela does not subscribe to this enlightened philosophical frame. She gives preference to the forces that oppose the expansion and triumph of these myths. She chooses "savagery" and asserts: "Whatever was native to me, whatever I could not help and was not a moral failing I loved with the fervor of the devoted." (TAMM 33) Xuela believes that what white culture considers "bad" must, by definition, be "good."

When Xuela chooses "the native" it is obvious that she feels affinity with the exterminated Caribs rather than with the ex-African people, who survived but lost their bearing in the modern world. They are pictured as zombies, half dead, half alive, walking in a trance, no longer in their own minds. Having lost their native cosmology they have been severed from their own inner imaginative life, they no longer trust what they intuitively know. Unlike them, Xuela finds herself against losing access to the inner life of her own inventions and believes in the redoubtable influence of Obeah on everyday life. While her father considers Obeah to be the belief of the illegitimate, the poor, the low for Xuela it is an alternative epistemological frame, through which she makes sense of the world. When on the way to school, she sees one of her classmates lured to death in the river by a jabalessé (she-devil in Caribbean folklore) she never relinquishes her faith in the realness of the event she witnessed in spite of the fact that to admit having seen such an apparition was to say that the black children lived in a darkness from which they could not be redeemed. Xuela chooses that darkness and learns to separate the real from unreal. In the light of the loss of collective memory and careful erasing of the past, Obeah provides Xuela with a means for the imaginative repossession of the past. Xuela's steady belief in the power of Obeah — an epistemic perspective that undermines the colonizer's ontology — is a sign of her resistance, her stubborn refusal to be confined within the Western grids of knowledge.

Xuela's father "whitens" himself climbing the social ladder; by contrast Xuela inverts her father's trajectory and "blackens" herself transgressing gender roles. Even though she marries way above her own class and race she does not do it with a view to becoming a mother and a lady. She not only refuses to be a bearer of children but also uses her sexuality to subvert traditional colonial scripting of femininity.

Kincaid's narrative points to the futility of clinging to skin color as a major determinant of identity. Both Xuela and Moira being black and childless, what differentiates these two female protagonists is their contradictory attitude to sexuality. It is the exhibition of her uninhibited sexual agency that makes Xuela "black," just as Moira's impaired sexuality makes her "white." Xuela simulates the reversal of colonial power and dominates Philip to shift agency from the master's to the slave's body and blur the distinction between the two.

Through the renunciation of maternity and her narcissistic and predatory sexuality, Xuela defies the colonial power that wants to reduce her to subaltern position. Kincaid allows Xuela to hold on to the Manichean economy of colonialist discourse and the racist and sexist stereotype of black female sexuality to show that historical contexts are also constitutive of identity. Race

enhances meaning through adherence to or violation of gender and sexual roles that can respectively subject or liberate an individual from colonial and patriarchal domination.

Language is a key factor forming the Caribbean social reality. Although Kincaid's novel is written in elegant Anglo American English, her careful designation of the code of her protagonists' parole is very informative of Caribbean social choices. In the Caribbean, standard English or French are used in official situations- they connote respect and respectability. English Creole or French patois or pidgin are scorned as the languages of the illiterate and dispossessed. When a middle class person uses Creole vernacular it is usually to speak to a social inferior, for example a servant. In literature, however, this code-switching, from English/French — the language of the colonizer to Creole/patois, the language of the colonized dark masses is more discordant as it reflects social insecurity and anxiety produced by color-coded social stratification.

The linguistic continuum frames the social panorama of Kincaid's novel. The father who wants to rise socially and uses a standard English to make himself socially acceptable. He speaks English with strangers as a way of manifesting his cultural affiliation and exercising his supreme colonialist authority. Whenever he addresses his countrymen in English, he not only renounces his blackness but also reasserts his right to dominate and abuse them.

Xuela's stepmother abides by the same logic. When Xuela arrives at her house, the stepmother speaks to her in patois to emphasize the class distinction between them, to discredit her and make her illegitimate by associating her with the made-up language of people regarded as not real, the shadow people, the forever humiliated, the forever low. It is meant to be a calculated insult whose aim is to draw attention to the fact that they, Xuela and her stepmother do not belong to the same social caste and will never be equals.

The father shifts his idiom and speaks Creole when he is with his family. For Xuela these moments offer brief glimpses of the remnants of his genuine selfhood. Xuela speaks patois to her white husband, while he addresses her in Standard English. Kincaid's descriptive code-shifting, her insistence of informing the reader which languages/dialects the protagonists apply in different social contexts and personal circumstances makes class and cultural difference the central theme of this novel.

The Autobiography of My Mother is an important book that contributes to the delineation of sociopolitical and discursive texture of the Caribbean, enlarging the study of racial and social relations with a new female perspective. It highlights the representational interdependence of race, class, gender and sexuality. Kincaid, forces readers to adopt new reading strategies which did not emphasize whether the characters are "black" or "white," but witness to the fact that, there are no races only cultures. Kincaid asserts that one's identity should proceed internal from one's internal truth.

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Third World Women: Disagreeing with Westerner's Concept of View in Sudha Murthy's *Mahashweta*

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to deal with the idea of Westerners about Third World Women in the novel Mahashweta, by Sudha Murthy. Sudha Murthy is well versed in both Kannada and English languages. In this novel, through the character Anupamathe author portrays the vulnerability of women and also their inner power to re-bounce from obstacles. The protagonist Anupama undergoes various struggles. But at last she proves herself as an empowered woman by overcoming all the struggles. This is an inspiring story of courage in the face of betrayal and disappointment. This inspiring story offers hope to those who suffer prejudice in society. Sudha Murthy herself narrates the story in a simple realistic style. This novel, Mahashweta is an eye opener to the people who consider women as an object that is being sold in the market.

A successful woman is one who can build a firm foundation with the bricks others have thrown on her. The status of women in India had changed over the past few million years. Today women have held high offices in India including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of Lok Sabha, and Leader of the Opposition. Women are strong now-a-days. By facing numerous problems in their life they proved themselves as equal to men in Sudha Murthy and her writings.

Sudha Murthy was born in 1950 in Haveri district of North Karnataka. She did her MTech in Computer science and joined in Tata Engineering and Locomotive Company as a First Female Engineer. Now she is the chair person of Infosys foundation. Her novels are, *Dollar Bahu*, *Gently falls on Bakula*, *House of Cards*, *Wise and Otherwise*. She is well known in both Kannada and English languages. She acted in Marathi and Kannada movies. She got R.K.Narayan award, Padmasri award, C.R.Patil award, and Attimabbe award. Most of her novels deal with women and their problems. Simplicity has always been a speciality of Sudha Murthy's writings. In the simplest of the words she always conveys the message to lead a meaningful life.

The term Third World was initially coined in 1955. Third World Women refers to underdeveloped or over exploited people. Third World Countries are, Asia, Europe, US, Australia. According to the Westerners, The Third World Women are primarily beings that are passive and acted upon. They are, "Always, already victim" (Singh 205). Third World Women are considered as down-hearted, weak and depressed. Mohanty also claimed that Western feminism too often portrayed non-western women as different from themselves. That is, victims of male control, restrictive culture, more oppressed, tradition, religion, and family oriented, legally unsophisticated, illiterate and embattled in nationalistic revolution. Westerner's writes

about Third World Women in a negative way highlighting the practises of dowry and Sati in India. Westerners never considered Third World Women in a positive note.

In this novel *Mahashweta*, the protagonist, poor and beautiful Anupama met handsome and rich Anand .Both fell in love. Anand convinced his mother Radhakka, to marry Anupama. When her father tries to convince her to marry Anand, she was afraid of her situation. But for the sake of her family she agrees to marry Anand. According to her, “*Like Rohini to Chandra, like Lakshmi to Narayana, She is to him*” (Murty 33). To her, “The greatest jewel is her Anand, others weigh her down” (Murty 36). Her love for him is as firm as the Himalayas, and as clear as the waters of Manasarovar. She loved him whole heartedly. During their marriage Anand said to Anupama that “*Anu, I am giving you my heart today, please keep it safe*” (Murty 36). After two months Anand went to England for higher studies. But before going he convinced Anupama by saying, “*Till death do us part*” (Murty 38). Poor Anupama trusted his words. She is about to join him after Lakshmi pooja.

In her own house Anupama start to feel like stranger. The only comfort she derived was from Anand’s calls and letters. Anupama thought “*If only I had wings, I’d fly away to him*” (Murty 43). During her Lakshmi Pooja, a hot coal fell on her feet and small white patches started to appear. She confirmed with doctor that she has leukoderma. But she did not reveal to anyone because of fear. But one day Radhakka found the disease and asked her to go to her father’s home. When Anupama’s father tries to fall on Radhakka’ feet, Anupama does not like his father to lose his self respect so she stops him by saying that she did not cheat anyone. Here one can see that women of third world do not want to lose their self respect and dignity to others.

When she went to her home, she was not welcomed. Her step- mother and step-sisters started to hate her. The words like “*Bad omen and Rejected wife*”(Murty 131) were uttered by member of her own family. Because of Anupama, her step-sisters marriage had stopped. Her father became weak because of all these problems. She and her father wrote many letters to Anand. Anupama, wrote in her letter that, “*Anand , please come and take me from this hell*” (Murty 145) but received no reply. “*She realized that Anand alone held the key to her future*” (Murty 62). But Anand did not reply to any of their letters.

Anupama becomes weak all the more and the white patches started to spread all over her body. One day her father said in a pained voice that his daughter’s have become millstones around his neck and his worries have doubled since Anupama returned home. Anupama starts to cry. She was like a lonely traveller on a long and arduous road. She tries to attempt suicide. But, before that she thinks what people will say if she dies? No one is going to feel for her. Not even her family and her lovable Anand too. Now, she realised the true Anand who loved her beauty instead of her. She understood that his words held no truth when he spoke to her. She removed her Mangalsuthra thinking why should she keep something which does not belong to her. With more courage and hope she went to Bombay, and led a peaceful life suggested by her friend Sumithra.

Anupama stays in Sumithra’s house until she finds a job. When Sumithra asked Anupama, why she could not ask money from Anand for her treatment, Anupama replied that she does not need anyone’s money. God will provide for her. And with the help of her education

she will lead rest of her life. She does not want to be a burden to her friend. So, she accepts her job as a clerk. At this time, Sumithra's husband tries to misbehave to her. But she somehow manages to escape from his trick. This shows the character of Third World Women- their culture and courage. Later she joined in college as a lecturer and went to her friend Dolly's house to stay.

In this situation also she sends money to her family. This shows her kindness towards her family though they treated her badly. One day she met with an accident and Dr. Anand gave treatment to her. They both become friends. When Vasanth proposed to her she rejected. At last Anand realises his mistake and came to meet Anupama. Anand's repentance was sincere, but it was like the coming of the rains after the grass. When Anand tries to convince Anupama, to bring her back in his life, Anupama asked him, how can he expect a burnt seed to grow into a tree and also told him that, "Saying the right thing at the right time is what makes a conversation meaningful" (Murty 146). She started to ask questions to him. She asked him why his mother sent her back to her house it's because, his son will not like ugly toy. Anand became silent. Anupama continued to speak. "Love is not the commodity that you can buy after putting it to the test. It is not something that you can buy after consulting others. It is not sold in the market for money" (Murty 6). She said even in Bombay where even this mad rush, she found humane inside to it.

Hearing all these things, again he requested her to come back into his life. But Anupama said clearly that:

"You never treated me as a human being. I was only a beautiful object that you wished to possess and flaunt. Had I known your attitude toward life, I would have told you to marry somebody else. Do you think that I would have left you for some other man? A marriage is a lifelong commitment; for better or worse, till death do us part. Wasn't that what you said to me before you left for England? Even though you are a Doctor, you only know how to treat a disease, not tend to a patient's emotional needs (Murty 147). At last she said him that, "We are not made for each other" (Murty 149). Anand went out silently.

In this novel *Mahashweta*, the character Anupama sketched by Sudha Murty to show the westerner's concept about third world women is wrong. At first, Anupama was depressed and heartbroken because of Anand's attitude and her family's behaviour towards her. But she did not lose her courage and self respect by crying all the time and waiting for Anand. When she realised the truth, only because of her beauty her life became complicated and not because of disease, she starts to stand on her own by working as a clerk. She does not want someone to support her. She even sends her salary to her home as a duty of a daughter.

From the above things it is understood that, women of Third World is not a depressed woman but an empowered woman. Women of third world don't like to waste their time to feel for anything that is unimportant. Rather they try hard to show themselves as an Empowered woman. Anupama's submissiveness failed her to understand her rights. Westerners fail to understand Women of Third World and their power. Nowadays women even take part in Eco-Movements like Green Belt Movement and Chipko Movement. So, now it's time to agree that Westerner's view about Third World Women is wrong.

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Vanquishing the Typecast and Redefining Gender Roles: A Study of Marginalized Sex in Jaishree Mishra's *Ancient Promises* and Chetan Bhagat's *Half Girlfriend*

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Abstract

The contemporary world visualizes woman to be a free bird who is guaranteed with ample freedom in their life but the concept collapses to prove itself as a fact when we consider of those handful of women who still fall prey into the very hands of the conventions of the patriarchy. Comparing the past decades human kind had shown remarkable progress in embracing sufficient space for a girl's individuality and aspirations but again these actualities does not encompass the outlooks of the entire civilization. The characters of the fictional accounts Ancient Promises and Half-Girlfriend, Janaki and Riya Somani had been enforced upon them the smothering ambience of their marital houses. The characters proves their might when they demolish the ideal norms of the subjugated society and its recurrent stereotypes and rises again as a determined individuals to accomplish their identity as a redefined one. Thus both the characters of the novels, Janaki as well as Riya emerges as individuals who have challenged their patriarchal society and later developed as prosperous individuals. The authors portrays these characters to the readers to restate the fact that women are not mere machines to fulfil the carnal and egocentric desires of men but akin individuals who requires freedom to have their right in determining their focus of life. This paper tries to have a detailed analysis to the inner selves of the characters Janaki and Riya who happened to be those mighty individuals who endeavored to challenge their conventional society and those who had also made an effort to illustrate how the roles of women extends beyond the boundaries of their filial relationships. The key concern of the paper is to highlight the plight of women who are ensnared in the confined limitations of marital life and also emphasizes on how women like Janaki and Riya Somani can terminate the binding forces that does not accept their personalities and those factors that act as hindrances in pursuing their future goals.

Keywords: Gender Roles, Patriarchal Society, Self Realisation.

Analyzing the past history women had been looked upon as oppressed individuals engaged in long battles defending themselves against male supremacy. As Virginia Woolf points out in her essay *Shakespeare's Sister*, "Some of the most inspiring words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips; in real life she could hardly read, could scarcely spell, and was the property of her husband." Gender upon which the

society had charged their sense of duties had regarded women to be the one who ought to live up to the expectations of their opposite sex whether it be her father from her childhood or her husband to whom her ownership is transferred along with a team comprising of her in-laws. Rarely was she involved in the household matters and her opinions were welcomed to be considered. The topic necessitates a discussion to whether the women have their freedom in this 21st century which is said to provide ample opportunities for them and the thought requires further enquiry when we scrutinize into the very fact about the consideration being shown to women which fails to substantiate the above stated argument with an enquiry into the characters of the fictional accounts like *Ancient Promises* by Jaishree Mishra and *Half Girlfriend* by Chetan Bhagat.

Ancient Promises narrates the semi-autobiographical saga of Jaishree Mishra through the character of Janaki who is depicted as a Keralite being bought up in the cityscapes of Delhi and she was destined or was forcefully demanded to discard her aspirations including her teenage lover Arjun and her education. Her family which saw their life deep rooted in the rich Kerala traditions had their own validations to determine their daughter's future which later turned out to be marked as spiteful memories chronicled in pages of her past life. She was pushed into a forced alliance which she had to endure as she upheld her duties as a daughter and all the values inscribed on her as a woman by her parents and the society. But considering the final outcome neither the values or morals helped her nor the so called adjustments favored her struggle with an indifferent and cold husband like Suresh. Janaki who is also mentioned as Janu in the novel is exposed as a shattered being, one ensnared in divided consciousness when she was subjected into a rigid filial household of the Maarars. The character takes its shape in the author's creative space where she distinctively portrays one that replaces the otherwise stereotyped images of women who are weak, silent and suffering opinion less beings.

Chetan Bhagat sketches the life of a Bihari boy Madhav and Delhi girl Riya Somani who builds up an everlasting bonding as the story unravels before the readers. The tale is being narrated in the point of view of Madhav from which this paper is deviating as to delve deep into the character of Riya Somani whose thoughts had otherwise being retold by Madhav and a few journals that belonged to her. Riya Somani is again a typical modern girl from a wealthy business class family who throws away her ambitions and marry her childhood family friend Rohan Chandak.. In Riya's journals the reader acquires an impression about her life that she was somehow or the other betrayed or ostracized within her own family even before her distasteful marital life. The only sort of escapism from her repulsive life was by writing journals as she finds the medium to express her otherwise repressed meditations.

Ancient Promises presents Janaki's status as an ideal being who toils to establish an identity of her own in the contemporary Indian scenario. It explores into Janu's journey through phases like that she underwent as a daughter, wife, mother, divorcee and her journey to future accomplishments. Initially Janu is depicted as a young and vulnerable woman who is forced to give up her western lifestyle along with her love for Arjun with whom she fell in love as a teenager, when she was sixteen. Their friendship switches over to love and her family realizing the romantic escapades of their daughter imposes upon her a groom 'handpicked' by them from the socially respected Maarar

family. Unwilling to hurt her parents she with her half made up mind agrees for the marriage on her eighteenth birthday. As the character speaks in the novel, she considers on accepting the proposal of Suresh Maarar as a debt being paid for a sin of loving Arjun when she mentions, "...to meet Arjun. To leave Arjun. And to censure that I began to pay of some debts that had accrued against my name somewhere. My story was beginning to be written again" (68).

Chetan Bhagat's portrayal of Riya had been limited to the descriptions shared by Madhav but Riya in the real sense can only be grasped with the journal's which open up for feministic arguments and themes. When she says about her being, "...if you crush a flower before it blooms, will it ever bloom as bright later?"(197), the character silently echoes about the happiness that had been deprived from her life. In same entries reader's find Riya calling her future husband Rohan as 'bhaiya' and calls it a 'bizarre' idea to marry him when the proposal awaited her 'family's' reply. Similar to every alliances that were bonded with a disguised concept of business deals, initial rejoicing with its whims and fancies were devastated as and when Riya recognized the exact nature of the in-laws who at the beginning of the relationships had exposed themselves.

India is a diverse country with multiple cultures whose beliefs lay intertwined with several epics and folk tales. However diverse the country may be each of it's community has its silent law making body which is collectively known as the patriarchy. From time immemorial the so called body in the society had been the factor that determined the norms and rules according to which each of its members were expected to act upon. The roles to be played by everyone in their different phases of lives has been compared with the heroes and heroines of Indian epics such as *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, etc. One such example of which the society seeks to reflect upon the women is of 'Sita' from the legend of *Ramayana*. Idealising as '*uttamnaari*', she is still remembered with utmost reverence for being the epitome of the womanly virtues like tolerance and discipline that made her remain honest to encounter whatever obstacles came in her way. This paper as the title suggests examines how the Janaki and Riya demolishes the typecast roles assigned on them by the patriarchy and their effort in redefining the stereotype feminine ideals. The closer examination on the characters Janaki and Riya are likely to uncover identifiable similarities to which they were subjected to from the beginning of their spirited youth, a collapsed nuptial life and the actions that commenced in self-realization. Both the characters had their teenage sweethearts although in the case of Riya who had only promises to be the protagonist's Madhav's 'Half girlfriend'.

The world have been transforming since the history of feminist movements demanding the recognition of women's cultural roles and achievements along with the women's social and political rights that were marked by momentous books such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). 'Women Education' was a key aspect undertaken by the feminists and the governing body of the nations had formulated plans and policies for the same as it affects the zones such as gender equality, alleviation of poverty and women empowerment. However their existed a repeated saying that 'educating daughters are like planting seeds in neighbor's field' as it is not considered an effective investment. This topics requires special attention in this analysis because both the characters in the stories, Janaki as well Riya are married off

at a very young age of eighteen and according to Riya's words was "just about nineteen and still in college" (198) and thus their right to education. 'Marriage' according to the Indian tradition is a ritual for which girls had been trained since their birth, to adapt to any future conditions defined by her husband and the in-laws. The ritual of many marriage not only deprives a woman from her dreams and happiness but transforms her into a different individual who are expected to swallow in the conventions of her marital household. They had to submit themselves makeover of their inner selves of personality and even the dress codes that was thrust upon her along with rules advocated by the family which is evident from Riya's words when she was insisted to 'wear Indian clothes only' and was asked to 'do it. Don't argue'. The endless comparisons made upon her family with that of her in-laws in every aspects of economic security and social status seemed to reduce her existence into a worthless being.

When Janaki says, "...it was now clear to me that however hard I tried, I wasn't to be one of them. But it didn't stop me from trying" (109), it is obvious to the readers that her decision in discarding a suffocating marital bond to obtain a secure life was not a decision opted out of a moment's impulse but a willpower born out of firmness that had hardened with several experiences, where, Riya too had bitter circumstances to undergo from the very first day of her marriage. *Ancient Promises* had strong criticism against the system of arranged marriages which the author saw like paying an ancient debt or a means that sustains age old practices. If the former had given significance to the cultural roots and traditions, Riya's business class family upheld the importance of social prestige in their respective lifestyles. Jaishree Mishra's attempt was not to plead the patriarchal society to accommodate her female protagonist, rather she demonstrated her protagonist molding her as a perfect exemplar who strives forward breaking free of all shackles of oppression. In *Half Girlfriend* although Riya's marriage and her efforts to overcome the traumatic experience of the same had not given sufficient representation like that of Janaki's, what both had to undergo are parallel torments in their conjugal lives. 'Adjustments' and 'modifications' had futile consequences in both of their lives and this prompted them to raise their voices against the dominating forces instead of allowing themselves to remain as marginalized beings. As Jean Shinoda states, "the true cost of anything is what we give up in order to have it. It is the path not taken to take the responsibility of making the choice is crucial and not always easy. What defines the heroine is that she does it" (Shinoda, 281).

"The less she exercises her freedom to understand, to grasp and to discover the world about her, the less she find within herself, the less will dare to affirm herself as subject"-Simon De Beauvoir

As Jean Shinoda titles her book there is a *Goddesses in Every Women* and as the occasion calls for it she is ought to respond against those forces that restrains their independence in expressing herself. Emotion has been the key element that had been always identified with femininity and maternal emotion is a concern to which many of the women continue to hold on an obnoxious conjugal life that they otherwise fear may affect their children. But through the novels *Ancient Promises* and *Half Girlfriend*, Jaishree Mishra and Chetan Bhagat presents before the contemporary generation what one ought to do when they are denied their rights to freedom and again the same is not limited to the women but anyone who are oppressed or victimized. In *Ancient Promises*

the readers are able to see Janaki trying to seek her future progress which were lying out of the confinements of their nuptial boundaries and the only way of escape for her and her mentally challenged daughter Riya was to resume her studies by gaining a scholarship in a foreign university where destiny again unites Janaki and Arjun together. Riya in the novel is not welcomed into her family back but instead of lamenting about her horrible fate she gather's courage to find a job and meets up with Madhav in Patna where she had to be in as a part of her work and later she chooses to travel to New York city which grants her ample freedom to live with her passion for music. Thus from all these examples we can conclude that these characters had reached a level of self-realization or a more blissful state when they endeavored to unearth their inner realms. The event of divorce did not weaken them but inspired them towards a fresh episode of their lives which is evidently spoken by Janaki as, "My marriage ended today...endings were really only beginning in disguise. The analysis on the above said characters reveals the value of feministic concerns in the modern society where there still exists a handful of voiceless shrieks for elevation from their current existences. 'Marriage' was the event with which the lives of the characters took a nasty turn the and from the same we can infer that wedding is not something to be regarded as the ultimate aim in a girl's life because she too deserves a chance to experience the world around her instead of entrapping herself up in familial relationships. An Indian woman can absorb into them the very examples of these characters so as to restructure women's role that stretches beyond the filial atmosphere that ensures absolute gender equality which again is an advancement to safeguard the welfare of the humanity as a whole.

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Voices in the Wilderness of Taboo as Echoed in *Chemmeen*

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Abstract

There are multitude masks of women, dwelling in diverse literature of the world, such as mother, protector, inspirer, the chaste, suffering wife, charmer and lurer. Chemmeen, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's award winning fiction could vividly picturize the lives of women as daughters and wives hanging between 'to follow and not to follow' the traditions of fishermen's community. Their conventions are sometimes liberal but always rigid. Taboos are used to certify the virtue of women in general. When the patriarchal society demands the wives to be Savithris to stand between the God of Death and Satyavans, it shall be fair in comprehending the passions and feelings of the gender opposite. The present study attempts to show light on the women who knowingly become dumb and the women who unknowingly shackle their chains only to assert their identity.

Keywords: *Patriarchy, customs and identity.*

In Indian Writing in English, fictional and nonfictional, there are repeated references to unwritten laws targeted against women. It is pitiable to adhere a social system inflicted with gender bias according a superior status to the aggressive male rather than the nurturing female. It becomes the most pathetic when women themselves play negative roles against women.

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's *Chemmeen* has the quality of a plot which encompasses much of superstitions and taboos of the fishermen community, Kerala, with all its accompanying turbulence, suffering and guilt, as the love story between Karuthamma and Pareekutti unfolds. Their traditions are neither liberal nor rigid. The novel shows light on the lives, the superstitions, the inner beliefs and the sufferings of the community of fishermen. It has been out skirted with a deep and significant myth. The myth is about chastity which is considered typical for the community. The safety and catch of the fishermen depend on the virtue of their wives and daughters. If the women are not virtuous, the fisher folk believe that it would stir up the rage of the sea goddess, Katalamma, and the fisher men may experience a violent sea and a poor catch.

Chemmeen is unveiled with the love relationship between Karuthamma, the daughter of Chemban Kunju, and Pareekutti, a young Muslim trader. As inter-caste marriage is completely against the community to which the protagonist belongs, Karuthamma sacrifices her love for Pareekutti and marries Palani, an orphan whom Chemban Kunju met in the course of one of his fishing expeditions. Following the marriage, Karuthamma accompanies her husband to his village. Her father requests her to stay to look after her sick mother. But she refuses to do so. In his fury, Chemban Kunju disowns her.

On acquiring a boat and a net and subsequently adding one more, Chemban Kunju becomes more greedy and heartless. With his dishonesty, he fails to repay his debt to Pareekutti and drives him to bankruptcy. After the death of his wife, Chemban Kunju marries Pappikunju, the widow of the man from whom he had bought his first boat. Panchami, Chemban Kunju's younger daughter, leaves home to join Karuthamma, on the arrival of her step mother. Meanwhile, Karuthamma has ventured to be a good wife and mother. But scandal about her old love for Pareekutti spreads in the village. Palani's friends shun him and refuse to take him fishing with them. On one night, fate brings Pareekutti to Karuthamma and awakens their old love. Palani, at sea alone and baiting a shark, is caught in a huge whirlpool and is swallowed by the sea. Next morning, Karuthamma and Pareekutti, are also found dead hand in hand, washed ashore.

The kernel part of the tragic fiction revolves around three people – Karuthamma, Pareekutti and Palani. Karuthamma, the heroine as given in all novels, is charming and beautiful. The spirit of her young age attracts the young Muslim boy, Pareekutti. Their passion blinds them that the young people are not only from different religions but also from different social backgrounds. Karuthamma belongs to a community that has a philosophy of its own. It is explained when Chakki says to Karuthamma that the strength and the wealth of the fisherman lie in the purity of his wife. It has been maintained for ages. She has already known a few old tales of women, on the seafront, who strayed off the path of righteousness. Because of that the waves rose as high as a mountain and the water engulfed the sea shore. The sea shore was infested with poisonous sea snakes. Other monsters of the sea with mouths as large as caves darted after the boats. So Karuthamma thinks that whether her story will be included to it.

This tradition to women is like a citadel with no doors and no windows. Because, here woman is overlooked, ignored and reduced to insignificance. But Karuthamma who loves someone outside her caste, who, however hard she tries to forget him, finds herself loving him more. "... She even wanted to ask him if she could be converted to his religion" (43). Traces of asserting one's individuality could be seen occasionally in the novel.

When Karuthamma is insisted not to meet her lover, she obeys the instructions imposed on her by her mother. Chemban Kunju makes arrangements to get her married to Palani, an orphan. Even the neighbours of Karuthamma feel sorry for her condition, as Palani could not even give seventy five rupees as deposit for the marriage fee. Though Karuthamma does not have her full mind for the marriage, she agrees. Because "Karuthamma wanted to get away from that home and that neighbourhood" (90). She enters a new village for a new life. But women in the village say that there is something wrong with Karuthamma, when fisherwoman Vavakunju asks "Then why did he (Chemban Kunju) give away the girl to one like Palani?" (114).

Amidst the state of utterly being broken up, Karuthamma contrives to live happily with Palani. She clings to him afraid of losing him, as she has none in her natal house. Gradually she feels that her grip on him is slipping. But the arrival of the baby gives the couple a new meaning. They believe that the baby will offer them uninterrupted happiness. It also vanishes soon after the coming of Panchami, Karuthamma's sister. Karuthamma's inquisitiveness to know about Pareekutti draws a gap between her and her husband. Her secret of old love tale is disclosed to Palani. The latter leaves the house in frustration.

“Karuthamma suddenly had a new awareness of life. All her values changed with a new undefinable logic, Untill noe she had been afraid of life... She had no will of her own” (201). Even though she has led a happy life with Palani so far, her mind and heart fluctuate now and then. When she hears the voice of Pareekutti, at the end of the novel, she marshals everything away from her mind - her lovable sister Panchami, affectionate husband Palani and her own child. She rushes to Pareekutti and surrenders both her body and soul to him. Thus her unhealing and unsealing wound of wooing Pareekutti makes her break her system and custom. She embraces him in death.

The silent transformation of Karuthamma is marked with the push for women who are ready to come out of gender politics in the name of tradition. When there is conversation on purity in the novel, Karuthamma is told that "Today there isn't that purity, or that discipline. Today the men too, are like that". Men and women were getting away from those old ways and traditions. But the daughters of the sea must guard those old traditions" (94). As Indian society characterizes women as ideally warm, gentle, dependent and submissive, almost all the women in the fiction abide by their customs. If women develop a sense of who they are and cultivate conscious and constructive identity, they doubtlessly would achieve autonomy. But shall not put the gender opposite down in turn. Understanding and equality in relationship and the fact that both the men and women have these qualities in abundance, pave way for a blissful life.

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Warriors of Crisis: A Study on Heroines of Siba Shakib and Batya Swift Yasgur

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Abstract

This paper proposes to analyse the two heroines 'Shirin Gol' and 'Sulima' of Shakib and Yasgur from the novels Afghanistan Where God Only comes to weep and Behind the Burqa who faced the perilous situations in their life with great courage. It is evident through these two characters that Women in Afghanistan have proved resilient against all odds, despite a dysfunctional state and more than two decades of a bloody civil war. During the Taliban regime, as gender apartheid replaced the anarchy of warlords, violations of their rights became the norm. Yet, even then Afghan women worked alongside men to assist the most vulnerable segments of the population, ensuring they had some access to education and health care, both at home and in exile. Shirin Gol's perseverance and hope in migrating to Pakistan, Iran and coming back to Afghanistan in the giving better life to her children proves her quality of warrior in her. Sulima in Behind the Burqa exposes her courage, perseverance, resilience and resistance through all the oddities that surrounds her life. Sulima the eldest sister is a strong willed woman who worked as activist in communist regime and took a bold decision to escape from forced marriage by secretly marrying her cousin who loved her madly. Due to her participation in woman activism she got arrested and faced threat for her life so she got migrated to Germany and then America. After marriage, when her husband turned bullying and torturing, she withstood it courageously like a warrior and became a successful women entrepreneur.

Key words: perseverance, resistance, oppression

Afghanistan where God only comes to Weep, written by Siba Shakib exposes, how war topples the life of a village girl Shirin Gol. *Behind the Burqa*, written by Batya Swift Yasgur, exposes the story of two sisters Sulima and Hala, their journey from peaceful family life to horror. Shirin Gol, Sulima and Hala prove real warriors of crisis. The prolonged conditions of the conflict in Afghanistan have taken heavy toll on human life and brought enormous suffering and devastation for the country. In any conflict children and women, are the worst sufferers because of their vulnerable position in the society. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues, "Women have never been secure within (or without) the nation state-they are always disproportionately affected by war, forced migration, famine, and other forms of social, political, and economic turmoil" (514). Women are pressured to take on the role of men because the men are lost, have died, or have returned to the home country because of unemployment in the host country. Similarly, with no male presence, Afghan women have had to take on the role of the head of household. Heroines from both the novels enjoyed peaceful life only for few years of their childhood. They are victims of both patriarchy and the brutal situation of conflict that has ravaged Afghanistan half century. Each and every day in their life is like an adventure migrating from one place to another place, migrating from one country to another country. They struggled for basic needs

like food clothing and shelter on one side and to solve their family crisis on other side. Shirin Gol and Sulima are real warriors of crisis in their life.

Shirin Gol and Sulima have continued to work hard to support their families and provide their children's needs while recognising that their hard work is for their children's benefit rather than their own. After reaching host country, both of them juggled multiple tasks for the benefit of their families, including working at multiple jobs, learning English, and taking care of household chores. It is clear that despite the linguistic, economic, and cultural barriers to resettling in a new environment, they took the initiative to improve their situation. They did not let the various systematic barriers impede their motivation to continue to nurture their families.

Shirin Gol an admirable woman in constant search for better life, a life where her children have a chance of a future without poverty and fear. She got displaced inside Afghanistan numerous times and has gone to Pakistan and Iran as refugee and separated from her family members. Her life comprised of migration and displacement only, she lead her life by temporary stay in displaced place or host country and struggle for survival. When the Russians attacked the village, Shirin Gol's family migrated to Kabul. She finds herself burdened with enormous tasks at a tender age. She realizes that "she is still a child, and that children's lives involve lots of things of which she has been completely unaware" (34). She is however a bold girl, dreams high. She has confidence in herself, she learns everything quickly and wants to become a doctor to help and serve her country. She married her husband Morad to repay the gambling debt of her brother. Morad acknowledges her strength and hope.

Shirin Gol's family undertook the journey to Pakistan when the situation becomes worse in Kabul by walk without her husband. They walked for days and weeks. It is very dangerous journey, during day time helicopter fly and fire and the Mujahidin soldiers took sheep, blankets, food, young boys, who are apt to fight, girls and women as toll. When a sentry demanded Shirin Gol in a toll gate, she escaped from him by acting as lunatic person. When Shirin Gol's husband Morad is severely injured in an accident she did not have enough money to treat her husband. She is pushed to the state of being mistress to a wealthy Pakistani smuggler chief, under whom Morad worked. Shirin like all the mothers of the world want to give her children a better and prosperous life. Shirin Gol delivers a girl baby to the smuggler chief. She says she is doing this for his family she expresses it as: "For you, my daughter, she whispers. I did it for you. For you my son for you, my Morad. For myself, so that we can stay alive" (91). There is no safety for refugees in Pakistan. Shirin Gol is raped by three police men when she went to buy groceries in Pakistan market. She has delivered a son due to this rape.

Shirin Gol has moved to Iran in the hope of giving good education to her children. She entered Iran without any legal papers. She is happy, she got house, job and her son got admission in school. But after a period of time Iranians started ill-treating them. Iran government asked permit for everything like school, university, purchase, examination, doctor, travel, exit, work, hospital. Shirin Gol returned to Afghanistan with hope in her heart. In Afghanistan she worked secretly in doctors house, because women are not permitted to work, only widows are allowed to work in carpet factory otherwise they should go for begging. She is pushed to leave her children in orphanage and she became beggar, when her secret employment is found by Taliban. Finally she undertook her last journey to a mountainous village where her bother works as commander.

She hopes that a day will come when everything in her life will be well and there will be plenty of food around with all peace and calm.

Throughout the novel there is a lot of repression of Shirin's voice. However none can deny her success at various levels at various stages of her life. Noteworthy feature in Shirin's character is her sense of self-respect and a strong voice. She neither keeps quiet nor submits without struggle once she grows up, although in her childhood she is usually tossed on her head by her mother for her talkative nature.

In the novel *Behind the Burqa* Sulima born as an elder daughter to her father got good education in the midst of her father's strict vigilance about her activities. Sulima has become woman activist in spite of her father's objection and faced confinement in house for her action. After her father's death Sulima came under the custody of her tyrannical brother Karim who controlled and tortured her by all means. He spoiled her dream of becoming doctor. He permitted her to do biology on condition she should get engaged before enrolling herself in college. Sulima's courage is revealed through her act of relieving herself from the troublesome engagement with Yakub. To break her engagement and bogus marriage certificate produced by her brother Karim, she found Ibrahim who loved her die hardly and married him secretly in register office.

Sulima has come out her family vigilance after marrying Ibrahim by undertaking a dangerous risk. Sulima is free to work, her husband is supportive of her all activities. Sulima has conducted campaigns on the importance of education to village people by travelling widely and working as teacher. She has made women to realise the importance of education. Sulima's life becomes dangerous when the leader of communist party is succeeded by Hafizullah Amin after Taraki. Hafizullah Amin triggered out continuous complaints about her communists principles and suspects that she is not true to communist principles. She got arrested and released on the plea of some influential friend of an Amin's government. She is arrested for three times and finally she is in situation to leave the country from the torture of Amin's government. Situation of Sulima is expressed in the novel by her husband Ibrahim as "We have no choice. You can't go to jail and be raped or killed" (BTB 111). Sulima migrated to Germany.

In Germany with the help of Yasin, Sulima's brother-in-law has found a room for rent, where they have to share bathroom and kitchen with the other tenants. Sulima, felt happy to have room of her own. After getting a room, Sulima searched for a job, language is biggest hurdle to get job in Germany, though she got a degree in biology, she did not get job for her qualification. She got cleaning job in a doctor's office and then a part time job as a laboratory technician in a university. Sulima has to face the struggle all alone, because Ibrahim her husband has not completed his degree and also he is not interested in looking for job. Step by step Sulima got promotion as a research assistant and then as a researcher in university but her dominating husband spoiled all her progress by forcefully threatening her to leave America.

Sulima has travelled alone to America with her little daughter. In America Sulima was received by her sister -in-law, She stayed for one night in her house. She is chased out of the house by her mother-in-law in mid night without any American currency and also she is not well versed in English. She found a room in a motel for low cost and without any deposit money she

searched house for rent. After a frantic search a land lady has given her house with a bedroom, living room and kitchen in basement. Next day, she went in search for job by travelling by bus to the suburban area. By stepping in to the house one by one, she got the laundry work for 3.25 \$ for an hour. Sulima has become flower decorator, but to start a business of her own immigration process has to be cleared. Sulima started a flower shop with help of American friends. Though she moved from Germany to America and America to Germany to gain the love of her husband, she never loses her confidence, she is ready to start her life from zero status and sacrifice all her progress to gain the love of her husband. When Sulima's husband torture reached unbearable level she took bold decision of divorcing her husband. Later she married an American who loved her truly.

Hala the second heroine of *Behind the Burqa*, like her sister Sulima she also faced threat for her life in Afghanistan for running school for neighbourhood children during Taliban regime. To save her life, some well-wisher helped her to migrate to America. Hala has boarded the flight as a wife of some unknown person. Feelings of Hala when the flight take off was expressed in the novel as "As I watched my country get smaller and smaller, I silently prayed for Madarjan, Surya, and all my family. And for my country itself" (BTB 221).

Hala migrated to America without any proper travel documents. She is sent to prison and informed till she clears her trials regarding her migration; she has to stay in prison. She is informed that she would be sent to Pakistan if the judges found that her explanation was not satisfactory. Language is a barrier to explain her status. She is not able explain the circumstances which forced her travel without any documents. Sulima her elder sister by great struggle reached her sister and explained Hala's situation to the airport officials. They are not aware of the situation prevailing in Afghanistan and also the native language of Afghanistan like Dari, Pashtu to arrange a translator for Hala

Sulima somehow approached the INS (Immigration and Naturalization service), local members of congress and also the Vera centre for justice. After a great struggle, parole sanctioned to Hala. There are many prisoners staying for years in prison facing their continuous hearing Hala is lucky enough to have sister like Sulima, it is because of her effort Hala's parole is sanctioned. Hala stayed in prison for three months and fourteen days. After a great struggle asylum is sanctioned to Hala.

Thus Shirin Gol and Sulima demonstrated considerable ability to take on multiple roles and be self-reliant when needed. Their toil knew no boundaries. Their stories have revealed these women's motivation to succeed in life, be flexible in their circumstances, and work for the benefit of their families. This is a huge strength that demonstrates that they are resilient and chose not to succumb to the hopelessness that surrounded them in trying times.

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Whose Choice is it anyway? Women's Rights and the Headscarf Girls in Orhan Pamuk's *Snow*

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Abstract

Orhan Pamuk is a Turkish Nobel Laureate who novels retell stories from the nation's past. His postmodern parables tend to delve deeper into the Ottoman past or to jump to the much recent military coups in modern Turkey. Unlike My Name is Red and Museum of Innocence, novels that indulges in postmodern tropes and haphazard narratives. Snow is a politically charged novel with a much simpler narrative. It follows the adventures of the poet, Ka, who in his search for love and while investigating the suicides of young girls in Kars, gets embroiled in the religious and political tensions that result in a military coup. The religious and secular debate that sends Kars' girls to suicide in the novel raises serious questions about the concept of the right to choose including whether the right to choose implies/ includes a right to not exercise that choice. Through Ka's conversations with Blue, the fundamentalist leader and with Kadife, the leader of the headscarf girls; Pamuk problematizes the concept of choice and that of voice and identity. When gender identity and experience becomes politicised, human rights and perceptions of gender justice transcend from the personal realm to the social realm. This paper problematizes the notion of choice and will analyse the in/availability of choices when Kadife's individual choices make political statements for the character, for the girls of Kars, for women world over and for the novelist as well in Orhan Pamuk's Snow.

Keywords: *Women's Rights, Dress Code, Head Scarf, Religion, Turkish Novel, Orhan Pamuk*

Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* traces the travels of the poet Ka as a journalist to Kars, a remnant of the Armenian and Russian periods, which is flanked in snow that isolates them from the rest of the country and envelops its streets and ruins in its whiteness. In his search for an old love and the reasons for the suicides of girls in Kars, Ka meets poverty, unemployment, dissolution and the tussle between religious and secular politics that makes the headscarf a religious issue and seems to send Kars' girls to suicide. His meetings with Serdar Bey, the newspaper owner; Muhtar, a leader of the religious party; Kadife, the leader of the headscarf girls; Blue, the Islamic terrorist whose words can make people take their own lives and Ipek, the woman he comes to Kars to fall in love with; tell us about propagandist news, religious fanaticism, hopelessness and deterioration of a city and a people: themes that Turkey and many other countries are familiar with. In his "first and last political novel", Pamuk finds a microcosm of Turkey inside the snowflakes that enveloped Kars.

In *Snow*, Ka's influence of the West is a recurrent issue. He escapes to Germany as a political exile. His poems and his fame bloomed there; addressing an expatriate audience. He returns to Turkey to attend his mother's funeral. His journey to Kars is to find an old flame in the hopes of winning her love. Though he finds his writer's block removed in Kars and writes nineteen poems, his happiness lies in a life in Frankfurt. Kars is where he can draw inspiration

from and win his love but to sustain the ensuing happiness he needs Frankfurt. But it is about Kars and Turkey that he writes and they are the source of happiness and creativity. Religion is another question that troubles him. He is away from happiness and when he sees hope for it, he starts believing. But his belief in God does not mean practising a religion. The label of a blasphemer costs him his life

The preamble to *Snow* quotes Stendhal from *The Charterhouse of Parma*, “Politics in a literary work are a pistol shot in the middle of a concert, a crude affair though one impossible to ignore. We are about to speak of very ugly matters.” In a novel about political instability, military coups and religious conflicts, the case of suicide girls and women’s rights are genuinely such a shot, something that sends the reader into a similar sense of unease.

Orhan Pamuk talks about a lot of politically sensitive issues in *Snow* hardly mainstream writers ventured to broach on. The constant military coups and changing regimes that besieged Turkey since Mustafa Kemal Attaturk is a major plot device in the novel; so are the many political killings. The riots that accompany major power changes tend to disappear from the official parable soon the induction of a new regime, these erasures often make a discourse of these incidents difficult. Pamuk refers to these riots in his *Snow* that tells the tale of Ka’s lost poems and the Kurdish massacres. The Kurdish massacres comes with all their gory reality in the novel with the trucks taking dead bodies of religious school boys to villages for identification and the dead face of Necip with the pierced eye that continues to haunt Ka. The references to the Armenian massacres are as an entry on the Hotel Asia meeting in Fazil’s notebook:

Then, in the course of his long speech, about the Crusades, the Holocaust, the American massacre of the Indians and the French massacre of the Algerian Muslims, a defeatist in the crowd slyly asked, ““And what happened to the millions of Armenians who once lived all across Anatolia, including Kars? Feeling pity for this man, the informer-secretary did not write down his name” (*Snow* 286).

With appending the disappearance of Armenian massacres to genocides from other parts of the world, Pamuk drives home his point without referring to the massacres as state-sponsored genocides. Read along with the lines, “At the beginning of the twentieth century, only half the city’s population was Muslim...” and “a row of houses abandoned by Greeks, Armenians and Jews as a nationalist state bore down on minorities” in *Istanbul* and the description of the riots; the potential of these riots and their character is any reader’s guess. There is also the report condemning Ka as a Western agent in *Border City Gazette* that mentions “the Armenian massacres that should have been buried long ago”. Pamuk gave these silenced, deleted and “buried” histories of atrocities on humanity a presence and more visibility in the world picture through his novels. But *Snow* fictionalises these histories and at times weaves them together.

The need to fix his tales in a historical period and connect them to their parallel history offers him a licence to dwell on these silences. It is in this amalgamating of historical facts with fiction and offering suggestions while refraining from judgements that Pamuk scripts metahistories.

The personalisation and fictionalisation frees him from taking sides that a historian may be susceptible to while allowing the multiplicity of truths that fiction can afford. It excuses him from making finalities and endorsing ‘the’ history and enthuse interest in the cultural past of his country. The fantasy and mysticism of fiction rescues the novel from the stamp of exotic, a threat still looming over an Eastern writer attempting a historic narrative. And through these meta-narratives, history interfaces with fiction.

It is these interventions that blur the lines between history and fiction that helps Pamuk broach the subject of the headscarf and the suicide epidemic that affected the areas of Batman and Kars in the novel. The influence of the Western thought, the modernity of Mustafa Kemal, the revival of Arabic and Islamic traditions and the clash of the followers of East/ West paradigms, were all attributed with the responsibility of the controversy surrounding the headscarf in Turkey. When the suicides of the young girls in Kars are linked to the headscarf controversy; the issue graduates to a different realm of discourse. Pamuk's brilliance lies in bringing out the multitude of reasons that go beyond the religious/ secular dialogue and perpetrate the 'epidemic'. This is the aspect of the novel that forms the focus of this paper.

Ka, a poet who is in exile in Germany comes home to Kars to meet his love interest, Ipek and as an investigative journalist trying to find the truth about the increasing number of suicidal girls in Kars. The society had agreed on the notion that the suicides are over the headscarf issue in the town. The local authorities had banned the use of headscarves and the girls who believed in wearing headscarves were committing suicide when denied the option. Ka finds out that Kadife, Ipek's sister is the champion of the headscarf girls and that her lover, Blue, an Islamist fundamentalist leader is another active champion of the issue. He starts talking to the people of Kars, especially the families of the victims and the deciding authorities in the issue. His status as an outsider and/or insider in Kars, makes him approach it with certain detachment and the multitudes of truths involved.

At the same time, he is not unaffected by the melancholy and the threat of impending failure that affects the town behind its heydays with the decline of Russian-Turkish trade. He could also sense a rising conflict between the religious and secular groups in Kars though he is surprised at the change.

'Why are so many people turning to religion all of a sudden?' asked Ka.

Ipek didn't answer...

'Why is everyone committing suicide?' asked Ka.

'It's not everyone who's committing suicide, it's just girls and women', said Ipek. 'The men give themselves to religion, and the women kill themselves' (*Snow* 35).

Here Ipek underlines the fact that it is not religion that essentially oppresses these women, but the society that crushes them and links it to religion or uses religion as a tool of oppression. The squalour and the hopelessness that affects the people do not escape him. He rightly surmises that the suicides could not be reduced to a monolithic cause; but a series of continued intrusions and violations on their lives and rights.

'We are now gathering denunciations from people who say what a shame it was that these girls were so badly deceived [by the Islamists], but because they don't want to put more pressure on the girls, thus perhaps driving more of them to suicide, we haven't yet printed any of these statements... 'Aren't the Islamists against suicide?' Serdar Bey did not answer this question.

This conversation between Ka and Serdar Bey points further to the haggling between the two interested parties for the responsibility of these suicides. Neither is ready to gauge the situation and the people who are issuing denunciations do not include the girls, the potential candidates. They remain mere subjects while the patriarchal intelligentsia opines about the ethical notions and passes judgements over the veracity and stigma of the action.

“Ka was fascinated by the desperate speed with which these girls had plunged from life into death. The care they had taken – the hooks they had screwed into the ceiling, the rifles they had loaded, the medicine bottles they had transferred from the pantry to their bedrooms – suggested that they had been carrying their suicidal thoughts around with them for some time.” (Snow 14) This observation affirms how the actions of the girls are not a spur of the moment decisions but are statements against a patriarchy that denies and negates their wills and rights; a powerful declaration against their pre-designed roles and their staunch refusal to submit to choices made for them. The desperation that Ka identifies is the desperation for change; it is a demand to be noted, to be counted, and to be recognised as individuals with their distinct minds and wills. The suicide that becomes an epidemic records their valiant fights through their deaths.

“What shocked and frightened Ka was the manner in which these girls had killed themselves: abruptly, without ritual or warning, in the midst of their everyday routines.” (Snow 13) The girl who chose to consume sleeping pills had decided to kill herself than go back to her in-laws and submit to their abuse. Her cousin’s suicide when questions were raised about her virginity by her teacher that resulted in the cancellation of her marriage points to the age old agenda of using moral codes and rumours to suppress women. Despite the family’s insistence that they are attempting to prove the duplicity of the rumour and expose the evil teacher, their deciphering a pattern in the deaths of the cousins and calling it a “copy cat suicide” is guilty, even if psychologically valid, of blaming the victim.

The stark reality of women’s rights in Turkey and the unhappiness that pervades the lives of women in Kars and their spirit to challenge the patriarchy is rather clear in the words of the deputy governor of Kars. His closing argument in the meeting accentuates the under representation of women in forums for them and the general belief of the sympathisers of women representation that women cannot speak for themselves and want intervention on their behalf. It also exemplifies the apathy of the policy makers towards women representation and their apparent naivety about the need to include the interested party in decision making concerning them. The deputy governor tells Ka,

‘But if unhappiness were a genuine reason for suicide, then half the women in Turkey would be committing suicide. ... [he] went on to suggest that women might give in to the temptation of killing themselves because of a chorus of male voices – fathers, imams, the state [sic] –remonstrating: Don’t commit suicide!’ This, he told Ka proudly, was why he had written to Ankara asking that the Anti-Suicide Propaganda Committee include at least one woman. (Snow 15)

No one even thinks of asking the girls why so many girls are committing suicide. The girls are never part of/ included in these conversations, observations are made on their actions, and they are never part of any conversations or actions. In each death, the reporting individual refers to why the girls were unhappy, but that never gets linked to their suicide. That a woman’s unhappiness doesn’t matter or is of no significance for this society is evident in the conversations between the hotel manager and the tiny unnamed man,

‘But here’s the real reason for this epidemic: they’re selling these girls to elderly clerks, men they don’t love’.

The manager objected: ‘When my first wife met me,’ he said, ‘she didn’t love me either’. He went on to declare that the epidemic had many causes, for example unemployment, high prices, immorality and lack of faith’
Because he agreed with everything both men said, Ka felt rather two-faced as they sat in silence for several minutes. (*Snow* 101)

When post truth is reigning, verity is often lost in the shenanigans of the apostles of the posttruth. Ka’s hesitance in asking questions is an indicator of this. “He also refrained from asking why it was, if indeed not a single headscarf could be found in Kars in the late forties, that a group of fiery youths had felt compelled to stage a revolutionary play urging women not to cover their heads.” (*Snow* 22)

“So despite her parents’ expressed wish that she remove her headscarf, the girl refused, thus ensuring that she would frequently be removed by the police from the halls of the institute”. (Pamuk, *Snow* 17) It is not her religion, by the state’s denial of her right to choose her clothes, and her identity that send the girl to suicide. When she has to face the fact that her opinion and her right to choice are immaterial, she refuses to live a life of compromises, that’s what makes her state that, “life had no meaning and that she no longer wanted to live.” But the society that is oblivious to a half of the population and their right to exercise their rights is not able to comprehend the situation which leads to a the generic response of Kars to similar suicides that “...no one expected a girl of such piety to take her own life” (*Snow* 17) Human lives lose significance in the much politicised discourse of the religious/ secular conflict. The society is indulged in dissecting the ‘logic and commonsense’ of the act rather than addressing the causes of the suicide.

As long as women are not able to make their own choices, voice their opinions, speak for themselves, make informed decisions about themselves in a society; the said society cannot make claims to upholding women’s rights. No individual can be happy in someone else’s shoes, forgetting who they are. It is when they risk losing their identities, forgetting their individual selves that Kars’ girls take the extreme step. “‘I’m not all that afraid of becoming someone else’ said Hande. ‘What scares me is the thought of never being able to return to return to the person I am now – and even forgetting who that person is. That’s the sort of thing that makes people commit suicide’” (*Snow* 126). This refusal to live in borrowed identities and tailor made roles is what makes these suicides a political statement; statements loud enough like a shot at a concert; statements that made the whole nation to wake up from a stupor of gender inequality and listen to the voices of their girls and women. For the girls of Kars, their deaths are statements against a system that refuses changes, a brave statement that they would not live their lives on other people’s terms. They cannot afford to forget who they are; not anymore. And it is in identifying these voices –voices often lost among the clashes of the patriarchy and its vested interests– that Pamuk distinguishes himself as a master story teller.

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Women: Ever Philanthropists

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Abstract

Since its origin, in the name of feminism, literature has tried to project women as a component of the second sex; a suppressed figure, who is submissive in nature. On the other hand, literature that has been written within the so-called umbrella term of feminism in the recent projects, women are projected as successful beings, in spite of the numerous hurdles which further cites women as a separate entity. The main objective of the writers, who claim themselves feminists, is to assert liberty for women in every walk of life. The present paper is a valid attempt in highlighting how feminism, in various ways globally, has travelled with a negative wavelength and has isolated women from the space of humanism. The main objective of the paper is, to reconsider feminism as an aspect of humanism; as God created both men and women on earth, to lead their lives together, which emphasizes upon being superior or inferior and though we consider a certain equality between sexes, they prove to be ever philanthropists.

Key Words: *Feminism, Feminist, Anti-Feminism, Philanthropists.*

Women, in several ways, have been projected as subordinates across the globe. Women are placed in the second position in all the common platforms of the society. Since its origin, Literature, under the umbrella term Feminism, showcases women as a component of the second sex. In many cases, writers, who claim to be Feminists, undoubtedly highlight women as a subordinate figure living next to men.

Literature, at the early stages, treats women as victims at the hands of men. At this juncture, Feminists, gives attention to male domination, as their key component in symbolizing women. As time progresses, Feminists, across the globe, shift their attention from male domination, to women who suffer outside the family which stresses on how women in society are treated cruelly and badly.

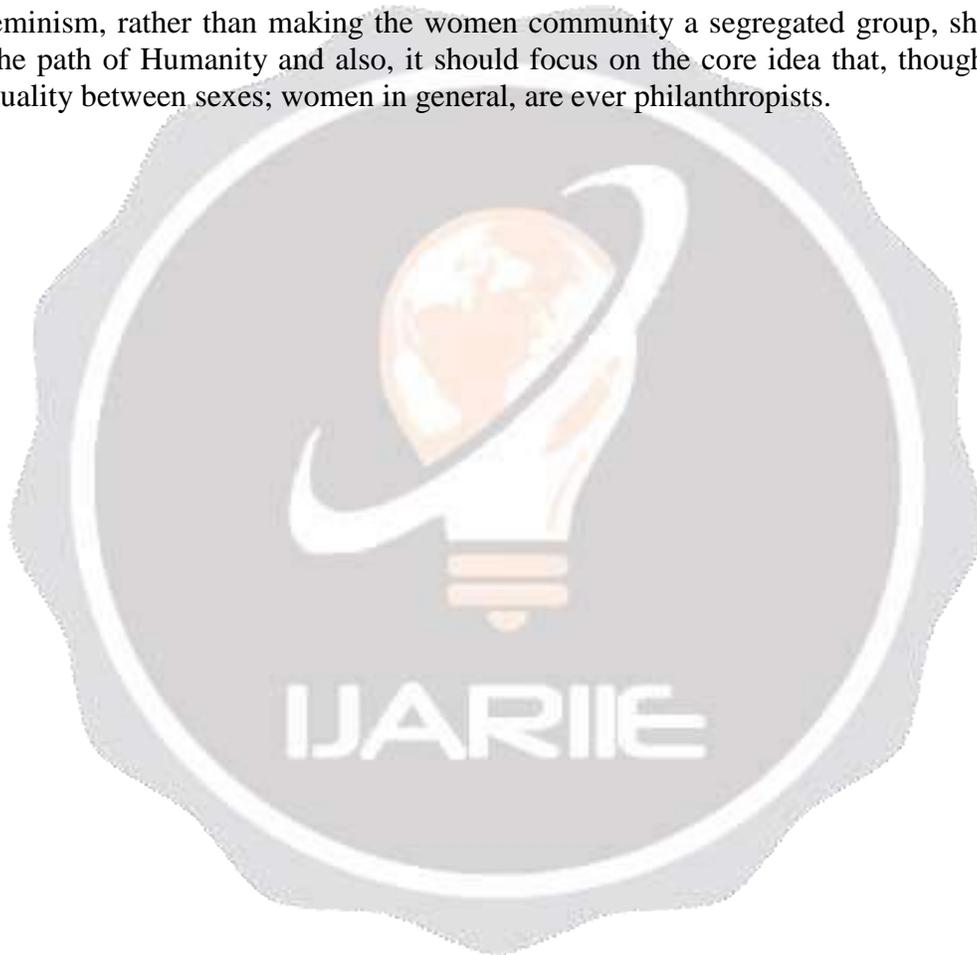
Feminism, in its progress, reaches another level by talking on Equality. It claims equal rights for women at every walk of their life that, and also on the other hand, deliberately gives voice to achieve complete freedom for women.

While stressing on equality and freedom for women, Feminism happens to travel in the yet another path, where the whole world, tries to view women in a different perspective; because, for the first time, in a very long time, Feminists, have projected women as an empowered figure. Eventhough, it shows women as a successor, it fails to reflect the special quality of women in particular.

In the recent past, the term, Feminism, with an attempt of placing women at the highest level both inside and outside the family simultaneously, happens to face the challenging task with a new dimension called Anti-Feminism, which strongly condemns Feminists and their varied beliefs.

With all these divergent approaches, Feminism, in some way, projects women as inferior and in another way as being superior. From the beginning, the term Feminism, has travelled with a negative dimension, which failed to consider women as equal beings, the way that God created both men and women, with an individuality and speciality of their own, to lead their lives together, without treating oneself as inferior or superior.

Feminism, rather than making the women community a segregated group, should travel towards the path of Humanity and also, it should focus on the core idea that, though there is a certain equality between sexes; women in general, are ever philanthropists.



Dowry System in Tamil Nadu- Origin and Practices

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Abstract

The practice and problem of dowry appear to have been wide spread in North India from early time. But the origin of the practice of dowry system in Tamil Nadu could be traced back to medieval days. Till the beginning of the 8th century A.D There are no authentic evidences to the practice of dowry either before or after marriage, in the proper sense of the term. Inscriptions and literary works bear ample evidence in support of this practice. Dowry system was alien to the ancient Tamils. Historical contacts with northern India brought this system to the Tamils. Dowry has become inseparably linked with the status of women in the male dominated society. This paper attempts to trace the origin of dowry practice in Tamil Nadu. Dowry is a real problem in the present day Tamil Society. Several socio-economic factors have contributed to the persistence of the system in the present form society. Governmental and Non-governmental agencies have been endeavouring for its eradication. The cancerous growth of the dowry practice in Tamil Nadu and its grave implications have started attracting the attention of every serious minded person today and naturally researchers also.

The practice and problem of dowry appear to have been widespread in Aryavarttha from a very early age. But in Tamil Nadu its beginning could be traced back to the medieval days. Till the beginning of the 8th century A.D., there is no authentic evidence to the practice of dowry either before or after marriage, in the proper sense of the term. Inscriptions and literary works bear ample evidence in support of this practice. However, its hold was limited over to a few sections probably influenced by north Indian values. This paper attempts to trace the origin of dowry practice in Tamil Nadu.

In view of its sociological impart, this study is bound to be interested. The cancerous growth of the dowry practice in Tamil Nadu and its grave implications have started attracting the attention of every serious minded person today and naturally researchers also. Dowry has become inseparably linked with the status of women in the male dominated society.

The following points form the hypotheses

- Dowry system was alien to the ancient Tamils.
- After the migration of the Aryans into South India, the dowry system gradually captured a place in the life of the Tamils.

These are the facts tested in writing article with the help of primary and secondary sources.

The present study has been undertaken to explain the following objectives

- To explain the different terms of dowry.
- To highlight the study of pure Tamil marriage during the Sangam age.

- To trace the origin of dowry practice in Tamil Nadu.
- To analyse the Brahminical influence slowly paved the way for the practice of dowry in the Medieval Tamil Nadu.

Due to the very nature of problems handled, the present study adopts an inter-disciplinary method which is historical as well as sociological. In writing this article, it seeks to collect data from Sangam works, Encyclopaedias, Dictionaries, Gazetteers, Government Orders, some Inscriptions and Books.

For the sake of clarity, this paper examines the meaning of the word dowry at some length in Indian context. The term 'dowry' is derived from the root word, 'dover' or 'dou're' which mean 'to endow', Etymologically it means the endowment made by the parents for their daughters' secured life in future, particularly in their after married life. In course of time it has come to acquire the present meaning as wealth brought by the bride to her husband.

The word dowry is popularly termed as 'dos' in Latin, (Edwin R.A. Seligman, and Alvin. Johnson (eds), Encyclopedia of social sciences, London: The Macmillan Company, 1954, p.23 1), 'dowry' in English and dot in French (Adira C. Maye.r, Caste and Kinship in Central India, Berkeley: University of California press, 1966, p. 283). In north Indian languages it is known by different terms such as daun, dahej and dayaj. In South Indian languages it is called Sreedhanamor Sithanam. (Ranjanakumari, Brides are not for burning, New Delhi Radiant Publishers, 1.989, p. 3). However, in most of the Indian languages dowry is referred to as "Varadakshna". The Dharmashatras, the Ancient Hindu Law texts, laid down detailed qualifications and qualities that bridegrooms must possess and to whom presents in cash or kind known as Varadakshina were to be given. The court also held that Varadakshina was dowry. Dowry in early stages included ornaments and clothes, which the parents of the bride would afford to give away as property to the bride. Sithanam and Sirvarisai (Tamil Lexicon, Vol. III Part - I, Madras: University of Madras, 1983, p. 1483) are Tamil words wrongly used to denote Varadakshina. Both the Sanskrit and the Tamil terms are found to be used as synonyms in the medieval Tamil inscriptions. (A.R.E. No.90 of 1926 and A.R.E. No. 13 of 1943-1944)Takkayakapparani (Takkayakaparani, Talisai - 10, U.Ve. Swaminathaiyar (ed), 1960, p. 6.), the medieval Tamil works of Ottakuthar, employs the term **Sridhan**, meaning dowry.

The New Encyclopaedia Britannica says 'dowry the property that a wife brings to her husband on. (Philip M. Goetz (ed), The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol I London: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1986, p. 205). According to Cambridge dictionary, 'dowry stands for the property or money which a woman brings to her husband at marriage.' (Paras Diwan, Dowry and Protection to Married Women, New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 1990, p.30) The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary, (J. Coulson (ed), The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 30) and the World Book Dictionary.

Attempts were made to control dowry through the mechanism of the law as far back as the Sind Deti Leti Act of 1939 (Annexure 1, Sind Deti Leti Act No. XXI of 1939 in G.O. No. 3841 dated 04.12.1946 (Home Department) This Act was the first known legislative measure to curb dowry. However the first systematic law to prohibit dowry, known as the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 came into force only on July 1, 1961. According to this act, "Dowry"

means any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly by one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage, or (b) by the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person, to either party to the marriage or to any other person; at or before or after the marriage as consideration for the marriage of the said parties, but does not include dower or Mahr in the case of persons to whom the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) applies (Fort St. George, Gazette partIV, section-2, Central Bills, (New Delhi: 22 May 1961, p. 373).

As there was widespread dissatisfaction among people over the ambiguous expressions such as “consideration of marriage, after marriage,” two amendments were made in 1984 (Paras Diwan, Dowry and Protection to married women, New Delhi: deep and Deep Publications, 1990, p. 22) and 1986 (J.P. Bhatnagar, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, with State amendments, Allahabad: .Asoka Law House, 1990) p. 8) where in such objectionable phrases were substituted within connection with marriage and or any time after the marriage respectively.

From the above sources, it can be concluded that Dowry may generally be defined as the property in cash or kind or both, a woman brings to her husband or the property a man receives, when he marries, either from his wife or from her family, either at or before the time of marriage or after marriage. However, today it has become purely a commercial transaction sans any respect for the feelings of the affected party. To be more specific, dowry in to-days context is a forced extraction than a gift voluntarily brought by the bride.

There is no clear evidence for any kind of dowry in the early days. But on other hand, there are several references to the prevalence of the system of bride-price. The bride-price which is usually given to the bride is variously termed as Valaivilai, Thazhaivilai, Parisil, etc. (Ahananuru, 250; Purananuru; 248;271 ; Narrinai -300) The Sangam classics indicate the nonexistence of dowry practice among the ancient Tamils. Even ancient works like Tolkappiyam are silent on this question. But Tolkappiar makes reference to the eight forms of Aryan marriages. (Tolkappiyam (Porul), Kalaviyal 1, Tinnelveli South India Saiva Siddhantha Nurpathippu Kazhagam, Madras, 1969). Nachinarkiniar, the Commentator of Tolkappiyam describes the Brahma and Arsa types of marriage (Vellaivaranar, Tolkappiyarn-Tamil Ilakkiya Varalaru (Tamil) (Chidambaram: Annamalai University, 1957), p. 115). Bodanar, one of the classical Tamil poets, says even in the case of severe poverty and utter penury, a married woman would not even think of parental help. Even if she would speak high of her days under the parental care, she would not beg for parental help. (Narrinai 110). So, it can be understood that neither the bride nor the groom of those days expected any help from their in-laws. This view gets further strengthened by the study of pure Tamil marriage described in the sangam works.

The wedding ceremony of the early Tamils is vividly described in the Sangam works. According to Nallurkizhar, on the auspicious Rohini day, the day for marriage, rice mixed with black gram was prepared for the feast; a beautiful pandal spread, the sacred lamp was lighted, woman who gave birth to sons and capable of giving birth carried plates full of flowers; the bride took her sacred bath; with all their blessings she was married. (Ahananuru: 86). In addition to the details found in the poem 136 of the same anthology, mention is made of the loud sound of the drums (murasoli) and of the worship of God prior to the wedding. Here the food served was rice cooked with meat; it was served to the relatives and neighbours, K.K Pillai thinks that it may be

considered as providing a description of the pure Tamilian form of marriage ceremony. (K.K. Pillai, A Social History of the Tamils, Vol.1, Madras: University of Madras, 1975, p. 366) In both marriages there is no reference to the custom of circumbulation of the fire or chanting of any mantra, or paying of any kind of dakshna; or the presence of any Purohitar. There is also no clear evidence for the practice of paying and receiving any kind of dowry before or after marriage.

The customs of circumbulation of fire during the marriage ceremony was a rare practice in the Sangam age (Kuruntogai - 106). The Aryan influence was noticeable. Tolkappiar makes reference to the eight forms of Aryan marriage which are declared as part of Aryan code in the earliest Manudharmasastra. The Manudharmasastra recognises eight forms of marriage. They are Brahma, Daiva, Prajapatya, Arsa, Asura, Gandharva, Rachchsa and Paisasa. (A.L. Basam, The Wonder that was India, Delhi: Rupa and co., 1988, p. 169).

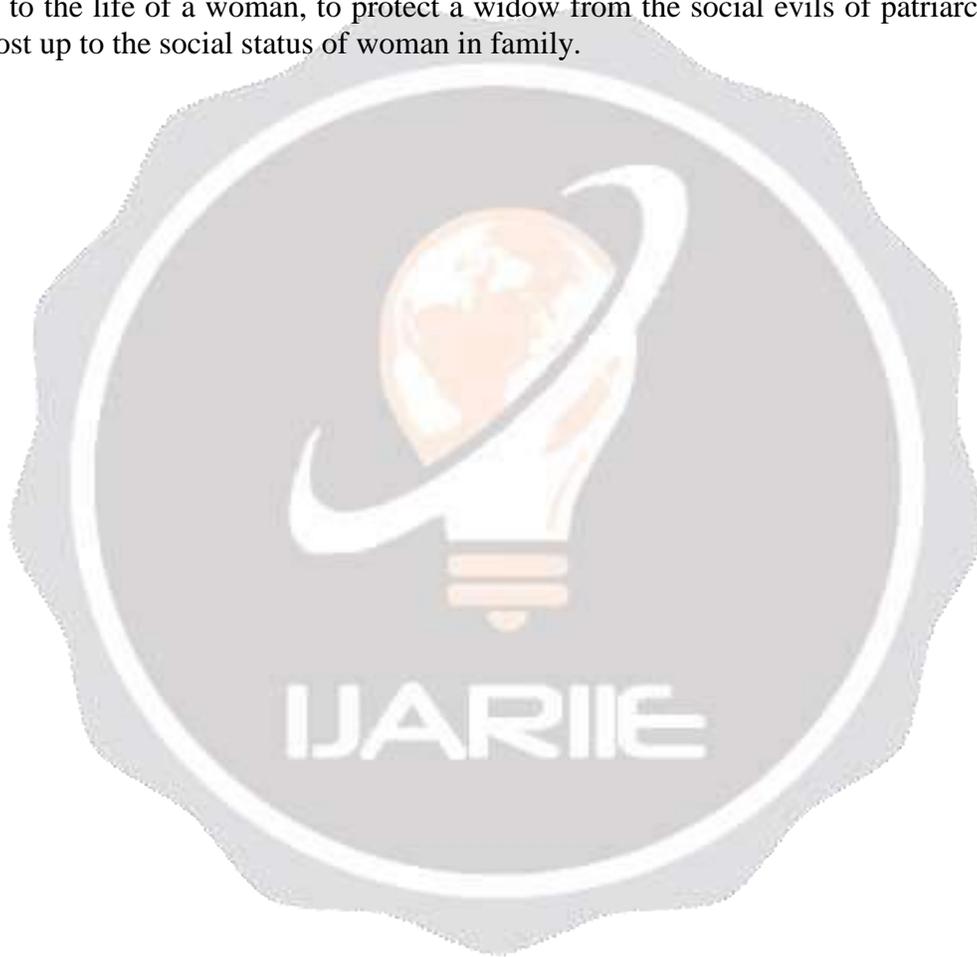
Among these eight forms of marriage the last three forms Gandharva, Rachchasa and Paisasa - do not have anything to do with gift or dowry or bride-price. In the period of Dharmasastra gifts were presented to the bride at the time of marriage in the first three forms of marriage, where as the bride-price was customary. These forms of marriage indicate the emergence of the system of dowry and bride-price side by side. To conclude the eight forms of Aryan marriage can not be compared with the marriage patterns of Tamils. Even the Gandharva system can be compared to some extent with clandestine love (Kalavu). The marriage system of the ancient Tamils was a natural phenomena.

Silappadikaram, (Silappadikaram - 1: 50-53) a post-sangam work which records the marriage of Kannagi and Kovalan, also has no clear reference to the custom of giving and taking dowry before or after marriage in the proper sense of the term. But Brahminical rites and ceremonies became more fully adopted. During the Pallava period, information about Brahmanical influence in marriages is available. But there is no recorded evidence to the practice of dowry. Even in the literatures of the period, there is no reference to it. However, the Brahmanical influence slowly paved the way for the practice of dowry in the later period.

The origin of the practice of dowry in Tamil Nadu could be traced back to medieval days. The beginning of the dowry practice in Tamil Nadu is referred to in the inscriptions and literatures of the eighth century AD. The earliest inscriptional evidence to the practice of dowry comes from Manur in Tirunelveli district of the time of Maranjadayan, probably Varaguna Pandyan. The record is dated in the thirty fifth regnal year of the king, probably, A. D. 800. It relates to the rules for membership on the village Sabha. One of its rules states that only a shareholder of the village could become a member. The share may either be purchased or received as gifts or acquired as Sridhan through one's wife (A.R.E., 1913, Part II para 23). This indicates the prevalence of the system of Sridhan or dowry and the influence from the north.

Takkayakapparani, (Takkayakapparani, Talisai-10, U.Ve.Sa. Edn, 1960, p.6) hints at the custom of paying dowry to the groom. In Civakacintamani (Cintamani-1064) there is reference to Sridhan and bride-price. The poet Umar (Cirappuranam 1 33, 34) also refers to Mahr system among the Muslim community in his Cirappuranam.

In Tamil Nadu, the earliest extant Tamil works do not talk about the existence of the custom of dowry. The Sangam people lived with nature. They loved nature. As love and Valour were the only factors for the consideration of marriage, there was no place for dowry. In the medieval Tamil Society, the practice of providing a bride with properties such as lands as Sridhan slowly began to strike roots among the upper section of the society. Because of historical contacts with north India and the migration of the Aryans from north to south Sridhan came into vogue. The inscriptions and literatures of this period testify to this fact. Varadakshina or Sridhan was given voluntarily to the groom and there was no compulsion in early times. Obviously it was her property. The modern practice of dowry has no resemblance to the original concept contained in Hindu law as it originated in ancient time. Thus Dowry or Sridhan was given as safeguard to the life of a woman, to protect a widow from the social evils of patriarchal society and to boost up to the social status of woman in family.



When Things no Longer Fall Apart: Women Characters in *Purple Hibiscus* and *How they Redefine Themselves*

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Abstract

Purple Hibiscus, written by the Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, is an immensely absorbing family drama narrated by the fifteen year old Kambili Achike who belongs to a rich and admired family where the father is a religious fanatic and an authoritarian who tortures his wife and children severely. The paper analyses the three major women characters in the novel. They are Kambili, the central character, her mother Beatrice and her aunt Ifeoma. Kambili appears to be a very shy, obedient and apprehensive girl but develops her courage after staying with her aunt and mingling with different characters at her aunt's place. As Kambili begins to breathe freedom, she realizes her inner self and her sexual awakening also strengthens her. Kambili's mother Beatrice is also a very docile character who conforms to the 'norms' of womanhood. She suffers severe physical abuse from her husband but tries hard to bring peace and harmony. Though she behaves in an unexpected way towards the end she is not able to forgive herself. Aunt Ifeoma stands in contrast to the characters of Beatrice and Kambili. She figures as a very bold and striking character who is efficient in many aspects. The paper does a detailed analysis of these major women characters who outlive physical and psychological violence. The kindness, honesty and patience of women are often looked upon as signs of submissiveness. In the face of insecurity and vexation they take charge of their own destinies and eventually shape their lives as they had dreamt and hence they act as perfect models of post-colonial feminism.

Keywords: - womanhood, self-determination, freedom, feminism, violence, liberation

"I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat"-
Rebecca West

Feminism is often defined as the endorsement for women's rights on the basis of the equality of the sexes. Literature is one of the best means to depict the spirit of women's liberation. Against the backdrop of post – colonial Nigeria, *Purple Hibiscus* shares the much needed thoughts of women's status and circumstances. It reminds us of the fact that change must be started right from the family, from the intimate spheres of every home. It portrays some of the deeply moving situations of the life of women who are subjected to wretched physical and psychological repression. The paper dwells upon the journey of these women from the clutches of patriarchy to the boundless sky of self-determination.

The younger one of Achike family, Kambili, is a very quiet and submissive girl. Kambili is the narrator of the novel. Living under the strict rules of her father, Kambili's world is too drab in the beginning. But she is absolutely loveable and sincere and also possesses a great sensibility. Though she is terrified by the violent punishments of her father, she is keenly aware of every pretension and shows a good sense of humour:

We did that often, asking each other questions whose answers we already knew. Perhaps it was so that we would not ask the other questions, the ones whose answers we did not want to know (28). She keeps a very intimate relationship with her brother and mother. Following the violent attacks of her father, her mother has to undergo an abortion, which seriously affects Kambili. The sense of loss and threat disturbs her young mind.

I went upstairs then and sat staring at my textbook. The black type blurred, the letters swimming into one another, and then changed into a bright red, the red of fresh blood. The blood was watery, flowing from Mama, flowing from my eyes (35). As she is completely submissive to the rules of her father, she does not have even the free will to interact with her classmates. Thus she is called a 'backyard snob' by her classmates who are unhappy with her reserved nature.

Kambili experiences a huge change when she and her brother go to her aunt's house during their vacation. The aunt's house in Nsukka is literally a haven for she has never imagined such freedom and privilege in her life. She is amazed by the liberal ways and the honest behaviour of her aunt, cousins and the people around their home. Free from her father's strict schedules and horrible punishments, she builds up her courage and revives a different outlook on her life.

What actually turns her life around is her relationship with Father Amadi, the priest she met at Nsukka. Kambili falls in love with him which ultimately strengthens her. She becomes happier, bold and becomes conscious of her sexuality. "I smiled. He motioned for me to stand up for a hug. His body touching mine was tense and delicious. I backed away. I wished that Chima and Jaja and Obiora and Auntie Ifeoma and Amaka would all disappear for a while. I wished I were alone with him. I wished I could tell him how warm I felt that he was here, how my favourite colour was now the same fired-clay shade of his skin" (221).

Kambili shows a totally astonishing resistance when her father tried to destroy the painting of their 'heathen' grandfather. She has to face brutal physical assault from her father but she hesitates to give up.

Kicking. Kicking. Kicking. Perhaps it was a belt now because the metal buckle seemed too heavy. Because I could hear a swoosh in the air. ... More stings. More slaps. A salty wetness warmed my mouth. I closed my eyes and slipped away into quiet (211). When things switch on to 'a different silence', Kambili seems to be very calm and content. She enjoys the freedom and liberty the absence of her father bestowed upon her life.

Kambili's mother, Beatrice is often referred to as 'Mama' in the novel. She is a typical maternal figure who is very docile, affectionate and caring. She looks after her family very well and condones the cruel deeds perpetrated her husband Eugene Achike. She suffers from two abortions following his severe beatings. "I stepped out of my room just as Jaja came out of his. We stood at the landing and watched Papa descend. Mama was slung over his shoulder like the

jute sacks of rice his factory workers bought in bulk at the Seme Border. ... We cleaned the trickle of blood ,which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red water colour all the way downstairs. Jaja scrubbed while I wiped” (33).It is also hinted that she is grateful to her husband for not marrying another woman after she could only have two children. In the beginning she is one of those women who conforms to the views imposed by the patriarchal society. She is always willing to comply with the commands of her husband and does not speak ill of him.

In the article ‘Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture? , American anthropologist Sherry Beth Ortner comments on the reason behind considering women as inferior to men throughout the ages. She claims that women’s marginal status is the result of the belief that human culture is above nature because culture is man’s way of mastering nature. Since women are generally identified with nature and men with culture, women are regarded secondary to men.

Mama keeps some of her favourite figurines in the étagère. She finds solace in cleaning and polishing these collectibles. After every outburst in the family, she polishes and caresses the figurines. The figurines symbolize Mama who is also very delicate and creates an aura of tenderness. The destruction of figurines shows the end of Mama’s forbearance.

“He picked up the missal and flung it across the room, toward Jaja. It missed Jaja completely, but it hit the glass étagère, which Mama polished often. It cracked the top shelf, swept the beige, finger-size ceramic figurines of ballet dancers in various contorted postures to the hard floor and then landed after them” (7).The tolerance and patience of women are often misunderstood. They strive to bring peace and harmony and to make their homes a perfect living space. But the male-dominated society misinterprets their attempts as gestures of helplessness.Mama has also tried her best to cope with the cruel nature of Eugene but at last she poisons him. Though she paves the way for a more peaceful life, she is devastated by a strong sense of guilt.

Aunty Ifeoma is the only sibling of Kambili’s father. She works as a lecturer in the University of Nigeria. She can be called an epitome of courage and self-determination. Though she is a widow, her character is opposed to that of Beatrice and Kambili. She never hesitates to voice her opinions but also takes initiative to restore her familial relationships.Aunty Ifeoma is also a Catholic but she never looks down upon her culture and tradition. Unlike her brother, she never underestimates her father who is unwilling to convert to Catholicism.Ifeoma has also made it a point to set up a comfortable and pleasant atmosphere for her children regardless of her financial problems. She even gets into trouble with her profession for adhering to the Nigerian Pro-Democracy movement but never heeds to any kind of blackmailing or threatening. She is a ‘new’ woman in every aspect.

“Being defiant can be a good thing sometimes. Defiance is like marijuana- it is not a bad thing when it is used right” (144).The days Kambili and her brother spend with Aunty Ifeoma ‘make all the difference’. The two children experience the wonderful things in life they had always missed. Thus Aunty Ifeoma becomes a perfect embodiment of new womanhood who possesses strong will and efficiency.

Purple Hibiscus unveils some of the striking women characters in the literary scenario. These characters endure different forms of patriarchal exploitation and finally recommence their

lives as they had imagined. They bring about the true spirit of feminism and yet they remain extremely loveable and sincere from beginning to end. One of the noticeable facts is that though they show respect to the western religious practices imposed by colonialism, they never fail to hold on to their native culture and tradition. Through the novel *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie endorses womanhood to seek their own identity and design a more responsible and happy life which ultimately wipes out the dark tinges of inequality.

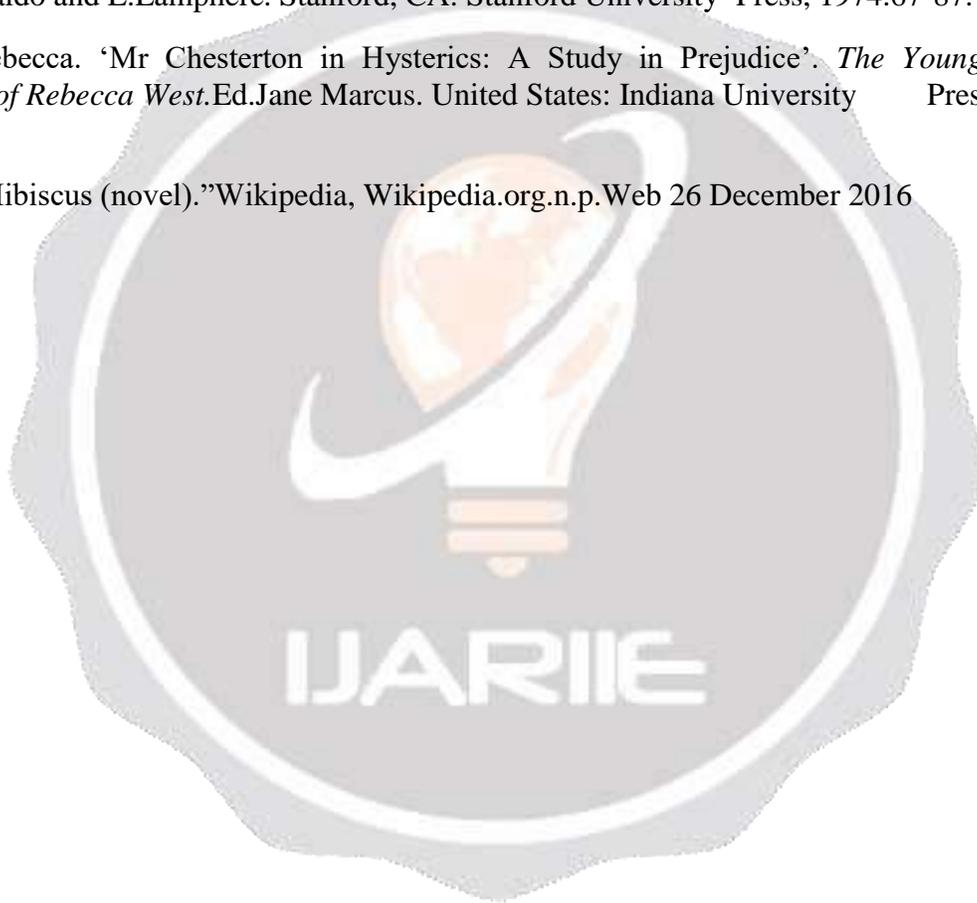
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Ostracism of Matured Female Body in Malayam Cinema- A Counter Analysis

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Abstract

Female body is a viewing platform to be gazed upon, lusted after, protected and admired. Throughout the history of Malayalam cinema, female 'body' has been a centre of attraction both by spectators and by the social culture of Kerala. In this paper I make an attempt to analyze the ostracism of matured female body with reference to two Malayalam films 'How old are you?' directed by Roshan Andrews and 'Four Women' directed by Adoor Gopala krishnan. These two films are analyzed both from spectators' point of view and from director's point of view. Women play an important role in Malayalam cinema. Each woman on screen represents 'the living woman' in the society. Women speak to women through their silence, body gestures, body language and voiceless voice. On one hand woman is celebrated for her 'body' and the other hand the same 'body' is tortured on screen. Those mentally and physically tortured bodies begin to recover from injuries and come up with more resistance. In the present paper, the ostracism of matured female body is taken for consideration. In the film 'How old are you?' the female protagonist in her 36, is subsided both by her husband and by her daughter just because of her ageing. In the film 'Four women', the stories of four women tell their ostracization because of ageing. Here 'body' becomes an object and its value is measured by the softness and shape. The different perspectives of these two films are analyzed. Female sexuality is also denied to these matured women in films.

Key words: ostracism, Malayalam cinema, women, female body

Theorization of female body has been a widely discussed discourse in literature and media. Female body has its own voices against the patriarchal ideology. In the politics of patriarchy, Female body occupies a secondary space where the man becomes the conqueror. It is a constituted 'site' with norms and notions developed in a particular society. Body becomes gendered when it is constituted by dominant culture-especially patriarchal culture. Female body is interpellated into her social and ideological position by an authority figure. But this subjective interpellation becomes objective, when a woman is constructed by sex and gender. As Butler says one's sex is per formatively constituted when one's body is categorized as either male or female. In the popular culture, body becomes constructed site for scopophilic pleasure. Popular films like cinema is perceived as the things that people voluntarily take part in order to induce pleasure. Through cinema, meaning female body and pleasure generated and circulated within a social system.

In the present times, cinema has become an important medium through which different aspect of female body is articulated. Female body has been a matter of hot discussion for a long period of time. Body has got different meaning in different cultural locality. Body is a space where the dominant power can play whatever it wishes. In the early history of time female body

is regarded as a powerless space and it is a matter of pleasure. The imaging of female in popular culture produces different meaning to different spectators. The only common factor that unifies these spectators is that of objectification of female body as a text starts with Rene Descartes, a French philosopher who splitted mind from the body. It has tended to treat body with mistrust as the site of uncontrollable impulses and instincts. According to Ian Buchchanan, this only began change in the early 20th century with the advent of phenomenology, especially the work of Maurice Merleau Pontey, who was probably the first philosopher to attempt a genuine philosophy of body. But in the latter half of the 20th century Feminism in all its forms that has given the greatest attention to the body. Simon De Beauvoir argues that Body is the site of an almost essential form of sexual difference which has in turn led to the formation of a sex/gender binary. In the words of Judith Butler, it is fallacious to think that there is a natural body that is distinct from a cultural body. So to correlate sex with biology and gender with culture is similarly mistaken. At theoretical level body has got wide meaning. In the present paper how female body is represented on screen and how women are ostracized because of their ageing is analysed.

There are differences in the ways in which the identities of men and women are constructed in films. The common beauty standard in patriarchal culture is that mature women are considered unsexy and deformed figures. The increasing ageism denies women's ownership of their bodies and on screen fantasies of matured sexuality. The present paper discusses the example of ageism. Gwendolyn Audrey Foster argues that women are continually told they are too old to be sexy and with each passing year, the onscreen look of the erotic women seem to become younger and younger to the point absurdity. In the film 'How old are you?' 36 year old Nirupama Rajeev is imaged as an awkward woman who cannot attract her husband sexually. That is she is not viable and she does not own her body or eroticism. The film maker constitutes such a text for this particular imaging of matured woman as unattractive and grotesque. But the character of Nirupama Rajeev is able to invite the spectators into her world.

Nirupama Rajeev is working as a UD Clerk in the Revenue Department. Her husband Rajeev Narayan (Kunchako Boban) works at Akashavani and aspires of migrating to Ireland, but Nirupama cannot accompanying him as most of the Irish companies turn down her job applications. She is over aged and almost all the corporate companies' need young and vibrant women. Nirupama is not such a woman, she is having the age old health problems like blood pressure, and weak health etc. her body is presented before the interview board as tedious through yawning. Her husband is a male chauvinist and is imaged as young, vibrant and aspiring personality. He himself feels that she does not match for him. He always her for not being appreciated him for his official work. He does not want to listen to her domestic complaints. Nirupama is a typical Kerala woman whose days begins with preparing breakfast and ends with preparing dinner. Her aged body becomes a burden for her husband and daughter. She tries to attract her aged body by making artificial color to her silver hairs. Whatever she does she gets any support and appreciation from her husband. Even though the camera tries to focus on the health problems of women after thirty five years in an ironical and teasing manner. To realize his dream of Ireland, Rajeev is even ready to leave his aged wife. Her daughter is always irritated with Nirupama. There is nothing interesting about her life; she leads a normal life but craves for a change. Her inability to rise up to her daughter's expectations and discomfiture of her husband being mistaken for her younger brother troubles her. Her meeting with the President of India becomes unsuccessful as she faints in front of him. After this incident she becomes the laughing stock on social media.

Nirupama gets in a situation where she has to watch her husband and daughter fly to Ireland. Nirupama had a habit of having a vegetable garden on her roof without the usage of chemicals and pesticides. It is her old classmate, a successful business woman Susan David, reminds her of the woman she used to be and inspires her to rediscover her younger self. She encourages and inspires her into a seminar with important people as audience. Her topic biofarming influenced all the officials and gives her the job of making it reality. Once again the President meets her with family and turns out to be successful. Her character is transformed from a depressed woman to a steady and sprightly lady. Film maker deliberately tries to rediscover the youth in her though the *mise-en-scene*. Her costumes play an important role in her body transformation. She is imaged in sarees and in tracksuits. The film interpellates the matured female body. The film maker takes us inside the subjectivity of main and it works because of Nirupama's ability to invite us inside her. When we meet Nirupama, she has lost to-be-looked-at-ness and she never really looks for something missing in her marriage. The film realistically portrays the ostracization of matured female body. But it shows the mental spirit and vibration inside each matured body. It is the inscribed social values that make a woman's body ostracize or embrace. Gwendolyn Audrey Foster argues,

The world dismisses aging woman and would prefer that they simply disappear. It should come as no surprise that films that don't punish the trespasses of a gorgeous and sexually liberated female will never be met with anything but dismissal. The language used to describe older women in our culture drives me insane (81, 2016).

It is the culture which tries to isolate age old women. Only the younger beautiful sexy women have the space in visual culture also. Women's body is politicized in every aspect. In the film 'Four women', the film maker realistically portrays the ostracized female body through one of the stories of four women 'Nithya Kanyaka'. It tells about the story of a spinster, Kamakshi. The story opens with the knocking at the door of Kamakshi's room by a man who comes to satisfy his desire. But Kamakshi never opens the door for him and asks him to go back. Then the text opens to narrate the story of Kamakshi –how does Kamakshi become an ever green spinster. Kamakshi (Nandana) is the eldest daughter in the family and she has two younger sisters and a brother. She is going through her marriage period and a proposal comes to her. Ravi Vallathol is the man who comes to propose Kamakshi. But unfortunately, he falls in love with her younger sister. He wants to marry only her younger sister Subadra (Kavya Madhavan). Kamakshi informs her willingness to arrange Subadra's marriage with him even though she is 5 years younger than Kamakshi.

Kamakshi feels alienated and insulted. Mother is anxiously cooking food for the newly married couple. Meanwhile mother gets irritation with Kamakshi as she falls in thought. Kamakshi becomes sleepless as she feels alienated and marginalized by everybody at her home and society. She cries a lot and makes comment upon subadra's husband as Pazhuppan. Kamakshi's life revolves around at her home and kitchen. She never loses control over her sensual pleasures even though marriage is denied to her. Her brother's and younger sisters' marriage are solemnized. Kamakshi is a fatherless girl and her mother becomes too old. All her sisters and brother got settled with their families. Her mother is in death bed now. After mother's death Kamakshi becomes lonely at her home. She is shifted to Subadra's home. Parameswaran Pillai (Ravi Vallathol) is having a guilty consciousness towards Kamakshi for not being chosen

her to marry. Subadra gets irritation with kamakshi's presence at her husband's home. She blames Kamakshi for everything treating her as their servant.

Kamakshi leaves Subadra's home and comes back to her home when unpleasant news spread about Kamakshi and Parameswaran Pillai. Her youngest sister invites her to their home but she rejected that proposal. The story is about reach in the climax where we can again hear the knocking at her door. Kamakshi is never ready to open her door to Kesavan, who comes to satisfy his sexual desires with her as per her invitation. She begs at that man to go back and declares she is not a woman as he thinks. She accepts her mistake of being invited him to her home. She asks him to forgive her. She openly says that her heart wavers in a moment and now she regains her control over senses and she strongly says that it will never happen more. She asks a priceless question to herself that, without a man, a woman can live, can't she? Her answer is a yes. A woman can become self sufficient and self reliant. What she needs that a room of her own.

Adoor Gopalakrishnan constitutes the plot of the film four women to show the decolonization of matured female body –decolonization of female body begins and ends with the body-how to treat each other , how to organize body politically ,how women sustain themselves etc. both films show the need of loving their selves . as an art cinema ,four women is successful in its realistic portrayal of displaced, displeased and dismayed female bodies. It is a cultural construct that matured female body does not have the sexual appeal. Such bodies can be the subject to discrimination and judgment. Female body consciously takes the position and raises voices against ostracization and discrimination on the basis ageing. The films are built upon the structural normative patterns of socio-cultural norms around gender.The erotica of these two films indirectly articulate the exclusion of matured female sexuality. The text of these two films replicates hegemonic ideology about sexuality. How old are you? Is a successful commercial cinema and it has a feel good factor associated with it. Here the leading character Nirupama is constituted according to the whims and fancies of the producer. Even though the films give the space of to embrace matured female body, these films again centre on dominant patriarchal ideology. 'How old are you?'stresses the return of Manju warrior after long periods of 14 years. But the film four women stress the reality of the existence of female body in a dominant patriarchal social structure. It is the realistic expression of life and human relationships with a strong message. Every sequence of this film comes naturally. Both films show the element of outracing of female body. The female characters show the capability of their matured body through their views, thoughts and expressions. All the leading female characters own a resisting powerful body.

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The Concept of New Woman in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and *Clear Light of the Day*

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Abstract

This paper critically examines the images of new women and their struggle between tradition and modernity to establish their own identity. Anita Desai, a recognized contemporary Indian women novelist presents the inner feelings of women characters in all her novels. The most significant problem that woman faces is not sociological but inner problems like helplessness and insignificance of existence. Desai represents the pain and crisis of the modern women characters, in the novels Where Shall We Go This Summer? and Clear Light of the Day. In these two novels, Desai's protagonists like Sita and Bimla are the rebellious women who seek self-discovery. This paper attempts to highlight the emergence of new identity and how Bimla in Clear Light of the Day breaks the traditional norms and beliefs. Through the female character Bimla, Desai demonstrates that violence and oppression against woman can be eradicated if she is emotionally free and financially strong. This paper explores how Sita in Where Shall We Go This Summer? becomes a new woman and finally she realizes that she should be brave enough to face life. This brief research focuses the challenges and the awakening of women characters into a new realization of her place and position in life.

Keywords: Identity, Crisis, Self – discovery, Oppression, Challenges, Realization

Anita Desai (1937-) is one of the strongest voices of women writing in India Today. She occupies an unassailable place in realm of contemporary Indian English fiction. As a novelist, she sets herself seriously to voice the mute and helplessness of millions of married women. All her novels present social conditions but she focuses mainly on the exploration of the inner-self. In this connection, Srinivasa Iyengar has rightly observed, "Anita Desai has added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English Fiction. Through her novels, she has brought out the intangible realities of life, the inner most depth of human psyche. Her primary emphasis is on the individual's quest for a personal meaning in life. Anita Desai in her novels delineates the image of new woman who struggles to bring changes in society and rebellious in nature. K.Meera Bai rightly remarks, "The word New Women has come to signify the awakening of women into a new realization of her place and position in family and society. Conscious of her individuality, the new woman has been trying to assert her rights as a human being and is determined to fight for equal treatment with man" (Srivastava 15-16)

New woman chooses to fight against the age old traditional norms and currents of the society. They are rebellious women who demands status like that of man in the society with equal rights. Besides, they seek self respect, and self – discovery in their life. Seshadri aptly remarks, "The new woman is assertive and self-willed searching to discover true self." (Sandhu & Maan 351) The new woman raises voice of equality and rights of woman as well as her

recognition, respect, space, understanding from her male counterpart. The new women's eager for education and job make her to stand as economically free independent women.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, as a feminist ideal, the concept of new women gradually emerged. It is popularized by Henry James. This woman challenges the institution of marriage and encourages woman to set herself free from male domination. Mary Wollstoncraft who is considered as the 'mother of feminism' raises voice for women's education and institution of marriage. The image of new woman has been portrayed in many literary works and projected in Ibsen's *Doll's House*(1879), Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893), and *Candida*(1898). Neeru Tondon aptly comments: "The 'new woman' today challenges the traditional notions of 'Angel in the house' and 'sexually voracious' image. The new woman is essentially a woman of awareness and consciousness of her low position in the family and society and tries to improve it." (Tondon 26)

The emergence of new women is identical with the feminists' theory. They struggle to strike a balance between society and self. Anita Myles states that, the women in Desai's novels do not give up the strife so easily.

"They indulge in self-analysis, self discovery and ultimately compromise with the situation to live life stoically becoming assets to the family by developing the power of sustenance. True enough some women characters prefer to remain in the world of illusion while many others endeavour to find a way out". (Myles 37)

Desai's works in 20th century explores the image of new women through her female characters. Her women characters in her novels are aware of the dilemma and they rebel against the accepted norms of conventional society. They represent the new woman who struggle to establish their identity and to live an economically independent life. Desai's women characters are the personification of new women who seek a new identity. They are rebellious in nature. They seek a new identity in their family as well as in society.

In our patriarchal society the miserable situation of women go unnoticed. Arrival of British and their new attitude changed the social pattern in India. At the same time male domination has tried to overpower her. But women came forward and emerged as a new woman to seek a new identity. Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* deals with the tale of Das family. The children of the family are Raja, Tara, Bim. Desai mainly focuses the story of Bimala (Bim) who is the ' new woman' .The children of Das family lives in a rented house in Old Delhi. Bim rejects the traditional concept of marriage and remains single.

Bim prefers for singlehood and she establishes an identity for herself as a teacher, manages her household activities. Besides she looks after her retarded brother, Baba who is afflicted with Down Syndrome. She is left alone to face the adverse circumstances while her sister Tara goes often out to the Roshanaraclub with the Misra sisters. Her sister, Tara lives a glammers and tailor –made standard life, while Bim leads life according to her own inclinations and principles. She develops an anti- marriage attitude. Besides she is aware of her responsibilities in life.

Desai highlights the importance of woman's education through her female character Bimala. She has portrayed the character of Bim as a strong and independent woman who struggles for education, "Father never bothered to teach me. For all father cared, I could have grown up illiterate and – and cooked for my living, or swept. So I had to teach myself history, and teach myself to teach." (*Clear Light of Day* 236). She dislikes the marriage of the Misra

girls Jaya and Sarala because she thinks that they have to go to college instead of getting married. She insists, "...they're not educated yet, they haven't any degrees. They should go to college." (*Clear Light of Day* 214) Unlike them, she wants to become an educated woman and she wishes to lead economically independent life. She wants to dress and smoke like man. Thus she becomes self oriented woman and she never expects any help from man. Desai highlights that financially self sufficient woman can overcome the problems and responsibilities that come to one's life. Besides she demonstrates that oppression against woman can be eradicated if she is emotionally free and financially strong.

Bim's brother Raja got married and settle down. He never bother about the responsibilities of Baba, aged aunt Mira Masi and father's insurance business. Being a good hearted woman, Bim looks him in light of understanding and forgiveness. Through her experiences she realizes that a meaningful life can be achieved by having positive attitude towards life. Having the qualities of courage and confidence she fulfills her ambitions. Therefore, Tara and her husband Bakul realize and state ,

Bim had found everything she wanted in life. It seemed so incredible that she hadn't had to go anywhere to find it, that she stayed on here in the old house, taught in the old college, and yet it had given her everything she wanted. (*Clear Light of Day* 240)

Unlike Bim, Tara does not have courage to face problems in life. She gets married to Bakul who is much older to her and she becomes an obedient wife. But she does not find happiness in following her husband's orders. She seeks for freedom and individuality rather than being a submissive wife to her husband. Now Tara realizes why Bim ignores to marry with her family doctor, Dr. Biswas. She thinks that she has lost her individuality when she obeys her husband's commands accordingly. Dr. Biswas proposes Bim to marry him but She refuses his proposal. When he came to Bim's house to check the health condition of her aged aunt Mira Masi, he realizes everything about Bim. Then he says,

Now I understand why you do not wish to marry. You have dedicated your life to others – to your sick brother and your aged aunt and your little brother who will be dependent on you all his life. You have sacrificed your own life for them (*Clear Light of Day* 148)

Desai's protagonist, Bim is the personification of new woman who faces life like a man and she manages all manly duties for the family. Being a single woman she overcomes a lot of burden over her and breaks the traditional beliefs. She is emotionally strong woman who rejects traditional value system and follows the new way of modern life style. Here she proves herself as a 'new woman' who performs manly duties and carries the family burdens on her shoulder with courage.

Desai's main concern is to explore family relationships and individual acts of self – realization. Her novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* highlights the image of new woman through the character of Sita. Here the new woman Sita who is the protagonist of this novel. It deals with Sita's search for a new identity. Sita represents the world of emotion and feminine sensibility while her husband Raman is a very practical man. Sita is a middle aged woman who finds herself separated. Being in her forties, Sita lives in Bombay with her husband and children. She is bored with her routine life and she is fed up with her husband. Though she is surrounded by her family, she seeks a new identity in her life. She finds it very difficult to adapt herself to the city life. She is obsessed by the violence and destruction in society. She is not able to cope up

with the ugly city. When she looks at the streets of Bombay city from the balcony, she thinks of the ugly city where cannibalism occurs. Her disgusted mind reveals: “Crows formed the shadow civilization in the city of the flats and alleys. She watched them from the balcony,...There was always much black drama in this crow theatre murder, infanticide, incest, theft and robbery, all were much practiced by these rough, raucous, rasping tatterdemalions”(*Where Shall We Go This Summer?*38)

Her dislike of city people reflects on Raman who belongs to the business world. Her struggle in life is displayed when she compares Raman’s business associates to animals. Being in her early forties, she is confused by the fear of giving birth. She goes to Manori. She wants to be a woman as an independent being. She oscillates between the two ways of life.

Her wish is to hold her baby in her womb forever by magic. She does not like her child to be trapped and suffocated in the cruel world like her. Her internal ache is hurt when Raman ignores her inner instincts. As a result of Raman’s attitude, the husband and wife relationship is broken between them. Her soul searches identity. She is filled with terror and she is not ready to accept the reality of life. She searches relief, privacy, and peace from all sides from all sides of her life Sita herself exiles from her husband. She tries to find a meaning in the meaningless world. She finds the island as a place of freedom and relief from the modern life. She embraces the illusion instead of understanding the reality on the island.

She accompanies with her children, Menaka who is a sharp, temperamental young girl and Karan, who is restless small boy. Her search for new identity leads her to the island. But she is disappointed with the islanders. She is twisted by dejection, betrayal. She expresses the sorry state of the deserted house: “Then she went in at last and saw what had become of the house in twenty years of absence a waste of ashes she saw... naturellynpart of them as abandoned shell or lump of twisted drift wood” (*Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 67). The image of the house represents the illusionary world of Sita. Her expectation is failed again in the island. She finds out the reality of life in the island. She realizes the illusion when Menaka and Karan express that their dissatisfaction to continue to say, she accepts, “It was no place in which to give birth, there was no magic here the magic was gone” (*Where Shall We Go This Summer?*112).

She has brought her children in order to feel them happy and secured. She still struggles to find her identity. Her children long to return to Bombay. Menaka calls her father secretly to take them from island. When Raman reaches the island to take his children, once again she feels for her sorry state.

She reconciles with herself. Though she denies the violence of the city, she is ready to face the inexperienced life. Her self – adjustment becomes the remedy for her struggle. She understands her husband’s love that results her to follow to path of her husband. Her return to the mainland symbolizes her self realization. Her search for the self is fulfilled in the island. She reconciles and commits herself in life. N.Raj Gopal states that: “The novel ends establishing victory of reason over fantasy” (Gopal, N. Raj 40). When Sita realizes the reality of life she returns to the mainland. Here Sita becomes a new woman after her self – realization of life. She is ready to face modern life with a new hope.

Desai has given a new recognition to Indian English fiction by the portrayal of asserting one’s individuality especially woman’s individuality. She has skillfully captured the very nuances of Indian women’s life. She describes the implicit urges of women to re-define their self with dignity. Through her female protagonists, the novelist assert that women are not merely

sex objects or sacrificing people in the family. They are women of substance as well as essence. In *Clear Light of Day*, Desai highlights the image of new woman through the character Bimala. Bim is a significant Indian new woman who breaks the traditional norms and currents. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Sita has been portrayed as a new woman who seeks her new identity. When she decides to go back with her husband, she turns out as a new woman. The 'new woman' is essentially a woman of awareness and consciousness of her low position in the family and society. She accepts life and goes back to a life of routine and conformity.

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Portrayal of Women in Kavery Nambisan's *On Wings of Butterflies*: A Psychological Analysis

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Abstract

Kavery Nambisan is an Indian English writer and a surgeon, who practices in rural India. The novel On Wings of Butterflies depicts the struggle and trauma of women in the society. The psychological analysis of characters traces the instance of suppression or depression or oppression at various stages of life. Evita, the central character of the novel is the daughter of a fallen woman turns to become an organizing secretary of Wow, Women or Women. Her childhood memories and her mother's struggle in the hands of strangers are the root cause of the organization. This young determined Eva aims to unite all the women, despite their background and rise as one force to fight against injustice. The members of WOW are from various fields, Pushpaben, a psychologist and social worker; Tara, a Deputy Commissioner of Police in-charge of crime; Kripa Kagal, owns Swargalok Jewelers; Heera, a seamstress; Lividia King, Organizer of WOMB; TLS, an activist; MeghaDasi, a Fortune-teller. They succeed in organizing a convention for five days in Delhi. The delegates share their personals to encourage the spectators to take brave decision at the time of crisis. The convention creates awareness and agitates wide range of people that lead the leaders to sign the treaty to end the exploitation of woman. Evita's achievement marks the beginning of Independent woman in every walk of life.

Key words: *Exploitation, Suppression, Depression, Oppression and Transformation.*

The novel displays the plight of Indian women in the patriarchal society. Women are considered as weaker sex and are suppressed by men. She struggles for identity both in the family and in the society. The daring aspiration of the Panjim girl Evita, causes a revolution through WOW to unite and rise their voice for equal rights. Kaveri Nambisan focuses on the assertive nature of women and their success in the novel *On Wings of Butterflies*. The Part I of the novel deals with the sufferings of women, Part II is about the demands of WOW and Part III is the result of their struggle.

Many women are deprived from the basic needs of their life in the male dominated society. They are puppets in the hands of manipulators. They suffer throughout their life as they lack education and are unaware of their latent potential. The author depicts the exploitation of women in the family and in the society through the portrayal of Maria, Panna, Heera, Trilokasundari, Milar, Lydia, Kripa, and Megha Dasi. Maria is the unwed mother of Evita, works as a waitress in a roadside café during the evening shift. Her beauty allures men, on whom she depends for her livelihood. She submits her life to the strangers without realizing her health and

future. “Maria was a confused woman who could not tell the difference between men who flattered and men who abused her: she was used by man after unknown man.” (P.17)

Panna’s life is shattered by her drunkard father. He pawns her for money. Panna is innocent at the age of thirteen to resist her father and the pawnbroker. After a long struggle, she manages to escape with her two children Heera and Shiva. She continues to live as a flesh trader. When Shiva discovers his mother’s business with the strangers, tries to possess her which ends fatal to him. Heera dreams a happy life with her dhobi husband, but soon confirms that he is useless as he believes in wild sex for the birth of son. Panna chains and threatens her drunkard son – in – law to safeguard her daughter Heera. Panna beats Shiva to death, when he tries to molest her.

Trilokasundari’s wish is to become a politician. Besides objection from her family members, she joins politics at the age of nineteen. She faces bitter criticisms as her name doesn’t match her appearance. The name Trilokasundari stands for the most beautiful woman in the three worlds (Heaven, Hell and the Earth). Her marriage to a Party member ends in divorce within five years. Then she overthrows her husband and the Party and determines to become an activist.

Every Sunday during inspection, Milar, a pretty girl, is tormented by the lady warden for her wrinkled clothes and ugly plait in the orphanage. But the male warden is social to her, irons her clothes, plaits her hair neatly and compliments her with chocolates. So the eleven year old Milar escapes from the corporal punishment and seeks refuge in the favor of male warden. Then only she realizes that she has leaped from a frying pan into fire. His cruel nature is revealed when he tries to molest her. “Now I shall iron your underclothes’ and reached for her chemise”. (p.114) When a rich business man Sam Billimoria offers to marry her, and also agrees to pay the pension to the old couple who adopted Milar. She accepts his proposal, their beautiful married life begins in the white mansion in Goa but soon it ends because of her unfitness for married life. At the age of 15 she has got married and within one and a half year she becomes a widow. Though many offer to marry her for her beauty, she remains as a widow. This makes others call her as ‘the mad goddess’. She lives alone and stitches women’s innerwear for her bread and butter. She has a good collection of books as her husband always gifts it. She is a voracious reader prefers to read and write books on history.

Kripa, a jeweler is the wife of a politician Dinakar Kiran Kagal. “He accused her of being responsible for all the problems in his life; she did not give him more children.” (p.45) So giving birth to more children seems to be an icon of potential for men. Dinu, who seems to be a typical and common man known for his dominance, expects the total submissiveness of Kripa as a conventional homemaker, and gets disappointed when it is failed. Hence he threatens and to the core divorces her. She is determined to be the leader of the Party, for the remaining of her life.

Dr.King wishes to marry the teenage Lydia in his late thirties. He readily offers a fat reverse dowry to win her hand. He reminds the readers Baroka, the sixty year old bale of a village, the symbol of lion and who owns and molests an eighteen year belle, Sidi, the symbol of jewel, in Wole Soyinka’s masterpiece, *The Lion and the Jewel*. Lividia King remains a happy wife with her two children until she learns about her husband’s adulterous nature. When she finds that Dr.King yearns for the company of young girls, her anger becomes aggression. “Lividia was an unhappy woman, shamed by the infidelities of her husband...” (p.95). She hides her sorrows in the smile.

The widow Megha Dasi collects funeral ash, sells it to the hotels, to feed her sons and daughter Torulata. But she becomes a burden for her sons in her old age. They want her to die soon, so they fail to feed her properly. When Megha Dasi learns about her son's expectations, she decides to leave Howrah to spend her last days in Vrindhaban. Evita meets her to know about the future of WOW, which makes her to realize the purpose of her life. She decides to search her granddaughter in the slums of Howrah and finds Jyotika. The young girl does odd jobs to her neighbors and prefers to draw either women or butterflies, because she remembers her dead mother as a "magnified butterfly" (p.130). Jyotika's painting "... women running, with their eyes fixed on a faraway" (p.136) is the symbolic representation of independent woman in the novel. Megha Dasi confirms Jyotika's blissful future from her drawings, dies happily. The female characters in the novel experiences injustice as men exploit her to satisfy their economic, social and sexual needs.

The exploitation of all the women in the novel leads to their self – realization, which strengthens them towards transformation. However the Prolonged suppression, depression and oppression thrust them to be lost in the crowd, they upraise for equal rights.

"Karen Harney prevailed and continued her pioneering efforts for women. She argued convincingly that women must be given the opportunity to find their own personal identities, to develop their abilities, and pursue careers if they choose." (Wood, E Samuel, Green Wood, R Ellen, *The World of Psychology*, p.412)

Evita realizes that many women are helpless, meek and submissive like her mother, they easily fall a prey to the men. She is the victim of her mother's promiscuous life. At an early age of fifteen decides to leave her home to earn her livelihood. She travels through many places for job and starts her career as a waitress, later becomes a receptionist in a chain of hotels. She chances to meet various people with social, cultural and psychological problems and decides to start an organization for the future of womankind.

"As a child I had to watch my mother suffer. She was so helpless. I waited seven years to start WOW. I want to see change". (p.106) Evita sketches a proper plan about the members of the organization, All Women Political Party and its goal. On her twenty- second birthday she uncovers the details of WOW to her mother and friend Maria, and then posts the envelopes to the members. The members are selected from Magazine, Television, and Newspaper. She tries to build confidence and empower women through WOW.

Pushpaben is an elderly woman with the leadership quality. She designs pamphlets, plans workshops to motivate the members of WOW. Her husband supports her in all her deeds. She extends her selfless help to the poor and needy through Nari Adalat in the villages of Rajkot and solves the family disputes. According to her India needs WOW for, "We witness injustice every day, everywhere. Two – thirds of the illiterates are women. The men find it easy to divide and rule."(p.39)

The members of WOW and other women join to support Evita in organizing the meeting. Tara Amar is the Deputy Commissioner of Police in charge of crime. She is a spinster, known for her promising nature. She helps Evita in all her ways and provides protection to the public during the meeting. Heera is practical and down to earth, stitches clothes for living. She shares her problems to Kripa, and becomes a member of WOW. She establishes Swargalok Sewing Centre with Kripa's help to teach sewing for the poor and illiterate women. Though she is poor, bravely

fights her economic problems alone. Trilokasundari becomes an activist and publishes papers on social evils in the conferences. Milar reacts bravely and punches the male warden on his face and then leaves the orphanage on her own. This exhibits her potentiality and self –realization. Kripa is defiant, joins WOW, and starts All Women Political Party in Mumbai with string of jasmine as the Party’s symbol. Though Dinu hurts and criticizes her, she conducts workshops and meetings for the downtrodden women. Lividia King establishes The World Organization of Male Bashers WOMB and stresses on “Adam – bashing” (p.96). She always shares real incidents to the gathering to motivate them to be bold. “We teach women to unlearn outdated virtues like timidity and submissiveness”. (p.96) At last, Lividia King admits her defeat in the violent approach to the gender bias. When a woman realizes her strength, she learns to oppose injustice and set as an example to others.

Every one dreams due to his or her persistent wish. If her dream gets shattered, she feels a vacuum in her mind. She finds no driving factors for her life and feels stressed. When she is found stressed, she becomes an easy prey to the people around her, who may be her husband or family members or the society.

Dreams are all forms of "wish fulfillment" — attempts by the unconscious to resolve a conflict of some sort, whether something recent or something from the recesses of the past. Because the information in the unconscious is in an unruly and often disturbing form, a "censor" in the preconscious will not allow it to pass unaltered into the conscious. (Freud, Sigmund *The Interpretation of Dreams the Illustrated Edition*, p.09)

Then she is suppressed and ultimately gets depressed. Such a depressed woman, will choose any of the below choices, she will surrender herself, or she will leave her family, or she will commit suicide or she will kill the suppressor. These are the ultimate options of a suppressed woman. Kripa, Trilokasundari and Milar leave their families after divorce or became widows. All the above women find refuge in WOW and get support mutually for each other.

The confident Evita leads the convention of WOW in Delhi. The growing number of members marks the initial success of the organization. Their demands include “Every child should bear the name of the mother and father, and inheritance laws should be the same for sons and daughters”. “Panchayat, parliament and assembly seats must be impartially shared. When fifty percent of all political leaders are women, there will be true democracy”. “House wives should be paid wages” (91). The last day of the convention marks a drastic change in the view of the conflict between men and women. To the surprise of its members and others, the children play an important role in bringing people together. Their secret mission is to kidnap Evita to pacify and lesson the folks that a healthy relationship between men and women are essential for the future generation. “... thousands of children with their hands linked together formed circles around the building. Boy – girl – boy – girl - boy – girl”. (p.248) At last the demands of WOW are accepted and treaty is signed by the leaders to end the suffering of women.

The transformation of woman leads to the emergence of WOW, with the underlying motive to fight against gender discrimination, inequality and exploitation. It succeeds to bring a new dawn in the life of women and a change in their attitude towards life. After the convention Evita and others resume to their work with gaiety. The novel implies that every woman is born with courage to fight her problems and bring a fruitful change in her life. The title *On Wings of Butterflies* is symbolic in nature. The butterfly undergoes transformation from the stage of pupa

to fly independently with its colorful wings. Similarly a woman struggles, molds and strengthens herself to march forward with her dreams of life.

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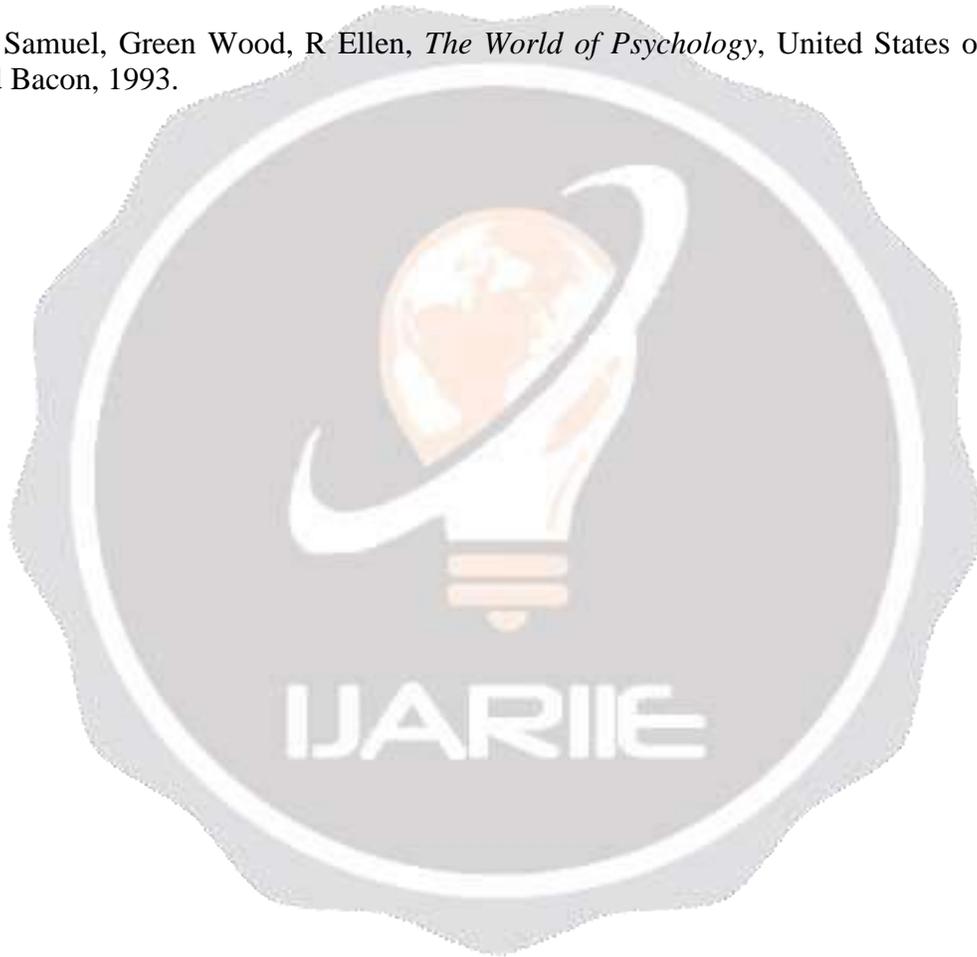
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Nuances of Feministic Overtones in Kim Addonizio's Poem, *What do Women Want?*

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Abstract

Kim Addonizio is an acclaimed poet and author known for her portrayal of themes and characters in a vivid and lucid manner. A proud recipient of many awards and honours, she is a feminist to the core and had subtly portrayed these very ideas in her poem, What do Women Want? The poem is rich in metaphors and imagery and delves the risk that women experience of being viewed as stereotyped. She uses the red dress to portray and to surface that deep-rooted longing in women to establish their individuality and assert their identity. The poem is both passion-filled and emotional and the poet uses a red dress to express a woman's desire, a prominent theme in this poem. The wonderful quality of this poem is that, it is way ahead of its times in both its thought content and ideology.

Key words: *feminist, individuality, identity, desire, stereotyped*

Kim Addonizio is an acclaimed poet and author known for her portrayal of themes and characters in a vivid and lucid manner. Born in Washington DC on 31st July, 1954, she received her under graduate and post graduate degrees from San Francisco University. She has written a number of poems and the prominent ones are *Lucifer at the Starlite*, *What Is This Thing Called Love: Poems*, *Tell Me*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award, *Jimmy & Rita*, *The Philosopher's Club* and *Three West Coast Women*. A proud recipient of many awards and honours, she is a feminist to the core and has subtly portrayed these very ideas in her poem, *What do Women Want?* Addonizio was a founding editor of the journal *Five Fingers Review*. Among her awards and honors are fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation, a Pushcart Prize, and a Commonwealth Club Poetry Medal. Kim Addonizio teaches in the MFA program at Goddard College and lives in San Francisco.

What do Women Want? deftly brings out the anguish that a woman feels when she is cast in a stereotypical mould and the desire and longing to forcibly break these fetters and push to the fore her real self- her true and innate identity. The entire poem contains only twenty seven lines and is written in a simple and down-to-earth language clothed in rich imagery and metaphors. The poem abounds in an abundance of passion and emotion, wherein Addonizio examines the theme of desire, and in particular that of a woman and so cleverly uses a red dress as a metaphor to drive home her point. The poem is not occult, but direct and frank, emphatically asserting the desire in the very first line, the answer to the query posed in the title: "I want a red dress". This

straight-forward approach affixes the red dress in the memory of the reader. The entire poem is all about this and Addonizio outlines the importance of this image which recurs throughout the poem.

Addonizio has so cleverly chosen a dress to dress her thoughts. Clothes are a very important accessory in a woman's life and this is what is used by a woman to express her style, her emotions her feelings, in short, her entire self. She has deliberately chosen a red dress to address her thoughts as opposed to a neutral colour like black, a black dress which is suitable for every occasion. A red dress is different- it is bold, it is sexy, it stands out from the rest and it is bright. The colour red traditionally represents stronger emotions like passion, anger and desire. It simply is more than a dress- it tries to convey something. That is why the beginning of the poem, "I want a red dress", leads one to pursue further interpretations. This poem is not a shopping list and therefore it is not the dress that matters, but what really the red dress represents. That is what the poet/speaker yearns for.

The following lines reveal the passion beneath Addonizio who uses a speaker to voice her thoughts: "I want it flimsy and cheap, / I want it too tight, I want to wear it / until someone tears it off me".

Strong fabric of emotions lie under the layer implying that Addonizio wishes to use the dress to transcend the garb of casual wear and instead use it to draw attention, to attract. She wishes that people should want her. It is crucial, vital, for it attracts attention. It is more than a dress, it is passion, it is attitude and it is desire. The speaker's confident, almost arrogant attitude continues throughout the lines. Next she walks down the street, passing the mundane, everyday places like the Thrifty's and hardware store, "past Mr. and Mrs. Wong selling day-old / donuts in their café, past the Guerra brothers / slinging pigs from the truck and onto the dolly, / hoisting the slick snouts over their shoulders.

The speaker is not at a fancy party, or a gala event or walking the ramp as a model where such a bright dress would exude sexuality. Instead she walks down the street in the bright light of the day. Addonizio surrounds the speaker with gritty images of everyday life- day-old donuts and pigs and sweaty labourers- and the woman in the red dress stands out like a jewel.

The poet uses the phrase, "keys glittering in the window", wherein glitter is the word that symbolises women who glitter, but are hardly noticed or ignored, though they too have something to offer. Keys also have a function, they offer privacy and are a means of safe guarding belongings. Women too offer protection, and just as the lock is incomplete without the key, men are complemented by women. The confidence exuded by the red dress calls for attention, just as the glittering keys at the window. The keys at the window can be perceived only by a keen eye and the speaker most definitely needs to draw attention to herself. The speaker wants to glitter physically but she also wishes to exhibit emotional strength in everyday life. The glittering of keys at the hardware store is hardly an unusual sight, despite which they glitter. Women should also similarly shine with confidence regardless of the situation they are in. The image of slinging pigs refers to the fact that many men are pigs. They regard women as inferior beings. The keys or women glitter, while the pigs or men view women as lesser beings.

“I want that red dress bad”, is the proclamation by the speaker who confesses, describing how it will make her feel “like I’m the only woman on earth”. The dress sets her apart from the drab and dull everyday existence, from the dust and dirt and hard work, and makes her special. She wants, in fact, to *be* the red dress, a highly desirable object inspiring passion and desire in those who see it.

“I want it. When I find it, I’ll pull that garment / from its hanger like I’m choosing a body”. It is now that the speaker’s true intent is revealed. She wants much more than a dress. The dress is in fact a metaphor which represents many things- passion, desire, beauty, sex and confidence. The red dress is representative of an attitude, a lifestyle, in fact an entire personality. Addonizio’s speaker is desperate to be passionate, desirable, beautiful, sexy and confident.

Addonizio changes the mood of the poem very smoothly. The speaker becomes bolder and wants the dress “flimsy and cheap” to hug her like a second skin and to wear it “until someone tears it off me.” She also wants the dress to be “sleeveless and backless, / this dress, so no one has to guess/ what’s underneath”. The poet explores the risk that women have been assigned stereotypical roles. Using imagery and metaphor, she clearly conveys the message that women want to be understood. Therefore mentioned lines mean that women want to be valued for their true selves. The speaker then wants to walk down familiar lanes enjoying familiar sights.

The poet, at this juncture drives home her point with a force that descends upon the reader like an avalanche: “I want to walk like I’m the only/ Woman on earth and I can have my pick”. The poet wants to use this image to describe the feelings of modern women who want unlimited liberty and who wish to sever any bond with the chauvinist, masochist patriarchal set up. Then she ushers in her ultimate declaration: “I want that red dress bad”. It is not that the speaker just wants the red dress badly but she wants to be like the red dress, a highly desired object. The red dress is a representative of her desire for freedom, showcasing her fiery attitude, to claim her identity by moving away from stereotypes and make the world accept her for what she is: “I want it to confirm / Your worst fears about me, / To show you how little I care about you / Or anything except what/ I want.

The emancipation of the speaker’s desire seems to be attached to the red dress and what it signifies to her alone does not matter, but the men with whom she is acquainted with and who presumably desire her in it, the entire issue of women not being free to desire what they want is reinscribed with men’s desires. One wonders whether the speaker is reduced to the sexy red dress and her female power is defined only through her physical appearance.

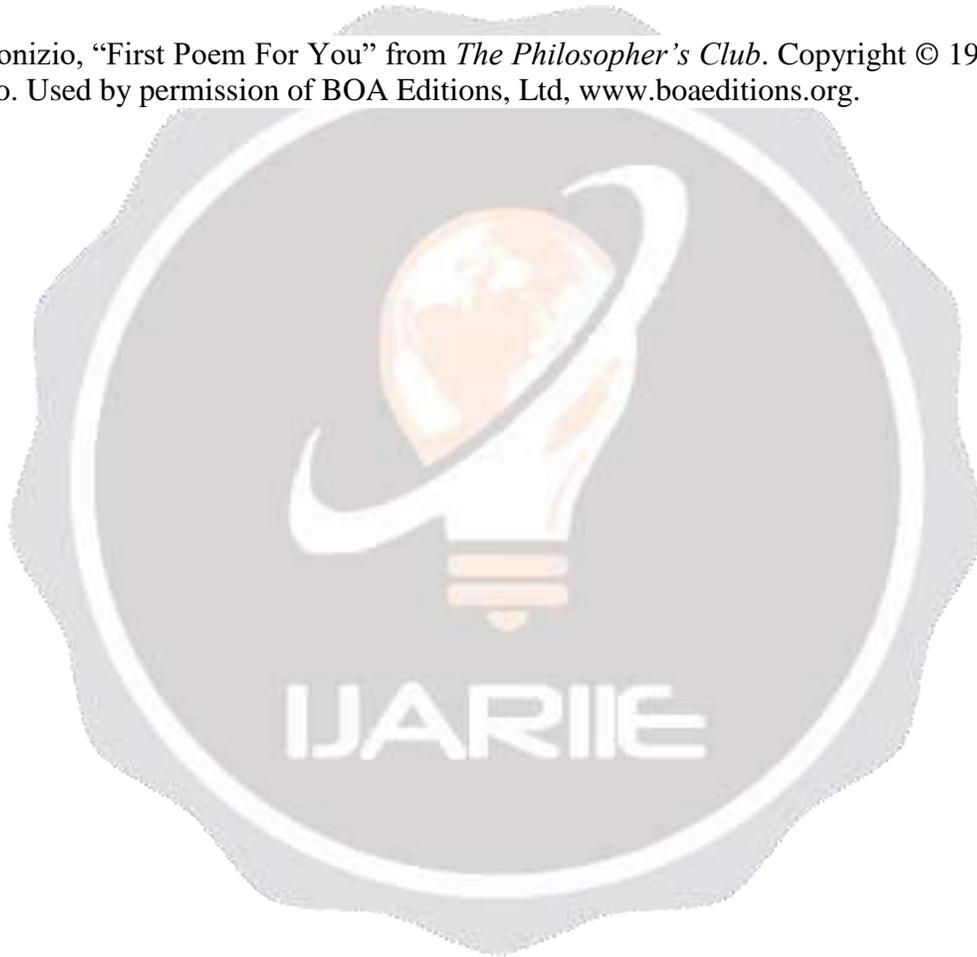
The red dress is one in which the speaker wants to be buried and which speaks volumes about how much the dress means to her. The dress goes beyond what it actually is and becomes both her body and her self together. More than anything, she wants to be herself in whichever way she chooses, in her own skin, her own self and not her physical charming self alone. She wants to want for her own self, her own desire and pleasure on her own terms: “When I find it, I’ll pull that garment / from its hanger like I’m choosing a body/ to carry me into this world, through / the birth- cries and the love- cries too, and I’ll wear it like bones, like skin, / it’ll be the goddamned / dress they bury me in”.

Semiotics is a general philosophical theory of signs and symbols that deals especially with their function in both artificially constructed and natural languages and comprises syntactics, semantics and pragmatics. The poet uses the semiotic theory of Charles Sanders Pierce and each and every line of the poem abounds in rich symbolism. Apart from being a goldmine of feminism and metaphorical richness, this poem explores symbols at multiple levels.

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Search for Identity in Maya Angelou's *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings*

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyze the search for identity in the autobiography I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou. It attempts to portray the life of the protagonist Maya Angelou who was a Black girl in America. She struggled herself as a victim of racism and gains the strength to overcome the difficulties of being a black woman in a white dominated country. The theme of self identity and racism is dealt in this project. Maya finds her identity and self respect in her life by being a role model for black people. Through this book, Maya conveys the ways to overcome the difficulties associated with the mixture of racial and gender discrimination endured by a southern black girl. Through this we came to know how women suffered and encounters in the society with many obstacles.

Key words: *racism, feminism, independence, identity, family and travel.*

Maya Angelou was born on April 4, 1928. She was an American poet, memoirist, and civil right activist. She wrote essays, poems, and was credited with a list of plays, movies and television shows spanning over 50 years. She received so many awards and was honoured by universities, literary organizations, special interest groups and government agencies. She received Tony Awards for her play *Look Away* and three Grammys for her albums. She was also honoured with a Pulitzer Prize for her books of poetry *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water*. Few of her autobiographies are *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *The Heart of Woman* (1981), *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002), *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (2004) and *Me & Me & Mom* (2013).

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings is an autobiography written by Maya Angelou. She becomes a poet and writer after a series of occupations as a young adult. This book covers the life of Maya Angelou before she becomes a VIP. *Caged Birds Sings* introduces the theme of race, feminism, independence, identity, community, family and travel. This novel is a coming-of-age story about Maya Angelou that illustrates how strength of character and a love of literature can help overcome racism and trauma. This book begins with Maya Angelou when she was three years old and her older brother who were sent to Stamps, Arkansas, to live with their grandmother and ends when Maya becomes 16 years old. At that age she becomes a mother. In this novel Maya transforms from a victim of racism with an inferiority complex into self possessed, dignified young woman capable of responding to prejudice.

Major characters of this book are Maya Angelou, Bailey Johnson, Annie Henderson, Big Bailey Johnson, Mr. Freeman and Mr. Bernath Flowers. The book *I Know Why the Caged Bird*

Sings contains 36 chapters. It begins with the character Maya Angelou who was in the age of three and her brother whose name Bailey was four years old. At that time their parent's marriage life comes to an end. Abandoned by their parents Maya and Bailey are sent their Annie Henderson's house in rural Stamps, Arkansas. Her grandmother was the owner of the general store and she maintains a good position because of her honest investment. Although her grandma is relatively wealthy, the white children of their town hassle Maya's family relentlessly. Once a white dentist denies treating Maya's rotting tooth, even when her grandma paid him the money.

After four years, when Maya was eight years old, her father unexpectedly comes to Stamps and takes his children to their mother St. Louis, Missouri. At that time Angelou is sexually abused by her mother's boyfriend, Mr. Freeman. Maya informs about this to her brother Bailey. Then Maya's family goes to court. Even though Freeman is found guilty, he escapes jail time and he is killed by someone from Maya's family. Mr. Freeman's death mutes Maya's life and her freedom. She feels guilty and withdraws herself from everyone. She thinks about Freeman's death and says, "I thought my voice killed him; I killed that man, because I told his name. And then I thought I would never speak again, because my voice would kill anyone". After Freeman's death Maya Angelou and Bailey are sent back to their grandmother. Maya overcomes her silence, guilty thoughts, fears with the help of a teacher, Mrs. Bernath Flowers. She encourages Maya to read Charles Dickens, William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, Douglas Johnson and James Weldon Johnson. Through these authors Maya regains her voice and soul. The writers Jessie Fauset, Anne Spencer and Frances Harper also affect her life and career.

At the age 14 Maya and Bailey are sent to their mother once again, who has moved to Oakland, California during the World War II. Both of them as young children, struggle with the pain of having been rejected and abandoned by their parents. She attends California Labor School and studied dance and drama on a scholarship. Before graduating, she becomes the first female streetcar conductor in San Francisco. She spends one summer with her father. She experiences homelessness for a short time after a fight with her Father's girlfriend.

When Maya Angelou was sixteen, she hides her pregnancy from her family for eight months and graduates from high school. At the age of seventeen, she gives birth to a baby boy. At last Maya Angelou begins to feel confident as a mother to her new born son. Maya endures many personal traumas and societal obstacles throughout her childhood. At last decides to become a good caring mother for her new born child.

Identity theory is applied to this novel. Identity theory is a family of views on the relationship between mind and body. This theory was developed by Herbert Feigl and J.J.C. Smart in the late 1950s to early 60s. Leibniz's law violations to Hilary Putnam's famous pronouncement that mental states are in fact capable of being "multiply realized". There are many kinds of identity theory explained about psychological trauma. The identity theory clusters around the notions of consciousness, experience, sensation and mental imagery. Identity theory focuses on the mental states such as suffering and pain. It enables the characters self identification to overcome all the obstacles. In the novel Maya Angelou searches for the identity to overcome all her torments in her life. She had reflected as a victimized person in her community. Though, she was considered as a mean person to others but her courage and hope motivated her to survive in her society. For instance, "I would have the job. I would be a conductorette and sling a full money changer from my belt. I would" (268).

Maya Angelou experiences the critical situations in her life in order to discover her self identity. In these lines, Maya Angelou developed as a first women conductor to show her self confidence and courage. She became a role model to each and every black woman and finds her self identity.

In this book Maya begins her life as a black girl in America, becomes a victim of racism, and eventually transforms from a person with an inferiority complex to an individual who responds to racism and gains the strength to overcome difficulties and realize her potential. Though she struggles with insecurity throughout her childhoods, she manages to maintain herself respect. She faces so many troubles to find her path in life. Through this book, Maya conveys the difficulties associated with the mixture of racial and gender discrimination endured by a southern black girl.



Optimism in Despair in Maya Angelou's *Still I Rise* and *Life Doesn't Frighten Me*

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Abstract

This paper aims to reveal to the world the courageous tone through the women's voice. Life is embedded with positivity and negativity, but it is one's hope and courage to overcome the intolerable plight. Maya Angelou, who is an African American writer, was born on April 4, 1928. She was an author, poet, historian, song writer and play wright. Her poem vigorously express the difficulties that one faces during tough times and at the same time, she rises her voice against it. Still I Rise(1978) and Life Doesn't Frighten Me(1993) are two poems written by Maya Angelou, where her promising nature reflects showing the optimistic attitude to achieve triumph in life. The title of the poem itself shows, how life is been taken by turning a bad situation into a good one. It encourages the supressed people by helping them to come out of depression and to fly out as a confident person. Hope Theory is applied here which shows the positive approach towards people who are at the cross roads.

Literature reflects the society that we lived in and we live in. It has a broad view of our life that we come across daily. Books indulge us with so many characters with the real characteristics which becomes the mirror of life. It connects each one's life with larger truths and pave them a way to know their reality through the works of literature.

African Literature is literature of Africa which includes oral literature which is also called as orature. During colonial period, Africans exposed to western languages and began to write in their tongue. Following fiction, plays started emerging. African Literature in the late colonial period showed the themes of liberation and independence in their writings. During postcolonial period, numerous works appeared by African writers in western languages as well as in their traditional languages such as Hausa.

Maya Angelou is an African American writer who was born on April 4, 1928. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays, several books of poetry and was credited with a list of plays, movies, and television shows. She was also a prolific and successful poet. She was called "the black woman's Poet Laureate", and her poems were called the Anthems of African Americans.

The recurring themes of Maya Angelou are love, enduring, music, discrimination, racism, struggle and overcoming hardships. She uses laughter and ridicule instead of tears to cope with minor irritations, sadness, and great suffering. *Phenomenal Woman, Alone, On the Pulse of Morning, Old Folks Laugh, Insomniac, Caged Bird, A Brave and Startling Truth* are the few poems of Maya Angelou.

Still I Rise is a poem written by Maya Angelou in the year 1978. Maya Angelou says in a very confident tone that, though she is pushed down in the dirt, she rises again like a dust and stands strong. She tells that like the moon, the sun, and the tides she would rise up with high hope. She points to oppressors who are happy to see her broken, bowed heads, lowered eyes, shoulders falling down like tear drops that, though she is been mistreated with foul words and hatred, she would rise like an air and rise like phoenix. Her appearance may upset others but she doesn't mind it and further says that in spite of her history's shame she would rise high. Because of the past, she is in pain but still she has courage to rise. She portrays herself as a black ocean that leaps wide, welling and swelling and bears the situation. She escapes from dark fear and terror and lives in the light. She considers herself as the hope and dream of Black people and women who were treated as slaves.

This poem is highly political as well as personal. The word "you" points out directly the oppressors by whom they have been oppressed. She raises her voice confidently with sympathy and courage. She keeps on emphasising 'Still I Rise', which shows her optimistic nature in the pessimistic situation and her self-esteem to overcome the obstacles. The title of the poem itself shows the power of self-respect and boldness. The positive pulse and energy is carried throughout the poem. It is an inspirational poem for every one and especially women who are stamped down. This poem contains poetical devices like refrain, simile, metaphor and personification. Lies/ rise, gloom/room, hard/yard are the rhyming words found in the poem. "I am Black Ocean, leaping and wide, welling and swelling" is the metaphor used here. The hope and confident tone can be seen in this poem.

Life Doesn't Frighten Me is another poem written by Maya Angelou about the theme where one can easily throw the fear once it is taken up with courage. In her poem, she says that neither shadows nor noises would frighten her. Barking dogs, mother goose, lions which would generally cause fear in other people will never frighten her. She keeps repeating the fearful terms throughout the poem with the conclusion that these things should not be a barrier in her life. She also ironically says, the way she reacts and responds to the fear itself made fear to run away.

"I go boo
 Make them shoo
 I make fun
 Way they run
 I won't cry
 So they fly
 I just smile
 They go wild"

Her bold nature can be seen in the lines "If at all I am afraid, it is only in the dream". She opines that her charm itself helps to overcome the big ocean. Wall/hall, loud/cloud, goose/ loose, boo/shoo, fun/run, cry/fry, fight/night, park/dark, where/hair, girls/curls, scream/ dream are the

rhymes here. Life Doesn't Frighten Me at all is the repetitive lines in the poem. Sight, sound and touch are the imagery which Angelou uses in this poem.

Still I Rise and *Life Doesn't Frighten Me* ultimately represents Black people and women. These two poems convey about the historical oppression of Africans when they were treated miserably by Americans. They were never considered equals but had been suppressed. It also concerns women who were marginalized and underwent so many pathetic situations. Here oppressed people are not only the Black people but also women. During colonialism, women were treated very cruelly and considered as an object to men. On behalf of the oppressed women, Maya Angelou speaks very boldly about how they have been treated badly and how they rise up with courage. She gives strength and enduring power to solve the problems, overcome them and also to change the negative situations to the positive one. Maya Angelou stands here as the hope for all women who have been marginalised. She doesn't take her situation as the reason to sit down but flies out with the courage by overcoming the obstacles in life

Hope Theory can be applied in these poems. Snyder's Hope Theory helps us to know that hope is an essential quality where each one should cultivate in them. It helps to progress one's life by avoiding the twists and turns of tough times. The positive vision on problems with hope helps one to achieve their goal and stay with self-esteem.

Snyder's Hope Theory also emphasises the same positive approach to life as seen from the above poems of Maya Angelou. Similarly every woman must have the courage to overcome their problems rather than being dissolved in the darkness of life. Women have so many roles to play for themselves as well as for others. She should never deviate from pursuing the path of liberation by putting herself down in the pit of sorrow but must come out as an achiever by solving the problems that confront her. Thus Maya Angelou's poems and Hope Theory help us to know the power of optimism.

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Perseverance of Women in Ruta Sepetys' *Between Shades of Gray*

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to analyze perseverance of the protagonist in the novel Between Shades of Gray by an American novelist Ruta Sepetys. The title portrays the brutal conditions and suffering of Lithuanian girl Lina Vilkas during Stalin's regime. The color Gray in the title symbolizes the dullness surrounded in the life of Lina and her society. The Will to Survive is the central theme of the novel. The novel is about the protagonist Lina who fights to survive in the Labor Camp and finds an outlet through her drawing. Being an adult Lina encounters innumerable perils in the camp and overcomes many obstacles to survive. Through the psychological approach, the Lithuanian girl Lina's hope, despair, will to survive is been portrayed clearly. The consequences of the cold-heartedness among humans made a horrific experience of Lina and other Lithuanians.

Key Words: Suffering, Peseverence, Survival, Despair , Hope.

Ruta Sepetys was born on November 19, 1967 in Detroit, the daughter of a Lithuanian refugee, raised in Michigan family of artists, readers, and music lovers. She was a contemporary novelist. She is a Lithuanian American writer of Historical Fiction. She is a Rock Feller Foundation Bellagio fellow and the first American writer of Young Adult Literature to speak at the European parliament. Sepetys is drawn to the stories of strength through struggle. Sepetys published her first novel in 2011. Her award winning novel, *Between Shades of Gray* is published in 45 countries. The New York Times considered this novel as a "Superlative novel and the story of hardships as well as human triumph". Her second novel, "*Out of Easy*" is set in the French Quarter of New Orleans in 1950, and her third novel "*Salt to the Sea*" exposes one of the greatest hidden disasters of World War II. Her novels were nominated for Carnegie Medal and Good Reads Choice Awards Best Young Adult Fiction. Among all these works, her notable work is *Between Shades of Gray*. This book was a finalist for the 2012 William.C.Morris Award for a Debut Young Adult novel and was shortlisted for the 2012 Carnegie Medal. The Book won the 2012 Golden Kite Award for Fiction. It was translated into 27 languages.

Adolf Hitler (20 April 1889 – 30 April 1945) was an Austrian-born German politician who was the leader of Nazi party (NSDAP), Chancellor of Germany from 1933-1945 and leader of Nazi Germany from 1934 to 1945. He was effectively dictator of Nazi Germany, and was at the centre of World War II in Europe and the Holocaust. The Holocaust was a genocide in which approximately six million Jews were killed by Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime and its collaborators.

Joseph Stalin was the leader of Soviet Union from the mid 1920's until his death in 1953. He was effectively the dictator of the state. In the 1930's and 40's Joseph Stalin's regime killed tens of millions of people. The novel is about the Genocide of the Baltic people after the Soviet

occupation in 1941, wherein the holocaust dominates. The Soviets not only displaced countless Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians, leaving them to die, but wiped those countries from the map for much of the last century.

The novel tells the story of Lithuanians deported and sent to Siberian Labour Camps by Stalin during World War II. In 1941, fifteen year old Lina Vilkas is taken from her home in Lithuania by the Soviet Police along with her mother Elena Vilkas and younger brother Jonas Vilkas. This police organization was responsible for quieting political opposition and anti-communist sentiment (through deportation, imprisonment and execution) under Stalin's rule. She was thrown into the cattle cars with many other Lithuanians, her life changes overnight. While her train moves farther and farther away from home, she worries about the fate of her father, whom she glimpses on a separate train. Slowly, she and her travelling companions cover 6,500 miles packed tightly together, travelling north to Siberia and crossing the Arctic Circle, Lina never could have imagined that the things could get worse but when they finally arrive at their destination-a labour camp. Forced to work in unthinkable cruel conditions for a single piece of bread each day, Lina fights with the others to survive, and finds an outlet for pain through her drawing. Lina is determined to make it out alive, however hard that may be. This is the story of Lina's pain, endurance and survival.

Between Shades of Gray was originally intended as a Young Adult Fiction. This is a story based on the author's own history, about Stalin's own genocide during World War II, which is told from the Lina's first person perspective; we watch and experience everything that unfolds through the protagonist Lina's eyes. Lina's narrative is simple and direct, emotions layers on one two dimensional plane. Lina is a protagonist that is both relatable and strong, and grows from ignorantly headstrong to the one person that can keep her family together as the months and years unfold. It is a long and harrowing journey, spanning year and covering 6,500 miles, but it is through incredible strength, love, and hope that Lina ultimately survives.

Sepetys makes extensive use of foreshadowing to foster a palpable sense of danger, as soldiers wrench Lina's family from their home. The narrative skillfully conveys the deprivation and brutality of conditions, especially the cramped train ride, unrelenting hunger, fears about family members' safety, impossible choices, punishing weather, and constant threats faced by Lina, her mother, and her younger brother. Flashbacks, triggered like blasts of memory by words and events, reveal Lina's life before and lay groundwork for the coming removal. Lina's romance with fellow captive Andrius builds slowly and believably, balancing some of the horror. A harrowing page-turner, made all the more so for its basis in historical fact, the novel illuminates the persecution suffered by Stalin's victims (20 million were killed), while presenting memorable characters who retain their will to survive even after more than a decade in exile.

Throughout the novel, Ruta Sepetys expresses the historical event of Genocide of the Baltic people and their sufferings during World War II. Slavery Theory is applied to this novel, the theory was developed by Stanley Elkins in 1959. Elkins was an existentialist. Existentialist is a person who studies behavior and thus believes the behavior you exhibit is who you are. Elkins explained the characterization of Slaves under the name of 'Sambo'. Slavery was degrading and dehumanizing that slave lost their identities and becomes 'Sambos'. He constantly finds final solution for Jews against Nazi's anarchy. He argues that the process of enslavement is the same as the process of final solution. In the novel Lina experiences the slavery and sufferings in the concentration camp. She was forced to great turmoil and torment because of this slavery. Lina discovers first her own capacity for courage, then her ability to use art to overcome challenges,

and finally her desire for both love and survival. The line “success means survival Failure meant Death. I wanted life. I wanted to survive” (319).The power of heart and hope to overcome despair and death underlies Lina’s will to Survive. For instance, “There is a war between Germany and the USSR. Germany has moved into Lithuania” (69). And then, “How could Stalin simply take something that didn’t belong to him, something that a farmer and his family had worked their whole lives for? That’s Communism” (105). Yet another time, “Three hundred grams of dry bread .They were starving us and would probably dump us into holes we dug” (132). Lina happens to take a glimpse of, “The Portraits of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin above the desk” (141).

This novel was inspired by author’s family history in Lithuania because Sepetys is the granddaughter of a Lithuanian military officer who himself escaped to a refugee camp during World War II. They were deported to Siberia, forced into hard labour. *Between Shades of Gray* is partly based upon the stories she heard from survivors of the Genocide of the Baltic people during a visit to her relatives in Lithuania. Sepetys decided she needed to write a fiction novel rather than a non-fiction volume as a way of making it easier for survivors to talk to her. She interviewed dozens of people during her stay and wrote this novel.

Finally, these three tiny nations have taught the world that love is the most powerful army. Whether it is the love of a friend, love of our country, love of God, or even love of an enemy – love reveals to us the truly miraculous nature of the human spirit. The paper is being written in order to highlight the “Need for Humanity and the deepest well of Human Compassion”.

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Hegemonic Consequences in the Novel *Kanada* by Eva Wiseman

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to analyze the need for humanity in the novel Kanada by Eva Wiseman. The Title portrays the brutal conditions and suffering of Jewish people by German Nazi's domination during World War II. The novel revolves around Jutka Weltner, a fourteen year old Hungarian Jewish girl who fights to survive in the Concentration Camp. The protagonist Jutkas' hope and strong will power to survive is stressed in the novel. During Hitler's regime millions of people were killed and sent to Labour camps. Kanada, the novel represents a new start to Jutka because she emerges like a caged bird from the camp. Humanistic Approach is applied to this novel. The power of dominion leads to destroy the humanity; even among the fellow humans is explained clearly. The consequences of the cold-heartedness among humans made a horrific experience of the Protagonist Jutka and other Jewish people.

Key Words: Humanism, Survival, Domination, Brutality.

Eva Wiseman, a contemporary Novelist was born on 1947 in Hungary, currently lives in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Eva possesses a Bachelor of Science degree, a Master of Arts degree, and a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Manitoba. She is a writer and journalist. She has worked as a journalist for Winnipeg Free Press. She is a Young Adult Fiction Writer and has begun writing at a young age. Her first young adult novel is *A Place Not Home*. Eva is a finalist for numerous literary awards across North America and is selected for the New York Public Library's annual Best Books for Teen Age List. Her Second novel, *My Canary Yellow Star* is equally successful and her novel *No one must know* is also critically acclaimed and has won the Manitoba Young Reader's Choice Award. The other novels of Eva Wiseman are *The Last Song*, *Another Me*, and *Puppet*. *Kanada* is the notable novel about the Holocaust Fiction as it depicts life in concentration camp and its survivors, who are ostracized and homeless. On 2007, the author is awarded with "Geoffrey Bilson Award" for this novel. The Title portrays the brutal conditions and suffering of Jewish people by German Nazi's during World War II.

Eva Wiseman's powerful novel *Kanada* describes the war and its long, difficult aftermath with compassion and tenderness. The novel is set in Hungary from June 1944 to August 1946 during the last year of World War II and it tells the story of the Holocaust through the eyes of a fourteen year old Hungarian Jewish girl, Jutka Weltner. With the invasion of the German army into Hungary and the onset of World War II, life is fragile and the future seems to be uncertain for Jutka and her family. Her father and brother Dezso have volunteered for the forced labour regiment and are sent to an unknown destination, leaving her mother in charge to take care of Jutka and her grandmother.

Jutka along with her mother and grandmother are herded into a ghetto and shipped in a boxcar to Auschwitz. Freedom is denied but hatred is found everywhere in Hungary as hundreds of

thousand of world war soldiers and Jews are deported to concentration camp during the last year of World War II. In that hellish place there is another Kanada. It is an ironic name given to the storehouse at Auschwitz where the possessions, clothing and jewellery stripped from the victims are deposited. It is also a place where Jutka is put to work.

The story is told in three distinct parts. These parts are dealing with those periods being titled Limbo, Hell and Paradise. Part one shows the life of Jutka's family in Nazi- occupied Hungary; Part Two takes Jutka to the bowels of Hell in Auschwitz; Part Three follows Jutka as she moves from concentration camp to refugee camp.

The theme of hope, despair, survival, deprivation, violence, determination, prejudice and persecution is portrayed in this novel, which is written in the first person point of view. Jutka is portrayed as just a normal teenage girl with friends and family. Everything becomes topsy turvy in a matter of months. The narration of Eva Wiseman is clear and concise. The author depicts the torture and brutality inflicted on Jews in Auschwitz. The author has used the Stream of Consciousness techniques in this novel. The protagonist Jutka constantly dreams of Canada and leading a life there. Those dreams are the key to her survival, and they keep her hope alive amidst the pain and suffering of those around her with a constant threat of death over her shoulder. Wiseman describes vividly, the casual brutality, and great cruelties to which the Jews are subjected. She also captures the fierce desire for life, the bonds of friendship and kind heartedness of the fellow prisoners. The central character witnesses the horror and inhuman deeds experienced in lifetime.

Humanism is a psychological perspective that emphasizes the study of the person's behaviour. Humanistic Approach is applied to this novel. "Humanism is a metaphysical philosophy that ascribes to humanity a universal essence and privileges it above all other forms of existence (Heidegger)". Abraham Maslow, who is the leader of humanistic psychology, approached the study of personality by focusing on subjective experiences, free will, and the innate drive toward self- actualization. Humanistic psychologists look at human behaviour not only through the eyes of the observer, but also through the eyes of the person who is into the action. Sometimes the humanistic approach is called phenomenological. This means that personality is studied from the point of view of the individual's subjective experience. In this novel, the protagonist Jutka's suffering and brutal torture in the concentration camp is clearly explained. The horrors of Ghetto and Auschwitz are illustrated as the places with unimaginable cruelty. For instance, "Attention all Jewish Residents, Every Jewish person must wear a ten centimeter six- pointed Canary Yellow Star on his/her garments (Wiseman25)". The line portrays the inhumanity and terrible condition of Jews by Nazi's anarchy. And then,

"Each of you will be given a number; every woman will have this number tattooed on her arm, on the other side of my forearm, neatly outlined in the drops of blood and blue ink, was A10234 (Wiseman 104)".

In these lines, Jutka explained the oppression and brutality of Nazi. Hope abounds in her determination to survive, to make new friends, to strengthen the religion, and to shape her inner character. The power of dominion results with terrific experiences of these Jewish people. The novel shows a great deal of strength in the face of hopelessness and suffering.

Dehumanization theory was developed by Jacques- Philippe Leyens and Nicholas Haslam. It describes a behaviour or process that undermines individuality of and in others. It is a psychological process whereby opponents each others as less than human and thus not deserving of moral consideration. The study of dehumanization has implications for areas as conceptions of what is to be human, notions of race and racism, war and genocide, and the ethics of our

relations to non-human animals. *Kanada*, the novel witnesses more horror and inhumanity. Just as horror can bring out the best methods of survival in people, courage can also bring out self-confidence in people. For instance, "Seventy or Eighty people were herded into each cattle car (Wiseman 77)". Jutka felt the oppression of Nazi towards Jews even in her school. For instance, "Jewish Students were no longer allowed to go to school". Jutka's Principal Nemith, who is a Nazi ordered all the Jewish Students not to attend the school. And then, "I m dreaming of Canada and to dwell on my dreams (Wiseman 233)". Those dreams of Jutka were the key to survival, and they kept her hope alive among the pain and suffering. For instance, "You are a good person Jutka giving me your bread, sharing the potato peels with us (Wiseman 118)". The line explains the conversation of Eva to Jutka for offering her food to her. Selfless acts of courage and sharing basic necessities provided to Jutka in concentration camp show her compassion towards her fellow beings. Jutka is like a caged bird, which suffers and experiences inhuman brutality. For instance, "Everybody who had cared about me was dead. There was no one waiting for me to return home. I realized that home had vanished" (Wiseman 182). In the world of Dehumanization, Jutka being a young girl overcomes all her struggles in this labour camp and finally she leads a normal life. Courage and Self-Determination leads a way to Jutka to overcome obstacles in her life.

Finally, the war may have ended but it did not end the suffering of many of the inmates of concentration camps. Many of the people lost their relatives and own belongings. Famished, diseased and homeless survivors are in the middle of Life and death. Some camp survivors went to Israel, but for Jutka there was only one dream left: the dream of a country full of hope, where she would no longer have to live in fear. Thus, through humanistic approach this heart wrenching story is analyzed. The novel reveals the miraculous nature of the human spirit that hope makes man to endure extreme sufferings and to come out of it successfully. If everyone has a humanistic approach to life, there is a cessation to hegemony. Jutka overcomes the oppression brutality through her long sustained dream of living a struggle free life in Canada.

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Woman: The Hero, an Analysis of Select Movies

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Abstract

Women have a crucial role to play in every sphere of life, be it household, economic contribution, child rearing or societal development. To play these roles effectively women should be conscious of their optimum potential. Women's status in India has greatly improved from being doubly marginalized to being revered for their achievements. The mass media have long been welcomed as the watch dog of society and this tradition bestows upon them the social responsibility to mirror and guide the process of social change. Movies are the most influencing medium by which the audience in all strata of society often gets carried away and any interpretation can have tremendous impact on the society. The paper deals with portrayal of women and women's voice in recent cinemas. Though Movies remain male-dominated terrain, in recent years a few women centric movies are produced and appreciated which portray women as a social member who can shoulder great responsibility with dignity unlike their counterpart from earlier years. The female characters from select movies are analyzed in the light of Standpoint Theory and Gender Empowerment Theory. Standpoint Theory affirms that an individual's own perspectives are shaped by his or her social and political experiences. It is a postmodern method for analyzing Inter-subjective discourses. Gender empowerment Theory helps one to assess by figuring out from four criteria; they are socioeconomic development, rising gender egalitarian process, historical legacies and institutional design factors.

“I think women are foolish to pretend they are equal to men. They are far superior and always have been. Whatever you give a woman, she will make it greater...she multiplies and enlarges what is given to her” - Willaim Golding

The status of Indian women has seen ups and downs throughout the centuries. The low tide or nadir was the situation when she was considered a mere child bearing machine and maid to the family. Women had to face double marginalization. Coventy Patmore in his poem “Angel of the House” explains the aspects of a perfect woman, which later on went on to become the stereotype. She is a wonderful being who sacrifices her pleasure, leisure and choices for the wellbeing of her family, no matter what they do to her in return. A wonder woman should be an epitome of patience, forbearance and forgiveness. Cinema played an active role in cementing this image. Movies of the earlier times portrayed woman as gentle, mild, submissive and selfless, somebody who never rebels against any injustices done to her. Even the headstrong women who play the negative role is also shown to have passions spent and calm down in the course of life

As the time went on, women gained access to education. She realized her folly and her fight resulted in the raising of various feministic theories around the globe, thereby mass emancipation of women folk. With the first wave of feminism her voice was heard reminding male chauvinist of her existence. With the second wave of feminism she wanted her rightful place in the male dominated world. With the passing of the third wave she came to an

enlightened situation from where she understood she needn't compete with men but could express the experience of being a woman. In the recent times women have empowered themselves and achieved a stand where even men revere and respect her. Mass media helps in the dissemination of information. With the advancement of technology, the world has shrunk into a global village. One of the most effective media is cinema. Movies with its audio-video aids captivate audience and leaves everlasting message in the hearts of the audience. Movies can be called agents of change as the primal stereotypes of mild submissive woman is created through movies.

The paper aims to analyse the pattern and themes of portraying women's characteristics through the select movies in the light of Standpoint Theory and Gender Empowerment theory. The select movies are *Mary Kom*, *Dangal*, *Pink*, *Ki and Ka*, *Parched* and *Uda Punjab*.

Standpoint theory's concept is that an individual's own perspectives are shaped by his or her social and political experiences. According to this approach, a standpoint is a place from which a person views the world. A standpoint influences how the people adopting it socially construct the world. Michael Ryan says, "The idea of collective standpoint does not imply an essential overarching characteristic but rather a sense of belonging to a group bounded by a shared experience." Standpoint theory emphasizes the utility of a naturalistic, or everyday experimental, concept of knowing ones standpoint shapes which concepts are intelligible, which claims are heard and understood by whom, which features of the world are perceptually salient, which reasons are understood to be relevant and forceful, and which conclusions credible.

Female empowerment theory focuses on the socioeconomic development, rising gender-egalitarian attitudes that transform economic development into a cultural process of human development, historical legacies stemming from a society's cultural and political traditions and institutional design factors (Alexander and Welzel). The four aspects of gender equality are basic living condition, participation in civic actions, positional empowerment and political representation.

Mary Kom depicts Kom's journey of becoming a boxer to her victory at 2008 world boxing championship in Ningbo. It was directed by Omung Kumar and produced by Sanjay Leela Bansali. The biopic portrays the difficulties which resulted in triumph of the boxing star. Her father asks her to choose between him and boxing, from which she chooses the latter. Narjit Singh coaches her and she wins 2006 Women's World Amateur boxing Championships. She also chooses to make way for matters of the heart, marriage and kids before coming back to winning global recognition again in 2008, 2010 and 2012. She is nicknamed Magnificent Mary. She is the renowned example of the multitasking woman who maintains perfect balance between work and family.

Dangal is a 2016 biographical sports drama film directed by Nitesh Tiwari. Mahavir Singh Phogat is an amateur wrestler who trains his daughters Geeta Phogat and Babita Kumari to win Gold and silver medal respectively in Commonwealth Games. The movie initially begins with the father wishing for a male heir who later on realizes the potential of his daughters. In the society where female infanticide is a common, where considering girls as burden is the custom, in that particular society (Haryana), training women in the male dominated field is unique.

Ki and Ka is a romantic film written directed and produced by R. Balki. The lead contradicts the gender roles placed upon women and men of Indian society. Kia wishes to

become successful business woman whereas Kabir wants to become “house husband”. The conflict comes when Kabir gets fame for his interview stating that it doesn’t matter if ki (girl) takes up the role of Ka(boy) and ka takes up the role of Ki. In the movie in the cameo role, Jaya Bachan advises Kia that Kabir’s decision of breaking the stereotype is great choice but being wife to such a person is even greater task. The age old taboo is broken through Kabir’s character, thus emphasizing gender equality.

Parched is directed by Leena Yadav. The story revolves around four women residents of a desert village of Rajasthan. Rani is a widow who supports her mother-in-law and son Gulab who is rebellious and spoilt. Rani was widowed earlier in life and has led a life of suffering and struggle adhering to the traditions and culture which imposes torture on widows. Gulab, who is violent and wayward, is married to Janki who is a child bride, she tries to avoid marriage by chopping off her hair. Janaki also becomes victim to Gulab’s atrocities but later on is relieved from marriage and joins her childhood lover. Lajjo struggles with her alcoholic husband who beats her and calls her Barren woman but in reality her husband is impotent. And Bijli is an erotic woman sort of sex worker. The women join hands to and relieve each other’s misery, they are good at embroidery and handicrafts, and they show courage to take a bold step to leave their native village which is rebellious. And finally refuse to subdue to all customs, traditions and patriarchy.

Uda Punjab is an Indian Crime Drama Film directed by Abhishek Chaubey. It is based on drug abuse by youth population of Punjab. The women characters of Bauria, a farm worker also hockey player and Preet Sahni, a doctor-cum-activist, are remarkable. One stands for the victim and other as a savior. Bauria finds a small bundle of drugs, she tries to sell it to earn quick money, but she is trapped. In spite of all her troubles during repeated rapes she says “Good days are yet to come”. Bauria inspires the pop singer to believe that there is another side to desperation. Infact she is the person who transforms him. She wanted to play Hockey at the national level, but unfortunate events like her father’s demise shatters her dreams. She is a bold girl who never complains but welcomes good or bad turns of events cheerfully. Whereas Preet runs rehabilitation centre and tries to create awareness about harms of drugs. She collects evidences of drug trade and hopes that someday the state would be free from drugs. Preet becomes martyr in the process of abolishing drugs from the state. Yet it was her initiative which resulted in the abolition of drug abuse. Preet stands tall as a modern empowered woman who can initiate change.

Pink is a courtroom drama film produced by Aniruddha Roy Chowdhry. The movie revolves around three girls Meenal Arora, Falak Ali and Andrea Tariang, being trapped in false accusations from some rich ,politically influential boys ,whom an eminent lawyer Deepak Sehgal saves thereby giving a strong social message of being sensible to women’s rights. The closing remarks are, Deepak mentions that his client said NO, which is not a word but a statement and implies a woman’s right. NO simply means No and doesn’t require further explanation. It can come from anyone, a girlfriend, a sex worker, or even your wife. The film depicts the matter of fact that, in spite of being educated women is not aware of their rights. The movie ends with a poem by Amitabh Bachchan which can be translated as “when character is pure why are you worried? Sinners don’t have any right to question you”

The characters in the movie form their standpoint based on the circumstances they live. The characters from the above mentioned movies have fought with the circumstances to win in

the struggle. Here are examples of people who have discovered themselves at the crossroad. Proper channalisation of energy with right direction of path makes an effort fruitful and the sense of direction is given by education. The heroines know to differentiate right from wrong and are in a position to alleviate the pain. Geeta and Babita are pushed on to become Wrestlers being inspired by their legend father. Kia, being educated and empowered aspires to become business magnet and adopts road not travelled, Bauria and Preet are brave enough to fight against drug because they have witnessed what drug can do to fellow humans. Rani, Bijli, Lajjo, and Janaki being subjected to male chauvinism, oppressions and are chained to age old customs. Having reached the saturation point they revolt. The characters fight their fears and chains that keep them down, finally breaking bonds. Meenal, Falak and Andrea's story creates an awareness about women's rights.

The trend of Indian cinema is changing and nowadays women centric movies are being produced. The stereotype of woman as a docile creature who suffers in silence is changed to somebody who fights for her rights with dignity. Like Literature even cinema imitates life. The positive trends are the indicators of the positive change in the society. The select movies present the iron willed women who empower themselves and emerge victorious thereby becoming role models for others to follow.

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Subaltern Servitude in Daniyal Mueenuddin's *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders*

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Abstract

Born to a Pakistani father and American mother, Daniyal Mueenuddin ventured into writing after his stint as journalist, director, lawyer and businessman. He owed his skill to write to his mother who made him to read from the multitudes of books she had collected always. When his ailing father requested him to stay in Pakistan, to protect the farm from the looting managers Mueenuddin besides managing the farm read and wrote extensively. Though he recalled it later as an arduous life he remembered the time well spent with books. When he moved back to America in 1993 and attended Yale Law School and practiced law but dissatisfied with the career he switched over to become a writer.

Obtaining a degree in writing from the University of Arizona channeled him to publish his works and the first story published was "Our Lady of Paris" (). In Other Rooms, Other Wonders, a collection of his short stories was published in 2009 and the collection is entwined with the life and family of K K Harouni, an aging patriarch. Faulkner called short story to be a writing that is "simply a matter of working up to that moment, to explain why it happened or what it caused to follow" (11). Mueenuddin too felt like writing "stories for Western audience – stories about the farm and the old feudal ways, the dissolving feudal order...and began writing the stories that make up" (251) that he recalls in his collection of stories In Other Rooms, Other Wonder. The collection won The Story Prize for 2009 and also won the 2010 Commonwealth Writer's Prize. It competed for many awards in 2010 and competed for Pulitzer Prize, the Los Angeles Times First Fiction Award besides the Ondaatje Prize and reached the final round of National Book Award. The New York Times complimented it as a work that picturizes "Intimate portraits that raise some of the biggest question in Pakistan today...offers a richly observed landscape that is written with the tenderness and familiarity of an old friend."

Born in Los Angeles, in 1963, Daniyal Mueenuddin's father was a Pakistani and his mother an American. Though grew up in Pakistan Mueenuddin's frequent visit to Wisconsin enabled him to speak and write in English fluently. After his parents' separation he completed his schooling and graduation in the US to return to his ailing father in Pakistan to assist him in running the estates. It is after his father's demise Mueenuddin attended Yale Law School to become a Corporate Lawyer. His love for writing made him to pursue writing career and end practicing law.

William Dalrymple in the *Financial Times* has compared Mueenuddin to literary giants like R K Narayan and Turgenev in portraying the rural folk. The *New York Times'* review compliments him as one whose "Intimate portraits that raise some of the biggest question in Pakistan today...Offers a richly observed landscape that is written with the tenderness and familiarity of an old friend".

Mueenuddin won The Story Prize in 2009 and the 2010 Commonwealth Writers' Prize. His skill in picturizing the Pakistani society enabled him to be shortlisted for many literary awards. The short story collection *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* is the winner of 2010 Rosenthal Family Foundation Award. The book *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* is translated into sixteen languages and the short story "Nawabdin Electrician" was selected by Salman Rushdie in 2008 as the Best American Short Story. "A Spoiled Man" was included in 2010 PEN/O'Henry Prize Stories.

The eight short stories in this collection deal with the life and times of K.K Harouni, an old and rich landlord. The first four stories talk about Harouni and later four has his son taking the reign. In all the eight stories the plight of the workers in the Harouni homestead remained the same. All the societal vices like corruption, lack of morality, exploitation of women and lack of education are beautifully depicted by the writer.

K K Harouni hailed from a large farming family in Lahore and in his youth worked as a civil servant. Though he is old he still had "influence in the Lahore bureaucracy" (13) and had Mercedes waiting in his doorstep for him although he ventured out very rarely. The portrayal of the house and farm highlights the stature of the family that owns it. Harouni, in the short story "In Other Rooms, Other Wonders" does not hesitate to seduce and then to disown Husna, a young woman who comes to seek his patronage. Harouni had a heart attack in the recent past and is living alone in the house. Husna in order to climb in the social ladder wanted a rich man's patronage. Harouni is a man who "cared for nothing for what his wife or the servants thought" (124) and willingly invited her to stay in his house when his wife went for Hajj. When his daughter, Sarwat, questioned him about her he replied, "At my age, what I need is companionship, and Husna can give that to me. Riffat can only come for tea or for few hours, but Husna is here whenever I need her" (131).

Sarwat treated Husna like dirt but Harouni did not allow Husna to complain about his own daughter. Though not realizing she has started to love the old man and tried to assist him when he needed help. After the visit of Sarwat the servants started to treat Husna better but she did not realise her position in the house or in the society. When he fell sick and was taken to hospital, the doctor reminded her about her position in the house. "Husna began to cry, shaking, and he stood back and looked at her shrewdly. "Don't, this isn't about you. Prepare yourself now. Remember who you are" (137). She was not allowed to come to the living room but was summoned by his daughters two days later to leave the house with her belongings. Though she wanted to shout at them for the treatment of their father she remained silent and left the house without uttering anything.

"Saleema" is a story about a woman who hailed from a family of addicts, criminals and crooks. Her husband becomes an addict and therefore to feed herself she becomes a maid in the house of Harouni. Though a house help she is deprived of good food and hence become close with the staff cook, Hassan. "The cooks tempted her, lording it over the kitchen, where she liked to sit, with the smell of broth and green vegetables cooking and sauce" (30). Hassan "ruled the hot filthy kitchen. He made food both for the master's table and for all servants, more than a dozen of them. For days on end the servants' food would be inedible – keeping with Hassan's policy of collective punishment" (31). When he left Saleema she became close with Rafiq, the valet of Harouni. Rafiq fathered her child but left her when his wife and son came to take him home. With a child and none to depend on she too became an addict. "She was finished, began using rocket pills, which she once had so much despised, lost her job, went on to heroin, leaving her husband behind without a word" (60). Husna with none to protect and education to assist her

was treated like a dirt and was sent out after the demise of Harouni. Another woman who is mercilessly treated is Zaniab, a maid of Jaglani.

Chaudrey Nabi Jaglani is a manager in the Harouni farm and he gave wrong information about the land prices to his master Harouni and exploited him. He took advantage of his “master’s incapacity and lack of oversight” (64). Jaglani was neither a good husband nor a good politician and he rarely thought about others. He used his powers to intimidate those who contested against him and used the resources to his advantage. He forcibly made Aslam to divorce Zainab who caught his attention. He used Zainab to satisfy his physical needs and in order to satisfy her forcibly brought his grandchild to her. But after falling sick, he refused to meet Zainab for he was ashamed to think of himself to be a person who yielded to his physical need. He cared more about himself than about the others who lived with him. Society too did not dare to talk about men who were powerful. They tormented only those who are weak and vulnerable.

“A Spoiled Man” is about a man who suffers because is a poor man. He is wrongly accused of being a criminal and he undergoes the torture silently. It is the words of the rich reaches the authorities and the poor man dies as a dejected man. Weak and unprotected women were exploited by men in these stories. Saleema, Zainab and Husna were used by men as objects of pleasure. They hailed from poor families and were left without protection. Husbands were either addicts or did not provide the shelter they needed. The common phenomena that is seen in all these women’s lives is that they were living at the mercy of others and ultimately left out in the streets. Mueenuddin has focused on the economic issues faced by the lower classes and exploitation of women in his stories that makes his story collection a true portrayal of reality.

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Self Actualization in Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night*

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Abstract

Empowerment of women is the need of the hour in this modern society. The novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* by Githa Hariharan is frontally feminist in its theme. Githa Hariharan is a famous contemporary writer. She is known for writing about emancipation and their social transformation of women which is reflected in her novels. The novel revolves around women's dilemma in this contemporary world. Githa Hariharan portrays the position of women in the patriarchal society. She explores the awakening of women consciousness which compels her to struggle for self alienation. This paper depicts the strife and struggle of three women Devi, Sita and Mayamma. They belong to three different generations who are fighting for their freedom and self respect. The protagonist of the novel Devi is trapped in the current of alienation and isolation. She tries to break the chain of heart aching traditions in order to protect her own identity. Devi is able to overcome all her trials and tribulations to achieve her sense of identity. Thus the self Actualisation theory can be applied to this novel.

Contemporary women's writing is enriched with its own merit. In the twentieth century women attained equal position to that of men in production of creative writing, but by the end of the twentieth century women's writing also has been acclaimed of being equal in merit. Writers like Shashi Deshpande, Kamala Suraiyya, Kamini Roy, Ismat Chugati, Kamala Markandaya are the contemporary writers. These writers have tried to depict the feelings of women in an effective manner through their writings. Githa Hariharan is one among them.

Githa Hariharan was born in Coimbatore and brought up in Bombay and Manila. She completed BA English from Bombay University and MA communications from Fairfield University. At present she works as a freelance editor. She published novels, short stories, articles, newspaper articles and columns. The novels include *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994), *When Dreams Travel* (1999), *In Times of Siege* (2003), and *Fugitive Histories* (2009). A collection of highly acclaimed short stories, *The Art of Dying*, was published in 1993, and a book of stories for children, *The Winning Team*, in 2004. She edited a volume of stories in English translation from four major South Indian languages. Hariharan's fiction has been translated into a number of languages including French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Greek, Urdu and Vietnamese. Githa Hariharan is one of the founders of the Indian Writers' Forum, a platform for cultural politics.

Feminism is a revolt against male dominated society. After marriage the status of women changes, she sticks to the world of restrictions and it is mostly not possible to be on her own. This is portrayed by Githa Hariharan in her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* which won the Commonwealth Writers prize for best book in 1993.

This novel revolves around women's dilemma in this contemporary world and it depicts the strife and struggle of three women Devi, Sita and Mayamma. They belong to three different generations who are fighting for their freedom and self respect. The protagonist of the novel Devi is trapped in the current of alienation and isolation. She tries to break the chain of heart aching traditions in order to protect her own identity.

Devi, the protagonist returns from America to India in order to get married. With the compulsion of her mother she got married to Mahesh, a Regional Manager in a Multinational company. She tries to be a dutiful wife and dutiful daughter-in-law like her mother. Like every girl she also has some expectation that her husband should support and understand her. But everything turns upside down in her married life. Her husband often goes to office trips for long days.

Devi has nothing to do at home. So she spends her time with her father-in-law and her servant Mayamma. Like her grandmother her father-in-law also says many stories. She also hears the story of her servant Mayamma whose married life was so pathetic. She compares their real life stories with that of few myths. She is provided with everything but something is lacking in her life.

Her husband fails to understand her. He always puts a deaf ear to her and he does not understand her feelings and emotions and because of that there is no love and affection between them. So she falls in love with her neighbour Gopal and she elopes with him with the knowledge of Mayamma. Later she realizes that he has no true love for her and she came back to her mother's house to overcome all her trials and tribulations to achieve her sense of identity.

Self actualization theory can be applied to this novel. Self Actualization represents a concept derived from Humanistic psychological theory, and especially from the theory created by Abraham Maslow. Self Actualization represents the growth of an individual towards the fulfilment of the highest needs and those who are searching meaning in their life. Maslow's hierarchy is described as follows: physiological needs, such as needs for food, sleep and air; safety or the needs for security and protection, especially those that emerge from social or political instability; belonging and love including, the needs of deficiency and selfish taking instead of giving, and unselfish love that is based upon growth rather than deficiency; needs for self esteem, self respect and healthy, positive feelings derived from admiration; self growth, engendered from fulfilment of potential and meaning in life and parallels can be found between self actualization and some instances in the novel:

“Devi knew the time was right; she did not act now, she would be forever condemned to drift between worlds, a floating island detached from the solidity of the mainland” (138). She is provided with everything but she feels something is lacking in her life. This sense is due to the mental detachment from her husband. But now there is no heart aching suppressed feeling for her. She is free from her marital bond to identify herself.

Devi realizes that she must make an attempt to find an identity for herself:

“To stay and to fight, to make sense of it all, she would have to start from the very beginning. Suitcase in hand; Devi opened the gate and looked wonderingly at the garden, wild and over-grown, but lush in spite of its sand-choked roots. Then she

quicken her footsteps as she heard the faint sounds of Veena, hesitant and childlike, inviting her into house.” (139).

Devi longs for a true love and moral support. But she did not get that from neither Mahesh nor Gopal. So Devi finally realizes and returns to her mother to start from the beginning and to fight for her life and identity. It is in her relationship with the mother she hopes to find an identity for herself.

An analysis of the novel reveals that the problem she faces in her life did not dishearten or stop her from identifying herself. Thus self realisation and self knowledge made her to move forward and face the challenges in her life boldly. Thus the status of women transforms from victimization to empowerment.

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Embracing Motherhood as seen in Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper*

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“American literature is the literature written or produced in the area of the United States and its preceding colonies. Most of this literature is written in the English language, much of it by men and women whose forebears came from the British Isle” (Fisher 1). “Until seventeenth century the word novel meant a short story of the kind written and collected by Boccaccio in his *Decameron*. Most historians and critics agree that novel made no permanent appearance on the literary scene until the late seventeenth century” (Rees 121).

Jodi Picoult is an American novelist who was born on May 19, 1966, in Nesconset on Long Island in New York. She is famous for her novel *My Sister's Keeper* (2004), which has won The Gold Book Award from Nielsen Bookscan UK, Vermont Green Mountain Book Award Master List (2007), the Best Novel, Spanish or Bilingual - 2009 Latino Book Awards, and Virginia Readers' Choice Award in 2007. Many of her novels are reworking on social materials.

The other notable novels of Jodi Picoult are *Change of Heart* (2008), *Nineteen Minute* (2007), *Harvesting the Heart* (1993), *Picture Perfect* (1995), *Handle with Care* (2009), *House Rules* (2010), *Perfect Match* (2002), and *Sing You Home* (2011). Her only novel which was made into film was *My Sister's Keeper* with the same title released in 2009. *My Sister's Keeper* movie is directed by Nick Cassavetes, an American director, and the screenplay is by Jeremy Leven. This movie was nominated for 5 awards category and has won four among them.

The novel, *My Sister's Keeper* is about Fitzgerald's family, who discovers that their two year old, daughter Kate has a rare type of leukaemia. So they decide to have a genetically modelled child with all the similarities of Kate's genes, by creating a “saviour sibling” named Anna. The saviour sibling at the age of three started donating blood, platelets, bone marrow and many others when Kate needed them. At the age of thirteen, Anna hires a lawyer and files a law suit for ‘medical emancipation’, which is to change her medical guardianship from her parents, Sara and Brain to someone else. It is because she does not want to give one of her kidneys to Kate, who will eventually die without a kidney transplant. Such an unexpected turn of events tears the family apart.

As the trail begins and each party is questioned, there arises rift between Sara and Anna: One fights for her daughter's life while the other fights for her right. But the true reason for Anna to file the law suit is more than just to gain control over her body, but to carry out Kate's wish to die. This is revealed only at the end on the novel. During the trail Sara raises many questions and

tries her best to convince Anna to donate her kidney to her sister. But Anna lets her lawyer speak on her behalf, because of the dilemma she is going through on choosing between her sister's life and desire.

Finally the truth is revealed that Kate is willing to die. Sara is shocked when she gets to know that Kate is the one who convinced Anna to file the law suit. The judgement comes in favour of Anna. While heading back home with her lawyer Anna is met with an accident and immediate brain death occurs. Her lawyer who is her medical guardian asks the doctor to transplant Anna's kidney to Kate. The novel ends with the epilogue by Kate.

The novel is narrated from the perspective of different characters such as Anna, Jesse, Brain, Sara, Campbell and Julie. Even though the book revolves around Kate; her sickness had affected the lives of people around her, but Kate's narration is only seen in the epilogue. In that Kate talks about how she didn't get a relapse in eight years and the lives of her family members after Anna's fatal end. She ends by saying that Anna is within her and is never forgotten.

Motherhood is often referred to as selfless sacrifice and unconditional love which never changes with time. Physical and mental pain a mother bears to bring a child into the world and the care and concern she carries throughout her life is known as motherhood. In *My Sister's Keeper*, Sara, the mother, undergoes a lot of psychological trauma during the course of the novel to save her daughter. Although the novel revolves around Kate and Anna, the mother's role is subdued but not hidden.

Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. Attachment does not have to be reciprocated. One person may have an attachment to an individual which is not acknowledged. Attachment behaviour in adults towards the child includes responding sensitively and appropriately to the child's needs. Such behaviour appears universally across cultures. Attachment theory provides an explanation on the parent-child relationship which emerges and influences subsequent development.

Attachment theory in psychology originates with the seminal work of John Bowlby in 1958. In the 1930's John Bowlby worked as a psychiatrist in a Child Guidance Clinic in London, where he treated many emotionally disturbed children. This experience led Bowlby to consider the importance of the child's relationship with its mother in terms of its social, emotional and cognitive development.

Bowlby defined attachment as a 'lasting psychological connectedness between human beings' (McLeod). Bowlby proposed that attachment can be understood within an evolutionary context in that the caregiver provides safety and security for the infant. Attachment is adaptive as it enhances the infant's chance of survival. According to psychologist Mary Ainsworth, attachment "may be defined as an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between himself and another specific one – a tie that binds them together in space and endures over time" (McLeod). Attachment is not just a connection between two people; it is a bond that involves a desire for regular contact with that person and the experience of distress during separation from that person.

The theory deals with the attachment of a child to its mother for care, safety and support. In return the mother satisfies the child's every need. Same way the novel *My Sister's Keeper*

explores the benevolent and biased mother's love, with a doughty personality. Sara Fitzgerald is a former attorney and stay-at-home mother of three children, Jesse, the first son, Kate and Anna. When she finds out that her daughter Kate is suffering from leukaemia she makes Kate her first priority. Sara's passages, told at different points over the next fourteen years, focus largely on Kate's struggles. She describes how scientists help them conceive another daughter, Anna, who is a perfect genetic match for Kate. Over the course of the next few years, Anna undergoes several procedures, including frequent blood withdrawals and a painful bone marrow extraction, to help keep Kate live. Sara describes in great detail the pain and suffering that Kate endures. In different ways, both Jesse and Anna act out at Sara because of her single-minded focus on Kate.

In 1952, Bowlby along with Robertson writes his paper on "Separation Anxiety" in which he talks about three phases of separation response from the child that is separated from its mother. Initially the child protests. The next phrase is despair. The final phrase is denial or detachment. All these three phrases are seen on the two children of Fitzgerald family. The mother plays a great deal in inducing such emotional distress in the minds of the children leading to detachment.

The first stage is 'protest' and it is seen in Jesse and Anna at a very young age. Anna understands that the sole purpose that she was bought into this world is to keep her sister alive and this fact hurts her more than anything else. Sara even admits that she can only think of the unborn Anna in terms of what she could do for Kate. All the surgeries and treatments that were given to Anna in order to save Kate are so painful. At times she wishes Kate were dead, to put everyone out of misery. Sometimes Anna would do things to get her mother's attention from Kate. All this emotional distress has led Anna to protest against her mother by filing a law suit for medical emancipation. All her days Anna holds the impression that, "They (Sara and Brain) don't really pay attention to me (Anna), except when they need my blood or something. I wouldn't even be alive, if it wasn't for Kate being sick"(Picoult 16). These lines show Anna's thought that her parents have bought her up to supply the needs of Kate and not out of real love.

Jesse on the other hand feels neglected by his parents and feels guilty for not being able to save Kate. These feelings lie at the heart of his behaviour. At the age of ten when his mother breaks her promise to take him to orthodontist he pulls out the braces off his teeth with the fork. This shows his desperate craving for his mother's attention. Once again when his father breaks his promise because of Kate's illness, he crosses the road wishing that he might be hit by a car. Jesse and Anna throw tantrum to get their mother's attention when they have illness. When they are teenagers they show it differently: Anna by filling the law suit and Jesse by burning empty warehouses.

Sara starts her narration with Kate's diagnosis of leukaemia because Kate's cancer served as the major turning point in Sara's life. From then on, Sara's life has centred on keeping Kate alive at any cost. Kate on the other hand may seem to get most of her mother's attention and time, feels secured and never longs for her mother's attention. When Sara gives birth to Anna, her first words are to tell the doctors to be careful with the umbilical cord, not to ask about her newborn baby. These actions reveal that Sara thinks of Anna more as a treatment for Kate than as an individual human being. Paradoxically, Sara accuses Anna of effectively signing Kate's death sentence by deciding not to donate her kidney, but Anna has that power specifically because her parents conceived her as a way to save Kate's life. When Kate talks to Julia about her siblings, she says that Jesse gets into a lot of trouble because it's his only way of being

noticed. Then Kate says ever since she got sick, almost every single holiday has been hard for Anna.

Sara says when she is pregnant with Anna, “Although I am nine months pregnant, although I have had plenty of time to dream, I have not really considered the specifics of this child. I have thought of this daughter only in terms of what she will be able to do for the daughter I already have...Then again, my dreams for her are no less exalted; I plan for her to save her sister’s life”(Picoult 58). These lines tell the controversial nature of Anna’s birth. Sara knows that having another child represents Kate’s best hope of survival. She has not considered the child, however, as an individual, and cannot see the child except that she would save Kate. At this point, she measures Anna’s value in terms of how she will help to keep Kate alive. This attitude makes Anna to think that she has no power over her own life. Her main purpose, as she sees it, lies in providing platelets, bone marrow, and even her kidney to Kate, and as a result Anna feels that Kate’s needs always take precedence over hers.

Kate's medical needs were put at the forefront while Anna’s desires and emotions were never given priority. This unequal treatment resulted from a parental conflict of interest. Her parent's judgment was clouded by their concern for their eldest daughter and therefore they made biased decisions. The procedures used to improve Kate's quality of life prevented Anna from leading a normal childhood. By focusing on Kate, Sara’s other kids not only remains invisible but also are loved less. This has led to the rebellious nature of Jesse and Anna.

Secondly, the children and the mother are in a desperate situation. Sara till the end fights but in her heart she knows that Anna will not give in. At the beginning she expresses her disappointment through anger towards Anna. In response Anna too acts angrily and stays stubborn. This shows that the child is in a desperate need for attention. Once Anna gets her mother’s attention, she stays stubborn and reflects her mother’s behaviour. As a child Anna follows her mother’s footsteps.

Anna stands out as the book’s most conflicted character. Her connection with Kate and her struggle to exist independently of that connection are well-defined. She tells Campbell, for instance, that of all the things she might want to be in ten years, what she most wants to be is Kate’s sister. At the same time, Anna desperately wants to exist independently of Kate, but she knows that she cannot do so as long as her main purpose in life consists of keeping Kate alive. These contradictory feelings make up the tragic core of Anna’s character. She feels a tremendous sense of guilt for wanting to lead an independent life by neglecting Kate and wonders if she is an awful person for feeling that way. She breaks herself from her mother in despair in order to gain her love. She imagines and compares their funerals. Her hypothesis is that more people will turn out to Kate’s funeral than her own. She feels jealous of Kate. These thoughts show that Anna craves for attention.

Sara acts first and foremost as a mother throughout the novel, and her need to keep her daughter, Kate, alive motivates her more than any other impulse. Whatever problem she encounters, whether it is Jesse’s delinquency or Anna’s need for independence, the matter holds less importance for her than Kate’s survival. Paradoxically, by focusing so much on being a mother to Kate, Sara does not always fill the role of mother for her other children. For instance, Sara tends to disregard Jesse’s self-destructive behaviour, which Jesse uses to call out for attention, and she doesn’t stop to think that Anna might be genuinely unhappy when Anna files

the lawsuit for medical emancipation. Although Sara undoubtedly loves Jesse and Anna, she has difficulty in considering them as people separate from Kate. Even with Kate, Sara focuses mostly on her physical, rather than emotional, health. For example, when Anna reveals on the stand that Kate doesn't want to live any longer, Sara does not believe it because she has never spoken to Kate about these feelings. So all the three children are one way or other detached from their mother.

Father acts as another caretaker to a child. In this story Brain Fitzgerald most of the time tries to take equal care of his children but unable to balance at some places. Jesse burns empty warehouse, as a means to gain his father's attention indirectly. Jesse feels neglected because his parents focus so much on Kate, but by setting fires he can literally call his father's attention any time he chooses because Brain is a fire fighter.

Once Jesse recalls a Christmas when his parents and sisters had to go to hospital because of Kate's relapse. Jesse being alone at home he cuts down a tree and decorates it. But when his parents return they fail to notice his effort. Jesse also recalls that they forget to get him a gift in advance rather they send him a gift from hospital. Every time when his parents return from hospital they get him a gift to console him for leaving him alone, but Jesse feels that he cannot be bought with gift. He wants them to notice him personally. Both Anna and Jesse feel invisible when Kate is around. These insecurities created by Sara later resulted in the rude and rebellious behaviour of her kids.

The third stage is 'denial and detachment'. Detachment is clearly seen when Jesse lives in an attic above their garage which is separated from their house. He plans the pathway to his room in a way that it will be hard for a person to enter, just so that people won't enter easily. Throughout all of these events, Jesse has been setting fire to abandoned buildings. Jesse acts like a delinquent in other ways as well, such as drinking alcohol excessively, but much of this behaviour stems from anger over his inability to save Kate and his feelings of being ignored by his parents. Jesse believes that, "We've all got our scripts down pat. Kate plays the Martyr. I'm the Lost Cause. And you (Anna), you're the Peacekeeper"(Picoult 13). This shows his despise with his own situation by addressing him as a 'lost cause'.

Anna, meanwhile, has saved Kate's life by donating her blood and bone marrow to Kate. Significantly, Anna's lawsuit appears to directly contradict her role as Kate's protector because she feels detached from the family. More and more, it is seen how Kate's cancer takes a toll on the other children in Fitzgerald's family. Sara's narration states that, once again Jesse is ignored. He started to lash out of the house at a young age. Leukemia has deprived not just Kate, but also Jesse and Anna from a normal childhood.

When Sara is served with the papers for the lawsuit, she becomes furious with Anna as she cannot understand Anna's decision. Brian, however, understands Anna's point of view to a degree and recognizes that she would not have brought a lawsuit unless she is genuinely unhappy. Sara's ballistic reaction to Anna's lawsuit reflects the single-mindedness of her character. Anna, meanwhile, behaves in similar way. She will not withdraw, but she also wants desperately to let her mother fix everything. She may be rebelling against her mother's wishes, but she is not yet strong enough or mature enough to be entirely independent. Sara thinks that it is better for Anna to experience some pain. But Anna, who will be the one to experience the pain, has no say in the matter.

Bowlby's major conclusion was that to grow up mentally healthy, which is "the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment"(McLeod). The evolutionary theory of attachment by Bowlby, Harlow and Lorenz suggests that children come into the world biologically pre-programmed to form attachments with others, because this will help them to survive. The infant produces innate 'social releaser' behaviours such as crying and smiling that stimulate innate caregiving responses from adults. The determinant of attachment is not food, but care and responsiveness.

All through the novel Anna and Jesse's response to situations are greatly interlinked with their mother's behaviour towards them. Sara also relents in her decision a little when she learns that Kate actually wants to die. She seems to accept Anna's medical emancipation after that. Sara's overriding concern for Kate obviously stems from the fact that Kate repeatedly verges on death, whereas the problems the other children experience, though serious, are not fatal.

Through the course of the novel step by step Sara tries to understand Anna and her reason for such a decision. She starts giving Anna the attention she longs. Even though Sara does not show her love directly to her other children she still loves them. By the end of the novel Sara understands Anna's reasons and accepts it. This shows her transformation of character and understands being a mother is more than just focusing on the sick child and giving care to all the children is important. Sara lacks the balance at some places as a mother but at the end after losing Anna she realises her mistakes and Sara spends the rest of her life regretting that she neglected Anna for so long. She takes care of Jesse and he becomes an honest police officer.

Attachment theory states that at each stage of the child's growth, the bond between the child and the mother grows deep. This is often revealed by the mother through sacrifice and unconditional love. When the child is ignored it acts in an unruly way to get its mothers attention. Through the character of Sara, motherhood is focused along with the help of the theory, the bond between mother and the child is elaborated. Thus Picoult reveals that motherhood is a very important aspect in a person's life, as the proper care of a mother shapes the character of a child.

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Resilience of Ordinary Women in Extraordinary Times in Kristin Hannah's

The Nightingale

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Abstract

*The Nightingale is a novel of war that tells the struggles of two women. It is set against the panorama of the war in France. Kristin Hannah is an award winning and bestselling American author of more than twenty novels. The novel The Nightingale tells the stories of two sisters Isabelle and Vianne and their survival in German occupied war-torn France. It is a novel that celebrates the resilience of the war survivors and the sturdiness of women. Kristin Hannah is inspired by the stories of ordinary women during the time of the war. She has explored and celebrated the bravery and courage of **ordinary** women in extraordinary times. She attempts to raise this question in reader's minds "when would I as a wife and mother risk my life and more important, my child's life to save a stranger" (The Nightingale). This novel shows women's potential in crisis management as the characters Isabelle and Vianne respond to war in different ways and become an epitome of crisis managers. Moreover, this novel projects women in a different perspective, that is not as victims but victorious. Resilience theory can be applied to this text to study how despite adversities these women when at crossroads risked their lives to save others during the war.*

This paper aims at focusing on resilience of women amidst adversities and deals with how women managed crisis in grave situations like World War II. To study this, the novel *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah has been selected. Kristin Hannah is an award winning and bestselling American author. She has written more than twenty novels including *The Nightingale*, *Winter Garden*, *Night Road* and *Firefly Lane*. This novel has been published in over 39 languages. The writer in one of her interviews reveals that her love for stories of women who joined the resistance during World War II urges her to write this novel. She was mesmerized by life of an ordinary Belgian women and her courage. Also by other women who became spies and hid Jewish children in their homes. Taking this history as a driving force, Hannah has created this beautiful novel with a blend of her imagination.

Largely, aspects such as Gender discrimination, identity crisis, domestic violence, patriarchy, sexual harassment, knowing oneself are majorly discussed ideas when it comes to women. Mostly women are objected as victims in patriarchal society, for example, *Kamala* by Vijay Tendulkar in some of the literary works and in some they overcome the stereotypical ideas concerning them.

On the other hand, novels like *The Nightingale* shows women in a different standpoint. In this novel, women no longer suffer with their own problems they face in their family, but step out to the society and struggle for the sake of others, they put others problems first and not theirs. Novels like these advance women's potential as crisis managers not only in their family but also in the society. Thus, Hannah's portrayal of women actually mirrors not only their sufferings but

also how they emerge victoriously in their confined society. She attempts to raise this question in reader's minds "when would I as a wife and mother risk my life and more important, my child's life to save a stranger" (*The Nightingale*). Men who fought in war are only remembered and women are forgotten and become invisible. Thus, the main goal of the story is to pay homage to the women who risked their lives and those of their families to save those in danger during the war, and to sing their stories when so many forget them:

Men tell stories," I say. It is the truest, simplest answer to his question. "Women get on with it. For us it was a shadow war. There were no parades for us when it was over, no medals or mentions in history books. We did what we had to during the war, and when it was over, we picked up the pieces and started our lives over (*The Nightingale* 328).

Women are forgotten in wars and found incapable but closer reading shows that the women are extremely resilient and do not see themselves as victims. When they are at the crossroads of life, they are strong enough to rise above their adversities.

The novel *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah portrays women in a very different perspective. Generally women are seen vulnerable and gullible in the society. But, Hannah's portrayal of women in this novel is exceptional. Though, she has thrown light on the adversities that women face, she has highlighted their fighting spirit against the odds. The two women characters Isabelle and Vianne differ in their actions and respond differently to war. Hannah has written beautifully about the struggles of these two women, but she does not stop with this but rather shows how these women despite their grave situation risk their life to save the lives of others. Generally, war novels talk greatly about men who struggle in war field, but this novel on the contrary centres around women who struggle back home both mentally and physically in Nazi occupied France. In the face of their suffering, they rise from their comfort zone and risk their lives. Thus it can be understood that these two women cannot be seen as victims or weaker gender, as they overcome it resiliently with their invincible courage to save others.

As mentioned above, the writer has chosen the ordinary women characters to show how resilience is a significant phenomenon. Vianne Rossignol Mauriac is one of the important characters in this novel who is resilient and brave. She is an ordinary woman who works as a teacher at an elementary school and lives with her husband and daughter Sophie. Vianne does not have a proper family until she meets her husband Antonie. She loses her mother at a very young age and she is abandoned by her father. At this point in time, she is unable to take care of her little sister Isabelle and hence they part ways. She is a sensible and intelligent woman who takes all measures to protect her daughter from the Nazis. At first she does not resist the Nazi rather appeases the Nazis but later she dares to step out of her confinement and saves dozens of Jewish children in her town. It is not a cakewalk for her, as the war goes on and her money and food run out, but she sacrifices food for her daughter and her friend's son Ari. Most importantly she falls prey to the lustful hands of a Nazi soldier who billets in her house and conceives his child. She has been raped by him, the price that she pays to protect her children. Vianne is depicted as a brave and maternal character. Despite having a Nazi soldier billeted at her house and being a catholic, she risks her own life to save Jewish children. Even when she is conceived with her enemy's child, she never reveals this awful secret to her husband when he comes back from the war only with an intention to maintain a sense of serenity in her family.

The next important character in the novel is Isabelle Rossignol who is also known for her fighting spirit. Isabelle is the younger of the two sisters. She questions dominance and usually brushes aside other people's orders. She grows up motherless and yearns for love from her father and sister. She has been expelled from a dozens of boarding schools. She feels rejected and

termed impetuous by her teachers, father and sister. She has a fire that burns inside of her from the very moment the Germans entered France. She wants to do something to stop them and refuses to become the proper lady her father desperately wishes her to be. When the war breaks out, she is unable to be with her sister and joins the resistance network. She passes around flyers and helps smuggle dozens of British and American fighter pilots over the Spanish border. She has been given the code name "The Nightingale". She steadfastly saves many lives as she can become famous in the world of resistance and among Germans. She is resistant to authority or any force that stops her from the mission. She never compromises her beliefs and acts secretly by staying away from family and helps airmen escape. She makes her a pillar of strength throughout the entire novel. Later, on account of saving airmen, she has been arrested by Nazis and taken to a concentration camp. She survives in the camp which is not easy as it sounds. There is a complete pandemonium, but she holds her spirits high, from dying, to see her land free from enemies. She is the epitome of resilience, though being a nineteen year old girl. She dares to give a letter against Germans and progresses by joining the group by taking airmen from France to Spain through a careful secret route. She is fearless, as a result of which she suffers in the concentration camp and gets to see her father die in front of her eye. In contrast, she responds resiliently to the situation and sees the free France. Despite fighting against pneumonia, she dies in the end

Liliana Maria Labronici in her article "Resilience in women victims of Domestic violence: A Phenomenological view" says

Human sciences use the concept resilience to describe the ability of an individual or group to face adversity positively, even when their environment is unfavourable . . . In the health and human sciences resilience is a new theme, characterized by "human capacity to respond to everyday life demands in a positive way, despite the adversities faced throughout the development of his /her life cycle, resulting in the combination of individual attributes and his/her family, social and cultural environments(626)

Moreover, psychologically, resilience is nothing but a person's ability to adapt to life tasks in highly adverse condition. It is considered as an ability that urges one to bounce back from negative experience. It is a crucial ability that is found in any average individual. Interestingly, it can be acquired through the process of learning. Being resilient does not mean to be completely free from negativity but to cope up effectively through crisis. People who are resilient are the people with an optimistic attitude who know to balance negative emotions with positive ones; In other words adapting positivity amidst adverse situations. In addition, functioning competently is an important trait than merely overcoming the stressful situation. By being resilient a person can bounce back from adversity to invincibility:

With its emphasis on competence despite exposure to adversity, the concept of resilience has long been attractive to applied practitioners seeking to promote strength in vulnerable individuals, groups, and societies. A wealth of research has documented processes by which individuals achieve positive developmental outcomes despite exposure to known threats to adaptation ("Resilience Theory and the practice of positive psychology from individuals to societies" 773)

Further, this article defines adversity as a negative experience that has the potential to prevent development and says that it may be chronic. Thus, with competence functioning any individual can become resilient. On the other hand any adversity can be overcome by merely being resilient because resilience enables one to successfully adapt to disturbances that threaten development:

Resilience is most appropriately conceptualized as a developmental process or a dynamic capacity rather than a static outcome or trait. Applicable to a broad range of systems ranging from children and families to institutions and societies, resilience encompasses *the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system function, viability or development* (“Resilience Theory and the practice of positive psychology from individuals to societies” 774).

Kristin Hannah in this novel describes the horridness of concentration camps, diseases, murders, survival, famine and loss. The adversities that women undergo pierce one’s heart. But the beauty lies in Isabelle and Vianne’s resilience and they are ordinary women who become the Nightingales in saving many lives. Vianne, who is scared and timid in the beginning become invulnerable on learning to be resilient. At the stake of her own life she and her sister save others in the war. They achieve things that even men fear to attempt against the Germans. They become beacon of hope to many. Isabelle breaks the stereotypes that have been imposed on her and questions authority. The two sisters Isabelle and Vianne are no different from any other ordinary middle class women living in France. Vianne used to be a dependent wife. She used to count on her husband for everything and when her husband leaves her and goes to war, she waits for him telling her daughter that her father will protect them. “Papa will protect us” (*The Nightingale* 13). But, adversities she faces during the war back home as a single mother suffering to feed and protect her daughter transforms her. She does not allow circumstances to rule over her. Like any other ordinary woman she was confined to her family and work. “She knew little about her finances” (*The Nightingale* 18). But she attempts to save others by being resilient despite adversities. Similarly her sister Isabelle being an ordinary young girl, she does not tolerate Germans in her land. She always tries to be on par with men. “She said with a sigh. Why was it so easy for men in the world to do as they wanted and so difficult for women? (36).

She tries hard to break the stereotypes and looks up to Edith Cavell, a nurse who saved many soldiers. She is the nightingale who helped 87 airmen escape and the girl whom the Germans looked for. But when she reveals this to the Nazi soldiers no man believes in her and assumes Nightingale to be her father Julien and kills him. She suffers in the concentration camp for having saved airmen. The nastiness in the concentration camps does affect her body but not her mind: “And it wasn’t the end. She had to remember that. Each day she lived there was a chance for salvation. She couldn’t give up. She could never give up”. (286).

In spite of suffering, she resiliently looks forward to freedom. She finally sees the free France that she yearns for. These two women from ordinary life have achieved extraordinary by simply being resilient. In the society that thinks women are useless in war and their job is to wait for their husbands’ return, these women prove it wrong. They have showed that “And you, of all people, should know that a woman can do anything a man can do” (132).

Women learn that they are fragile in war but do not stay back in a cosy corner. Both the sisters were raped and tortured but their high spirits never let them shatter. Isabelle says “They couldn’t touch my heart. They couldn’t change who I was inside. my body... they broke that in first days, but not my heart” (317). Vianne in the end of the novel looks back to her past with the heavy heart, though she has helped people escape. She misses all the things the war took away from her, her papa, sister who had the heart of a lion, friends, daughter’s childhood, job etc. These two women are not only resilient but sacrificing, they sacrifice everything for the sake of others. For example, Vianne sacrifices her food, body just to keep her loved ones safe. On the other hand, Isabelle leaves her sister voluntarily to protect her sister from danger. Moreover, as

mentioned above they can be seen as protectors. Vianne is the incarnation of forbearance. Thus it can be understood that resilience is the ability that enables one to look beyond adversity.

From my point of view, portrayal of women and women's voice in novels like these shows the heroic side of women. Even if women are physically weak in terms of health, they are strong willed. Closer reading of works like these, show women as great crisis managers. Moreover, this novel conveys a valuable message that being strong is an option that anyone can choose to be when at crossroads. Also, it can be understood that by being resilient any impediments can be overcome. Vianne and Isabelle stand as a beacon of hope to millions of women to achieve big. In addition, it talks about the power of resilience amidst adversities. Everybody has hardships in life, but everybody is not resilient. Some tremble and wither, but the characters of Vianne and Isabelle remind the readers to bounce back from hardships. As Winston Churchill says "If you're going through hell, keep going". Because, it helps to recognise the greatness of one's durability, because an easy life never makes one stronger. Psychologically, any individual capable of adapting to changes can be resilient if they choose to be. Therefore, Kristin Hannah through this novel contributes to the society by telling her readers to be resilient like the characters Vianne and Isabelle who bounce back from the adversities and challenge every woman to become history makers.

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Isolation and Disillusion in *The Girl on The Train* by Paula Hawkins

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Abstract

Paula Hawkins, a British novelist was born in the year 1972 and was raised in Zimbabwe. She is well known for her famous psychological thriller The Girl on the Train. The story revolves around three women, Rachel, Anna, and Megan. The struggles of these three women portray their thirst for their dignified social stand. The powerless women unite to find the solution for the problem that binds them. This paper focuses on the Gynocritical approach which emphasizes on understanding the female world better to understand the injustice towards the female characters resulting in the chaotic relationships. The temperament of the women should be understood only then one can understand the hardships she had been through to achieve the state of their freedom. Hence the gynocritical approach towards this novel takes you to the core of the women's psychic.

Paula Hawkins, a female British novelist born on 26 Jan 1972 and was raised in Rhodesia, which is now a part of Zimbabwe. Paula Hawkins has many dimensions such as a journalist, financial Adviser and also as a freelancer. She turned to be a successful writer after the release of her psychological thriller, *The Girl on the Train*. She started her carrier with her romantic comedies under her pen name, Amy Silver. She as a graduate of Philosophy, Politics and Economics, she is the author of a financial guide to women, *The Money Goddess*. The works of her comprises of many thrillers and romance with woman protagonists such as Cassie Cavanagh in *Confession of a Reluctant Reconnista* and Rachel in *The Girl on the Train*. The novel received many positive reviews and had won prizes like, The Best Books of 2015 by *Kirkus Reviews* and 2015's Goodreads Choice awards in the category mystery and thriller. This novel remained in the New York Best Sellers consecutively for 13 weeks. It also hit the big screens under the production of Marc Platt and directed by Tate Taylor. In every book of hers she adds the crisis of the economy on the characters and their struggle to escape the complexities of their life. The women protagonists of her novels are not restricted to the conventional ideas of women. The characters are into many extreme conditions irrespective of their gender roles. The protagonist of two of his novels portray the challenges the women face and their views in facing these trials and tribulations.

The entire plot of the story revolves around the mental frustration of the three women narrators, Rachel, Anna and Megan, "*I might be a Barren, divorced, soon to- be homeless alcoholic*" (*The Girl on the Train*, 249). The characters in the story are the victims and victimises others for their psychological disorders. The lives of the characters in the novel have ambiguous future and are uncertain about their mental swings. The character of Megan is blessed with the happy family but then the character of Megan turns out to be complaining in nature. The character in the novel gets jaded both physically and mentally. The women characters in the story are the best example of the independence that they enjoy. Their mental swings and their

bodily search for lust has become their medicine for healing the rejection and dejection faced by them. The three main protagonist of the novel face three different crises in their lives. Rachel a drunkard finds solace in alcohol, Megan, suffers throughout her life with insomnia, and lastly its Anna, suffers her married life just for being her husband's mistress. The psychological pressures rule the novel. It's not just the psychological ailments that invade the story but it's the mental envy that steals their mental peace, "*I like most about it, having power over someone, it is intoxicating*" (*The Girl on the Train*, 239). Though the female characters are not directly interlinked they are linked with their emotional hatred towards each other. This is the only quality that ties them. When there was only envy among all the three, the misinterpreted truth is revealed only at the end when all the three women are in a helpless state due to the broken trust that can never be attached. Rachel playing a crucial role in the novel discloses every crime that had taken place that is buried beneath her sub-conscious mind. These characters are initially misinterpreted among them. This misinterpretation proves that, "*Appearance is deceptive*". Megan's death helps the narrator to bring all the characters close together by focusing on the death. As a cause of the death, Rachel and Anna are enlightened about the fake love that they were addicted to

Gynocriticism is a theory which originated long back in 1970's and become a part of feminism. Though being a branch of Feminism it has features differently from the other branches of Feminism. It was coined by Elaine Showalter, an American writer. Gynocriticism is about the peculiar writings of women and the writings which require subjectivity to its text. It also argues that unlike other works of literature, gynocriticism claims that the women writings require special tools to write the female attributes. Elaine Showalter says that this type of literature talks about the "Internalized consciousness" (*A Dictionary of Critical Theory*, 78) of the female minds. This theory breaks the stereotypical interpretation and the writings of the male texts and forms its own form and style of the text. Such deep understanding of the text is purely because of the women writers and the reflection of their womanhood in the society they live. Xu Yue, Chinese linguist says in her article *Contribution of Gynocriticism to Feminist Criticism* as,

The main concerns of gynocriticism are to identify what are taken to be the distinctively feminine subject matters in literature written by women; to uncover in literary history a female tradition, and to show that there is a distinctive feminine mode of experience, or "subjectivity," in thinking, valuing, and perceiving oneself and the outer world.

This gynocritical approach to a women's writing can help the readers not just to look at the writing as a feminist writing but as a writing that is distinctively framed to match with an individual's thoughts. Gynocritically, a women writer can be viewed as different writer but not as the imitators of the other feminist writers. The journey of a woman can be typically portrayed through the words of a female writer and the deep understanding of the texts can be comprehended through the gynocritical understanding of the readers. Thus this criticism can help the reader to understand the women's writing better and to deeply understand the feministic purpose of the writing.

The novel is purely the mental frustration of the three women belonging to the modern world. In the story there are many places where the modern world influences and partly becomes the stressful life style of the women's world, "*Scott stayed up watching TV and I'd forgotten to delete my browser history stupid mistake*" (*The Girl on the Train*, 287). The agonies of the

women include this technological revolution. The theory of Gynocriticism applies to the inadequacy and the intellectual inferiority that is present within the minds of the characters. The suffering and the pains of the women in the novel proves that such complex emotions are well understood by the analysis of the Gynocriticism. In the novel the protagonist prove that the women are always in need of man's contribution to their life even if they are self-sufficient, "Megan is an independent, wilful woman I'm sure of it, and if she were having an affair she might need to get away to clear her head" (*The Girl on the Train* 310). The character in the novel feels insecure of everything if the person they desire is someone else's. This forms to be the main plot of the story. All the three women are engulfed by the jealous of each other as a result none of the three is happy with their desired life. This is the psychology which can be understood and transformed it as a work that reflects the women's mind state and the inexplicable that a girl owns due to the lack of confidence on his partner. Women being the fairer sex inherently pose the quality of being conscious of their appearance. In the novel there are various instances where the characters think that their fading beauty can be a reason for their failing relationship especially Rachel and Anna. There are instances where they blame their own outlooks for the drift they have with their beloved, "I am not beautiful and I can't have children" (*The Girl on the Train* 388). The above mentioned words tell the pain and desperation of Rachel for being away from Tom. Throughout the novel the female characters highlight their inability and their run towards their identity and true love. The theory of Gynocriticism the women are at its centre and the universe is seen through the eyes of a women. Here in this novel the female characters and their narrations take us to the world of jilt and desperation of women. There is no chapter in the novel that contains the narration of female characters. It is explained in the book *From Dublin to Chicago: Some Notes on the Tour in America 1914,* as, "Gynocriticism arranged with a view to the convenience and delight of women". In the novel three main female characters enjoy narrating the inner conflicts of their minds and the ambiguity found in their affinity towards their life partners.

Paula Hawkins narration technique is mesmerizing as the story is narrated by Rachel, Anna and Megan take turns in narrating the exact state of their minds. Her style takes us completely to delve deep into the psychology of the three women. The style of the plot includes so many flashbacks and it comprises of the mood swings that the characters as a result of their psychological ailments. Rachel an alcohol addict forgets these actions that take place around her when she is drunk. So the author talks about the fragments of what happens when she was drunk. These clues add up to the suspense of the story. The thrill and the suspense of the story were entwined with memory and imagination. This is proved in all the instances of Rachel, "I feel as though she did, though I can't remember when. Before I went out? Or did I speak to her later?" (*The Girl on the Train*, 198) It is very evident through the narration that the characters in the novel are very much clear and remembering the good things that had happened and they completely are faked out when they are in the position to recall the unpleasant happening of their life. This tells how the characters wanted to escape from the nightmarish incidents of their life. "Remember those first days so clearly, walking around, shoeless, feeling the warmth of wooden floorboards underfoot, relishing the space, the emptiness of all those rooms waiting to be filled. Tom and I, making plans" (*The Girl on the Train*, 250). Hence the novel is understood and can be deeply read through understanding the world of women. The needs and the challenges faced by the women are entirely different from those of the male world. Hence before judging the women issues it is mandatory for that the proper understanding and the subjectivity is necessary to imbibe the quality of the women writings. "People I see every week, going to and fro. I

recognize them and they probably recognize me. I don't know whether they see me, though, for what I really am" (*The Girl on the Train*, 35).

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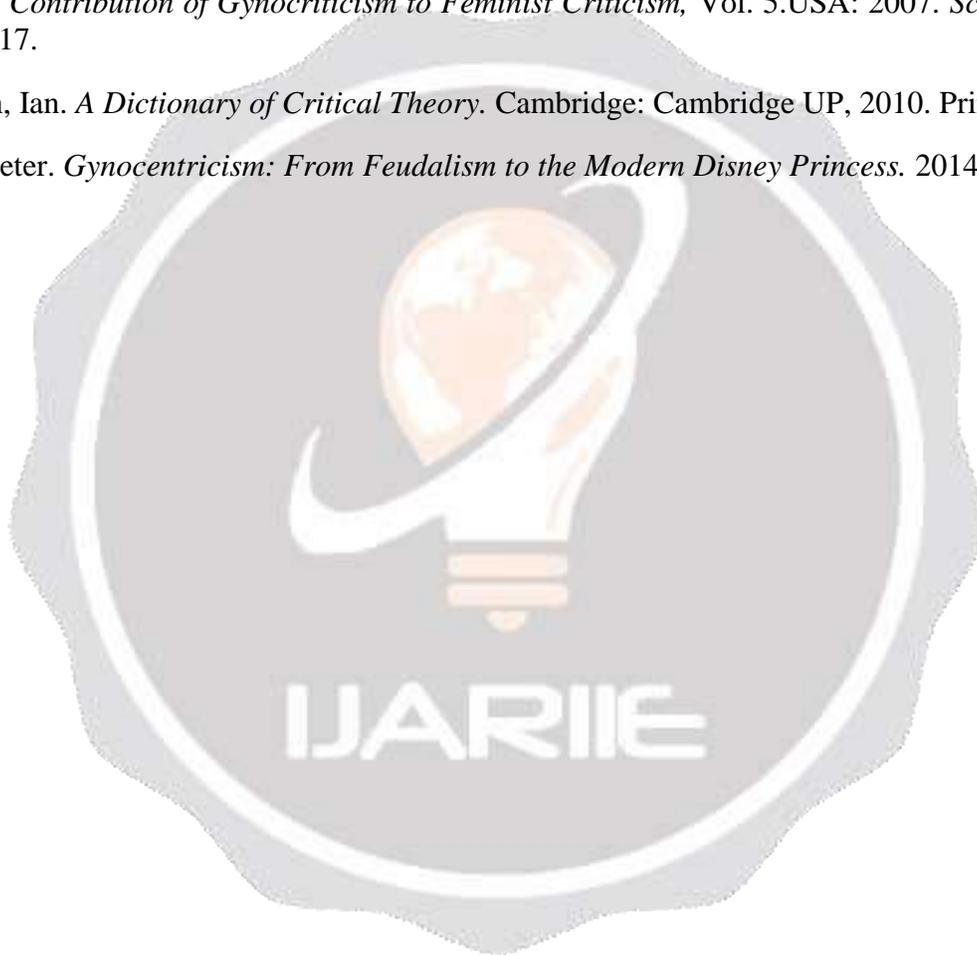
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Portrayal of Sisterhood: A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's

Sister of My Heart

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Abstract

This paper aims to study the theory of sisterhood as portrayed in Sister of My Heart by Chitra Banerjee. The story centers on the lives of two Indian girls, Anju and Sudha. The voices of the girls picture the story of their lives. In alternating chapters the reader closely follows the lives of Sudha and Anju through childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. Although some of the characters immigrate to the United States, most of the story is set in India. Indian traditions and culture are part of the rich portrayed in the novel and the descriptions of Calcutta are especially vivid. Sister of My Heart is a story about family, friendship, and the bond between sisters. The term sisterhood is used among feminists to express the connection of women who are not biologically related but are bonded in solidarity. Sisterhood is always a deeply rooted relationship that brings together women who are very different from one another in every way.

This paper also focuses on the friendship and their struggle to balance it in the midst of with conflicting passions and demands that come to women as a daughter, wife, and a mother.

Key words: *Culture and tradition, Immigration, relationship and love.*

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian American author and poet, known for her careful exploration of the immigrant experience, particularly that of South Asian women. Divakaruni's writing is fueled by her own experiences as a first-generation immigrant and a woman caught between cultures and traditions. Two of her novels, *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart* as well as a short story *The Word Love* were adapted into films. Readings of her works produce new meanings. She writes for children as well as adults and has published novels in multiple genres, including realist fiction, historical fiction, magical realism, myth and fantasy. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel *Sister of My Heart* is based on female bonding in a world dominated by men.

Sister of My Heart tells the tale of two cousins born on the same day, their premature births brought on by a mysterious occurrence that claims the lives of both their fathers. Sudha and Anju love each other as sisters and the bond between them so strong it seems nothing can break it. When both are pushed into arranged marriages, however, each discovers a devastating secret that changes their relationship forever. *Sister of My Heart* is the tale of two women, best friends whose lives are transformed by marriage, as one woman comes to California, and the other stays behind in India.

Anju is the daughter of an upper-caste Calcutta family of distinction. Sudha is the daughter of the black sheep of that same family. Sudha is startlingly beautiful; Anju is not. Despite these differences, since the day the two girls were born—the same day their fathers died, mysteriously and violently—Sudha and Anju have been sisters of the heart. Bonded in ways even their mothers cannot comprehend, the two girls grow into womanhood as if their fates, as well as their hearts, are merged.

When Sudha learns a dark family secret, that connection is threatened. For the first time in their lives, the girls know what it is to feel suspicion and distrust—Sudha, because she feels a new shame that she cannot share with Anju; and Anju, because she discovers the seductive power of her sister's beauty, a power Sudha herself is incapable of controlling. When, due to a change in family fortune, the girls are urged into arranged marriages, their lives take opposite turns. One travels to America, and one remains in India. When tragedy strikes both of them, however, they discover that, despite distance and marriage, they must turn to each other once again.

The term sisterhood is used among feminists to express the connection of women who are not biologically related but are bonded in solidarity. Sisterhood, which is defined as an intimate and nurturing asexual relationship between women, is an emerging motif in the fiction of contemporary Asian American women writers. In Divakaruni's fiction Sisterhood is always a deeply rooted, instinctual relationship that brings together women who are very different from one another in every way. This is especially in *Sister of My Heart*. The sisterhood of women often refers to their feminism, their participation in the women's movement, their support of other women or their recognition of female qualities that are unique to women's nature.

Sudha's wish starts to reflect in their bond. It appears as if God had heard her wish partially. The nuptial knot of the sisters unknots their bond and drives a wedge between the two. They were not only born on the same day but also wedded on the same day. Sudha moves with her husband and in laws who live in another part of India, Anju plans to join with her husband in United States after getting the visa. Marriage has driven Anju and Sudha apart. On the night of their wedding Anju becomes aware of her husband's attraction to Sudha. At this juncture the young women intertwined together from the birth are separated physically and mentally. A huge barrier is comes between them in the name of marriage.

The sister-knot remains to be the crux of the novel as their bond towards each other shapes the course of their lives. At times and circumstances pushed them to tear apart they are back together when they needed each other's support. Though this exchange of support is common between siblings who live far away as well as those who live next door to each other, the bliss of sisterhood blossoms in their life.

Divakaruni feels that sisterhood is one of the longest relationships one experiences in one's lifetime. The emotional portrayal of the two women at the heart of the *Sister of My Heart* is narrated in an artistic manner of the character's inner and outer worlds that usher in rich emotional experiences to uplift the story about Anju and Sudha, who learn to make peace with the difficult choices, circumstances that have forced upon them. Anju and Sudha grew up, they got into other relationships such as marriage that separated them for a period of time. But that did not build any gap between them, though they were distanced physically. Their relationship

included helping, sharing, teaching, fighting, and playing. Their familiarity and intimacy of the relationship helped them typically to know each other very well, and this intimacy suggests that they could provide support for each other in their lifetime depending on the situation. In many situations they both came together and understood each other's problems and dilemmas better than even their mothers could. Their relationship in adulthood was extremely close, psychologically close to each other that tended to be the way since their childhood. In times of illness and crisis, they provided emotional and psychological support to each other.

In *Sister of My Heart*, Divakaruni Chatterjee began their lives in close contact with a growing emotional bond for each other. Together they experienced the joys, pains, mystical tales, love, respect, council, and friendship and tiresome tasks that inevitably accompanied while growing up in a traditional Indian Bengali family in Calcutta. “Good daughters are bright lamps, lighting their mother’s name; wicked daughters are firebrands, scorching their family’s fame” (p.23). This exceptional sister-knot remains to be the core of the novel as their affection for each other increasingly shapes the course of their lives.

Sudha and Anju have been sisters of the heart. The two girls grew into womanhood as if their fates, as well as their hearts, were merged. The novel is exceptionally moving, dramatic, and exquisitely rendered. *Sister of My Heart* is a passionate novel about the extraordinary bond between two women wherein their jealousies, loves, and family histories threaten to tear them apart. A judicious consideration of all these factors appears to have influenced the author to explore the intricacies of the sisterly bond which ultimately provides one with a confidant mate in life.

Divakaruni wanted to speak and write the language of women. The characters of Divakaruni’s novels make the present day readers to analyze and introspect themselves to fathom the basic concepts of life. The novelist explores female bonding both in its social and psychological context. She foregrounds a variety of relationships including mother-daughter bonding, sibling intimacy and the association between widowed mothers in the narrative. There is no denying the fact that this strategic use of the narrative perspective promotes a better understanding of the inseparable bond of the sisters.

This paper seeks to explore the dynamics of female friendships in *Sister of My Heart*. Sisterhood relationship appears to be an abiding shelter for the members even in the face of a threat to the peace of the family or home. This reading of female bonding is also oriented towards a better understanding of the nature of women.

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Dissociative Identity in Women at Crossroads as Depicted in Preethi Nair's *Beyond Indigo*

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Abstract

A recent posting on the Dismal Scientist blog noted that the share of workers holding multiple jobs has been declining since 1994 and that the overall rate of workers holding multiple jobs has decreased. What emerges prominent is that the data is broken out by gender-namely, that working multiple jobs is more prevalent among women and young women in particular. The result may seem elating but when one is expected to fulfill the duties of two contradictory positions, Role conflicts occurs. Women take on multiple roles in today's society. Some roles are by choice and others are chosen for women, as demand increase to fulfill these roles women feel overwhelmed with time pressures and unmet obligations.

Nina the protagonist in the novel *Beyond Indigo* is a single women and high flying London lawyer who was born in India, her family coming to England when she was two and settling in the East, a background that shows Nina's struggle to balance conflicting cultures of her parents, rooted in tradition and the life she longs to lead. She lost her job, her boyfriend and faith in her guru in the space of 24 hours. Unable to tell her parents what has happened, she puts on suit every day and pretends to go to work. What she is really doing is escaping to a studio, where she begins to do what she loved-to paint. There are too many layers of pretense and something has to give way for Nina.

Preethi Nair is a British author of Indian heritage. She worked as a management consultant but gave up her job to become a writer, she has a wonderful way with dialogue, a sense of humor which comes across in her writing and she tackles the dilemmas faced by traditional immigrant families living in the modern Western world.

Preethi Nair is one of the diasporic writers rising up to prominence. She was born in 1971 in Palaghat, Kerala. She moved to London at the age of two and has been living there. She has written four novels. *Gypsy Masala* (2000) her first novel was rejected by many publishing houses. But Preethi took strenuous measures to ensure her book hitting the shops. Going through many hardships, she finally got the nod for her novels which include *One Hundred shades of White* (2003) and *Beyond Indigo* (2004) from Harper Collins.

Beyond Indigo, Preethi Nair's third novel is a fictionalized account of her journey in pursuit of a new life. The protagonist has brought out all the hardships, disillusionment and obstacles faced by the main character, Nina. As is typical of a modern life, disillusionment and obstacles are strewn in her path leading her into slough of frustration.

Preethi Nair uses colors to express the feelings of the protagonist in a very subtle way. Indigo finds a place in the title. Nina wants to go beyond the Indigo. Indigo is a color in the spectrum between 450 and 420 nanometers wavelength. Placed in between blue and violet, it is neither an additive primary color, nor a subtractive one. It is named and defined by Issac Newton, when he divided the optical spectrum. In this novel symbolically even though no one is

able to see that color, it “is about believing and knowing that something exists even if you can’t see it” (315). On this positive note the whole story is built.

Nina is a Lawyer for artists in London. She is born of typical orthodox Indian parents. To satisfy her parents, Nina goes to work. But her love and passion is for painting “I’d known I wanted to be a painter since the age of six” (18), says Nina. She somehow suppresses this passion for painting and works as a Lawyer, in order to please her parents. It is for her a great disappointment in life. Nina falls in love with Jean Micheal. She is not able to tell her parents about her love. At this juncture, Nina is unfortunately sacked from her job; she turns to her boyfriend Jean Micheal as she pins all her hopes on this man. When she goes to his place, she finds him consoling another woman in his bed. She becomes hopeless and totally dejected. It is more difficult for her to divulge the truth about her job. Also her upbringing makes it difficult for her to speak her mind to her parents.

Nina is disillusioned because she fails both in her personal life and in her professional life, but this frustration does not lead her to utter hopelessness. She masters strength and goes to work. She does not work as a lawyer but chooses, painting, instead. She wants to become a painter of life. She desires to become an amateur painter to free herself from despair which was gnawing into her soul. The color grey was enveloping her; she saw only grey everywhere. “The buildings were grey and dreary and set against a grey winter sky” (17). Her mind is clearly reflected through this color. She wants to come out of it. She wants ‘the sky’ to become “orange”(17). She wants to “soak” half in “the rays of an orange sky” (17). All these come true later in the story because of her strong positive outlook of life.

Nina puts on her suit and leaves home. She pretends to go to work as a lawyer but she goes to a painting exhibition of Matisse instead. As a painter, she enjoys the paintings displayed there. In the process, she becomes friendly with an Australian amateur painter. Gina, who was ready to rent her studio during the vacation.

Nina then goes to the studio to paint whilst her parents presume that she is working as a lawyer. In the mean time she agrees to marry Raj Metha, a Chartered Accountant from an affluent family from England. She has completed a painting of Budha, and dedicates this to her dead friend Ki by signing ‘For U Ki’. But it is misunderstood by others and they misinterpret it as a painting done by the Japanese Painter Foruki. Tasudi Margetti, a noted painter in the art world is intrigued by the style and the excellent choice of colors by Foruki, he wanted to meet Foruki. Nina pretends to be Foruki’s agent. She feels very small as an amateur painter among the tall professionals. She is not able to claim her own glory. This puts her into another frame of frustration.

Nina makes use of the opportunities however negotiates with Margetti. She attributes Foruki’s absence to his introvert and retrospective nature. Nina confesses truth to Gina on her return from Australia. She vividly explains to her the events which led her to organize the exhibition. Nina also discloses to her “My parents don’t know that I’m painting. Everyday I’ve been putting on a suit pretending to go to work, when really I have been putting suit pretending to go to work, when really have been coming here. To throw them off the scent, I arranged to see this guy who they wanted me to meet. I am getting married next month” (219). Gina is able to sympathize with Nina.

Nina is attracted towards Micheal, the owner of the restaurant gallery, where her exhibition that is Faoruki's exhibition was to be held. She is unsure of her feelings towards Raj, but she also does not want to disappoint her parents. There Nina is entangled in a web of emotions. She is frustrated because, on the one hand she is not able to say 'no' to her parents and on the other hand, she is unable to express her love openly to Micheal. "Guilt, angst and nerves all knotted in my stomach ready for one volcanic explosion, but all I had to do was to get through the evening" (232).

Preethi Nair brings in different strong colors like "red" and "green" into the story. Red is used as one of the additive primary colors. It is a strong color that conjures up a range of seemingly conflicting emotions from passionate love to violence. Green is also considered as one of the additive primary colors. It signifies growth, renewal, health and environment. These colors red and green also move towards a pleasant ending. Quiet contrary her fear, Nina's exhibition proves to be a success. She boldly tells her parents about her love for Micheal and stops her wedding with Raj. Her parents were shocked that she had been jobless for three months.

Role conflict occurs when demands that are incompatible are placed upon an employee such that are unavoidable. One experiences role conflict when they try to find themselves being pulled in various directions as try to respond to the many statues they hold. Dissociative identity disorder (DID), previously termed as multiple personality disorder (MPD) is a mental disorder characterized by at least two distinct and relatively enduring identities or dissociated personality. The more roles one serves, the more often Role conflict happens and causes various problems. It can be stressful as it requires managing the demands of different roles which means taking away ones energy and time. Such behaviors are accompanied by forgetfulness followed by memory impairment.

Another consequence of role conflict is Deviance. The expectations of any role can be thought as norms like the laws of one's country and violating these norms can lead to punishment. The problem of role conflict is probably worse now than it was 50 years ago. Back then most married women had one role: wife and mother. Most married men were performing the 'provider role'. These days, both men and women have more choices, which are good, but it also leads to lot more role conflict and stress.

In the beginning of the novel, Nina seeks an escape form a meaningless existence. She says, "So many times I had sad looking out of the window, imagining the sky to be orange, wishing that I could soak up the rays of an orange sky, fly out of the windows and have the courage to do something else, something that gave me meaning" (17). At the end, this feeling of frustration is totally gone. Nina boldly says, "Beyond Indigo is about believing and knowing that something exists even if you can't see it. It is about believing all possibilities..." (315). The taste of her first success has given her new hope in life. Her statement: "...there are always flowers for those who want to see them" (47), comes true in her life. The central idea of the novel can be interpreted as when one has doubts about being successful or on the ways to choose in life, one has to just listen to one's heart and follow one's dreams!

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Re-Capturing Women in Times of Insurgency in North-East India through Select Texts

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Abstract

North-East Indian women have a significant social role as compared to the women of other parts of the country. Since ages, evil practices such as dowry, sati, and female foeticide is absent in this region and post-Independence have seen many political and social upheavals in this part of India, where women have taken the public space. But a region shaken by insurgency and decades of unrest has shown a devastating effect on the psyche of the people and especially, women. The media has failed to support a wide national coverage. Nevertheless, considerable writers in English and other regional languages have centred their works on these issues. This paper will focus on the lives, roles and struggle of North-East Indian women during the insurgency period with the help of select texts by the writers of this region. This paper will present a background of the status of women in Northeast Indian society and at the same time, the vulnerability posed by insurgency.

Keywords: *women, insurgency, Northeast India, struggles, roles.*

Insurgency is defined as “Armed uprising or rebellion against a government.” It has specific aims and demands to be fulfilled and accepted by the ruling government. Insurgency basically arises when talks with the government fails without any plausible outcome. In India, the first armed struggle started in this region from Nagaland with NSCN (National Socialist Council of Nagalim). The reason behind the creation of this armed group was the forceful inclusion of Nagaland under India.

Insurgency was rooted post-Independence in Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura. These North-Eastern states have been heavily affected by the tussle between the Indian government and the insurgent groups. It has not only affected the present living condition but also the age old traditional way of life as living in times of insurgency constricts one’s movements, for instance, curfew.

The budding North-East women writers in English have centred their works extensively on the region from which they hail. Insurgency being a post-Independence phenomenon of the region largely looms in their writings.

This paper’s main focus revolves around women and the threatened environment in which they work and struggle to live. Women in North-East India never had to face the evils of society like dowry, sati, female foeticide, etc. unlike the other parts of the country. Their roles expanded beyond the household work to the community arena. This paper attempts to study the thinning of these roles usually played by women in times of insurgency. It is an attempt to present that a woman’s social life in North East India is less restricted by the society and more by the armed political situation. The primary texts chosen for this paper are by women writers and

the situations in which these writers present their women characters exemplifies their strength and will to survive in troubled times along with the aspect of helplessness and vulnerability.

Women in North-East India have roles to play not only in the private but public sphere as the men, "Most tribal traditions make a clear separation between family and society." (Buongpoi L. Ruth) Hunting, for instance, is seen as a community work where one male from every family participates. Similarly, during nettle harvesting (used for bark weaving), the ladies work together in the forest. But there is no denying that customary law shows that even North Eastern society is guided by gender inequality and gender taboos.

However, the arrival and the functioning of Indian military force was a turning point in the way of everyday life. Patricia Mukhim writes about the condition of women in times of insurgency, "While insurgency affects life in general, it has very devastating effects on women, but lack of documentation of the tremendous physical, psychological and mental sufferings undergone by women in conflict situations makes it difficult for the state to make appropriate interventions." The situations in a conflict area, to name a few, are grouping of villages, curfew and concentration camps. This not only dulls and limits the everyday life and work of the people but also has a tremendous impact on their psyche.

In times of emergency, the private life of women is extremely affected by the political upheaval rather than personal. They become the easiest target of the state actors. Rape and mass rape cases are one amongst the common evils the female lot faces. Temsula Ao in her short story collection, *These Hills called Home*, has re-captured and recorded the vile act of the Indian military forces. The raping of Apenyo and her mother Libeni is one of the most moving scenes in this book, the army dragging Apenyo by the hair and raping her "while a few other soldiers were watching the act and seemed to be waiting for their turn"(28). Libeni, Apenyo's mother came in support of her daughter and was raped too and "by the time the fourth one mounted, the woman was already dead" (28). The cause of such brutal acts as given by the forces is to teach the natives a lesson for helping the underground group. They do not stop with raping but decide the fate of a person's life, to kill or to leave behind maimed. The helplessness of a mother and the entire community at the hands of force is illustrated in this story.

Apenyo and Libeni died after being raped but there are another group of women, who carry on if not killed in the process. There is hardly any instance where a rape survivor commits suicide. In Uddipana Goswami's collection of short stories, *No Ghosts in This City*, a piece titled *This is How We Lived* brings out such related circumstance. Bogi Bai is found dead after being raped but the other village women are carried away in the dark by the army and returned back in the morning. They wash themselves in the river or pond and head back home. They are helpless and have accepted it as a routine. The explanation behind Bogi Bai's death seems to be her resistance as she didn't give herself up easily. Resistance becomes the reason behind her death.

There is another facet to the incident of rape in a woman's or a girl's life, lurking trauma and its effects. Patricia Mukhim has addressed this in her article, "Very often when peace returns, even temporarily in a certain conflict area, there is a tendency to forget the insidious effects that violence has had on women and children. Everyone believes that life goes back to normal, but does it really speak about women who are raped by state and non-state actors." Here, she talks about the lasting effect on a rape victim.

Zorami, a novel by Malsawmi Jacob set in the tumultuous period of Mizo insurgency depict this traumatising experience of several women characters along with the protagonist, Zorami. Zorami was raped at the age of thirteen by an army man while on her way to fetch water. The memory haunts her in the form of an "enormous black snake" (60) in her dreams.

Furthermore, it also affects her married life, "...she fears intimacy and recoils from becoming too close" (64). The family of a rape victim plays a vital role in providing her an assured existence. Zorami's parents diverts her attention towards education and gradually, nurtures her into her usual self but the mention of "damaged" by her father throws her into an emotional breakdown. Zorami is highly educated and grows up to become a college lecturer but still, the past has a powerful hold on her. Therefore, the protective shell, emotional support and understanding of family members are important for a rape survivor.

The plight of the two sisters, Rami and Mawii, shows how the absence of family can lead to ruin in such a delicate situation. Major Kohli dragged both the sisters and locked the younger one, Mawii with him and left Rami to his subordinates. They were released in the morning. Major Kohli is a symbol of exploit and brutality present in the Indian military force. With AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act) in effect which gave a license to the Indian army to shoot, arrest or interrogate anyone on ground of suspicion without warrant boosted the villainous activities of people akin to Major Kohli. Major Kohli continued the routine with the two sisters until both the sisters lost their mental balance, screamed and lived on the roadside. There was no one to return home to.

The dependency of the private life of women on political circumstance is further substantiated in their dealings with the loss of their loved ones. The mass recruit in the insurgent groups of respective tribes, ranging from a common man to an educated one is backed by the belief in the cause and therefore, leaving a loved one and a comfortable family life becomes a must. In *The Jungle Major (These Hills called Home)*, Punaba, a mere driver turns into an underground major leaving his wife, Khatila behind. While his life is full of struggle and uncertainty, Khatila's is also not comfortable. She is always under the scanning eyes of the Indian army who visits her frequently with questions related to Punaba. In such a situation, she cannot falter nor she does and refuses to give in and at the same time, manages not to infuriate them.

Sonny, a piece from Ao's book, *Laburnum for my Head*, deals with the absence of a loved one. The protagonist has given up Sonny, a law student to the cause. After the death or assassination of Sonny, the secret floppy regarding the lies and truths of the revolution is carried by her as Sonny asked her to publish, which might jeopardise her life. Finally, she embarks on a journey to publish it but finally, decides to keep it in a locker as there are eyes and ears stalking her movements. Both Khatila and Sonny's beloved live a life of loneliness and apprehension with required mental strength and patience.

There are two ways in which a public life is effected in troubled times of insurgency, restricted mode and suspension of movement. It is interesting to study the public life of Northeast Indian women in both ways as their social activities which is a part of community gathering or livelihood sees compression.

The women working in the fields have to return early for fear of Indian Army. The news of women being carried away from the fields and river by the army kept their feet and clock in check. This becomes crucial when a woman is the sole bread winner of her family. In Easterine Kire's *Bitter Wormwood*, Vilau is a widow and a single mother of a boy, Moselie. There were several single women like Vilau, who lost their men either to hunting or to the greater cause. They had to shoulder the responsibilities for the family but troubled times made their situation worse as they worked less on the fields, the harvest would also be affected.

The areas affected by insurgency always face problems on the educational front, for instance, shut down educational institution and lack of teachers. The luckier ones like Zorami

(Zorami) are sent out of their area to a safer one for schooling, Mizoram to Shillong in Meghalaya. The unfortunate ones like Neilhounuo (*Bitter Wormwood*) drops out of school. Neilhounuo also joins the underground group and becomes a representative of the women section recruited by the insurgent group. These group of women has to go through harsh training in the jungle with a survival instinct and working for the cause dominates their life.

The posting of government officials to the areas of unrest is often seen as punishment and many turn down the offer if possible. Especially, the posting of a woman in a government job is seen with a negative eye from the family members as women are the primary target against whom violence are meted out. Uddipana Goswami has captured this in her piece, “*The Hills of Haflong*” from the collection, *No Ghosts in This City*. The protagonist gets a job as a lecturer of Anthropology in Haflong Government College. Haflong is engulfed in a political turmoil with insurgent groups fighting against the state. Bomb blasts, gunshots and bandhs becomes a part of everyday routine and a working day would suddenly be put to halt. In such a situation, the protagonist has to convince her parents of her safety by staying at a government accommodation rather than a rented house.

Bogi Bai, the researcher in “*This is How We Lived*” from *No Ghosts in this City* comes from a city and settles in a village for her research work. She is related to the village and lives in the disturbed setting. As a researcher, she visits and talks to the villagers and out of friendly camaraderie, the villagers warned her about the situation, which especially brings harm to women. However, as a devoted researcher her sole concern is to record and collect information in her red diary and pertaining to her daily interviews with the villagers, she would reach home late. She was confident that no harm will come to her, backed by the villagers concern and powerful friends back in the city... “If I am in any trouble on my way back, somebody will come to help me.”(38) Soon, she was found death and “her *dakhana* (body –cloth) lying on the ground near her.” (38)

The suspension of movement is worse than these restricted ones. It occurs when the Indian military force comes down heavily on the common people and punish them for helping the insurgent group with food and other supplies. The punishment, a few to mention is, curfew, burning down granaries and villages, followed by grouping of villages, concentration camps, etc. The women suffer the most as in the words of Patricia Mukhim ... “the women who live in relief camps for years with no outlet for their sexuality, no access to traditional livelihoods, no access to reproductive healthcare and above all, no privacy.” They are forced to live surrounded by barbed wires, guarded by the Indian army with no access to their homes or fields in their own lands.

A woman’s predicament, both psychological and physical, which has a scarring impact on her life is highly ignored by the government. The media coverage regarding insurgency is mostly concerned with numbers and incidents, for instance, the number of people killed, place and death. The absolute power is vested on the Indian military force in this region by the government. The Indian government needs to adopt an understanding and effort for people’s life instead of instant use of force.

Therefore, about North East India, it can be said that women needs protection first, against Indian military force rather than patriarchal injustice as is the case with other parts of the country and the world. Women in this region work at par with the man, at social and individual level but these disturbed times has feebled their role as their life is at constant threat. The impact of using available force by the government has led the region to a sense of detachment by

endangering the lives of people at the fingertips of power. The crime is not against a single person but a whole civilization and the talks of law is absent.

The women writers chosen for study – Eaterine Kire, Malsawmi Jacob, Temsula Ao and Uddipana Goswami writes about the region and the life of women during insurgency times. They deeply feel the need to let the world know through their works and fill the loopholes of information. Their works become a diary of all the North Eastern women who suffered helplessly and have known vulnerability in their native land. Their works shows the effects of such situation on women both physically and mentally. Women are the most targeted and neglected side of the ugly tussle between the government and the insurgent groups. These women writers have voiced and represented this side.

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Eco Feminism in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

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Abstract

*Ecology is the study of the relationship between human groups and their physical and social environments. Feminism can be defined as the thought and movement toward the political, economic and social equality of women on par with men. Combining the words ecology and feminism, ecofeminism embraces the idea that the oppression of women and the oppression or destruction of nature is closely connected. Acclaimed as "the best work in English fiction", Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004), winner of Hutch Crossword Book Award of 2004, is acclaimed as the best work in English fiction a stunning work of fiction that exhaustively deals with the ecological and environmental conditions immensely affecting the local rhythms of life in Sundarbans, an archipelago of islands spread between the sea and the plains of Bengal on the easternmost coast of India. This focuses on Ghosh's women characters and how their life seems to revolve around an historical event which has left or finally leaves a deep impact on their lives.*

Combining the words ecology and feminism, **ecofeminism** embraces the idea that the oppression of women and the oppression or destruction of nature is closely connected. Elements of the feminist movement, the peace movement and the environmentalist and green movements can be seen in ecofeminism. Activist, educator and author Ynestra King went so far as to call ecofeminism as the third wave of the feminist movement. The term was coined in 1974 from the French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne's work, *Leféminismeoulamort*. Feminism can be defined as the thought and movement toward the political, economic and social equality of women on par with men. Ecology is the study of the relationship between human groups and their physical and social environments.

Eco-feminism also echoes beyond the lines. It re-imagines what the non-human world would achieve in the elimination of institutionalized oppression based on gender, class, race and sexual preference, and what may aid in changing woman, but at the same time, reshapes the culture with the help of her male counterparts.

Amitav Ghosh was born on July 11, 1956, in Kolkata to Shailendra Chandra and Ansali Ghosh. He travelled frequently to Bangladesh, Srilanka, Iran and India. Ghosh attended Delhi University and received his B.A and M.A and began his studies at Oxford and from there he was sent to Egyptian village for his research. The village was located in the delta of the river Nile and Ghosh lived among the "Fellaheen" or the Egyptian peasants. He graduated from Oxford earning

Ph.D and he worked in the Department of Sociology. His first novel *The Circle of Reason* was awarded France Prix Medic Etrangere. Some of his other novels are *The Shadow Lines*, *An Antique Land*, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, *The Glass Palace*, *Sea of Poppies*, *The River of Smoke*, *The Flood of Fire* and *The Hungry Tide*.

The Hungry Tide tells about a very contemporary story of adventure and unlikely love, identity and history, set in the most fascinating regions on the earth, off the easternmost coast of India, in the Bay of Bengal, lays the tiny island known as Sundarbans. For settlers here, life is extremely dangerous because of deadly tiger attacks. Unrest and eviction are constant threats. Tidal floods rise and surge over the land and occur without any warning leaving it devastated. In this vengeful beautiful island, the lives of three different people collide. Piyali Roy is a young marine biologist who comes in search of a rare endangered river Dolphin, Irrawaddy. Her journey begins with a disaster when she falls into crocodile infested water. Rescue comes in the form of young illiterate fisherman Fokir. Although they couldn't language between each other, they are powerfully drawn. Piya engages Fokir to help with her research and finds a translator Kanai Dutt, a businessman from Delhi whose Aunt and Uncle are long time settlers in the Sundarbans. All the three launch into isolated backwaters and experience powerful ravaging tidal surge. *The Hungry Tide* is an international success and a prophetic novel of remarkable insight, beauty and humanity.

The time period of *The Hungry Tide* represents the contemporary world. Each of the four prominent women characters life seems to revolve around an historical event which has left or finally leaves a deep impact in their lives. Nilima, who is the oldest female character, is shown to be the most ambitious character in the book. She shatters the traditional view of treating Indian women as Goddesses. She is not ready to compromise and let go of her lifelong dreams for the sake of supporting a group of refugees who are finally massacred. She is the dominant person in the household and the decision maker. She breaks away from the traditional view of women being demure and portrays an ambitious and authoritative personality. Her decision of not helping the people of Morichjhapi somehow ruins her family life as her husband gets more reclusive after the massacre.

Nirmal and Nilima try to carry forward the cultural legitimacy of Daniel Hamilton's utopian society. Nilima Mashima of Lusibari belonged to an aristocratic family with a good educational background. The reforms of William Bentick and Raj Ram Mohan Roy for the cause of woman, the spread of higher English education and the Western individualistic ideal prepared the ground for women to play active roles outside their limited family circle. The empowering elite section was in the process of converting the traditional past to modernity that percolated as a new sensibility about women's duties and responsibilities. This historical perspective though ambivalent in the context of colonial women's modernity, proved useful at times. Nilima at a point says, "I am not capable of dealing with the whole world's problems. For me the challenge of making a few little things a little better for in one small place is enough. That place for me is Lusibari" (THT 387). Unlike her idealistic dreamy husband, she remains within possible and practicable limits. In the process she is stern and strict. Yet she reveals her deep love, though suffering immense pain at his incongruous behaviour. Nilima is strongly an ecofeminist. She works for the welfare of the locale people by forming a trust and educating people around. This would enhance the minds of the people so that it would prevent them from cutting trees, poaching and so on.

Kusum is akin to nature and she cannot stay away from the tide country. "Many months passed and we spoke of coming here: that place was not home; there was nothing for us there.

Walking on the iron, we longed for the touch of the mud; incircled by rails, we dreamed of Raimangal in flood” (THT 164). This closeness brings her back to Morichjhapi.

She is very strong in her traditional beliefs and considers dolphins as the messengers of God. “I call them Bob Bibi messengers”. All through the time, the boat was at the spot, the creatures kept breaking the water. Kanai cannot imagine why it came there and what made them linger. Kanai said, “There came a moment when one of them broke the surface with its head and looked right at me. Now I saw why Kusum found it so easy to believe that these animal were something other than they are. For where had seen a sign of Bob Bibi, I saw instead, the gaze of the poet” (THT 235).

Kusum strongly believes, Dokkhin Roi is the evil, in the manifestation of tiger. She thinks, “The animal was none other than Dokkhin Roi in disguise and the demon shook the earth with a roar as he started his charge. At the sight of that immense body and those vast jowls, flapping in the wind like snails, mortal terror seized Dukhey’s soul. Even as he was losing consciousness, he recalled his mother’s parting words, and called out: O mother of mercy, Bon Bibi, save me, come to my side”(THT 235).

Kusum, feels as an outsider on the main land. Tide country's nostalgic past calls her back, and she flees to Morichjhapi with her son Fokir to join the refugees of Bangladesh, who become the cause of her life. This concept of self as potentially unified with a place and an aspiration for psychic unity with the needy becomes her hub of freedom. This self-assertion leads her to the tide country and makes her stretch out a helping hand to refugees and tribal. She asks for Nilima's help to safeguard her people through her trust. Nilima refuses, as she cannot go against the government. The equivocal voices of these refugees allow for the deconstruction of historical and ideological categories of tribal settlement. Kusum instigates the radical spirit in Nirmal in his old age he breaks away with his armchair past and joins her, developing an ideological intimacy. Kusum is a person whom one cannot define in terms of modern or traditional. Kusum has an unfortunate childhood as her parents meet unfortunate ends, her father being killed by a man-eater and her mother being tricked into prostitution. She escapes to the town to run away from Dilip, the man who sold her mother and now was after her. Here she meets Rajan whom she marries but her happiness is shortlived as he is run over by a train.

Kusum becomes a part of a forgotten past which finds no mention in the history. The reason being the Government of India tried its best to cover up the massacre as it would have spilled mud on its image and dirtied it. In case of Nilima, history affects her life but in the case of Kusum she became a part of history which eventually kills her but she dies content; dying for a cause she believes in.

Piya is filled with scientific ideas and believes in facts. She brings out the scientific description and the data with regard to the Irrawady dolphins. Her interest in the research of the dolphins is spotted out when she cares for the dolphins and also the eagerness and the excitement in knowing more about it.

Piya had a bad childhood due to the quarrels between her parents and she might have taken up the job of a scientist so that the research work kept her away from her home especially after the death of her mother. She gets Moyna's husband Fokir involved in her research work by hiring him as her boatman. Towards the end of the story we see that the tide carry them to Garjontola which coincidentally also happens to be the last place Fokir's mother Kusum travelled on before being massacred in the Morichjhapi incident. Fokir loses his life in an attempt to save Piya. The incident makes Piya comeback to India and settle in Lusibari as she feels that she is responsible for Moyna and her son, Tutul and to start a trust to save the dolphins.

Modernity provides the new women with a reformulated society based on a discourse of science. She is aware of her vulnerable conditions as a scientist. The massive storm brings death and erases her long held notions. It also reveals her concern for Fokir. Fokir, the illiterate, simple, untrained fisherman, saves her with his basic instincts. He recites the legend of BonBibi, a mythical tiger Goddess of the tide country which is translated by Kanai for Piya. "Tilting back his head, began to chant and suddenly the language and the music were all around her, flowing like a river, and all of it made sense; she understood it all. Although the sound of the voice was Fokir's, the meaning was Kanai's, and in the depths of her heart she knew she would always be torn between the one and the other" (THT 360). She is torn between the poetry of Fokir's unspoilt life and the attraction of Kanai's prosaic lifestyle.

One cannot perceive the character of a person, words and actions are like the air above the water sending ripples on the surface but reality lies deep beneath it. Though Piya and Fokir cannot understand each other's language but they communicate effectively. Fokir though illiterate understand the needs of Piya when they are left stranded on a boat. Piya is impressed by Fokir's gentleness hidden beneath his raw covering and his immense knowledge of the river. Fokir is married to Moyna but loves Piya for her commitment towards the dolphins. Piya is the only person who has acknowledged and understood the intellect and talent within Fokir. The story continuously unfolds and reaches the stage when Piya leaves Lusibari only to come back and show her true measure, to perform her duty towards her fellow being. She comes back to start a memorial and dedicates it to Fokir.

Moyna, working as a nurse in the trust is noted for her self-respect and dignity. She wants to educate her son, so that his future would be better than hers. She works for the betterment of the people. Moyna Mondal and Piyali Roy represent two different social spectrums. Moyna's life is a struggle. As a tribal, acquiring basic necessity and living life with dignity itself, is problematic. In addition she is a woman with soaring aspirations, unlikely for one of tribal descent, she stands in the novel as a woman with self-respect. These women, Nilima and Kusum, Piya and Moyna, share a commonality of experience. It is their desire for continuous reaffirmation that makes them strong. They never lose their faith in the essential grandeur of their existence.

A lot of similarities can be drawn between Piyali Roy and Moyna even though their lives are miles apart. Piya is a cetologist who comes to Lusibari to do her research about a rare river dolphin. She is of Indian parentage but is an American citizen. Moyna, on the other hand, is a local who works as a nurse and wants something better in life maybe to become a doctor or to educate her son so that he can have a better future.

In continuity of the tradition developed by Tagore, Narayan, Sahgal, Ghosh develops women who are strong, can express themselves, do things, travel, come to their own decisions and live independently. They are out of the purposive control of men. They practice ideas which they value the most. They are symbols of growth, progress and forward movement. In Kusum there is a fusion of psychological and sociological trauma. They are strong women for whom sex, though important, plays a small part and on their own terms. It results more as a culmination in a relationship, as of Kusum with Horen. Ghosh's major women character get rid of their dependency needs, reveal their identity, breaking the pattern of sexuality and sensuality, and take their place as whole human beings freely and equally along with men.

It is evident that history and tradition play a very important role in shaping the life of the women. On one hand, we have characters like Moyna and Nilima who are trying to change the traditional identity which have been forced upon the Indian women through the passage of

history. Times have changed but new factors form part of the shadow lines which divide women's world. Both Kusum and Piya are directly responsible for the betterment of ecology whereas Nilima and Moyna are indirectly responsible; they educate people who are directly associated with nature for livelihood.

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Psycho-Socio Perspective of Women in the Novel *Chains*

by Laurie Halse Anderson

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to bring out the status of slaves until the eighteenth century mainly focusing the plight of women slaves in Laurie Halse Anderson's novel chains through the Principal character Isabel. The novel Chains is written with one of the greatest social evil that existed during nineteenth century in America. Isabel struggles on both physical and mental levels and endures intense trials to find the freedom that she believes is a part of her destiny. The title 'Chains' helps in bringing to light the condition in which Isabel and the American nation live. It is also a part of the condition that Isabel lives as a slave. She seeks to recognize her own voice and her voice acknowledged. At the same time, her journey to freedom is analogous to the freedom of the nation. The author thus tries to enlighten the readers with the knowledge that 'Everyone deserves freedom'. No matter what the position, social status, color and creed of a person is, she deserves to be herself in the world. Anderson emphasizes the idea of freedom and its significance through the voice of the slaves.

The aim of the paper is to bring out the status of slaves until the eighteenth century mainly focusing the plight of women slaves in Laurie Halse Anderson's novel *chains* through the principal character Isabel.

The nineteenth century in America saw the expansion of the United States into thirty one states. The population of the union grew as its victory expanded. There were settlers from different parts of the world migrating in. As a result, there were ethnic tensions and slavery. In order to redress, the Congress banned the import of slaves in 1807 which turned out to be a failure. The slaves often revolted against their plight but were stifled by the other local rebellions. The evils of these social evils were also written down by former slaves who managed to escape to the north. One such early narrative was Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845) that recounted the narrator's life as a slave. The first decade of the twentieth century saw the works of writers like Henry James, whose masterpiece *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) highlights the conflict between American individualism and European social custom and its impact on the situation of Americans in Europe through the life of Isabel Archer who is the principal character of the book.

The contemporary American literature in English also witnessed the contribution of works to Young Adult literature by the famous writer Laurie Beth Halse who is better known as Laurie Halse Anderson. She was born on October twenty third in the year 1961 to Frank A. Halse Jr. and Joyce Holcomb Halse in Potsdam, New York. Young Anderson showed interest in creative writing at her second grade itself. She was an avid reader who found her fantasy in science fiction.

The first recognized novel of her, *Speak* (1999) was adapted into a film in 2004 with Kristen Stewart donning the role of Melinda Sordino, the protagonist of the novel. This was also selected as a finalist for the National Book Award lauded by critics for portraying a thirteen year old girl's reaction to the society through silence after becoming a rape victim. It has been translated into sixteen languages. The next novel was *Fever 1793* (2000) which was followed by *Catalyst* (2002) where the action took place in the same school as *Speak*. It was also honored as a Barnes and Noble Best Teen Book of 2002 and won American Library Association Best Book Award for Young Adults. Anderson's next novel *Prom* (2005) was nominated for several state awards. Her fourth novel *Twisted* (2007) won awards such as the ALA Best Book for Young Adults and ALA Quick Pick for Young Adults for the year 2008. *Wintergirls* (2009), which was honored as ALA Quick Pick for Young Adults, narrates the story of two girls one of whom is dead, suffering from bulimia and anorexia. It had been published in fifteen different countries.

The historic novels of Anderson gave her a strong hold in the American literary circle. Her *Chains* (2008) is one such book that dealt with slavery during the Revolutionary War Era. This was nominated for the National Book Award and was recognized for the Scott O' Dell Award for Historical Fiction. This was the first novel in the *Seeds of America Trilogy* which was followed by *Forge* (2010), which was selected for Kirkus Best Book for Teens: Historical Novels 2010 and was also one of the Young Adult Library Services Association's (YALSA) 2011 Best Books for Young Adults. Her most recent novel, *The Impossible Knife of Memory* was published in 2014. Anderson was honored and recognized for her excellent body of work rendered in the novels *Speak*, *Fever 1793* and *Catalyst* from 1999 to 2002, for her significant and lasting contribution to young adult literature. She was also a runner-up for the Michael L. Printz Award and the National Book Award for Young People's Literature.

The novel taken for study is *Chains*, the most famous historical fiction of Anderson's works. The study tries to evoke pre-historic consciousness, in the society, which had subjugated the subalterns through various modes. It runs around the life of a thirteen year old girl named Isabel, who is an African American by birth. The forty five chaptered book follows her story of defending herself and her little sister Ruth from slavery that had caused tumult in their lives after the death of their mother. The novel also highlights important historical events that took place during the Revolutionary War from 1776 to 1777. The novel is an emotionally moving work of art that reflects the perspective of a teen and her stand against the social evils that she is forced to face.

Slavery was a form of free labor which existed as a legal institution from the early years of colonial period. It is estimated that around twelve million Africans were shipped as slaves to the American continent. Slaves were usually the Blacks of African descent and owned by Whites. Children of slave mothers always became slaves themselves. Freedom could be attained only by running away, though illegal or under the free will of their owner. This form of labor was vital to the agricultural economies of the south which in return yielded to the nation's prosperity.

Slave holders and the commodities of the south had a strong influence on United States politics and in fact, many presidents themselves were slaveholders. Slavery was a burning issue in the United States politics during 1770s. The slaves were treated across the nation variedly depending on the conditions, times and places. The treatment of slaves was commonly characterized by brutality, degradation and inhumanity. The colonies denied slaves the opportunity to learn, read or to write, fearing that knowledge would make them

rebellious or escape. Some states even prohibited religious gatherings of slaves which the owners doubted would kindle communication and lead to rebellion.

Slaves were punished by whipping, hanging, branding, burning, imprisoning and even raping. Disobedience was considered to be a sin and punishments usually came out as a result of the sin. Sometimes the masters attacked them even to show their dominance. Sexual abuse of slaves was rooted from a patriarchal southern culture that looked at all women, both Blacks and Whites as property. Many slaves fought back against such harassments and some even died resisting.

Anderson begins the novel with the dream of Isabel, a thirteen year old African American slave, of a free future after the death of her owner Miss. Mary Finch. Her excitement on the freedom evidently shows what a tough life it has been as a slave in an alien soil. She recounts the will of Miss Finch which states that Isabel and her five year old sister Ruth are to be legally freed after her death. When she explains the same to Mr. Robert, the nephew of Finch who has just arrived, he simply ignores her by telling "slaves don't read" (9). She understands that his intentions were not sentimental but financial when Robert discusses his plan of selling the girls at a cheaper rate. This is to free himself of the hindrances from acquiring the wealth that his aunt has left behind. They come across an inn where the girls get to meet Jenny who empathizes with them and offers to buy them. However Robert chooses to sell them to the Locktons in New York. On the way, she reminisces her past and the way her father was killed when he tried to voice his protest when they were sold as a family by an old Mr. Malbone, back when Ruth was an infant. The incident has still remained a scar in Isabel's memory. The future in New York as a slave again, scares her. Her anxiety is reflected when she puts her thoughts into words as, "I pulled her (Ruth) into my lap and stared straight ahead, afraid that if I looked back, I might break" (14).

The first day of their slavery at the Locktons' place begins rather frightfully. Isabel witnesses an investigation made on the locktons by Bellingham, a Patriot soldier who has been waiting for an opportunity to prove that the Locktons were actually the supporters of the King of Britain. The anguish of the rebellious Patriots of America against the colonizers are expressed through his character. Though Bellingham fails to prove the Locktons guilty, Isabel confronts her first form physical abuse from Mrs., Lockton because Ruth giggled during their conversation. The moments of embarrassment and weakness are explained by Anderson as "my cheek burned, but I fought back my hot tears and tried to swallow the lump in my throat. No one had ever slapped my face like that, not once in my whole life. *Better me than Ruth, better me than ruth*" (33).

Isabel gets acquainted with another slave boy, Curzon who had accompanied Bellingham during the investigation. Madam Lockton sends her with him to fetch them some clean water. This is when she comes to know more about the boy as well as the Locktons. Curzon says, "Lockton is a dirty Loyalist" (38) and that Isabel can have a free future if she agrees to spy on the Locktons and report to his master. He explains the power of the Patriots through his words "My master and those he serves, the rebels, the congress. We're fighting for freedom from people like Lockton" (39). Though she initially hesitates, Isabel decides to help the rebels in order to secure her life and her sister's. Becky Berry, the white servant of Mr. and Mrs. Lockton teaches her, her daily chores and warns her about madam's bad temper and the unsafe position of slaves in New York – "They're Loyalists, Tories. That means we're Tories too, understand?" (46). This explains that even choice of one's identity was

denied to slaves during 1770s. They were expected to get accustomed to the identity of their owners and follow what was expected of them to follow. Isabel suffered the same where she was denied of her right to have an identity of her own. And so were the lives of slaves in the country.

Isabel gradually learns to get accustomed to her chained life. Still Mrs. Lockton's treatment of Ruth disturbs her then and there. Though her sister is not subjected to much physical tasks, Ruth's separation from her throughout the day makes her insecure. "it wasn't right. It wasn't right for one body to own another or pull strings to make them jump" (51).

Isabel is once ordered to serve food to Mr. Elihu Lockton and his other Loyalist friends, where she is fascinated by the collection of books in their library that her "eyes were as starved for words" as her stomach was for dinner (59). She also observes that their conversations were merely targeted on getting the rebel army out of sight. She is also fascinated by the collection of Mr. Lockton which he draws out sheets of papers from the chest that had linens of Madam Lockton, which contained details of their plan and association with the conspiracy against the Patriots.

The same night Isabel escapes out of the house to inform what she has known so far about the Locktons, to Curzon, hoping that would help her unshackle the chains of slavery. The only means of solace she gains is her moments with Lady Seymour, the aunt of Mr. Lockton who had a heart for compassion. She feeds the girl with enough food whenever they get to meet. Meanwhile, Mr. Lockton gets arrested for his involvement in the conspiracy though it does not help Isabel in anyway. Whenever Becky brought gossips from the market, Isabel "tried to ignore the wild stories and stay alert for something, anything," that she "might use to secure our (their) freedom" (81).

There is also another instance, when Isabel overhears Mr. Lockton's yet another conspiracy in the assassination of George Washington. "The beast has grown too large... if it breaks free of its chains, we are all in danger. We need to cut off its head" (89). Meanwhile Madam Lockton mistakes one of Ruth's fits to be possession of some evil and threatens that she would not keep evil in her house. This weakens the already disturbed state of Isabel. "There was a lump on her head, but it would go away. Madam's threats would not" (97). She once again undertakes the risk of informing the conspiracy of the locktons. This time, she informs Colonel Regan, after everyone is asleep. Trusting the girls words, the officers give her a code 'ad astra', so that it would make her next arrival easier.

Mr. Lockton comes to know that his plot to kill Washington was uncovered and leaves the city. Anderson juxtaposes some historical incidents with the story of Isabel. The news of Declaration of independence is delivered in the novel with the following words: "Ten days after the British flooded the river with their ships, news that the Congress had declared independence arrived in New York" (124). She also brings out the mob attack of the statue of King George III. "They gathered into a mob on the Bowling Green around the massive statue of King George III" (125).

Meanwhile, the infuriated Mrs. Lockton informs her that she sold Ruth to a physician's family in Nevis which Isabel shall never forgive. She becomes involuntarily violent and reacts to Madam's indifferent words.

Madam looked down without seeing me; she looked at my face, my handkerchief, my shift neatly tucked into my skirt, looked at my shoes pinching my feet, looked at my hands that were stronger than hers. She did not look into my eyes, did not see the lion inside. She did not see the me of me, the Isabel (134).

Mrs. Lockton fiercely throws a huge painting hung on the wall on Isabel's head and when the circumstances become worse, Isabel had to run for her life. She escapes into the rebel territory where she hopes to escape from her chained life. But the reaction from the Patriot army members comes as a jolt to her. Colonel Regan shows his helplessness in aiding the girl. "The law binds my hands and my actions. You must return with your mistress." (140). With that, Isabel had no option but to go back to Mrs. Lockton and what followed was tragic.

They tied my hands together with prickly rope. They tied the rope to the back of a cart. They tied a horse to the front of the cart. The horse lifted one tired hoof after another and dragged me up the broad street where people smiled and laughed and pointed. My eyes cast down. The cobblestones mocked too. (142)

The following day, the court orders her fate with a permanent reminder of the day – a brand 'I' on her cheek that stood for 'Insolence'.

The glowing iron steaked in front of my face like a comet. The crowd roared. The man pushed the hot metal against my cheek. It hissed and bubbled. Smoke curled under my nose. They cooked me. (148)

After all the painful storms she had gone through, Isabel wakes up after six days in Lady Seymour's house who takes good care of her. When she is brought back to the Lockton house, she loses faith in everything – the rebels especially.

"Whenever I heard the words 'liberty' or 'freedom', I wanted to spit in the dust" (158). She felt so betrayed that she never wanted to see Curzon again. Her days pass on deliberately with doubts if the British would help them. She listens to a lot of stories from the market about the freedom of slaves in Virginia if they escaped to their camp.

Meanwhile the British invade New York that started with the firing of a hundred ships' cannons. She gets acquainted with another captain Campbell whom she pleads with to be hired as a servant. But her expectations once again meet with disappointments as he refuses to accept her service as they are allowed to employ only slaves who run away from rebel owners. "I do not hold with slavery, but I cannot help you. We do not interfere with Loyalist property. Return to your mistress" (182).

Lockton informs his wife that Lady Seymour is in need of Isabel to serve her as she is sick. It was during those tranquil days that the historical fire took place in New York. Isabel manages to rescue Lady Seymour though the left side of Seymour's body is paralyzed.

Isabel soon comes to know that New York has been occupied by the British and they had also taken some of the Patriots prisoner, including Curzon. This makes her heart melt and she visits him often informing the other authorities and fellow prisoners that he is her brother. He tells her that he had seen sights from the battle that are "not fit for the eyes of any person" (219). It was a consequence of the battle of Fort Washington. She soon starts frequenting her visit to meet Curzon in the prison without the knowledge of her owner, in spite of the latter's warnings. The plight of the prisoners under the command of the British are brought to light through the representation of Curzon. Day by day his physical ailment becomes worse.

"He did not answer me. That was an answer in itself" (237). She agrees to help Captain Morse in passing on information to Didbin, another officer after he consents to return the favor by taking care of Curzon's health.

A book-seller hands over a copy of Thomas Paine's work *Common Sense*. She begins reading the book recalling what once her mother told her about the book. "Momma

always said that Common Sense was far from the common, that's why it was so special when you found it" (240). Soon the book becomes a part of herself influencing her thoughts and actions. The book teaches her why freedom should be fought for and how good it is to fight injustice. She realizes after reading the book that "the words were dangerous, every one of them... Mr. Paine knew how to stir up the pot; he went right after the king and attacked the crown on his head" (271).

One day, Isabel is caught red handed by Mrs. Lockton when she was talking to a rebel officer. She demands for the note in Isabel's hand which she throws away into the flame. The angry woman swears to sell her sister. This actually relieves Isabel because she comes to know that her sister has not been sold yet. The thought that finding her is not impossible, keeps her alive. She understands that Ruth has been moved to Charleston and is now determined to find her. Since Queen Charlotte's birthday was approaching, madam gets a little occupied with the arrangements for the party. Isabel makes right use of this and escapes the house.

Lady Seymour who understands the plight of the little girl, offers some money and wishes her a safe journey. Isabel, now feels that abandoning Curzon would be a wrong thing to do and plans to take him with her. Since his health is at stake, Isabel dares to hide him with a blanket under a wheel barrow and travels a long distance. In exhaustion, she dozes off and when the two wake up, they realize they had crossed the river Jordan. The novel thus ends with the beginning of their journey to rescue Ruth who is now in Charleston and the story ends with the beginning of their journey.

An instance from the novel is of Abigail Adams' letter to her husband.

I desire you would remember the ladies and be more generous and favourable to them than your ancestors. Do not put such unlimited power into the hands of the husbands. Remember all men would be tyrants if they could. . . That your sex are naturally tyrannical is a truth so thoroughly established as to admit of no dispute, but such of you as wish to be happy willingly give up the harsh title of master for the more tender and endearing one of friend (79).

This quote expresses the position of women at that time and how Adams wished it would change. She tries to bring about change in the lives of women by requesting her husband to incorporate that into law and it becomes evident that there were more than just societal problems during the age. Domestic violence and dominance of men over their wives and other women at home were also other important evils to be addressed. Anderson uses this quote to emphasize the role of women through the character of Mrs. Lockton, where in the chapter that follows the quote, Mr. Lockton is angry at his wife and enforces his political opinions on her by tyrannical means. Madam Lockton's situation is not a result of only her husband's dominance. There were other tyrants involved because their fight was usually a result of political discussions, influenced solely by men. There were very few women in power at the time and this can be considered in formulating views of the society that is written about.

Isabel's mother has a strong role to play in establishing the foundation of bravery that defines her daughter's character. She does not establish a fully active role in the narrative. However, she exists in Isabel's mind and through this she understands the significance of bravery. The institution of slavery that binds Isabel extinguishes bravery. In such cases, the mother plays an important role in fighting brutal circumstances. "Momma taught us to fight the evil inside us by overcoming it with goodness. She said it was a hard

thing to do, but it made us worthy” (281). She has taught her enough on how to be brave in the face of evil, in all these instances, Isabel’s mother becomes a role model for her bravery.

Anderson portrays freedom to be something that demands active pursuit and worth a war. It is elusive if pursued easily. Isabel struggles on both physical and mental levels and endures intense trials to find the freedom that she believes is a part of her destiny.

The title ‘Chains’ helps in bringing to light the condition in which Isabel and the American nation live. It is also a part of the condition that Isabel lives as a slave. She seeks to recognize her own voice and her voice acknowledged. At the same time, her journey to freedom is analogous to the freedom of the nation. The nation’s bondage and servitude to England implies to the ‘Chains’ that shackle its liberty. For both Isabel and the nation, the journey is necessary to validate their own self for which the ‘Chains’ should be overcome. There is a great deal of struggle and sacrifice needed in both the journey to freedom transcends the chains that once defined their identity. The significance of the title is one in which ‘Chains’ represents what Isabel and the nation used to be. Through sacrifice and struggle, this becomes a part of their past, giving way to the present and future where the chains are visibly fading into darkness and thus redefining their identities.

An introspective reading of Isabel’s statement “I was chained between two nations” (180) explains that Isabel finds herself chained to the Patriotic cause of the newly conceived nation. Yet, she also understands in the course of her struggles that the patriotic cause will not yield her the liberation of slavery that she expects. She is perspective enough to understand that the fight for the patriotic institution does not apply to the slaves within the nation. Sadly, they are not considered at all. The chaining that Isabel refers to here reflects her desire to want freedom for the Patriots, as she identifies herself as one among them. Yet she is equally chained to the idea that as an African American, slavery is not going to be abolished in the new nation. Hence her chaining here consists of wanting freedom for the nation and for her own sense of self. Isabel can be seen as being chained between these two nations – to patriots as there is no hope of freedom from their dominance and to the loyalists as the patriots themselves are chained to the English. In such an exploration, Anderson’s characterization of Isabel is complex and intense.

“She cannot chain my soul” (246). Isabel utters these words in her mind after Madam Lockton said that she could not visit the prison anymore. The statement implies that Madam may beat her and control her body but she does not control Isabel’s soul. Isabel would still believe what she wants to believe.

The author thus tries to enlighten the readers with the knowledge that ‘Everyone deserves freedom’. No matter what the position, social status, color and creed of a person is, she deserves to be herself in the world. Anderson emphasizes the idea of freedom and its significance through the voice of the slaves. Though the message is revealed through Isabel, an African in an American land; it is a message for any individual looking out for freedom and power to exercise her own thoughts. It ultimately remains a lesson for those who seek various aspects of life, that the power of endurance is no less than violence and war.

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Theory of *Self-efficacy* and Portrayal of Women as Crisis Managers in Modern Society through the Protagonist Girija in *Lamps in the Whirlpool*

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Abstract

Empowerment of women has become the topic of the day. Many writers beginning from the early times till the recent days highlight the feministic aspects in their works. Women are portrayed as crisis managers in most of the fictions; meeting the various demands and tackling the problems they face. This paper attempts to focus on the revolutionary character Girija in the novel Lamps in the Whirlpool by Rajam Krishnan. Girija, an educated protagonist of the novel struggles in a male chauvinistic society. She serves as a humble house-wife and a responsible mother, but when she realizes that she is treated not more than a slave, she breaks open the cage of slavery. The social dominance theory, theory of recognition and theory of self-efficacy are detailed with reference to the protagonist. She drastically makes her shift from a dependent woman to an independent empowered woman, taking control over the situation. Thereby, Girija serves not only as a crisis manager but also as a role-model for all the women in this society.

Key words: *Women, empowerment, social dominance theory, theory of recognition, theory of self-efficacy, crisis managers, male chauvinism.*

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines Feminism as “the theory of political, economic and social equality of the sexes and the Cambridge Dictionary defines it as “the belief that woman 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.” Feminism originated in the perception that there is something wrong with the society’s treatment of women and it attempts to analyze the reasons and dimensions of women’s oppression. Feminism can be considered as a diverse, competing and often opposing collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies, largely motivated by or concerning the experiences of women, especially in terms of their social, political and economic inequalities. There are numerous works of literature since centuries depicting the portrayal of women. State and issues concerning women have been penned down as poems, prose pieces, articles, fictions, plays and much more. There is familiarity with women characters and their portrayal starting from Shakespearian time to the present, where Feministic issues are taken as a vital topic. The poem “Daddy” by Sylvia Plath is an unforgettable piece of literature depicting the male chauvinistic society. Indian writing emphasizes on the feministic issues and of the struggle a woman faces based on her gender, culture and the traditional practices.

Feminism is a movement that includes women and men who wish to see a world where discrimination based on gender and the idea that men are superior to women is abolished. The feministic movement gained its prominence through the three waves of Feminism. The first wave of Feminism was between the mid 19th and early 20th century. There was fight for social and political equality. The key concerns included education, employment and marriage laws. There was a struggle for women suffrage. The second wave of Feminism was between 1960's- 1980's. it was the period of liberation movement, where there was a struggle for equal pay, equal rights at work and representation of women in public bodies like parliament. This period was concerned with the gender inequality in laws and culture. The third wave of Feminism was from 1980's to the present. This period emphasizes at embracing the transgender people, transsexuality, of the feminine forms and self-acceptance. In general the common feministic issues are their reproductive rights, rights against domestic violence, right to maternity leave, right of equal pay, rights against sexual harassment.

Women in Indian society were and are still considered as repressed class. They are held secondary to the dominant males and are cast as the "other" throughout history. It is said that men and women live in separate spheres. Men belong to the "public sphere" of business and politics, whereas women are considered to live in "private sphere" of domesticity and care-giving. They are supposed to have no minds and wishes of their own. This relegated status has been offered to her lot owing to their self-efficacy nature purposely assumed for the betterment of their family. As Rajam Krishnan says, a woman in family will be even worshipped as an angel if she annihilates herself for the sake of others, whereas she will be cast away as monstrous, if not demonic in the reverse case. Throughout history, women have to struggle to gain equality, respect and the same rights as men. This has been difficult because of the patriarchy, an ideology in which men are superior to women and have the rights to rule women. Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially and psychologically. They are marginalized, ridiculed, disempowered, abused, exploited and disrespected by the patriarchal society. More importantly they are tortured in the name of culture and tradition.

Three theories can be closely associated with the protagonist and her state, as the novel progresses. The theories are Social Dominance Theory, Theory of Self-Recognition and Self-Efficacy Theory. The Social Dominance Theory was formulated by psychology professor Jim Sidanius and Telicia Pratto. The theory begins with the observation that human social groups tend to be organized according to group-based social hierarchies in the societies. The hierarchies are based on age, gender and arbitrary-set. (i.e.)In the first case, adults have more power and higher in status than the younger people. In the second case, men are considered to have more power and higher status than women and the last case is culturally defined group. It does not necessarily exist in all societies. Racism, sexism, nationalism and classism are all the manifestations of social hierarchy. According to this theory, group-based inequalities are maintained.

Theory of Recognition assumes that in order to develop a practical identity, a person depends fundamentally on the feedback of the other people and of the society as a whole. According to this view, those who fail to experience adequate recognition find it harder to embrace themselves. This leads to misrecognition. As the misrecognition violates the personal identity of the subject, the affected person is supposed to be particularly motivated to engage in a

struggle for recognition. Ever since the idea of universal human rights has been established, assigning equal dignity is commonly thought to be the central dimension of recognition. It is assumed that without recognition by all others, it is inevitable that one suffers a strong psychological breakdown. According to the Indian tradition, we don't suffer primarily from the fact that we are not recognized, but rather from the fact that we are held captives within a specific pattern of socially mandated recognition. When no due respect is given, a person seeks recognition.

Self-efficacy Theory was framed by Albert Bandura. The theory of self- efficacy lies at the center of Bandura's social cognitive theory. He defines it as one's belief in one's own ability to succeed in specific situation or accomplish a task. The person's sense of self-efficacy plays a major role in how the person approaches goals, tasks and challenges. Self-efficacy is the belief in one's own efficacy. The main concept of this theory is that an individual's actions and reactions, including social behavior and cognitive processes, in almost every situation are influenced by the actions that the individual has observed in others. It's developed from external experiences and self-perceptions. According to Bandura, people with high self-efficacy take hard tasks to be mastered than to be avoided.

This paper in specific has taken the feministic work of Rajam Krishnan, *Lamps in the Whirlpool* which depicts the struggle and the crisis management of the protagonist Girija. Rajam Krishnan was a native of Trichy District. Rajam was an autodidact. She started writing and publishing her works in her early ages, which were mostly social novels. She depicted lives of people who were usually not brought into the literary frame. Her plots echo in the hearts of many repressed women, cutting across culture and language. Rajam mainly focus on the pathetic plight of the suffering women in her novels. She examines the changing values of a society and their impact on women in Indian families. She is not an aggressive feminist, but has no patience when a woman wears the badge of suffering just to get the name as a perfect "traditional woman". Moreover she makes her characters comprehend the intricate state of transition they are placed in and expect them to disentangle themselves on their own from the hardships. She pleads for the equality of men and women. Krishnan continually fights for the social recognition of women. She projects the modern women standing at the cross-roads and also her inevitable obligations towards her family.

Lamps in the Whirlpool was originally published as *Suzhalil Mithakkum Deepangal* in 1987. The novel depicts the contemporary customs at the time of Rajam Krishnan. The title of the novel is charged with feminist significance. It depicts the struggle of women in Indian society. The central image in the novel is the small leaf boat carrying an oil soaked wick sailing in the Ganga. Pilgrims set such leaf boats down the river. Some boats succumb to the current; some do reach the shore far away. The tiny leaf boats with the burning wick symbolizes the fragile but courageous woman in our society trying to cope with its force. Their kind do not symbolize the helplessness of the lamps in the whirlpool but rather the purposeful "floating" of the lamps against all odds. Girija the protagonist of the novel is one such lamp who manages to float against the deadly society and keep her afloat.

A brief sketch of the plot would give a better understanding of the theme that is to be dealt with. Girija is an educated woman who is married and gifted with three children. She had

been working for eight years before marriage and quitted the job on her husband's demand. Her feelings are not respected by both her husband and mother-in-law. She is endlessly tortured in the name of culture and tradition. They extract all the work from her, showing no concern or love. She is treated as an unpaid servant. Girija submissively accepts such living and does the duties as an obedient homemaker for the sake of her children. In the male chauvinistic society, neither does she have an identity for herself nor the peace of mind. She serves as a frustrated homemaker bound by all domestic chaos. Here the social dominance theory can be applied, where Girija's life is stuck between all the three cases mentioned in the theory. As per the hierarchical system of age, she is continually dominated by her aged mother-in-law. As per the hierarchical system of gender, she is tortured and treated as a slave by her husband. As per the arbitrary-set, a group-based hierarchy that is culturally defined, she is tormented in the name of culture and tradition. Girija is made to follow the "madi" system, which is a practice of the Brahmins. The submissive nature of women is due to the psychic conditioning of society's do's and don'ts imposed on them. Women become mentally servile to men.

Though she serviced with uncompromising dedication for seventeen years, recognizes the meaninglessness of her life when her husband in an argument, threw the plate away. She decides to leave the house temporarily to find solace, on the banks of Ganga. Before leaving she removes the diamond nose-ring and ear-ring which according to her is the bondage of slavery. She meets various people in this trip, who serve as eye-openers. At this juncture, the *theory of recognition* can be applied. When Girija does not get her due recognition, she is motivated to engage in the struggle to find recognition and an identity of herself. The main reason for her misrecognition is the socially mandated Indian tradition, which takes gender and culture as its main concern.

On her return, they accuse her of being disloyal and force her to leave the house. When she realizes that she is treated not more than a slave, her walls of tolerance cracks and she breaks open the cage of slavery. With the help of Ratna, a relation of her husband, make temporary alternative arrangements. Soon her mother-in-law meets to give Girija's certificates, clothes but not her jewels. She also hands over a check of Rs.10,000 given on behalf of her husband, which Girija flunks back. Later she finds herself a job with a nun who runs a home for children. She drastically makes a shift from a dependent woman to an empowered woman, taking control over the situation. The circumstance pushes her forward to acquire an identity for herself. Girija emerges as a crisis manager at that point of time, taking control over the situation wisely. *Self-efficacy theory* is the apt theory that could be utilized at this point. Girija believes in her strength and faces the challenges. She approaches the crisis with efficacy instead of escaping from its clutches. She is no more a frustrated homemaker confining herself to the kitchen, instead emerges as a crisis manager and a role-model for women in this society. Girija is considered as the Indian Nora.

Woman is the key player of the family, who plays a role as a wife, mother and daughter-in-law. She sacrifices her entire life for others. In her childhood she lives for her parents, after getting married, she lives for her husband and kids and she lives for her grandchildren in her later stages of life. Being submissive doesn't mean that a woman is weak, it actually reveals her tolerance. Girija too leads a meek life for nearly two decades, this is how most women lead their life and the reason behind is their bond towards their children and family. She lives a docile life and the main reason is the dominance that prevails in the Indian culture. Culture and tradition are just guidelines that help people to reform and to lead a life of harmony. When that itself turns as a key for torturing people and putting them into frustration, it must be given up. This brings the

social dominance theory inside, which is based on the hierarchical systems in the society based on age, gender and other arbitrary-set. As per the hierarchical system, she is tortured by her aged mother-in-law to follow the *madi*, dominated and ill-treated by the chauvinistic husband. When the situation at home goes out of control, her valor is revealed. Girija leaves the house when she realized her identity crisis. The misrecognition motivated her in the search for identity, thus making the intrusion of the *theory of recognition* possible. Girija after being expelled from her husband's house, unlike most of the women would do; does not confine herself to a corner feeling defeated. Instead she confidently rises and stands on her own. Girija takes a wise decision by finding a job for herself. She comes out of the trauma and starts a brand new life in spite of all the chaos. She is portrayed as a very optimistic character during her crisis, because in spite of being banned from house, she does not take an immoral path or commit suicide. She makes a straight forward decision and keeps up her morality. World teaches both good and evil, Girija takes the positive side of it alone by taking inspiration from the optimistic women she came across. Even at the time of misery, she sketches out plans for the well being of her daughters. This all the more highlights her as a crisis manager. The *self-efficacy* Girija had, guided her at the most tormenting situation. She faces the crisis instead of avoiding the issue with entire belief on self thus highlighting the *theory of self-efficacy*. Girija is a balanced woman who tackles her emotions and steadies herself, to face the new world. Braveness is what women needs the most; she needs it even more at the time of crisis. Girija faces the chaos with a brave heart. Women should not become the enemies of their own sex. Women inflict hindrance to women more than men, this serves as a hurdle in the empowerment of women. This situation must change. Women though are physically weak are no less than men. It is convincing to see women shine in various fields. Education too plays a vital role in guiding women at the time of crisis, thereby molding them as crisis managers. Girija thus, serves not only as a crisis manager but also as a role-model for all the women in this society.

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The Emergence of Caitlin Moran: The New Woman of *How to Be a Woman*

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Abstract

This paper aims to establish Caitlin Moran as a 'New woman' through the reading of her non-fiction How to be a woman. The book documents Moran's early life including her views on feminism. It is a sort of memoir distinctively dealing with her experiences on becoming a new woman. In her career as a journalist, Caitlin gets ample opportunity to observe how women are presented in the media, and how feminism is playing out in the early twenty-first century. In the twenty-two years since she turned thirteen, she may have stumbled in her attempts to "be" a woman, but she arrives at the conclusion that 'being' is not the point, it is 'doing' that matters. Along the way Caitlin offers commentary on everything from beauty therapy, pornography, housecleaners, having children, fashion, feminist icons and role models, princesses, and plastic surgery. She is not afraid to state her bold opinions, and she hopes that by sharing her experiences, other women will be encouraged to speak out as well, and everyone will be proud to proclaim themselves as a 'New woman' in customary world. This book makes feminism more approachable for every woman by telling stories of her own life's struggles. In her book Moran calls out any woman who does not identify as a feminist saying that all women are inherently feminists unless they reject any notion of personal freedom. She is not an "ordinary" woman by any stretch of the imagination ultimately she puts a new face on feminism, cutting to the heart of issues with an irreverent, but magnificent, and amusing touch. Hence Caitlin Moran is seen as the new women in the present content.

Key words: *Feminism, legal issues, new women, freedom, equality.*

This paper aims to establish Caitlin Moran as a new woman through the reading of her memoir *How to be a Woman*. Caitlin Moran (born in 5 April 1975) is an English broadcaster, TV critic and columnist at The Times. Moran won the British Press Awards (BPA) Columnist of the Year for 2010, and both the BPA Critic of the Year and Interviewer of the Year in 2011. In 2012 she was named Columnist of the Year by the London Press Club and Culture Commentator at the Comment Awards in 2013. Her book, entitled *How to be a Woman*, became listed on the New York Times bestseller list in 2015. Moran has written for the *Times* since she was 17. She has won awards for her criticism and interviews. She is not an "ordinary" woman by any stretch of the imagination. She writes *How to Be a Woman* with the goal of making feminism more approachable for every woman by telling stories of her own life's struggles. She wants women to stop seeing feminists as radical man-haters and to start seeing them as advocates for true equality.

In her book Moran calls out any woman who does not identify as a feminist saying that all women are inherently feminists unless they reject any notion of personal freedom. Being labeled as a feminist could be positive or negative. Moran tells her own feminist stories using forceful and self-deprecating humor that any woman can relate to. Part memoir, part postmodern feminist rant, was the new feminism: buoyant, transgressive and up for a fight, “rugby style, and face down in the mud with lots of shouting”.

Moran rewrites ‘The Female Eunuch’ from a bar stool and demands to know why pants are getting smaller. However, a few nagging questions do tag on ...Why are women supposed to get Beauty treatments? Do men secretly hate women? What should we call our female parts? And why does everyone ask you when you're going to have a baby? all the way through her book Moran answers these questions and more in *How To Be A Woman* following her from her terrible 13th birthday through adolescence, the workplace, strip-clubs, love, fat, abortion, Top Shop, motherhood and beyond. She doesn't politicize feminism; she humanises it. The book narrates Moran's own experiences growing up and is presented almost like a set of chronicles from her teen years to moving to London, getting her first job, dating, marrying and having children. Alongside her memories and the funny incidents of those years she weaves in topics such as female sexuality, inequality, sexism and abortion. Moran approaches feminism through humor which is why even the worst moments have laughter-lines. In her thinking, the next wave of feminism should come through laughter and mockery. She is unabashedly honest and truthful about some of the topics which are part of her charisma that shine through also in her speaking.

Moran divides her memoir into sixteen chapters, a prologue, and a postscript. Each chapter ranges from fourteen to twenty-four pages, and they are arranged thematically around topics that women are constantly thinking about or are forced to think about by media, culture, and society from the age when a girl first becomes a woman with her first menstrual cycle until she is faced with the thought of plastic surgery in order to stay youthful and appealing. Moran discusses about fashion, body image and relationship with men, career ambition, sexism, weddings, and motherhood. Each chapter begins with a vignette of Moran's personal experience that launches her into an extended rant about the more abstract topic the anecdote represents. From the first chapter which opens on her 13th birthday, to the last where she uses the death of a colleague to get into a meaty debate about why women feel the need to have plastic surgery this might just be the funniest intelligent book ever written. In the rest of *How To Be a Woman*, Moran goes on to explore everything from the politics of parenting to the bargaining chips of love, using the disarming honesty of her own experience as a broader lens on some of contemporary culture's most deep-seated, widely resonating biases and frictions. Throughout her book Moran beats the drum of female pleasure. Almost nothing is off limits to her, and no act is inherently sexist with humorous account of women and their everyday quibbles. By doing so, Moran caters mainly to British women and the impressions they have during their growing up years. She steers away from the serious, universal stuff on feminism; her outlook, as she puts it, is the ‘broken window policy’ if you don't fix the broken window, there will be a tendency to break it further; on a similar note, if we leave the seemingly simpler issues of women unnoticed, they will persist and keep growing.

Moran shining a light on so many of the issues that women face these days that seem commonplace but the truth is, they exist and they need a solution at the best. For example Moran's rant about ‘razors' tattoos' Brazilians’ and ‘piercings’ reveals to us a cross section of the

young girls' world who dwells in these. We are allowed a peek into her growing up years amidst her 'populous' family in the initial chapters of the book. In next chapters we get her take on pornography, menstruation, female body and other such issues that concern a teenager here. Being in a largely 'dysfunctional' family due to its sheer enormity of needs, Moran's feminine needs are largely compromised. Her affinity with books and other media and she in depth feministic views are a result of her unusual lifestyle during her teens.

Towards the end of her 'rant' in the book, Moran has some unique, interesting views on feminist role-models, having children and abortion. Those chapters are a must-read as they are a combination of humor, insight and the core of Moran's feminism. So that most moving chapter is the one entitled 'abortion' where, as a mother of two, she tells her unborn child, "I can't have you. The world will fall in if I have you" (270), the book filled of bafflingly complex witticisms, this line, and this chapter shines and will make it the book everyone will be talking about. She speaks at length about Katie Price aka Jordan and Lady Gaga and gives us points to think about. By presenting the autobiographical elements of child birth and a confession like abortion, Moran seems to urge all women to stop feeling guilty for making some decisions in life if they were done for their own mental and physical well-being. She questions the role of women as a 'nurturer', one who gives birth to life. She urges women to stand up against 'stigmatization' of all sorts, be it starting a family or standing up for one's beliefs.

This deeply personal book also served as a call to arms for modern feminism, skipping academic jargon in favor of discussing women issues and Moran interweaves provocative observations on women's lives with laugh-out-loud funny scenes from her own, from the riot of adolescence to her development as a writer, wife, and mother. With rapier wit, Moran slices right to the truth whether it is about the workplace, strip clubs, love, fat, abortion, popular entertainment, or children to jump start a new conversation about feminism. With humor, insight, and verve, *How to Be a Woman* lays bare the reasons why female rights and empowerment are essential issues not only for women today but also for society itself. Moran calls proudly call herself as strident feminist and she begins every chapter talking about events in her own life, events that all women face at some point in their lives. There's never been a better time to be a woman. What Moran does offer is a fresh approach which is not very political, and neither is her approach an impersonal appeal to the intellect.

Some writers acclaimed that moron has so many influences in Virginia Woolf's writings because both Woolf and Moron write their text as a motivation to women. In *A Room of a One's Own*, Woolf explicitly tells us what she wants: she wants women to be able to write, to be creative, in order to do that, they need a room of their own with a lock on the door. They also need time and money. One example of a subject that Woolf was engaged in was women's economy are 'similar to those occupying the minds of feminist economists today' Woolf was very clear in her argument that money is a key component of women's independence. Same as moron in this text motivated by her hopes that people would open up their eyes to the power patriarchy has on our everyday life. She says in her postscript "I want CHOICE. I want VARIETY. I want MORE. I want WOMEN. I want women to have more of the world, not just because it would be fairer, but because it would be better" (309). To help people discover patriarchy's impact on their lives, she uses examples of her own life. Though moron uses humors with sarcasm and irony, as rhetorical means like Woolf but, she writes in different ways. Because she explains her humoristic approach that actually make her very angry. She says that if the

anger shines through the text. The triumph of *How To Be a Woman* is that it adds to women's confidence. Taken as a whole Moran puts full stop to the prolonged way of strict old feminism which mainly focused on patriarchy and she valiantly opened a new way to imminent feminist.

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Ethics and Issues in Dattani's *Tara*

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Abstract

Mahesh Dattani is an Indian playwright, actor and director and is the first playwright in English to be awarded the Sahitya Academy award. Tara was first published in 1990. It shows the gender difference prevailing in Indian society. Throughout the play Dattani has depicted the different lifestyle of men and women. Women in the society always depend upon men and it affects even young girls. Tara is a conjoined twin of Chandan, who is more talented but she is not given due importance. Tara is killed because of the social system that controls the minds and actions of people. Though not physically handicapped, Tara is handicapped because of her gender. Society has to realize that women are no less than men and must give respect and treat them with love. This paper focuses on the gender issue that prevails in the two act play Tara by Mahesh Dattani.

Keywords: *partiality, gender issues, social setup*

Mahesh Dattani is a playwright, director and actor. He was born on August 7, 1958. He got graduation in history, economics and political science. He formed a theatre group called playpen in 1984. His first full length play is *Where There's A Will* in 1986. He won the prestigious Sahitya Academic Award for his book of plays *Final Solutions and Other Plays* in 1998. Alyque Padamsee praised Dattani as one of the "most serious contemporary playwrights".

Dattani, in his plays takes the invisible issues of Indian society as the main issue. His characters struggle for some kind of freedom and happiness under the weight of tradition, cultural constructions of gender and repressed desire. Dattani has presented the bizarre reality of the women playing second fiddle to men. Tara is not the story of the protagonist of the play, but is the story of every girl child born in Indian family.

The play *Tara* was first published as *Twinkle Tara* which means star. It deals with the theme of gender description that stands of women in general as well as Patel family in particular, in prejudice, bias and discrimination. This play shows how the importance of male child affects the life and the growth of female child in the society, which exists even today.

This play tells the story of a conjoined twins Tara and Chandan who were born with three legs. *Tara* opens with the Chandan who now resides in London and changed his name as Dan. He tries to write the story of his sister as *Twinkle Tara*. He considers himself as responsible for his sister's death. The biological condition of the twins was clear that the leg matches well for the female child than male child but decision of the mother and grandfather changed the fate of the girl.

A scan showed that a major part of the blood supply to the third leg was provided by the girl. The chances were slightly better that the leg would survive on the girl. The leg was amputated. Because of the unusual nature of the operation, it was easy to pass it off as a natural rejection. (57)

When there was an operation to separate them, the third leg was given to Chandan on the basis of his gender but the result of the operation was a failure because his body did not accept the leg. Consequently Tara and Chandan had one artificial leg each.

Tara explores and exposes the typical Indian mindset where all preferred a boy child to a girl child. The decision taken by Mrs. Patel's leaves Tara crippled for life. Societies in India have always had a male dominated perception. All decisions in a family are taken by the senior male member of the family. In *Tara* Mr. Patel's father in law was the person who decided the operation in which the conjoined leg was to be given to Chandan in the place of Tara. He had even bribed the doctor with the sanction of a piece of land in Bangalore. Dr. Thakkar fell from his high status, without giving a second thought. Instead of taking a second medical decision of leaving the leg for Tara, he had sold out his conscience for the temptation. Though Mr. and Mrs. Patel were warned that, in almost all the cases of such kind, one of the twins died by the age of four.

They cause injustice to the girl child Tara. Tara the unlucky girl, who has not been given enough opportunities like her brother, finally dies. Chandan attempts to repress the guilt he feels over Tara's death. His sense of trauma and anguish is so intense that at the end of the play. Tara dies in a shock when she learns that it is her mother Bharati who is involved in the conspiracy of her unfair separation from Chandan. This discrimination not only inflicted upon her but the betrayal by a mother crushes her down deep inside. Tara gets disillusioned of her so called happy and caring family settings. After knowing this Tara feels betrayed that "And she called me her star"(58).

The first thought behind the selection of male child is the he would lead the family name and the another thing is dowry. The situation becomes worst if the girl is physically or mentally challenged. Every girl child born in Indian family suffers from some kind of exploitation and if there is a boy in the family, the mistreatment is very much visible. Consciously or unconsciously all the privileges are given to the boy. Throughout the play, Tara bears some kind of grudge against the society. She seems to have hatred towards the outside world. This is clear through her behavior with Roopa, Nalini and other friends. Her world is compressed, it consists of her father, mother, and her brother.

Tara brings out the sincerity and inclination of a girl to prove her mettle in the world of male supremacy. The name Tara suggests a star, the child was bright and a shining star that was a source of happiness for her family. Tara is full of potentiality while her brother was not enterprising at all. Her potentiality was sacrificed on the altar of gender. Identity crisis becomes a chain with which a female is shackled when the question of choice between male and female arises.

Through a character called Roopa, Dattani discusses about the practice of female infanticide in Gujarat. In which the female child is drowned in milk. When people asked for the death of the baby, they said that the baby choked while drinking her milk. The Patels in the old days were unhappy with getting girl babies so they used to drown them in milk" (29).

Tara and Chandan was a Siamese child after the operation they are physically separated but not mentally. They share the same agony, which Dan tries to delineate by writing autobiographical drama, though a futile attempt. Women in the society don't have their own identity, though she is more capable than men, she will not be permitted to work. This can be seen in the plat Tara through the male character Mr. Patel, when he call Chandan to work, Patel hesitates to take Tara to work only because she is a female child.

Tara was more enthusiastic and full of jest and spark of life. She had high aspirations which she could not achieve because of her physical state. While the boy had given the second leg, why not Tara? Even this biased thing was done by the women. Always women have to sacrifice for men in the society. Tara is killed by the social system which controls the mind and actions of the people. In our society girls are not wanted. Women are not made to think or decide but are made to submit to the wishes of man.

When Tara learns of the surgical manipulation, she turns bitter towards her mother and utters, “and she calls me her star”. This discovery is the central turning point in the play which “practically kill the female and tears her apart from the male and Chandan and moves far away. Her angst is expressed when she says “may be we still are like we always have been . Inseparable the way we started life. Till we forced out”

Tara's mother Bharathi feels guilty for her action towards Tara. She is fearful about Tara's future.

It's all right when she is young. It is all very cute and comfortable when she makes witty remarks. But let her grow up. Yes, Chandan the world will tolerate you. The world will accept you but not her! Oh!. When she sees herself at eighteen, thirty is unthinkable and what about forty and fifty! oh god!(23).

To shed her burden of guilt and assert her moral superiority over her husband she shows extra maternal love and concern to her daughter and also tries to expand her love by donating her kidney to Tara. she is a pathetic victim of patriarchy.

Bharathi's father is also one of the reason for Tara's denial. He bribed Dr. Thakkar in operation by giving him a piece of land in Bangalore. When it comes to the property he leaves all of them to Chandan and not a single penny for Tara.

Though Mr. Patel's attitude is always negative. He blames Bharathi and father in law for this discrimination but his position cannot be denied. He gives greater chances to Chandan, plans for his education and future career but nothing for Tara. He blames Bharathi responsible for everything and gets an escape from his responsibilities. Look at the way you treat Tara. As if she is made of glass. You coddle her, you pet her, she's grown up, feeling she doesn't need anyone but you!

It's noteworthy that discrimination with Tara continues, even after her death. Chandan who was always interested in writing a story, he writes, his own tragedy. Dan apologizes to Tara for doing this, “Forgive me, Tara. Forgive me for making it my tragedy” (60).

The condition of the girl child should change in the Indian society and the people should respect the feelings and the talents of the women.

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Silent Suffering and Quest for Self in Sudha Murthy's *Gently Falls the Bakula*

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Abstract

Sudha Murthy is an eminent writer in English and Kannada. She is a renowned author of many fiction novels. She is a Social Worker and a philanthropist and is popular for her benevolent work through Infosys Foundation. This paper focuses on the marriage gone sour, of aspirations suppressed for long and of non-acknowledgement of silent support. Sudha Murthy's novel, Gently falls the Bakula has its protagonist Shrikant graduating from IIT-Bombay. He consequently joins a software firm and become its director. Shrimati, his wife though more intelligent than him, gives up her further studies and manages his house. After almost half a decade of marriage, she realizes that her husband has become too focused on his career and has no place for family matters or to think about her. Eventually, she takes a decision that leaves their family life shattered. The book beautifully written exposes the problems within marriage and how obsessive rise to the top without giving attention to the life partner can destroy marriage. The Bakula tree whose flowers symbolized the love between them had fallen sadly. The novel answers the question if a happy marriage or a career is more important for women.

Shrimati, the protagonist, is a well-educated and intelligent woman. After her marriage, she confines her life to her husband's companionship and his happiness. Therefore, Shrikant, her husband, is successful in his profession. In return, he neglects her in all aspects except providing the basic needs. She bears her lonely and sad life with much endurance for many years and follows him as his shadow. Later, she starts examining herself that her life is fiasco and questions her husband about her role in his life. When her husband is reluctant to give her an answer, Shrimati decides to lead her life on her own against her husband's self-centeredness and resolves to come to blow with the traditional belief that "... a woman should stay with her husband, irrespective of what he was." Eventually, she leaves her husband not to earn, but to be on her own, to establish her identity and to live an independent and peaceful life.

The book is immensely readable and emulates each reader's life. It is written in an extremely straight forward style. The cities Hubli, Dharwad, Bombay and the U.S have all been portrayed in great detail and those living in these cities can enjoy the subtle details which would be missed by others.

The author has dedicated this book to all those women who give precedence to family commitments and responsibilities to overpower their own aspirations. Shrimati, the protagonist, is an extremely talented girl but is not ambitious and is ready to live under her husband's shadow. She represents many such women whose love and sacrifice goes unnoticed by their families. Women according to Indian traditions and in many other world cultures are expected to stay at home, cook and take care of the family willingly or unwillingly. Shrimati highlights the sad fact in our society that woman do not have the same freedom men have.

Women in India from the colonial period are dependent on their men. The tradition cowed down their position just to continue the family line. They are denied from grabbing the opportunities of education and refinement. They have been excluded from social and political activities. They are ignorant of their basic right as individuals because of illiteracy and ignorance. In short, the admittance to social justice and equality are denied to them. The social evils from rites of Sati, Devadasi system, Pardha system, child marriage to infanticide and dowry deaths are some of the evils that have been caused to trim down the position of women in Indian society. After Independence, Indian Constitution has enshrined many rights to women. Indian Government has provided equal educational opportunities to women. Ever since, it has introduced many schemes to empower women in many sectors. Analysis shows that women participation in work spots have been considerably increased comparing to men. With these, women stand in top positions in almost all fields. But all these are on one side of the coin. If we look into the other side the status of the women is deplorable. They are powerless and ill-treated inside and outside the home. Apparently, women are being empowered in Modern India by acquiring education but it is not true to the fullest at all if sensed with reality.

Traditionally, women are confined to homes to discharge their household responsibilities such as courteous of their husbands, children, obeying in-laws commands and shouldering different burdens. As a result, they have been relegating their position accepting, dedicating themselves for the upliftment of the family. In her writings, Sudha Murthy, an ingenious writer focuses on realistic problems faced by women in the society and how they encounter with the problems. This paper reflects on an educated woman's role submissive wife who faces the problem of loneliness and turns to be subservient to her husband's egotistic tendencies to realize her freedom as an independent woman. Over-Ambition and Self-Interest of her husband alienates her in the married life.

The book is about relationships that have to be sustained and nurtured like tender plants. The story is simple, yet it touches a chord. One finds such stories everywhere around, ambitions of the women sacrificed in the name of family, and the women reduced to the mistress of the home the territory demarcated for her. Women, no matter how educated, can fall into that trap of sacrificing their goals and dreams for that of their husbands. And even today in the name of 'tradition' women continue to be oppressed.

Shrimati ShrikantDeshpande, the protagonist, is an intelligent, plain-looking yet charming young woman. She has zest for Indian history writes many essays on Ashoka and Buddha. ShrikantDeshpande is an amiable and handsome person. Both are intelligent students and neighbours in Dharwad, Karnataka. Their families have a rivalry right from their ancestors. So the women have been at logger heads with bitter enmity. Bakula tree (a tree of fragrant flower) is a symbol that stands for love separates the two homes. Shrimati and Shrikant are classmates up to the tenth standard. They fall in love each other during their higher secondary and continue it in secret under the Bakula Tree until the end of their education. Though they are away, pursuing their higher studies they continue to love without break. She attaches bakula flowers to her love letters, as she likes it very much. The flower carries the aroma of their love that will never drop. Later, she qualifies herself as a postgraduate in history and he becomes an engineering graduate from IIT, Bombay. After completion, they get married convincing their parents with great difficulty. To marry Shrikant, Shrimati willingly foregoes her research

fellowship offered by a foreign visiting Professor, Mike Collins. After the marriage, Shrimati enters the house of her husband.

As expected, she is unwelcomed by her mother-in-law. Still she tries to win her mother-in-law's support. As many mothers-in-law, Gangakka, Shrimati's mother-in-law is cordial towards her daughter-in-law before her son but antagonizes her in her son's absence. Fortunately, soon Shrimati leaves for Bombay to stay with her husband. So as to repay the loan of her mother-in-law she prefers to take up a job in Bombay eschewing her coveted research work. Shrikant a determined person from the beginning resumes his career as a Software Engineer in an IT company in Bombay. He climbs the corporate ladder in no time. On the other hand, Shrimati begins to feel nothing is more important to her than her husband's happiness, and, brushes aside her Ph.D work in a foreign country. In her married life, Shrimati becomes the silent secretary to her husband at home. Her constant assistance enables him to achieve greater heights in his profession in short time. Consequently her desire to become mother is not satisfied and she earns the wrath of her mother-in-law to bear the blame of being barren. Sudha Murthy through the character of Shrimati refers the character of Bhamati, who dedicates herself to the sage husband when he is writing Dharmasastra and ultimately dies without achieving anything in life. In this context, while Shrikant appreciates sage's tremendous concentration, Shrimati applauds Bhamati's silent support. Their view reflects their attitude and lack of right understanding between them. In course of their life journey, Shrikanth reaches glorious heights and improves his material well-being but Shrimati's loneliness heightens day by day for not fulfilling her desire of becoming a mother. She prevails upon him for adoption but Shrikant does not evince much interest. Even though she entertains her idea of research but appears far remote. When life goes on like that, once, Shrikant goes abroad on foreign assignment. During this period, Shrimati falls sick, but does not inform him as it disturbs him mentally. Her husband does not acknowledge even this goodness and humanity. How so ever Prof. Collins understands her sadness during his visit to India and advises her to take up the research work to rekindle the spark of happiness. Ironically, artificial manners and absurd formalities do not please Shrimati in life. Once in a party when his friend Dolly criticizes Indian culture Shrimati reacts vehemently. Her husband rebukes her for her reaction. Shrimati, who usually be silent, expresses unhappiness and disagreement for the first time.

In due course, Shrikant becomes more materialistic, more selfish to grow professionally. On the other hand, Shrimati, who has helped her husband with perseverance to reach glorious heights, realizes that life is fiasco and decides to live her life where she finds peace and happiness. She recalls the story of Bhamati in desperation and thinks, "Every woman could not become Bhamati. Each woman had her own limits ..." (156). In Shrimati's life as well, end has taken place in respect of patience. She resolves to encounter Shrikant's egotism and stimulates herself introspect her stand in her family as a woman. She defies with the traditional belief "... a woman should stay with her husband, irrespective of what he was..." (157) and makes up her mind to leave that house. Finally, in Shrimati wisdom dawns and our can see a sea change in her attitude towards wife and husband relationship. Her enormous turmoil in loneliness and frustration in life propels her to dismantle this very concept of abject obedience to her husband and sacrifice in life.

In her own way, she puts an end to her loneliness and craves for freedom and identity from the very clutches of family bondage. She strongly appeals that she no longer bares loneliness, nor can live with artificial values that eulogize materialistic success. In fit of her tormentation, she tells that she has loved him more than her studies, respecting his sentiments, but the very decline in his attitude towards her feelings made her disapprove his deportment and free herself from slavish attachment with him any longer. As Norah Helmer in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, she says to Shrikant "Shri, I am leaving and I dont have any plans to return, I am handing all the responsibilities of the house to you" (160). Consequent upon, Shrikant feels that she has taken his spirit away with her and thinks his loving flower Bakula, gently falls from his life. Sudha Murthy presents the characters of Shrimati and Shrikant, reflecting the mood and temperament of present day couple after the advent of Software Industry. Above all, the novel projects post- Over-Ambition and Self-Interest Leads to Alienation in Marriage. Colonial sentiments and attitudes clearly makes the readers to think that life after marriage is not to live individually but to live together with right understanding to lead a salubrious life.

Shrimati's love is like the bakula flower giving out fragrance long after it was crushed. Reference to her steadfast love is also given in the book through the story of Bhanmati. She was a sage's wife who served him unflinchingly with devotion that the sage did not come to know that his mother had died and his wife had taken her place .He reveres her devotion by writing her name on the first page of his book so that people would forget the sage but Bhanmati would be immortalized. Shrimati also single-mindedly served her husband but whereas the sage had recognised his wife's unflinching support, Shrikant never acknowledged his wife's support in his success it was very late. Until perfection can be defined by the name Shrimati but when Shrikant takes her for granted she once again reviews her life and knows that riches and money cannot bring her happiness but her love for history can ignite the same joy that was present earlier in her life. She then takes a bold step and sums up the courage to follow her dream. Her dream was always to study further and in this regard she writes to Dr Collins who arranges for her to come to America on scholarship. Shrimati finally decides to leave Shrikant to start anew her life in an effort to find her identity.

At no point does she make any noise about the treatment meted out to her. But there is a silent introspection happening, which ultimately leads to her emergence as a stronger being. The book is named *Gently Falls the Bakula* perhaps to describe the patient love of Shrimati. The bakula flower had a sweet and strong smell and the fragrance remained even when the flower was some days old, perhaps this line in the beginning was foreshadowing the love of Shrikant and Shrimati.

Thus it is a story told in a simple style. It questions the choices women make and tries to find if they are happy with the choices. Shrimathi puts her career in hold and even gave up her chance to a full scholarship for a PhD program in the US and now is second guessing her choices. The open ending is quiet appropriate here. The book can serve as a warning to all those who think that life is a destination and one has all the time for family later on whereas what is needed is to enjoy life in all its beauty and facets side by side with professional and personal both being equally important. If one is able to do that it is bliss or else the marriage would be malice.

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Emergence of a Fine Woman in *Bridget Jones' Diary* by Helen Fielding

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Helen Fielding (1958-) is the acclaimed British Author, Journalist and the creator of the famous diary series- Bridget Jones. The author worked from 1990-1999 at various newspapers including The Sunday Times, The Telegraph while writing her first novel-Cause Celeb (1994) which made great reviews but limited sales. The author has also done scriptwriting for the movie adaptations. Bridget Jones' Diary published in 1996, was just an unrecognized column in The Independent a year before (1995). Which was followed by Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason (1999), Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy (2013). The series has been published in 40 countries and 15 million copies sold worldwide. Bridget Jones is regarded as one of the best fictional character in British Literature. Helen Fielding depicts her protagonist- Bridget Jones, a thirty year old single working woman, dealing with her topsy-turvy life which she has no control over and relating it to the readers' life. Using Post-Feminist theories, this paper aims at bringing out the instances where the protagonist emerges as a Fine Woman.

Helen Fielding was a journalist when she started writing *Bridget Jones* series in newspaper columns (1995) and a year later she published it as a novel which went on to become UK's bestselling novels of 20th century, also won British Book of the year award. She majored in English from St. Anne's College, Oxford in 1978, began working as a researcher for BBC's magazine –*Nationwide*.

The author also produced two documentaries on Southern Sudan Rebel War. In 2016, the author published her sixth novel- *Bridget Jones' Baby: the diaries*. Unlike other protagonists in Literature, Fielding makes Bridget Jones look strong and humorous at the same time.

In the novel the protagonist- Bridget Jones, a thirty year old singleton working in London, encrypts her daily on-goings in a diary. It traces a twelve month entries beginning with her calculations on weight, calories consumed and personal comments made by her on herself (v.g: very good, g: good, bad). The comments indicate her self-realization in errors committed, and to stay away from the things that affect her progress. Also with the issues regarding her relationships, cosmopolitan life with friends, family and parties.

The diary also records her New Year resolutions divided into “I WILL NOT” and “I WILL” concerning her health, being emotionally stabilized, not believing anyone easily(in case of men when it comes to a relationship), to stop smoking and alcohol consumption, improve career with high potential which she later acquires.

Being single at thirty is one of Bridget's biggest nightmares. As the society has a hawk-eye around her to know her relationship status, she replies- “Oh *God*. Why can't married people understand that this is no longer a polite question to ask? We wouldn't rush up to *them* and roar, 'How's your marriage going? Everyone knows that dating in your thirties is not the happy-go-lucky free-for-all it was when you were twenty-two” (Fielding 12).

While in this social quagmire, Bridget's parents set up a matrimonial match for her with Mark Darcy- a divorced barrister recently returned from America. Bridget unacquainted of any male friends (except Tom) whom she can see as prospects, falters to make any good impression before him. Unable to answer persisting questions from people about being single, she breaks down. Sharon (Shazzer) pulls her up giving her confidence and pros of being single. She says-

"You should have said 'I'm not married because I'm a *Singleton*, you smug, prematurely ageing, narrow-minded morons,'" Shazzer ranted. "And because there's more than one bloody way to live: one in four households are single, most of the royal family are single, the nation's young men have been proved by surveys to be *completely unmarriageable*, and as a result there's a whole

generation of single girls like me with their own incomes and homes who have lots of fun and don't need to wash anyone else's socks. We'd be as happy as sandboys if people like you didn't conspire to make us feel stupid just because you're jealous." 'Singletons!' I shouted happily. 'Hurrah for the Singletons!'" (Fielding 27).

As the novel progresses, Bridget is tempted to have an alleged affair with her boss and a long time crush- Daniel Cleaver. They see each other on and off but for less, as her fear of not to date men who are emotionally unavailable comes true. Daniel is hard to understand, unpredictable and not that into her, advances towards Bridget for pleasure seeking motive, which she resists and swears never to see him again. This can be the first event where she fights for her esteem. Later Daniel announces his marriage to an American Blonde girl. Although Bridget has a feeling for Daniel, she is not fragile, dumb or to a great extent vulnerable to have him. She wants to upkeep the inner poise, not allowing such thoughts to bother her.

The term Post- Feminism coined by Toril Moi in *Sexual/ Textual Politics* (1985) to support feminism that divides as Liberal and Radical Feminism, giving equal rights to both the sexes. Using Post-Feminist ideologies in the novel, Bridget proves to be prudent, offensive, judgmental, self- sufficient and is an embodiment of empowerment, independence and responsibility. She says -"there is nothing so unattractive to a man as strident feminism" (Fielding 16). Bridget aspires for self-improvement and keeps a track of her goals (to stop smoking, get to a perfect weight, to be free from emotional trauma and to maintain her inner poise) but she falters somewhere making it comical to the readers and to associate with one self

Janine Radway in her *Reading the Romance* (1984) talks about the text that voices women's anxieties and desires as "... a relaxing release from the tension produced by daily problems and responsibilities, but it creates a time or space within which woman can be entirely on her own, preoccupied with her personal needs, desires and pleasure. It is also a means of transportation or escape to the exotic or... to that which is different." (Radway). Bridget also invests time for herself to relax and to enjoy life. She does not compromise with life, fights till she has acquired what she wants. Bridget is strong, stable and not wanting anybody to complete her, until she finds a suitable person to share her life with.

Bridget finds solace in her friends (Sharon, Jude, Tom) with whom she shares her every problem. Be it her troubles of parents separating, issues with Daniel or Mark Darcy or even the slightest of culinary disasters. Meeting together and talking about it brings relief to her. Generalizing on the role of women in society, Sharon says- "We women are only vulnerable because we are a pioneer generation daring to refuse to compromise in love and relying on our own economic power. In twenty years' time men won't even dare start with fuckwittage because we will just *laugh in their faces*," bellowed Sharon" (Fielding 16).

As the year's entries end in the novel, Bridget finds certain things in order like her mother returns from Portugal with the help of Darcy, gets a better job at television broadcast for her work is not a compulsion but is an independence or to occupy herself with and escape from monotony, satisfied with her mental and physical health and finally she has found a man whom she can actually date- Mark Darcy.

As the paper brings out the thrust areas of women concerned with health, gender issues in society, Helen Fielding gives hope in the readers (especially young women) to stand up right in their decisions, even if they falter at it, giving them confidence to try once more. In the novel, Bridget Jones not wishing to end up alone and to lose her pride and identity, she creates a world where she can live in, on her own terms. "I am a woman of substance and do not need men in order to complete" (Fielding 43). These are the instances where Bridget grows into a fine woman, illustrating women's position in cosmopolitan societies. Her being independent, finding a partner to share her life, making mistakes and being satisfactory with it, is what makes the big difference. Thus Helen Fielding shows that women and men are socially equal and should allow each his/her dignified space and independence.

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Pilar's Transformative Experience of Love: a Study of Paulo Coelho's "By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept"

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ABSTRACT

"We will have difficult times, and we will experience many disappointments- but all of this is transitory; it leaves no permanent mark. And one day we will look back with pride and faith at the journey we have taken"- Paulo Coelho, "By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept." Paulo Coelho is one of the most widely read and most influential authors in the world. His philosophies are life –changing. He is very much concerned about individual's life experience than social concerns. His novels are incorporated with life transformative thoughts. Pilar, the main character in the novel experiences many inner conflicts. Her lover acts as a transformative force and helps her to recognize her true self. The paper focuses on the transformative experience of Pilar. The transformative experience is both epistemical and personal.

Key words: *Transformative Experience, Paulo Coelho, Philosophy, Epistemical, personal*

Life is full of experiences. Experiences cannot be learnt by reading or by being told, it can only be learnt by having the experience. Having an experience is the best way or possibly the only way, of coming to know what that experience is like. Experiences are foundations of knowledge. Many prominent writers have emphasized the significance of experience. John Locke, one of the first of the British empiricists believes that experience is the only source of knowledge. According to Locke, the ultimate source of our knowledge is 'sense-experience'. Here is how he answers in one of the questions asked in his essay entitled "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding":

"To this I answer, in one word, from EXPERIENCE. In that all our knowledge is founded; and from that it ultimately derives itself."

Coelho's personal experience and his religious family background influence his writing style. In almost all his novels, he talks about the significance of personal and spiritual transformative experiences. The following quote reveals how his personal experience transforms him and his conception about the significance of undergoing all kind of experiences to become a writer:

"I was an idealist at heart and deep down I thought that for someone who wanted to be a writer,
it is only right to have to undergo all experiences, even the mental hospital..."

I saw it as a part of my personal legend, or my yearning for adventure (Arias 35-36).

The word 'transformation' has a close relationship with spirituality. A holistic self transformation occurs when the human being realizes his 'self' and becomes a spiritual being. When thinking about transformation, the well-known image that comes to our mind is the transformation of caterpillar into a beautiful butterfly. Another image is transmutation of lead into gold. Images are plenty to mirror this sense of natural transformation in life. Coelho illustrated river as an image of transformation. The novel opens with a transformative note "There is a legend that everything that falls into the waters of this river-leaves, insects, the feathers of birds-is transformed into the rocks that make the riverbed."

Coelho says that one has to experience difficult times and many disappointments in the pursuit of attaining transformation, but these are all transitory in order to help man to get transformed. He describes the process of Pilar's transformation as gradual, taking place in a step-by-step manner. She rises from ignorance and lack of confidence to spiritual light through successive stages of self realization, spiritual experience and self transformation. Coelho in the author's note of his bestseller "By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept" says, "Pilar and her companion are fictitious, but they represent the many conflicts that beset us in our search for love. Sooner or later, we have to overcome our fears, because the spiritual path can only be traveled through the daily experience of love." Through this novel he gives the message that, "the more we love, the closer we come to spiritual experiences." During the spiritual and adventurous journey of Pilar and her lover, they meet their own destiny which is hidden under their daily experience of love. At the end of their journey a radical inner transformation occurs when the individuals equip themselves to discover the deeper meaning of life.

Epistemology is considered as a vital part of philosophy which is concerned with the nature and origin of knowledge. The term 'epistemology' is derived from the Greek words 'Episteme' (knowledge or science) and 'Logos'(knowledge or information). Laurie Ann (L.A.) Paul is a professor of philosophy and a scholar of eminent American philosopher David Lewis. She is renowned for her research on the concept of "transformative experience". According to her experiences are both epistemically and personally transformative. She utters "An epistemically transformative experience is a new and different kind of experience that you have never had before, which gives you new knowledge or abilities that you could only have gained by having the experience itself" and "A personally transformative experience is a type of experience that radically changes your point of view and fundamentally changes your sense of self and how you experience life" (Paul 2014, 10, 16).

The transformative experiences of Characters are brilliantly depicted by many writers in Literature. Alice Walker is one such writer whose trade mark is her concern for the lives of black women. She has beautifully portrayed the varied experiences of black women in her novels. In 'Color Purple', Walker unveiled how "spiritual experience empowers black women." (Williams 232). The novel focuses on the transformative experience of Celie. Shug Avery works as a transforming force in Celie's life: she teaches Celie about her own self, to stitch pants and about her lessons in economic autonomy. She learnt new information that was previously obscure to her and hence it is both epistemically and personally transformative experience for Celie.

Paulo Coelho' in his novel "By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept" skillfully accounts for the transformative experience of Pilar. According to him, spirituality is not strictly the exercise of the religion, but rather an experience for the self-enhancement of better life. He is more concerned about making a difference in the lives of his readers. Through his writings, he is more likely to be helping individuals to transform and lead a better life. In this novel, the master story teller makes his readers recognize the process of transformative learning through first-hand accounts of Pilar's transformative experiences.

Pilar in the beginning of the novel is portrayed as a weak woman who lacks confidence. This is revealed when she was waiting to talk to her lover for the first time after several years. She says "I waited, worried about what his first impression of me would be after many years. I felt like a child- insecure, tense because I knew none of his friends, and jealous that he was paying more attention to the others than to me." (Pg 10) She also feels sorry for herself because she lacks knowledge about the real world. "Poor me, chattering away about friends from childhood and dusty memories of an insignificant village- those were the only things I could discuss" (Pg 21).

After listening to her lover's transformative lecture for the first time, she realized her weakness of afraid of taking risks. She is more convinced that her lover was right and there are moments when she has to take risks and to do absurd things. During their journey to Bilbao for a conference, he remained silent. She thought the reason might be her ignorance about the world around her and of her being afraid of taking risks "I understood what the silence was about. What did he have in common with a woman who had never ventured out into the world? How could he possibly be interested in spending time with someone who feared the unknown, who preferred a secure job and a conventional marriage to the life he led?"(Pg 21)

Her lover acts as a transformative force in changing Pilar's personality. He takes part in the process of transformation by making her listen to his lectures and stories. He inspires her through his true love. It is obvious from the story that love has the power to transform things. When her lover invites her to attend a conference in Madrid, she decides to go with him and wants to take risks: the risk of meeting new people and talking about serious things. She says "I was no longer just seeing the real world through television or the newspapers. When I returned to Zaragoza, I'd have stories to tell, if accepted for the holidays, I'd have whole years of memories to live in." (31) After her lover's declaration of his love, it was astonishing to her and she was not convinced of his love. Moreover she was not ready to face sufferings due to love. Throughout the journey Pilar was persistently in conflict with herself: the battle between her heart and the mind. "I knew he was going to turn my world upside down. My brain warned me, but my heart didn't want to take its advice" (47). According to her, her boyfriend is wise, experienced and who knows how to court the woman he wanted. In spite of all these thoughts she believes that she could restrain herself from loving him. In the Seven days journey, she was able to manage herself for three days only then she realized that she was beginning to sense the storms brought on by the winds of love. She states "I had already begun to feel the break in the dam" (61).

He also teaches her how to free herself from the influence of "the other," which is a negative voice that tells people to do what the society considers acceptable. He teaches her many prayers that build up her self confidence and courage and to take up challenges. The story of 'the other' which was told by her lover made a profound impact on Pilar. She struggles to liberate herself from the influence of "the other." The characteristics of the other are given as follows:

“The other is the one who taught me what I should be like, but not what I am. The other believes that it is our obligation to spend our entire life thinking about how to get our hands on as much money as possible so that we will not die of hunger when we are old... so we think so much about money and our plans for acquiring it that we discover we are alive only when our days on earth are practically done” (56). Through the male character in the novel Coelho says one must listen to one’s heart. Listening to one’s heart opens the door to miracles and to experience joy and enthusiasm. Only when the other is ousted, the Divine Energy begins to perform its miracles.

When Pilar banished ‘the other’ from her thoughts, she started experiencing new feelings and felt herself confident and courageous. She says’ “Before the other could say a word, I had accepted the ride with him; I had accepted the invitation to travel with him and to take the risks involved.” During the journey with her boyfriend, she experiences an intense personal and epistemical transformative experience. It’s revealed from her words, “I am her in this room, I thought, far from everything familiar to me, talking about things that have never interested me and sleeping in a city where I’ve never set foot before. I can pretend – at least for a few minutes – that I am different.” The Immaculate Conception helps her find her way. It was a turning point in the life of Pilar, where she pushes her fear aside and desires to take risk, the risk of loving her Childhood friend. She utters, “I felt a sense of freedom. For years, I had fought against my heart, because I was afraid of sadness, suffering, and abandonment. But now I knew that true love was above all that and that it would be better to die than to fail to love.” She started realizing that her love was growing stronger and transforming her. The love built faith in her future and little by little she recovered her faith in God and she thought she got back what she had lost over the years.

The novel shows the importance of believing in love and the virtue of the masculine and feminine side of God. Faith and love, the important aspects of life take a predominant role in the novel. It is mentioned as Jesus said, “If our faith is the size of a mustard seed, we will say to the mountain, “Move!” And it will move.” (Pg 146) Coelho states that faith can make miracles. Pilar emerges as a strong woman in the end who has the ability to love and live the way she hopes to. She opens her mind and her heart to God, “Thank you Lord ...because I was a lost sheep, and you brought me back. Because my life was dead, and you revived it. Because love wasn’t alive in my heart, and you gave me back that gift” (185).

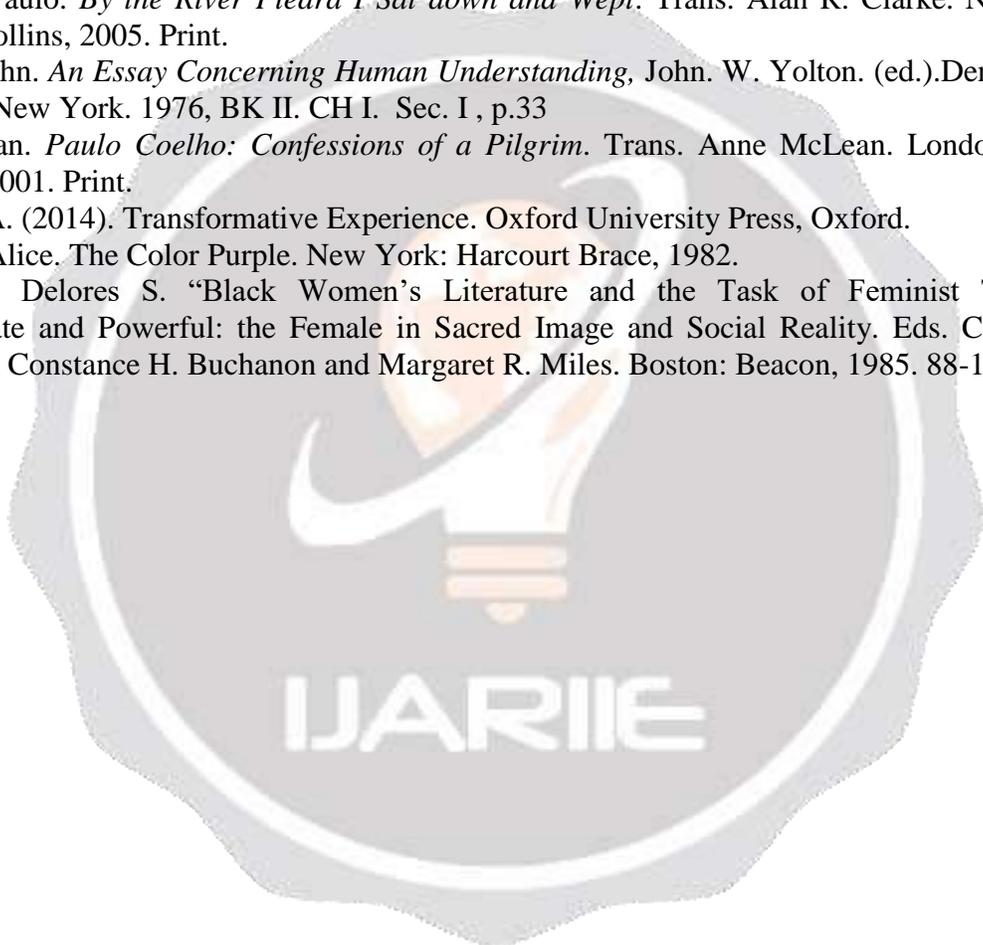
Coelho has pointed out the story of “The Gift of the Magi” in the novel. Like Jim in the story, Pilar’s lover has lost his most prized possession, the special gift to prove his love. He says, “I was ready to face the suffering alone and not to share it. If I had continued along that path, we would never have our house with the white curtains and the view of the mountains.” Pilar, frightened by his decisions says, “I don’t care about that house! I didn’t even want to go in!” I said, trying not to shout. I want to go with you, to be with you in your struggle. I want to be one of those who does something for the first time.” Both want to make each other happy. Love triumphs in the end. Coelho has given a strong message that “Life existed before we were born and will continue to exist after we leave this world. It is the same with love; it existed before and will go on forever” (204, 205) Through this novel the author wants to enlighten his readers that “spiritual experience is above all a practical experience of love” and “To love is to be in communion with the other and to discover in that other the spark of God”

The main character gains not only new phenomenological information but also found her preferences, desires, and self-conception altered. Due to this momentous experience, she emerged transformed in the end.

Pilar engages in an intuitive and imaginative exploration of her psyche and spirituality. The developmental changes lead to a deep shift in her perspective and habits of mind. Coelho being a humanitarian believes the individual change may lead to social change, and social change may promote individual change. Pilar's transformative experience of love leaves an indelible impression on the minds of readers that are long lasting and transforming.

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Empowerment of Disabled Women: A Study

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Abstract

Empowerment as a deed refers both to the method of self-empowerment and to professional support of people, which make possible them to overcome their common sense of powerlessness and lack of influence, and to be acquainted with and use their resources. In this context Women usually had little chance to voice their opinion. Society has developed and said that even today women stand the same with men. Discrimination in opposition to women persists, the only change living being that in some cases it is much more subtle. Women's movements have been instrumental in bringing concerning changes, attempting to Empower and equip women to fight for equality. But this is not the case when we turn our notice to women with disabilities. The empowerment of any divest section is possible when the group apprehension realizes its interests are not given main concern by society. Their main task lies in forming self-help groups to struggle for their rights. They also require to be aware of their responsibilities to widen mutual support to one another and to work in the direction of building a consistent group; center of attention on the benefit of the larger section of the society. Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to mistreatment in all forms: emotional and psychological, sexual, physical.

Key words: *Empowerment, Women, Discrimination, Women with Disabilities*

The word empowerment is used in many different perspectives and by many different organizations. For example, literature concerning empowerment is found in the fields of psychology, education, social work. There is a multiplicity of understandings of the term empowerment due to its widespread usage. Though the term is often used in development work, it is rarely defined. The current popularity of the period empowerment in development coincides with recent questioning of the effectiveness of central planning and the role of 'the state, and moves by donor governments and mutual funding agencies to hold NGOs as partners in development. "Political and institutional problems have gained prominence on the development agenda with a focus on human rights, good governance and participation." (Razavi and Miller 1995).

UN conferences have advocated that:

"Women's empowerment is central to development. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) mentions women's advancement and empowerment in decision-making, including women's participation in national and international ecosystem management and control of environment degradation as a key area for sustainable development." (Wee and Hazer 07).

The empowerment move toward to women in development offers a number of magnetisms for development agencies over the other approaches. Because its origins are frequently stated as being from the South, it may plea to Northern development institutions who wish to avoid charges of cultural imperialism, particularly in relation to gender policies. Empowerment is fundamentally a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a top-down strategy. Understanding empowerment in this way means that development agencies cannot maintain to empower women. Women must empower themselves. Plan consistent policies and programmes for women's empowerment have need of careful attention, because outside agencies/bodies tend to be positioned with empower-over target populations. The training of development professionals, in government, NGOs or donor organization does not always provide them to discuss with and involve others, which supporting empowerment need. Appropriate outside support and intervention, however, can be important to foster and hold up the process of empowerment.

Development organizations can, under some conditions, play an enabling or facilitating role. They can make sure that their programmes work to hold up women's individual empowerment by encouraging women's participation, attainment of skills, decision-making capacity, and control over reserves. Organization can support women's collective empowerment by funding women's organizations which work to address the foundations of gender subordination, by promoting women's contribution in political systems, and by fostering dialogue flanked by those in positions of power and organizations with women's empowerment goals. Empowerment cannot be described in terms of specific activities or end results because it engages a procedure whereby women can freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or inflicted from above, by planners or other social actors.

On the subject of 650 million people in the world—or 10 per cent of the world's population—live with disabilities, and frequently encounter a myriad of physical and social obstructions. They often lack the opportunities of the conservative population and are frequently among the most marginalized in society. Women countenance barriers to full equality and progression because of such issues as age, race, ethnicity, culture, language, religion or disability. Insistence of definite cultural, legal and institutional barriers makes women and girls with disabilities the injured party of two-fold discrimination: as women and as persons with disabilities. Girls and women of all ages with any form of disability are among the more vulnerable and marginalized of society. There is consequently need to take into explanation and to address their suffering in all policy-making and programming. Special measures are needed at all levels to put together them into the mainstream of development. Often women with disabilities are hardly noticeable both among those endorse the rights of persons with disabilities, and that promoting gender disinterest and the advancement of women.

Persons with disabilities they were facing many difficult ordeals of their personal and outsider side society. They are mistreated tin the name of disability. The people with disability they want develop in the society they need some requirements of their abilities they need skills and in gaining meaningful employment. The thought of empowerment, in the background of insufficiency decrease, has turn out to be increasingly important to mainstream development thinking over the past two decades. The social model of disability, which provide details disability in the expression of the societal obstructions that stop people with physical, sensory or

mental destructions from fully participating in society, is increasingly make a replica in the language of international conformities and the mission statements of disability organizations and development agencies around the world. Oliver emphasizes the importance of definitions, pointing out that condition “Disability is defined in social model terms; Disabled people will be seen as the collective victims of an uncaring or unknowing society rather than as individual victims of circumstances” (Oliver 02).

The trend towards defining disability in terms of the disabling role of society, therefore, should encourage policies makers and service providers to consider the need for society to adapt, rather than focusing solely on the prevention and the rehabilitation needs of disabled people. Discrimination next to women persists, the only change life form that in some cases it is much more subtle. Women’s movements have been influential in bringing about changes, attempting to empower and provide women to fight for equality. But this is not the case when we revolve our concentration to women with disabilities. The mainstream women's movements have stayed behind oblivious to the needs of this group. The disability movement too has not paid much notice to the particular needs of disabled women. Therefore they remain at the margin of all rights movements. They are not seen as having a part to play in society. The empowerment of disabled women consequently becomes the need of the hour. The empowerment of any leave without section is possible when the group apprehension realizes its interests are not given main concern by society. Their primary task lies in outward appearance self-help groups to fight for their rights. They also require being conscious of their responsibilities to make bigger mutual support to one another and to work towards building an interconnected group, focusing concentration on the advantage of the larger section of the society.

Empowerment also entails providing a group with the knowledge and skills to handle confrontations of abuse. Women with disabilities are particularly susceptible to abuse in all forms: sexual, physical, emotional and psychological. All women, counting those with disabilities, should be given sex education according to their physical and cognitive abilities. Training in self-defense is also significant; at the most basic level women should be intelligent to report any event of abuse to an authority figure. For women with speech and communication impairments confident words, symbols or pictures on behalf of abuse need to be slot in their communication devices to enable them to tell others if they had encountered any such incidents. Another feature of empowerment for disabled women lies in the receipt of their disability or limitations. Acceptance is a very important step towards developing self-image and self-confidence.

Empowerment also engages freedom of expression. Most women with disabilities on no account find the opening to express their sexuality, as they are largely look upon as asexual and rarely well thought-out for matrimony. Disabled women position at a disadvantageous position in society. The status of disabled women is not only substandard to that of non-disabled women but also to their male corresponding person. The investigative variables considered are:

1. Position in the family.
2. Access to education and healthcare facilities.
3. Opportunities to find employment.

4. Knowledge regarding existing legislation and facilities for disabled people.
5. Fulfilling the role generally ascribed to women.

1. Position in the family:

In the society everyone here is recognizable with the role of the family in socialization. Without a doubt, the family is rightly called the most important socializing agent. In the present background on the other hand, almost universally there is prejudice in socialization on various lines, including gender. Physically and Mentally challenged children are not taught what typical children are. As well, a disabled child in most urns gets little opportunity to come in get in touch with with the other organization of socialization such as school or look close group. In such a situation the family turns out to be the sole, as distinct from being merely the primary, socializing agent.

Intended for disabled women and girls, it is more often than not a case of double discrimination and cultural dispossession. The association between gender and disability varies from society to society particularly in the perspective of socio-cultural and the economic situation. In India the "male" independence can in surplus of the limitations caused by disability. The position of women despite the fact that is different. The marital status of a girl frequently determines her situation in society and family. Motherhood in addition plays a role in the social status of women. Disabled women are neither look forward to be married nor are they usually think about earning a living for themselves. Consequently they are look upon as possible burdens and often grow up with low self-worth and an apathetic self-image. Women with visual or orthopedic disability are in a well over again position as far as employment is apprehension and two thirds of these were connected in white-collar jobs. All of the women with locomotion disability worked as also teachers or special educators. Women with cerebral palsy knew about the National Trust Act. Some of them were indistinctly aware of travel allowances but had no specific in progression regarding them. This reproduces the attitude of social bodies to women with disability they are it seems that not worthy of even the information that apprehensions them specifically. Self-help groups of disabled women need to be structured. Women with disabilities are to be made conscious of the rights through training in self-advocacy. Non-print based mediums like theatre and puppetry are to be to be used as ways of extending awareness regarding the rights of the disabled in universal and disabled women in particular.

- Some recommendations that emerged from the study are as follows:
- Training for women with disabilities needs to be equipment towards developing a positive self-concept and self-image. They are to be empowered to be familiar with that they too are contributing and responsible members of society.
 - Government should frame policies food preparation specifically for women with disabilities.
 - Self-help groups of disabled women require to be organized. These women are to be made conscious of the rights through training in self-advocacy.
 - Rights of disabled women should feature in the normal women's movement.

The empowerment of disabilities fight in progress they are striving to get their rights in all over the world they need some support from social organizations to move up their rights to

the governments in the world. Some special organizations and groups they are teaching possibilities to overcome their status .They are making them greatly and fill the confidence. They are putting demands effectively in front of the government and their empowerment policies implementation its going on .This possibilities greatly clear the economical empowerment of their standrs.themselves have greatly made clear the effectualness of their demands from government and other bodies and institutions but we require now to widen the field.

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A Woman's Empowerment: Is this only a Pipe Dream?

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Abstract

This paper seeks to explore and analyze the novel 'Pinjar' written by Amrita Pritam, a noted poet and a novelist and recipient of the prestigious Jnanpith Award. Pinjar written in Punjabi was translated from Punjabi into English by Khushwant Singh titled - "The Skeleton". The novel was written with the backdrop of the partition in India. It depicts the struggles and pain of Puro – a Hindu girl abducted by a Muslim man Rashida. This paper seeks to present the anxiety, adventure and the mindfulness of a woman who faces challenges after her marriage. Puro's struggle of being Hamida (Thankful) despite all of life's hardships is the struggle of every woman after marriage. Puro's brave decision to change her religion, place and culture is something significant and noteworthy. This novel not only discusses certain events of the Partition of India, but also the various bold roles played by Puro. This paper is an attempt to compare Puro's struggles with that of the struggles faced by women today.

Keywords: *Mindfulness, anxiety, religion, marriage, adventure*

“Hamida had suffered much; the suffering had aged her. She was only twenty years old, but these twenty years had taught her more than she could ever have learnt at that age. She had become as serious and as thoughtful as an old philosopher. Only she could not put her many thoughts into words. Her emotions rose like foam on the crest of a wave, were battered against the rocks of experience and subside once more into the water.”

The novel Pinjar considered to be one the masterpieces of Amrita Pritam with the backdrop of the Partition of India, discusses the journey of Puro who stands tall as she inspires every reader.

Let us peep into the events of Puro's life. Puro a young Hindu girl is betrothed to Ramchand a wealthy young man from her own community, is abducted by Rashid a Muslim, who was forced to kidnap Puro by his family members because of the communal vengeance during partition. Puro struggles hard to escape from him and when she succeeds; her parents refuse to accept her back into the family fearing a communal backlash. Left with no other option, Puro goes back to Rashida. Due to the partition issues between India and Pakistan, many communal conflicts arose between the Hindus and the Muslims. Mean time, Ramchand's family leaves for India in the course of which, Lajo his sister who is married to Puro's brother Trilok is kidnapped by Muslim thugs. Destiny paved the way for Puro and Ramchand to meet again where Ramchand tells her about Lajo's kidnap. Puro with the help of her husband Rashida finds Lajo and saves her from Muslim thugs and they take her back to Lahore. Ramchand and Trilok wait for Lajo. In the end when Trilok persuades Puro to leave Rashida and start a new life with Ramchand, Puro refuses and says she is happy where she belongs.

This novel is a mirror to the emotional struggles and silent cries of many women who were victims of religious and communal conflicts. It also reflects the genuineness of womanhood and paradigm of power hidden in a woman through the actions of Puro.

“We feel uncertain- uncertain what it even mean to be a woman; uncertain what it truly means to be feminine; uncertain if we are or ever will be.” - John and Stasi Eldredge

The opening lines of the story – The sky was a colorless grey gives the reader a slight indication of the dull incident which would come to pass in Puro’s life. The colour symbolizes meaningless emotions, passiveness and uncertainty as it lies between the two extreme colours white and black. The author has evidently mentioned this colour in most of the major events in Puro’s life. She was caught between being Puro-following Hindu customs and traditions and becoming Hamida for Rashida and adopting a different way of life. A series of incidents in the life of Puro right from the time of her abduction till the end put her in a fix of whether to do or not to do something. Puro had to always choose between an action which would satisfy her but put her in trouble and an action which was against her will but would please the present community of her husband. In short, she was reduced to only a skeleton with no soul inside her.

“Man’s love is of man’s life a thing apart it’s a woman’s whole existence” – Byron

Rashida marries Puro forcefully after her failed attempts of going back to her family; Puro becomes Hamida to become acceptable to the Muslim community. The name was not only inscribed on her skin in dark green letters but everyone in Sakkar village began to call her by that name. ‘Puro felt like a stray calf in a strange herd of cows’.

“I feel something stabbing inside me” says Puro when she had conceived her son against her wish and will. Hamida did not sense the joy of motherhood. Even after she gave birth to her baby, she could not accept Rashida as her husband, as she had dreamt of becoming Ramchand’s wife. After her abduction she had just become a skeleton with no identity of her own. The episode of making vermicelli for Rashida brought back the memories of her conversation with her mother where she recollects her mother’s comment –“Fie girl, only the Muslims eat machine – made vermicelli!” brought tears in her eyes, maybe she had not even imagined that one day she would be living in a Muslim community adopting to their life style Being a young girl she definitely missed her time back home with her family. Forceful union with Rashida compels her to change her name, habits, culture, clothing attire and many other things which she had acquired and learnt from her childhood under her parental care. When Puro tries to merge the two different identities i.e. of Puro and Hamida she feels as though there are two different souls existing in one body. The transition from Puro to Hamida – a young girl living in an adolescence fantasy to a strong bold woman battling life’s harsh challenges, was something in which she had no choice of her own and before she could realize the permanent and painful change of seasons in her life, it was already too late. She is constantly haunted by questions and is constantly aware of the conflict within her. There’s a saying which goes like this, “You can break down a woman temporarily, but a strong woman will always pick up the pieces, rebuild herself and come back stronger than ever”. The challenges faced by Puro definitely made her a stronger woman.

“The hand of a bride becomes the hand of a mother. Ever so gently she cares for her precious child. Bathing, dressing, feeding, comforting—there is no hand like mother’s. Nor does its tender care diminish through the years.” —Thomas S. Monson

Puro’s story contrasted with the above quote. Soon after she gave birth, her eyes seemed to say, “What more do you want of me? I have given you my person and I have given you a son. I have nothing more to give.” However everything changed when she put the boy to her bosom. A strange, strong emotion welled up. She wanted to hold the boy and cry loudly. “The boy was a toy made of her own blood, a living being carved out of her own flesh. In the entire teeming world, this boy was all that really belonged to her.” Now she did not care about her parents who abandoned her. Nevertheless the birth of the child did not change Hamida’s feelings for her husband. Hamida showed that no work done by a man is either hard or as responsible as the work of a woman who is bringing up a family, for upon her time and strength demands are made not only every hour of the day but often every hour of the night too. Hamida started to live her dreams through her child that’s what every mother does. Child become her world and a reason to live.

Hamida empathized with every other woman she had met, be it they were traumatized; hurt or abused. Her willingness to help these women against all odds is remarkable. The first incident was her encounter with Kammo, who was abandoned by her father after her mother’s death. Kammo who was at the mercy of her aunt had to fetch water early in the mornings before even the birds chirp from the public well in a pitcher which was too big for her to carry, Hamida volunteered to carry her pitcher however Hamida could extend her help only until Kammo’s aunt warned her not to meet Hamida calling her a eloped bride.

Hamida’s next encounter was with Taro who was going through a psychosomatic infirmity due to her being the second wife of her husband. Taro’s parents did not take any interest in mending her life as they were of the mindset that once the girl is given in marriage, she belongs to her husband and he has all the right over her. “My parents have no use for me; parents never have for a married daughter. And my husband has no use for me because another woman is mistress of both his heart and house.” This is what Taro had to say when Hamida persuaded her to share what she was going through. Taro become party to the taboos of the society even though her in-laws were aware that their son was already married. They took Taro as daughter in law only because she belonged to the upper caste. Taro’s live exhibit the plight of a girl who is a pawn in the caste system of rural India. Taro was a strong girl who would express her heart out but then she was not able to come out of the web which she was part of, the society did not give any importance to the feelings of the woman.

The saga meeting traumatized women does not stop with Kammo and Taro. They have anew guest in the village; a woman who is mentally ill and who had lost her senses. People of Sakkar village out of pity gave that woman food to eat and a shed to stay in the outskirts of the village. One evening the elders of the Panchayat took the mad woman by the hand and left her in the dark at some distance from the village. Soon after few days she came back to the villages with her belly growing day by day. “She is neither young nor attractive ‘ she is just a lump of flesh without a mind to go with it... a living skeleton... a lunatic skeleton... a skeleton picked to its bones by kites and vultures,” thought Hamida. Very soon this lunatic woman delivered and dies. Hamida willingly takes the baby, gives bath and lays the baby in a cot next to Javed (Puro’s

son). The news spread throughout the village and many women came and blessed Puro for her kind deed. They lauded her act of mercy. Yet destiny had to play its part, the baby was taken away by the Hindu elders claiming its mother to be a Hindu woman and hence the child should be grown in the same community.

And finally her irreplaceable role in a great adventure to rescue Lajjo (her sister-in-law) from the hands of the Muslim tugs simply makes Hamida an extraordinary woman in the story. She is not educated, she doesn't have her own family's support except that of her husband, and yet she was strong and courageous. Hamida deeply felt the trauma of these women and tried her best to help them. A woman's strength isn't about how much she can handle before she breaks, it's about how much she must handle after she's broken. Puro set an example and is a source of inspiration to every reader.

“What's a queen without her king? Well, historically speaking, more powerful!”

A saying goes like this “If someone loves you, it should feel like they love you.” Rashida's only brutal act was that he had abducted Puro. But he was actually kind and considerate in nature. He continuously contemplates his cruel act. He loved Puro a lot and supported her at all times. Rashida though married Puro due to unavoidable circumstances, did give meaning to the institution of marriage by loving Puro with at most respect. His commitment towards his family and willingness to support Puro in every step was remarkable. Rashid addresses Puro as a “Woman of God”. It is not easy for a girl to find someone who understands her completely. Many a times her sacrifices towards her family go unnoticed. Men who cannot stand by their wives because of family pressures lose their credibility as husbands which leads to emotional infidelity. The cause of divorce nowadays is mostly because of lack of understanding and compatibility. A real man chooses to honor, love, adore and respect his wife. Puro in the beginning was against her husband and did not want to live with him. But later she could understand that her husband loved her a lot and that's why she refuses to return to her parents when Trilok (Her brother) offers her to go with him.

A post on a social media goes like this
 “Everyone wants a strong woman
 until she actually stands up,
 flexes her muscles,
 projects her voice

Suddenly, she is too much.
 She has forgotten her place.

You love those women
 as idea, as fantasies

Not as breathing, living humans
 threatening to be even better
 than you could ever be.”

Many of us give good speeches about the upliftment of women and the equality of men and women, but when it comes to action we hesitate to take a firm stand. Many of the parents think that daughter is a burden or their responsibility of their daughter's life is only till marriage and the husband and his family thinks that they become the owner of the girl once the girl is given in marriage. They assume that it is mandatory for the girl to heed to the customs and culture of the family she belongs to after marriage. A perception exists that, much of our personality of being women is the result of the choices that we make for self- protection and self- esteem. A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform. Many people do not realize this yet or rather realizes it but refuse to acknowledge it. Will we ever have a day when we don't explain to others what we are, what we feel, how do we want to live? If there comes a day like that, that day we can proudly say we women are empowered.

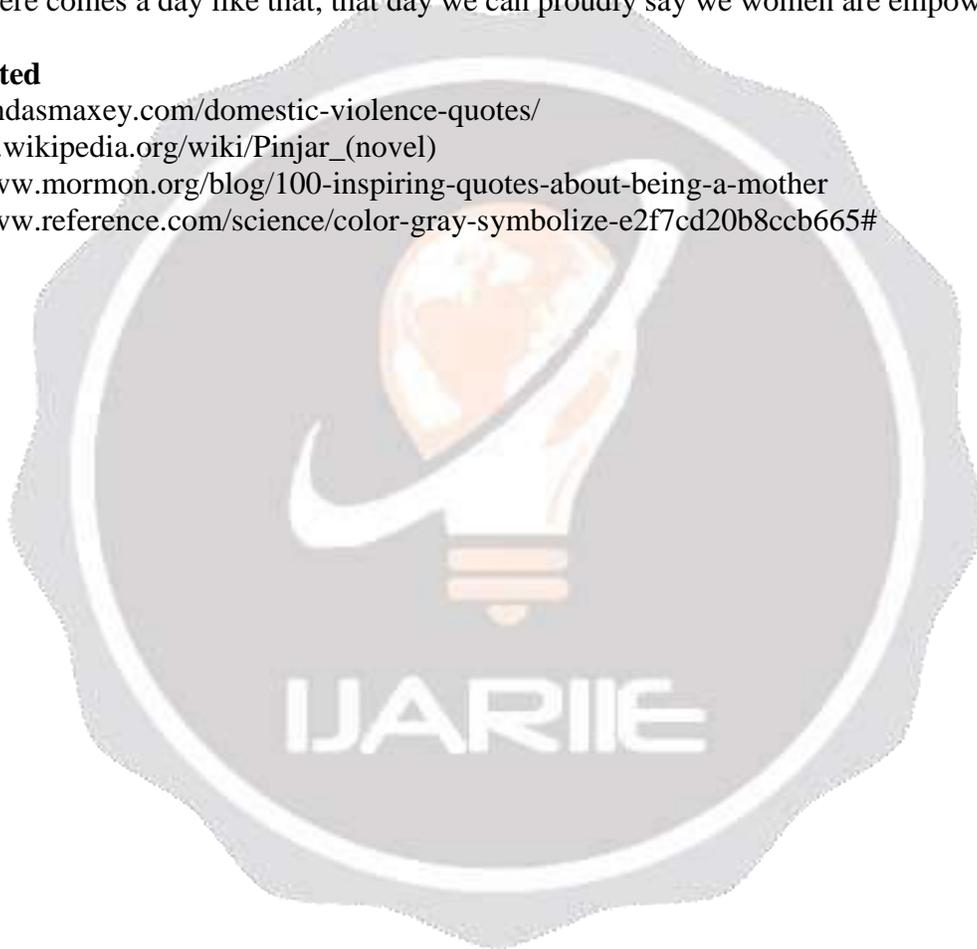
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A Transcultural Aspect to Feminism: A Study of the Poetry of Eunice Desouza

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Abstract

Anything and everything that is not restricted to only one culture and transcends the boundaries of nations and extends through all human cultures is termed as transcultural. Feminism, the women liberation movement in literary discourses, is one such widespread phenomenon which has massive significance in all over the world. It can be argued that the pioneers of feminism were the dwellers of the west such as Virginia Woolf, Elaine Showalter and Simone de Beauvoir. However this idea of giving voice to the voiceless is later seen to be celebrated all over the world. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century there was flowering of poets in America, Africa, Canada, India and as many countries as possible, who in their poetry developed a sort of feminism which was more of a personal experience rather than a passive spectacle.

Among them one such poet was Eunice Desouza, the Goan-originated poet who offers a wide range of women-centric ideas in her poetry based on her personal experiences. The kind of feminism, she deals with, is heavily inspired by western as well as Indian poets of varying cultures. Though feminism developed as a reform later it became confessional in the writings of some poets. Thus it is obvious that the confession varies from individual to individual. However there is some sense of similarity among them all. This paper shows how the poetry of Eunice Desouza is a record of a transcultural aspect of feminism inspired by poets like Sylvia Path, Emily Dickinson, and Kamala Das and many more.

Keywords: *Transcultural, feminism, confession, personal experience, emotions.*

Right from the beginning of human history woman is always seen as a marginalized section of society who needs to be dependent on man for its survival and existence. In the Bible it's mentioned that woman was created from the rib of man. So it's the religion which preaches woman to be inferior to man as it's he who created her. As it's the morale of the civilization so it is of no wonder that same misogynistic practices were prevailed in the whole history of literature before feminist criticism came into the front. "In its earliest years, feminist criticism concentrated on exposing the misogyny in literary practices: the stereotyped images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature and the exclusion of women from literary history" (Showalter 5). After this inception of feminism in literature there came umpteen number of poetesses who reflected in their poetry the anxiety and chaos issuing out from their forced life style. Virginia Woolf, Helene Cixous, Alice Walker, Sylvia Path, Eunice Desouza, Ismat Chughtai, Emily Dickinson, Kamala Das, Germaine Greer are just a few names.

While Virginia Woolf says “female authors wrote as women write, not as men write” in her book *A Room of One’s Own*, she means two things i.e. the possibility of a specifically feminine style and the assertion that it is the androgynous writers who become the classics such as Shakespeare and Marcel Proust. Same is the notion of Helene Cixous who says, “Woman must put herself into the text- as unto the world and into history- by her own movement” (Cixous n.p.). Sylvia Plath in her poems, “relives her childhood guilt, her anguish suffered during the hospital days, during which she sometimes imagines herself as the empress of the clinical world” (Sharma 45). Ismat Chughtai, an Urdu poetess of post-independence era of India suggests that women should be free from patriarchal biases to such an extent that even lesbianism would be their preference rather than dependence on men. The feminism portrayed by Emily Dickinson can be summarized as giving voice to the voiceless as said in her poem *I’m Nobody, Who Are You?* Kamala Das became the spokesperson for the section of women community who never questioned the prejudiced notion or had any courage to. Germaine Greer in her book *The Female Eunuch*, “offered a systematic deconstruction of ideas such as womanhood and femininity, arguing that women are forced to assume submissive roles in society to fulfill male fantasies of what being a woman entails” (“Germaine Greer”). Among all of them there is both suspicion and confirmation of certain criteria of feminism which Eunice Desouza tries to recollect in her poetry thus showing feminism has wider connotations spreading over all cultures.

The recent developments in Gender studies claim that sex is a biological construct whereas sex is a social construct. The idea of masculinity and femininity is totally developed by societal taboos and this same patriarchal hegemony is being dealt with in the poems of Eunice Desouza. “To define feminism purely in gendered terms assumes that our consciousness being ‘woman’ has nothing to do with race, class, nation or sexuality, just with gender. But no one ‘becomes a woman because she is female’ (Mohanti 55). Thus to Desouza, poetry is a way to open up and to advertize the opposition to these stereotypical notions. As Cixous points in *The Laugh of the Medusa* that women must write and use her body as a source of power and inspiration, Desouza also prefers to write and express her internal dismay. It’s not just for herself that she writes; she writes for the “universal woman subject who must bring women to their sense and to their meaning in history” (Kohen 875-876). Though it will be quite hard to express in a phallogocentric society she mentions in one of her poems, *Advice to Women*:

Keep cats
if you want to learn to cope with
the otherness of lovers
Otherness is not always neglect-
Cats return to their little trays
When they need to (“Advice to Women” 1-6).

Although there is the presence of a current of anger in her poetry towards the commodification of women, there is also the portrayal of sympathy and empathy towards women who suffer not because of their prejudice but because of their passivity and ignorance. In *Women in Dutch Paintings*,

The afternoon sun is on their faces.
They are calm, not stupid,
pregnant, not bovine.
I know woman like that

and not just in painting—
 an aunt who did not answer her husband back
 not because she was plain
 and Anna who writes poems
 and hopes her avocado stones
 will sprout in the kitchen.
 Her voice is oatmeal and honey (“Women in Dutch Paintings” 1-11).

Desouza feels that the women are passive because of their own inherited quality to please and satisfy others. Be it their parents or husband or children, one primary concern of every woman is to qualify the standards of expectation levels. In *De Souza Prabhu*, She explicates this notion by confessing her own experience of being an unwanted child or rather to say an unwanted girl.

My parents wanted a boy
 I have done my best to qualify
 I hid the blood stains
 On my clothes
 And let my breasts sag
 Words the weapon
 to crucify (“De souza Prabhu” 16-22).

By presenting how ignorance results in pain and trying to suppress the physical feminine growth Desouza rightly qualifies herself for Woolf’s description of a classic feminist writer. In some of the poems of Desouza we see radical expressions of female sexuality suppressed by men as well as women. Not only the body but also the mind of woman is nothing but a work-field for man; this is the idea that the society propagates. This gender biasness and differentiation in sexual acknowledgements are shown in her poem *Sweet Sixteen*:

Well you can’t say
 they didn’t try.
 Mamas mention menses.
 A nun screamed: you vulgar girl
 don’t say brassieres
 Say bracelets.

The preacher thundered
 Never go with a man alone
 Never alone
 and even if you’re engaged
 only passionless kisses (“Sweet Sixteen” 1-11).

The main proposition of Germaine Greer in feminist literary criticism is that the libidinal power of women is not allowed to grow in the society where service to men is of utmost importance. Thus Desouza rightly points out how female sexual preference is under turmoil.

It’s not just for the universal woman subject for whom Desouza wrote her poems. There is always an implicit depiction of her personal experiences in the form of confession in almost all of her poems. In this regard her dealing of feminism is heavily borrowed from Sylvia Path. There is “the shocking disclosures of the most intimate and private experiences of physical type or

precisely their experiences as females” (Sharma 45). Plath had a guilt-ridden conscience that she has killed her father. That same conscience is vibrant in Desouza when she says, “I killed my father when I was three” (“Autobiographical” 1-7). There is some kind of psychical dilemma eminent in both the poets however they prefer to cure themselves through poetry rather than psychiatry. It’s always the society which is responsible for this mental sickness in women and to suppress themselves inside a multilayered entity. But through their confessional mode of poetry both Plath and Desouza obtain a chance to rip those layers of suppression. Woman always have a desire for autonomy but a dread of exploitation; this is shown in one of the poems of *Autobiographical*:

I thought the whole world
was trying to rip me up
cut me down go through me
with a razor blade.
Then I discovered
A cliché: that’s what I wanted
to do to the world (“Autobiographical” n.p.).

Emily Dickinson was such a poet who dealt with the themes of death, time, immortality, nature and many more just to explicate the wider connotations of feminism. The review of *Poetry as Confession*, an article by M.L Rosenthal starts with, “Emily Dickinson once called publication “the auction of the mind.” Robert Lowell seems to regard it more as soul’s therapy. The use of poetry for the most naked kind of confession grows apace in our day” (“Poetry as Confession”). This ascertains that the kind of poetry Dickinson dealt with is also confessions of her life in some or other way. When she says, “You’re right– ‘the way is narrow’–/ And ‘difficult the Gate’–/ And ‘few there be’– Correct again–/ That ‘enter in– thereat’–” she mocks the idea of religious salvation; in the same way, Desouza, dealt with faith as a kind of nostalgia in one of her poems called *The Road*:

They said
now she wears lipstick
now she is a Bombay girl
they said, your mother is lonely.
Nobody said, even the young must live.
In school
I clutched Sister Flora’s skirt
and cried for my mother
who taught across the road.
Sister Flora is dead.
The school is still standing.
I am still learning
to cross the road(“The Road” 10-22)

Kamala Das says, “He did not beat me/ But my sad woman body felt so beaten” (“An Introduction” 29-30). What she means by this is, for man a woman is nothing but an object of entertainment. He violates her body and soul as much as he likes and as the way he likes but she is just a mutual spectator who witnesses the violation actively but is unable to object. Love is not always physical intimacy; it is the mutual admiration and acclamation of the emotional and

mental proceedings which is termed as love. Hoping for this when Das asks her husband for love, he takes her to his bedroom. This bold confession of sex lands her as a vehement critic of the societal practice of marriage. Same release of turmoil is seen in Desouza's poem *Marriages are Made* where she proposes the argument that the patriarchal system of marriage descends woman to the position of cattle. Before marriage she is examined from head to toe; whether she is fair or dusky, whether she is fat or thin, whether she is collective or disjointed; and all of these just to make her suitable for a prospective groom who may be lacking various features but his bride has to be perfect. She will grow and feed his children just like a cow. She says:

My cousin Elena
is to be married
the formalities
have been completed:
her family history examined
for T.B. and madness
her father declares solvent
her eyes examined for squints
her teeth for cavities
her stool for the possible
non-Brahmin worm ("Marriages are Made" 1-11).

Ismat Chughtai was the first Indian feminist who in her short stories such as *Lihaf*, *Badan ki Khushboo*, *Til* and many more dealt with the rights of women from women's perspectives. Lesbian relationship in *Lihaf*, Sexual exploitation of women within the Nawabi families in *Badan ki Khushboo*, sexual needs of women in *Til* lands Chughtai as a writer of female identification. She proclaimed that women should do what they want to do not what they are said to. Similarly Desouza pronounces the effective deconstruction of foundational and hierarchical sexual codes which govern the cultural intelligibility of women in her poetry. When she says:

Some recommend stern standards
others say float along.
He says, take it as it comes,
meaning, of course, as he hands it out ("Bequest" 8-11)

she compares her preference of living as that of to others. Being a woman she knows the beneficial and hazardous power of female beauty and thus describes this in her poem *Miss Lousie*:

Shaking her greying ringlets:
'My girl, I can't even
go to Church you know
I unsettle the priests
so completely. Only yesterday
that handsome Fr. Hans was saying,
"Miss Louise, I feel an arrow
through my heart ("Miss Lousie" 10-17)

Thus the whole proclamation is women must be allowed to reveal rather to conceal.

Womanism is a type of feminist perspective developed by Alice Walker which addresses the issues of women dominance and plight because of women. In her book *Colour Purple* she deals with this kind of misogynistic approaches where white women are domesticated by white men and black women are domesticated by white women. Thus it's the section of black women who is doubly marginalized from the common human society. The kind of liberation they demand is different to that of feminists as they experience twice the burden as compared to that of the white women. In Desouza's poems there is a far-fetched reference to this kind of feminism. In the Indian context the 'white woman' is the mother, the preacher, the bourgeois who preach of man-made ethics to the daughter, the student and the proletariat respectively.

Forgive me. Mother,
that I left you
a life-long widow
old, alone
It was kill or die
And you got me anyway
I was never young
Now I'm old, alone.
In dreams
I hack you ("Forgive me, Mother").

The problem of identification which Alice Walker deals with is also vaguely evident in Desouza's poems. Though hers is an expression of her Goan-Catholic origin but the lack of belongingness is immense in her lines:

No matter that
my name is Greek
my surname Portuguese
my languages alien.
There are ways
of belonging.
I belong with the lame ducks ("De Souza Prabhu" 8-14).

Societies crumble and collapse not because of the wrong and evil-deeds of a few bad humans but because of the apathy and silence of many good humans. Women are so biased that they themselves don't get to understand that the thing which is ethically right is always distinguished from the societal concept of right. Desouza lends her voice to oppose these kinds of women in her poetry.

This paper showed a comparative study of different feminist writers across nation and culture throughout the feminist history. Cixous belonged to French Algeria; Woolf to London; Greer to Australia; Plath, Dickinson and Walker to America; Das and Chughtai to India. Not just their nations but also their culture and customs are different in many ways. And after a detailed analysis we can see that their propositions are also different. However the common theme is feminism which spreads across all cultures and not restricted to the defined boundaries. Desouza was one such poet who showed this aspect of transcultural feminism in her poetry borrowing from everyone in discourse. Though Kamala Das and Ismat Chughtai were Indian poetesses yet their philosophies are also radically different from each other owing to their Malayalam and Urdu origins. Similarly Plath, Dickinson and Walker also belong to America but their notions differ from each other owing to their races and time period. Thus Eunice Desouza much cleverly

allegorizes every aspect of feminism in her poetry thereby establishing herself as a wonderful synchroniser of feminine traits.

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The New Woman in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*

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Abstract

Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland (2013) is found to be an interesting text to explore the idea of new woman. Written in the backdrop of Naxalite movement the text tries to highlight a host of issues and feminism is certainly one among them. Through the character of Gauri, various ideas relating to woman come to the surface although other women characters are also there to reinforce the same in one way or the other. A close reading of the text uncovers layers of meaning pertaining to women particularly in the changing world. The incorporation of diaspora world makes the text further resonant and hence it makes the attempt to find a new woman there a rewarding experience.

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* (2013) is found to be an interesting text to explore the idea of new woman. Written in the backdrop of Naxalite movement the text tries to highlight a host of issues and feminism is certainly one among them. Through the character of Gauri, various ideas relating to woman come to the surface although other women characters are also there to reinforce the same in one way or the other. A close reading of the text uncovers layers of meaning pertaining to women particularly in the changing world. The incorporation of diaspora world makes the text further resonant and hence it makes the attempt to find a new woman there a rewarding experience.

The 2013 novel written by Jhumpa Lahiri explores various streams and ideas of female independence within itself. In this paper, the foremost aim would be to analyze and look within the pages of this text and put forth arguments proving that the novel is indeed a representation of a feminist text through the principal character of Gauri and identify the grey areas that her character occupies.

Many readers identify Lahiri's text as a story that revolves more around the different ideologies and different life paths carried by two brothers Subhash and Udayan. The novel is a stark portrayal of choices, taking the readers through the Naxalite Revolution in Calcutta and an immigration that is conducted to fill vacuum in the lives of protagonists. First appearing in the form of an image in the hands of Subhash, who gazes at the black and white photograph, Gauri, is emblematic of the women of 1960's India, educated and independent, but to Subhash she comes to represent the milestone that Udayan has reached before him. "From time to time he drew out the picture and looked at it. He wondered when he would meet Gauri, and what he would think of her, now that they were connected. And part of him felt defeated by Udayan all over again, for having found a girl like that" (*The Lowland*, 45).

Gauri emerges in the text as one of the more enigmatic female characters created by Lahiri. She can be starkly contrasted with her other female protagonists like Aashima Ganguly (*The Namesake*) and Hema (Hema and Kaushik, *Unaccustomed Earth*). Lahiri's women are vehemently independent and grow in the novels, carving their own space in the minds of the readers. But Gauri becomes an anti heroine in the novel and forms a certain convoluted aura around her that makes it difficult for the readers to practice sympathy and apathy towards her. She is alienated in the text and remains an outsider in both the families she enters, unable to form a lasting bond with anyone in the novel.

She married Udayan, knowing and participating in his ideologies and revolutions, in fact one the reasons Udayan states to Subhash for falling in love and marrying Gauri was that 'she prefers books to jewels and saris. She believes as I do' (*The Lowland* 46). In marrying Gauri, he also makes her a participant in murder, which transforms her idea about how she feels about his revolution and whether he married her so he could access her assistance in achieving his own goals. In doing so she also becomes this self reflexive female character of the text that at she is a wife trying to fulfill all her duties towards her husband and his family but at the same time, she conveys her own thoughts about a large movement towards which her husband so passionately was involved.

What makes Gauri a problematic figure in the novel, is the sense of isolation and distance she feels from her child and second husband. During one of the major story arcs of the novel, after the death of Udayan and realizing that she is with Udayan's unborn child, Gauri marries and moves to Rhode Island with Subhash. Suffering from post partum depression, after the birth of her child Bela, Gauri is unable to form any sort of connection with her child and experiences anger and resentment towards Subhash as he is more successful in performing his duties as a parent than her.

"...and every time Subhash took over, so that she could get some rest or take a shower or drink a cup of tea before it turned cold, every time he picked Bela up and comforted her when she cried so that Gauri did not have to, she could not deny the relief she felt at being allowed, however briefly, to step aside." (*The Lowland*, 116)

This reversal of pragmatic gender roles in the text, gives the readers a perspective into the very less talked about issue of postpartum depression in women and especially through the character of Subhash a deep understanding and sensitivity in a father figure which is not something new in Lahiri's works. Especially if one considers Kiran Desai's characterization of the Judge, another adoptive father figure, she introduced in her novel, *Inheritance of Loss*. The two figures are different in the way they choose to perform the duties of an adoptive parent, where unlike Subhash, the Judge chooses to ignore and isolate his granddaughter.

Gauri ultimately leaves both Subhash and Bela and moves away to California to pursue her academic interests in philosophy, and this is where readers of the text stand divided over Gauri's persona. Though it is quite simplistic to assume that as a mother abandoning one's child isn't a question or step that a woman should consider, but it is equally difficult to ignore that had Gauri stayed with both Bela and Subhash, she wouldn't have been able to provide any of them with familial happiness that they sought and expected from her.

“She’d convinced herself that Subhash was her rival, and that she was in competition with him for Bela, a competition that felt insulting, unjust. But of course it had not been a competition; it had been her squandering. Her own withdrawal was covert, ineluctable. With her own hand she’d painted herself into a corner, and then out of the picture altogether” (The Lowland, 180).

A feminist reading of this text can also be portrayed in the way Lahiri talks about the female sexual independence. Gauri has a fluid sexuality where she has sexual relations with women as well once she is living independently as a Professor in California. She is not repressed. And neither is Bela, who grows up to be an environmental preserver, and live a life of a wanderer. Bela, in fact is bold and in spite of the reservations of her father, chooses to have a child without the support of a partner. Lahiri’s women are quite emblematic of sexual freedom and expression and one can find them scattered in her novels and stories. Hema, from *Unaccustomed Earth* also asserts her sexual independence just like Bela and Gauri do.

Therefore, it’s possible to argue that the novel is a feminist text in the terms of its representation of female independence. Gauri as a character is at the same time remarkable and a little problematic. But she carves her own destiny and doesn’t leave things to fate. She understands the passion Udayan had for the revolution, and accepts the fact that it was bigger than their relationship. She makes the decision of leaving Subhash and Bela because she realizes that they among themselves would be a much happier family than they would be with her. And in doing so, Lahiri again unravels the complexities of her female characters and how they continue to live in these grey areas, long after the text is finished.

Lahiri has portrayed this woman, Gauri, unpredictable and hell-bent on breaking out of her assigned box of Good Indian Wife/Mother/Daughter-In-Law. We feel the urge to admire Gauri’s daring, her willingness to trample on the life that tradition and custom demand. Without fear, she strikes out to live on her own terms—a truly American notion.

Gauri prefers to hack off her long, black hair in favor of a monkish bob. Despite being married, she openly desires an unknown man she encounters at a bus stop, to the extent of masturbating in a public bathroom. Gauri leaves her young child alone in an apartment for hours, or allows her to wander outside alone, apparently without one iota of concern. Is she worthy of the purported ultimate honor that society bestows upon a woman...Motherhood? Still, though Gauri feels more realistic than any of the other women in Lahiri’s writings...and admirable for her unique resolve and independence...she ends up a loser in this story. Defying convention and renegeing on duty leave her with a life that ultimately, Lahiri suggests, means nothing.

Was it worth it? What reward did it bring to strike out solo, to stand apart? Does Lahiri mean that convention, so ingrained in Indians as the “right” thing to do, represents the only path to a meaningful life? Does the author hint that only by doing our duty and following tradition in the ways of our mothers can Indian women find happiness?

First, it is seen that Lahiri has shown the evolution of Indian Women from their domesticity and tradition to personal identity formation process and modernity. Secondly, it is found that Lahiri shows how women along with men becomes the victim of time particularly in a highly globalized and mechanized world

Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* is a very nice novel which is opened to multiple readings and the feminist reading carried out here is only one among them. Lahiri is found to be very successful in portraying Indian women in the process of evolving into a new woman at a cross roads Indian politics. Gauri, although thought to be a new women is a found to be a rather ambivalent and ambiguous character given the age old Indian culture and the idea of modern India.

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The Voice of Clarissa in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*

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Abstract

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was an English writer and one of the foremost Modernists of twentieth century. Her works are mostly deals with feminism and mostly tells about the sufferings of women in the English society. One of her famous work Mrs. Dalloway tells about women who was living a happy life outwardly but suffers a lot to overcome from the past happenings. The novel addresses Clarissa's preparations for a party she will host that evening. With an interior perspective the story travels forwards and back in time in and out of character's minds in which Woolf uses the technique The Stream Of Consciousness beautifully. However in the end Clarissa's party is successful but she found herself a biggest failure by suppressing all her emotions in heart in which the voice of her heart will only heard to those who suffered the same pain.

Adeline Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was one of the most famous woman writers during twentieth century. Her works are mostly deals with a feminist touch and it portrays the character of women who suffers but tries to overcome all the hurdles she found on her life. One of her famous work *Mrs. Dalloway* also tells the same thing in which Clarissa Dalloway, the protagonist of the novel suppressed all her feelings and emotions and fulfills her duties passionately. Outwardly Clarissa was a successful woman but inwardly she found herself nothing but a big failure. Throughout this novel Woolf beautifully uses the stream of consciousness technique with overgrowing sureness of purpose; her keen mind and magnificent artistic sense enables the readers to weld the parts into a unified artistic whole of sensitive subtle portraiture. This novel's brilliance lies in the skill which Woolf moves the character's mind from one to another.

The novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (14 may 1925) details a day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, a fictional high-society woman in post- First world war England. The novel opens with Clarissa goes around London in the morning, getting ready to host a party that evening. The nice day reminds her of her youth spent in the countryside and makes her wonder about her choice of husband; she married the reliable Richard Dalloway instead of the enigmatic and demanding Peter Walsh, and she "had not the option" to be with Sally Seton. Peter reintroduces these conflicts by paying a visit that morning. However there was a parallel character to Clarissa, Septimus Warren Smith who was suffered from traumatic stress and commits suicide by jumping out of a window. Clarissa's party to the evening is a slow success. It is attended by all the people from her past. She hears about Septimus' suicide at the party and gradually comes to admire the stranger's act, which she considers an effort to preserve the purity of his happiness. However the plot construction is unconventional.

Woolf portrayed the character of Clarissa as a woman who is very strong towards the society and found herself comfortable and adjusted towards it. But her feelings for Peter Walsh and the love she wants has become an unsuccessful thing. Later Clarissa married Richard Dalloway not because of love but because of luxurious and comfortable life. When Clarissa found that her husband was in contact with another girl she was not able to show her anger and frustrations towards him as it is not because of love but it was he who has fulfilled her wish of living a life she wants. The other reason is because of the society she dwells in as if she commits crime it will become a black mark for her. These things are not happening only in English society but also in our society too. There are still many Clarissa who does not open their voices freely as it became an unheard voice. One who suffered the same pain of Clarissa will be able to hear those voices.

Similarly when she heard about the death of Septimus, Clarissa found broken but she did not show her sympathy to the party members. Woolf created the character of Septimus only to show Clarissa how strong Septimus was but not her. Septimus to overcome the stress and pain he found solution in his death. But Clarissa attempts to remain in an artificial world into which reality cannot intrude. She shortly begins to feel an odd identity with the unknown young man who has taken his own life; she feels that Septimus has achieved an act of courage of which she would never be capable. He has “reached the center” while she remains standing on the periphery of life. She feels Septimus reached to this decision only because he is a man but Clarissa however a woman maintained her appearance as a mother to her daughter and fulfilled her social obligations such as her role of hostess to parties. She perhaps could not confess that this life was not the one she desired and was the cause of her musings throughout the day. A very subtle but feminist tone can be felt right from the beginning.

When Clarissa goes out to buy flowers for her party and she immediately starts to think about Peter Walsh to who she nearly married. Considering her memories of dialogue between herself and Peter we can draw the conclusion that although he loved her he did not share with Clarissa his feelings which can be explained with the fact that Peter had a lot of more important matters to deal with. This reminds Clarissa to the fact that she did right by not marrying him, because with her husband Richard Dalloway, they keep a little distance, as it should be in a marriage. She somehow suppressed her feelings and tried to meet the demands of the age and society to her. It was real hard to live without liking what she did and hiding what she felt but as women had not much rights at this time she had no other way than accepting all those things and not to rebel against the standard.

When Clarissa hears about the death of Septimus she felt angry and kept grudges towards Lady Bradshaw saying, why she has to destroy the atmosphere with that bad news. She wanted to keep away this heavy word “death” from the party because her life felt so small in comparison to that thought in that way. Eventually, she embraced the thought and savored it, as it made her feel more alive, and allowed her to cherish and feel glad for the feelings of being alive, and the things that she had, although in her current state of mind, her life could be summed up as trivial, barely a wife and a party planner. Two facts concerning Clarissa, however, distance her from the “angel type”, and restrain her from sanctification: the fact that her virginity is rendered an act of conscious choice. Mrs. Dalloway’s virginity is sharply contrasted to her power to arouse fleshly desire in others. The word “failure” here refers to Clarissa’s continuous fails to meet her husband’s demands and her duties towards him. It is explained with Clarissa’s conscious option

to reject men and remain single being unconquered like an ancient pagan goddess or as a negative reflection of her to be normal in the question of sexuality. Hence Virginia Woolf symbolizes the character of Clarissa as the outward framework, the externally glitters, the outward pomp and show of a civilization which is suffering from a spiritual barrenness. Externally they may have wealth and all the materials giving comfort, insecurity, neurosis, insincerity, pride, vanity and false show. Spiritually they are “the hollow men”, “the stuffed men”, leaning their heads full of straw otherwise empty.

“My life, my choices, my mistakes, my lessons, not your business. Mind your own problems before you talk about mine. My life is not your story”. These words are possible only to a male dominated society and they told that man is a social thinker or a man with broad mind. But if the same words are uttered by a woman the people together called her as a stubborn person. Hence the voice and thoughts of a woman are blocked.

Thus Virginia Woolf concludes the novel by portraying Clarissa as a woman who does not open her heart and mouth to express her feelings towards the society. Though the novel was written during twentieth century still there are women like Clarissa who are not brave enough to open their heart as they are all still now suppressed by the society. Now people in our society does not care about these women and continuous to suppress them. They did not know that these women also had the freedom to speak and express their heart and do the things as per their own wish. But their voice is still remained unheard and they did not know how to make their voice an audible one to reach the audience.

To bring them out they should possess self-confidence and gain power to overcome their sufferings and pain. Though Virginia Woolf expressed all her feelings and emotions through the voice of Clarissa Dalloway still there are many Clarissa's throughout the world but there is no Virginia Woolf to bring them to the limelight. Their voices are still unheard to us even in this century and let's hope that those unheard voice will soon reach our ears.

“Heard melodies are sweet,

But those unheard are sweeter”

From the above lines, John Keats says that unheard melodies are sweeter but in my point of view the unheard voice of a woman is always a bitter and sour thing. They only remind me the sufferings and pain of a woman in the society. Hence we pray to god that those unheard voice which was the pain of a woman will soon changes into a lovable and cherished one.

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Inclusion of Women: Criterion for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Sustainable social development demands the active participation of women. Development not only refers to economic equality but also points to social, political and technological advances. History, tradition, technology etc. influence the role, opportunities and experiences of women. Marginalisation of women from the social sphere culminates in skewed progress. Equitable social advance can be realised through involvement of women in all the stages of development. Society surges ahead through the physical, vital and mental phases. These stages may not develop at the same speed in all parts of the world. Women are relegated to the domestic space through which they cannot aim to enter the larger arena of public sphere. Women's initiatives and their inclusion in developmental activities reveal that social capital, community identity and women empowerment has vastly increased. Politics should include more women candidates in order to ensure their maximum contribution to social advance which will culminate in a democratic and equitable society.

Keywords: *sustainable, marginalisation, progress, domestic, inclusion.*

The prioritisation of human needs in the growth and development of society is termed social development: sustainable social development demands the indispensable inclusion of women in the planning and implementation of social programmes. An inclusive society stipulates that the just needs of each individual be equitably met in order to usher in wholesome development. The term development not only implies economic progress, it is equally applicable to political, social and technological advancement. The comprehensive and inclusive evolution of society can only materialise when the different groups that comprise it, are given individual representation and consideration. Society comprises men, women and children and then there are those who form a formidable number but are still marginalised- the elderly, those with disabilities, persons with alternate sexualities, ethnic minorities and so on. An all-encompassing maturation and progress of society becomes meaningful only when each individual gets his/her equitable share of the natural resources as well as the material products. The basic requirement for an inclusive society calls for an active involvement of women in all the developmental stages that will result in equitable division of natural resources and material goods to each member of society.

The developmental journey of society has three stages-physical, vital and mental. The emotional and nervous energies which empower society's movements towards progress are termed vital aspects. All these are present in a society simultaneously, but only one may be

predominant, while the other two have subordinate positions. The physical stage is characterized by the domination of the physical element of people. Survival and subsistence being basic needs, innovation and change is not entertained at this initial stage. The most productive resource is land; the measurement of wealth involves the possession of landed property. This agrarian and feudal phase of society does not involve upward mobility and tradition is blindly followed; out of the box thinking is hardly encouraged. The second stage, the vital, is characterised by vigour and change; elements of curiosity and innovation come into play. Commerce and trade take a prominent position above agriculture; the focus of power shifts from aristocracy to the business class, which gradually uses the influence of money to amass political influence. The development of science becomes more defined with the expansion of commercial and industrial complex: surplus income develops, helping people to spend more for luxury and leisure. The last stage, mental, has three characteristics-practical, social and political application of mind. Practical application of mind paves way for invention while the social application of minds directs towards new and effective types of social organisation. The political application steers political systems that empower people to exercise political and human rights in a democratic manner. Renaissance and Enlightenment period witnessed these social changes; the American and French revolution was the direct result of the political application of mind. The relative duration of the three stages of social development and the pace of transition differs from one society to another.

Social development refers to a multidimensional, vital activity which culminates in substantial improvements in the wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and society as a whole. The fundamental aim of development is to relieve poverty, put an end to inequality and promote responsible citizenship for all thereby leading to a strong democracy. When the role of women in social development is analysed and studied, it is observed that history, tradition, technology, demography and urbanization have a great influence, especially as far as the opportunities and experiences of women in the different developmental stages are concerned. Advances in social development and gender equality place women in strategic position when compared to the past when women did not get due consideration; it helps them to face the challenges of greater participation in economic and political arena. When women are marginalised, national development goals have been affected. The role of women in development is a catalyst: stages like thinking, planning and implementation are seen to have become more democratic when women participation was substantial.

Women's participation in developmental activities has recently received special deliberation; more and more women are mobilising themselves to enhance their community's development. This has resulted in their association in decision making agency and active collaboration in policy formulation and legislation. When world leaders gathered in 2000, at the United Nation's Millennium Summit, a list of values was charted to guide global development in the new century: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility. Equality appeals to reinforce the promotion of women's participation in the development process while the call for solidarity and shared responsibility proposes to facilitate opportunities for all citizens to become active in the promotion of equitable and sustainable development. Women need education to inform and empower other women to avail the facilities that are opened up to them in the new social set up.

The rise of women in the development field has been very impressive; economic growth has led to a surge in consumption, life expectancy has increased while literacy and educational achievements have soared. In society, women are now visible as they perform multiple roles in the private and public spheres: yet gender gaps persist which is evident from little gender sensitivity in legal structures and public policies, apart from the low participation of women in development agencies. The absurdly high numbers of female unemployment and lower wages for women also paints a very grim picture. Cultural and religious acceptance of the inferior position of women aggravates the obstacles to women participation in developmental activities. Women are looked down upon as much different from men since they are relegated to the private sphere of the house and are socially conditioned to take up all household responsibilities which culminates in their work in private economy and their being given a very disparate socio-cultural status.

The emergence of women's organisations as social actors which promote equitable participation in the diverse spheres of society as well as being providers of strong and effective links among women, between women and governments and women and other social agencies is indeed a happy sign. Women organize themselves in response to critical situations in their communities; they project their traditional caregiving roles into the public roles. The quality of life in poor communities undergoes a dramatic transformation as improvement in nutrition, better child care, registration and statistics of birth, death and marriage along with the delivery of services to the old and infirm, disabled and violence victims prove. The efforts of women initiatives also produce favourable side effects by way of social capital, community identity, women empowerment and awareness of human rights.

Politics is one way of promoting women's connection to social development; in the national and local governments, however, women are still under-represented. Instilling leadership skills in women through training programmes will help them acquire and aspire to reach decision making positions. Most political parties are male dominated and only groom male candidates to reach the high echelons of power; since women have been relegated to the domestic sphere far too long, they tend to have low levels of confidence to play public roles. Women, tend to have more responsibilities at home including household work, care of children and the elderly and this makes them stay happy and content in their comfort zone and dissuades them from venturing out into the larger world of politics. Wherever women have entered into politics, they exhibit a greater sense of social responsibility for the welfare of their communities; whereas men tend to prioritise infrastructure over basic needs, women give precedence to housing, safety, clean water, sanitation, poverty alleviation and so on. Leadership style of most women is more inclusive, collaborative and consultative. Women are also more tolerant of diverse viewpoints, tend to be people oriented and encourage people participation. The involvement of women at the various stages of development process-thinking, planning and implementation - will truly revolutionise the ways of social development and make the world a more prosperous and liveable one.

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Racialization of Transgressive Women: Select Narratives of Black Feminine Resistance

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Abstract

“I do not know where to begin [...]. All segments of the literary world [...] whether progressive, black, female or lesbian- do not know, [...], that black women writers [...] exist [...]. It seems overwhelming to break such a massive silence.”

Silence becomes eloquent at times, declaring the metaphoric clarion of some upheaval that becomes the harbinger of some meteoric sagas and sets the stage for the ‘Golden Millennium’ of Shelley’s dreams. Afro-American History, particularly those of black women, is painfully wrought with issues of racism and sexism. Having been compelled to live a life of scourge, black women writers were desperately fumbling for an outlet to their pent up sufferings. They were going through a sense of acute claustrophobia because of their exclusion from the contemporary political and socio-cultural rubric. However, it was not long before they emerged from this state of forced atrophy with fictive creations that were re-writing feministic discourse of resistance, through black female palimpsestic characters almost epitomising George Bernard Shaw’s concept of ‘New Woman’. In this context, this paper seeks to analyze four significant texts authored by no other than Afro-American Nobel Laureate, Toni Morrison - ‘The Bluest Eye’, ‘Sula’, ‘Song of Solomon’ and ‘Beloved’ and, tries to decipher a canon which would be something of a cross between womanism and feminism (as Morrison never claimed to be a feminist but preferred to look at herself as a womanist) and the extent to which her narrative texts tread the avenues of ‘post-modern Feminism’ by altering Euro-American dichotomies.

Keywords: *metaphoric, clarion, ‘Golden Millennium’, racism, sexism.*

“I do not know where to begin [...]. All segments of the literary world [...] whether progressive, black, female or lesbian- do not know, [...], that black women writers [...] exist [...]. It seems overwhelming to break such a massive silence.”

Silence becomes eloquent at times, declaring the metaphoric clarion of some upheaval that becomes the harbinger of some meteoric sagas and sets the stage for the ‘Golden Millennium’ of Shelley’s dreams. Afro-American History, particularly those of black women, is painfully wrought with issues of racism and sexism, invariably intertwined with murky annals of colonization and imperialism usually perpetrated by white authority. Gates, in his pithy introduction in ‘Figures in Black’⁽¹⁾ adumbrates that ‘Blackness’ has been associated with the rhetoric of absence in ‘White’ imagination. He further adds that ‘according to Hegel, Kant and Hume, the Africans “felt black” and “thought black” as they were racially so alien to the white colonial authority. Race and reason, ethno-centricism and logo-centricism, together were used by these philosophers to deprive the Black of their humanity’.⁽²⁾ The ‘White’ chauvinists furthermore believed that only written literature epitomises ‘innate humanity’ of a race. Having thus been bulldozed into a claustrophobic existence that almost veered on the nondescript, the

Blacks were seething within as they yearned to be heard. But non-existence of any clearly marked written tradition not only maimed the Blacks figuratively but also facilitated 'White' allegation that they were the bearers of an 'inferior culture'. Such a wilful de-humanization based on racism almost compelled the 'Blacks' to desperately fumble for a voice and it was not long before they found one.

Lives of coloured women were doubly vilified by dual scourges of racism and sexism and, ironically enough, the perpetrators were both white and black men. Having no well-specified written tradition of their own, the Blacks were at the mercy of White depiction in any mainstream literature. Concomitantly, Black depiction was restricted to the prism of White male gaze that often held 'exotic implications' about 'Black femininity'.⁽³⁾ Ania Loomba pithily points out that 'Blackness' acted "as a signifier for various form of socially unacceptable behaviour"⁽⁴⁾ in Western mainstream literature. Even for Shakespeare, the greatest bard of English literature, 'Blackness' has been used as a metaphor of 'doubleness' and 'deceit'

"The better angel is a man right fair
The wiser spirit is a woman coloured ill." (Sonnet 144)

Anna Julia Cooper's *A Voice from the South* (1892), a book of essays, is considered to be one of the seminal texts of Black feminist movement, offering an explicit challenge to both White and Black male authors. However, literature of the Black feminine resistance dates back to as early as 1860s with Linda Brent's *Incidents*, an iconoclastic narrative that speaks about a black woman's unflinching grit and indomitable determination in bringing up her eight children singly rather than barter her self-respect to a life of concubinage. With this narrative, the subversive voice of a Black woman is fore-grounded as she takes up her baton- her pen to give voice to her deep-seated anxiety about her need to have control over her own female body. This text creates a separate canon of Black feminine resistance literature and it was not long before the likes of Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Toni Cade Bambara would tread her path, continuously re-creating tropes of signification for women of colour who have hitherto been racialised and stigmatised as transgressive.

Winner of several prestigious awards including the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, Toni Morrison is an author of great renown; hers is the voice of the subversive, the marginalized, the racialized transgressor, her mighty pen strongly vindicating issues of Black feminine resistance. Although her novels typically concentrate on black women, Morrison does not identify her works as feminist. When asked in a 1998 interview "Why distance oneself from feminism?" she replied: "In order to be as free as I possibly can, in my own imagination, I can't take positions that are closed. Everything I've ever done, in the writing world, has been to expand articulation, rather than to close it, to open doors, sometimes, not even closing the book – leaving the endings open for reinterpretation, revisitation, a little ambiguity."⁽⁷⁾ She went on to state that she thought it "off-putting to some readers, who may feel that I'm involved in writing some kind of feminist tract. I don't subscribe to patriarchy, and I don't think it should be substituted with matriarchy. I think it's a question of equitable access, and opening doors to all sorts of things."⁽⁸⁾ Keeping this in view, Toni Morrison's novels 'could be placed in this "womanist" tradition, as her reconstruction of black identity and history lies not in the celebration of individualism ... but in a sense of a community which includes heterosexual love and bonding.'⁽⁹⁾ If feminism aims at providing a voice to the voiceless and marginalized, if it seeks to ensure equality or equity

between sexes, Morrison's novels do circumscribe to it duly problematizing issues of race and gender by taking up the baton of resistance. In this context, this paper seeks to analyze four significant texts authored by Toni Morrison - 'The Bluest Eye', 'Sula', 'Song of Solomon' and 'Beloved' and, tries to decipher a canon which would be something of a cross between womanism and feminism (as Morrison never claimed to be a feminist but preferred to look at herself as a womanist) and the extent to which her narrative texts tread the avenues of 'post-modern Feminism' by altering Euro-American dichotomies.

Speaking in an interview about the plot of 'The Bluest Eye', Morrison says, 'I did not want the reader to have time to wonder "what do I have to do, to give up, in order to read this? What defense do I need, what distance maintain?" Because I know [...] that this is a horrible story about things one would rather not know.'⁽¹⁰⁾ The pathos ensconced in the plot draws from the long history of dehumanization and insurmountable sufferings wrought by the scourge of slavery on Blacks; however, the narrative reaches the crescendo of poignancy as a little black girl is stripped of modesty by her own father in an almost cathartic act to despoil himself of all hurt and negativity that had welled up in him against the Whites. Although his sufferings are attributed to his troubled past and agonising history of slavery, he cleanses himself on his daughter who is victimised at the dual altars of racism and sexism. His first ever initiation into sexuality was interrupted by two white onlookers prodding him to perform well. Such an abortive sexual experience coupled with his inability to protect either himself or his partner from White male gaze, pre-ordains the doom for his marriage. However, in an attempt at purging himself of his 'blackness', he had vilified two black girls, one of them being his own daughter.

Pauline, Cholly's wife, has been depicted as physically deformed and psychically maimed (in course of time after marriage) to create a kind of semblance with her equally deformed husband, Cholly; her fall from her dream-like world of romance and sensuality, to one of grossness again projects her sacrifice and final martyrdom as Morrison successfully creates tropes of signification where both their deformities are configured. Her daughter, Pecola Breedlove, bearing an ironic surname 'Breedlove', breeds disgust and disdain among blue-eyed Whites as she desperately yearns for a pair of deep blue eyes that become a metaphor of beauty for her. The text reaches the zenith of pathos as, carrying the child of her father in her womb, she fumbles for her pair of blue eyes. Morrison wants her texts not to be studied from any closed perspective and corroborates the noble emotion of love as the sole riveting factor in any heterosexual community and that, lovelessness could be tragic, as she herself says in an interview with Jane Bakerman:

"I want, here, to talk about how painful it is and what the painful consequences are of distortion, of love that isn't fructified, is held in, not expressed."⁽¹¹⁾

That transgressive women, or women who dared to tear asunder societal strictures codified for women of colour, were racialized is amply borne out by Morrison's *Sula* that boasts of strong black women palimpsestic characters who did not flinch in calling a spade, a spade. Be it Rocelle or Hannah or Sula or even Eva Peace (who bears an ironic surname like Pecola Breedlove), their multi-affairs with men including some interracial ones, made the society to castigate them as transgressors for being women with loose morals. The Black society made amends for their sin by scapegoating Sula as an embodiment of evil and primordial passion. Strangely though, the Black community of Bottom witnessed a strong bonding, epitomising

subservience to goodness and conventional traditions. Nel, close-bosom friend of Sula, started believing in her non-implication in Chicken Little's (whom Sula accidentally killed) death, even going to the extent of projecting herself as innocently good. The Black town however, started disintegrating with Sula's death; for the residents of Bottom, Sula was an evil-incarnate, a 'black' who had undergone figurative whitening through her inter-racial relations with white men and, it is through her death that Bottom is devastated at the altar of White authority. The closing of the novel is highly symbolic as it depicts a painful self-realization through Nel as she breaks down at Sula's grave, crying out her name in deep agony of epiphany.

Morrison accords subservient yet significant roles to women in her primarily male-centric text, *Song of Solomon*. Ruth Foster Dead, daughter of a black doctor, gives birth to a black child for the first time at Mercy Hospital. Morrison accords interesting and emblematic names and surnames to her characters; Ruth reminds us of the Biblical Ruth whom we associate with suffering humanity whereas her newborn son, christened Milkman Dead is oxymoronic enough, simultaneously symbolizing life and death. In course of the novel, he causes the death of at least two female characters, ones who had loved him dearly, Hagar and Pilate. Akin *Sula* that depicts the death of a transgressive woman, here too Pilate, a strong and confident woman is killed when a bullet aimed at Milkman, misses its target and strikes her. The character of Pilate seems to have traces of the macabre as Milkman discovers skeleton of his grandfather wrapped in a green tarp in her room. Interestingly, be it either Hagar or Pilate, women serve the function of a mid-wife to facilitate a man's needs and desires; beck at their beck and call, they are ditched as and when the man deems fit. His great-grand father had also abandoned his wife Ryna with twenty-one children to fend for themselves. Although Solomon is venerated as a hero by the Black community inspite of the fact that he had abandoned his wife and children, even going to the extent of naming the most scenic mountain 'Solomon', they have named a dirty ditch 'Ryna' because of her inability to shoulder the pressure of abandonment and final loss of sanity. Black women were thus, doubly marginalized-both by their own mwen and directly or obliquely by white oppressors. The string of misfortunes that the Deads go through, stem from the single incident of Solomon's flight to Africa to escape White atrocities.

That racialized and subjugated women often transgressed to macabre proportions that impersonated itself in sinister effectuations, is amply proven by Sethe's killing of her daughter and inscribing of 'Beloved' on her headstone. The root of such a shocking step dates back to Sethe's history of slavery and physical violation at the hand of a White while her husband watched the entire incident in shocking disbelief. The trauma of slavery that resulted in complete annihilation of self-respect and individuality from the minds of Blacks had rendered them ineffectual in either protesting or taking up arms against the Whites. Sethe, her mother Baby Suggs, her daughter Denver had all suffered psychical atrophy directly or indirectly at the hands of Whites. Such was their level of dehumanization and syncopation of identity, that Sethe had once spoken about her animal characteristics in front of schoolteacher's pupils. Sethe, being an epitome of insurmountable will and courage in the face of unforeseen odds, stood by the supernatural spirit of Beloved (the child she had murdered), specially when she was purportedly carrying Paul D's child. Her mysterious arrival and equally sudden departure suggest the perpetuation of pain-ridden past that can never be completely shirked off. In its ending, the plot reaches the high-point of pathos as Sethe declares her exceptional love for Beloved and the

readers do feel the helplessness of a traumatised mother who had resorted to kill her favourite daughter only to prevent furtherance of her sufferings that she, as a black woman, had to endure.

Emerging as a messiah on the literary paradigm of Black Women writing, Toni Morrison had initially refused to be considered as a feminist writer; yet, a close analysis of her texts and palimpsestic women characters do tend to make us believe otherwise. As a creator of strong characters who remained unvanquished in spirit inspite of being finally defeated, she managed to ruffle, to rouse contemporary languorous readers from their state of apparent slumber, with a jerking blitzkrieg that swept the entire reading fraternity with tales of untold pain and heart-wrenching sufferings. Slavery is a loathsome scourge of humanity; it segregates people racially and sexually. Being considered the 'Other', women bore the brunt of double marginalization, being pushed to the precipice of existence that had almost forced them to resort to a cocoon of impenetrable silence. Toni Morrison and other Black women Afro-American writers arose on the scene like a harbinger of change, blowing the clarion of change and equality, loud and clear.

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Gender Discrimination Prevalent in India at the Present Age as Depicted in Mahesh Dattani's Play *Tara*

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Abstract

Mahesh Dattani, the actor, playwright and a director, writes about societal problems and other issues related to the present day India like gender issues, sexuality etc. He writes his works in English. He is a proud recipient of Sahitya Akademi award. The play Tara portrays gender discrimination that is still a serious problem in India. The protagonist Chandan, a young boy, suffers with the victim (Tara) emotionally, due to the biased attitudes of his family members and the society. This paper aims to analyse the characters who are troubled by the gender inequality problem that is predominant even in modern society, as depicted in Tara. Dowry problem, female infanticide and sex-selective abortion to avoid having female children are some problems still happening in some regions. The society is developing with modern thoughts among people, but these problems have not yet been completely eradicated from the society.

Mahesh Dattani is the Sahitya Akademi Award winning Indian playwright. He was born on 7 Aug 1958 in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. He writes his plays in English. His themes portray the contemporary issues in India like family and relationships, gender issues, various traditional ideas and cultural values followed by present day Indians etc. His dialogues are based upon the realistic depiction of the current Indian setting. There would be certain elements of Indianness throughout his texts. His plays like *Final Solutions* (1993), *Dance Like a Man* (1989), *On a Muggy Night* (1998) etc. have been staged all over India and in many foreign countries. His recent plays are the black comedy *The Big Fat City* (staged in Mumbai on 22 Jun 2013) and *Where Did I Leave My Purdah* (staged at Mumbai's grand Tata theatre on 30 Oct 2012). He has written many radio plays and *Seven Steps around the Fire* and *Do the Needful* have been broadcasted in BBC radio. Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, Shambu Mitra etc. are Dattani's contemporaries. In *Tara*, Dattani has discussed about the gender discrimination that still exists in India. Certain stereotypes and basic ideas in the minds of the people in patriarchal society must change in order to eradicate gender discrimination and other problems related to it in the society.

The play *Tara* features two main characters Chandan and Tara (twins). As the play begins Chandan Patel is in a suburb of London. He had changed his name to Dan. He wanted to write a play portraying his memories with his sister Tara who is no more. Chandan and Tara were conjoined twins born in Bombay. When they were born, their chest bones and their middle parts had been joined and they had to undergo a surgery to get separated. In cases like this, one of the twins would die as both children grow up. Conjoined twins would be of same sex. As Chandan (boy) and Tara (girl) were of different sexes, they were very rare conjoined twins. They were the longest surviving pair of conjoined twins. Chandan recalled the moments when he and Tara had just completed their tenth standard in school. He recalled the moments when he came to know that his mother Bharati and his grandfather (mother's father) preferred to have his own health better than that of Tara. When they were born conjoined in the middle portion, there were

only three legs. One leg which their bodies shared had a main nerve connected to Tara's body. Bharati and her father preferred to give two legs to Chandan as he was the male child. The operation which was done to separate them had been carried out by Dr. Thakkar with so much of preference given to Chandan as suggested by them. The operation failed and both babies had to survive with one leg each. The leg connected to Tara's body would have survived if it was left in her body. Tara's health condition deteriorated as she grew because of the unnatural operation done against her health. Tara's mother became mentally sick due to her guilty feeling. Tara died later and that affected Chandan who had been emotionally attached with her. So Chandan lived with a depressed mind in London.

The brief introductory note given before the text of the play provides the readers the context and the ideas that they can expect in the play. In the note, it is said that the play is woven with the issues of class and community and the clash between traditional and modern lifestyles and values of Indians. Erin Mee, a leading Theatre Director, said that when *Tara* had been explained in the class on Indian performance at New York University, many students got interested in Dattani's work in general. One student said that Dattani has focused on the lifestyle of a family which represented the society, in order to dramatize how people are socialized to accept certain gender issues, as explained by Erin Mee.

In *Tara*, Bharati and her father failed to give equal importance to both the twins. Many families even today highly prefer to have boy child. There are certain ideas dwelling in the minds of the people living in a patriarchal society. One main idea is that a woman must consider herself as entirely belonging to the family to which she gets married into, without having any kind of attachment or belongingness to her parents and siblings. A married woman cannot stay long in her parents' home. Only men would have the complete rights to live with and manage the families in which they are born even after getting married. This idea comes under gender roles assigned in the tradition and followed for several years in the society. A boy child would enjoy a good status, good education and respect in many families. Men play highly respected roles in a family. Though in these days there are modern thoughts which have broadened the modern minds to work for the development of women's status in the society, the biased attitude still exists when it comes to gender based ideas. In this story, when Patel saw his son helping Bharati to knit, he bursted out in anger. He scolded Bharati by telling "But you can think of turning him into a sissy teaching him to knit" (Collected Plays 351). Only women are assigned to do certain works like knitting. Men avoid such works in order to show their prestige. Chandan tried to convince his father Patel but he was not even allowed to talk and complete his sentences. Chandan considered the act of his father shouting at his mother for such an idea as totally unfair. In a young boy's mind men and women are equal and they can take up any works if they wish. In a patriarchal society, a young boy's mind is totally exploited and seeded with unfair thoughts. As a boy grows up in a patriarchal society, he would imbibe certain ideologies and framed stereotypes related to gender issues. Patel was pure at heart as he had not done anything like what Bharati and her father had done to Tara. But certain ideas regarding gender discrimination had developed within his mind as he had been in a patriarchal society. Bharati's father had left his money only for his grandson and not for his granddaughter. In every situation he proved to be biased. Patel explained about his attitude to both the children and said "It was his money. He could do what he wanted with it" (Collected Plays).

Chandan did not enjoy the privileges given to him without considering Tara. He became depressed to a great extent and was affected deeply due to his continuous thoughts about Tara's death. He had got caught up in a guilty feeling because the operation was done highly

preferential for his good condition. Tara deserved to live long but she was deprived of her right to live in the world. Chandan and Tara lived like soul-mates, right from the moment their mother conceived them in her womb: “Like we’ve always been inseparable. The way we started in life. Two lives and one body, in one comfortable womb” (Collected Plays 325). The most affectionate twins were troubled by the discriminating attitude of their mother and grandfather: “they would risk giving both legs to the boy. Maybe if I had protested more strongly! I tried to reason with her that it wasn’t right” (Collected Plays 378). Bharati also became mentally sick due to her guilty feeling and she often shouted to Patel out of depression: “Stop it! Don’t fill her with nonsense about me.” (Collected Plays 354). Tara was not the only the victim of gender discrimination. The total family struggled in one way or the other because of the idea of gender discrimination prevailing in the country. The idea of gender discrimination does not only trouble women in the society but also men.

Female foeticide or sex-selective abortion and female infanticide had been a very common practice carried out in many families in India long ago. In modern times, those have been reduced due to the steps taken by the government and due to the involvement of several social activists to ban those in the society. Roopa, Tara’s friend explained that once usually in Patel families, female infanticide was often done. The Patels would drown the female babies in milk. So when people enquired about a girl baby’s death, they would say that the baby had choked while drinking milk. From Roopa’s dialogue, the readers would understand that the people killed female babies in order to be free from saving money and assets for giving as dowry while arranging for their marriages in the future. Roopa said “The Patels were unhappy with getting girl babies- you know dowry and things like that- so they used to drown them in milk.” (Collected Plays 349). Dowry problem has never come to an end. Even today, dowry is collected on the basis of a bride’s status, education and career. Avoidance of dowry giving or accepting is one way of eradicating the practice of female foeticide and female infanticide.

In Tara’s case, even Bharati and her father, Tara’s mother and grandfather, had not cared for her well-being. Even when Dr. Thakkar knew that the leg would survive in Tara’s body, he made the operation totally against Tara’s health. Both the children’s lives were wasted as they both had to live as handicapped. Because of the single mistake done with discriminating attitude, entire family suffered. Tara died, Bharati became insane and got admitted in the hospital, Chandan moved to London and suffered alone with guilty feeling, and Patel could not live with any of the family members. Gender discrimination could ruin the harmony of many families the society. The minds of the people must still broaden to give space for the women to live and enjoy certain privileges.

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The Portrayal of Maori Women In Keri Hulme's *The Bone People*

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Abstract

Keri Hulme is the first New Zealander to win the Booker prize for her very first novel The Bone People in 1985. She has written many short stories and poems some of which include Strands, Lost Possessions, Te Kaihau: The Windeater, The Silences Between, Stones and many others. Women throughout history and literature have been depicted as life giving source. This image is seen as Divine Mother a central concept in mythology. Maori women play an important role in their society. They are considered sacred and hold an equal status with men. They are the binding force and link between people. The paper focuses on how the protagonist Kerewin Holmes is portrayed as a woman who sustains life of her people and culture.

Keri Hulme was born on March 9, 1947 at Christchurch in New Zealand. She is a novelist, short story writer and poet, who gained international recognition with her award-winning novel *The Bone People*. Her first book, *The Silences Between: Moeraki Conversations* (1982), is a verse collection. Hulme also published *Te Kaihau/The Windeater* (1986), *Lost Possessions* (1985) and *Strands* (1992). *Stonefish* (2004) is a collection of short stories. Within New Zealand she served on the Literary Fund Advisory Committee (1985–89) and in 1986–88 was appointed 'cultural ambassador'. She has many awards to her credit which includes Katherine Mansfield Memorial Award, New Zealand Book Award for Fiction, Mobil Pegasus Prize in 1985 and the coveted Booker Prize in the same year.

Hulme being a mixed Maori of European descent herself deals with language and culture of Maori people of New Zealand in her writings. She incorporates Maori myths and legends into her works which provide a taste of Aotearoa, Maori name for New Zealand meaning the land of long white cloud, and its rich culture and landscape.

The Maoris who inhabited New Zealand between 800 and 1100.A.D descended from the Polynesians and carry with them a mythology that matched with their own qualities. They have a creation mythology, Maui myths and Tawhaki myths (concerns two legendary heroes) and many cultural symbols and beliefs. Traditionally these people base life on the philosophy of humanism and reciprocity. This explains the interconnectedness of the past, present and future along with ecology, ancestors and the environment all of which are considered as one single entity. The role of men and women in traditional Maori society is determined by this concept. Myths and legends play a pivotal role in human societies providing explanation of the creation of the world, natural phenomenon as well as define the role and identity that men and women must play in the community.

Women abound in Maori myth, playing a key role in connecting the present with the past and future. They are strong, powerful and exert great influence on other people. Women are considered sacred, due to their nature of giving birth to children and perpetuating life and

progeny. They are considered ‘nurturers’. They are also seen as a binding force and bridge between other members of the society.

In *The Bone People*, Hulme draws three individuals from different cultural backgrounds, genders and ages and are brought together by fate or circumstance. They are Joe, the frustrated and volatile Maori man who is still mourning the death of his beloved wife and son; Kerewin, a mature woman of mixed Maori/Pakeha blood and unproductive and frustrated artist who has isolated herself from society in her self built tower and Simon the castaway, a small European boy (about seven years old) who has been physically abused and mentally troubled by his former deprivation and present situation as Joe’s foster son. The three of them yearn to belong and to be loved. They get into an intimate relationship, displaying strong bond between them discovering and knowing each other when their ugly truths and shattering past surface, causing havoc and they are separated and undergo healing. However, the three people finally reunite as a family, embracing their destiny. Keri Hulme delineates in Kerewin Holmes a woman who is talented, self-sufficient, independent, assertive and one who serves as a link and life of her new found family: Simon and Joseph Gillayley.

Maori culture is an oral culture and the knowledge and tales of the past are passed down to the next generation by word of mouth. Women especially played a significant role in maintaining and transmitting family history, knowledge and many traditional songs called Waiata Tawhito composed by women themselves to their children. Kerewin Holmes the protagonist encounters Simon, a mysterious boy who is troublesome as well as troubled and it is through him her dormant life is rekindled. She helps his father Joe Gillayley by searching Simon’s mysterious past, giving him a life history- the probability of having descended from Irish Nobility thereby mending her own tangled problems in life. Also she has a big storehouse of knowledge of almost everything. She is a distinctive artist; plays guitar, composes poems, recollects many folktales, has a rich knowledge of different herbal indigenous medicines and possesses collection of variety of greenstone rings and pendants, a chest full of antic things, a large cellar of wine and all resources sufficient for a life on her own. Her independence and confidence is seen in the lines, “No need of people. She was self-fulfilling, delighted with the pre-eminence of her art and the future of her knowing hands” (Hulme, 7). The tower she built tells for itself her intellectual radiance. All these stand as proof of the comprehensive knowledge of Kerewin. She has witty and ready replies for every question and remark put to her. She also has the skill to commune over a wide choice of subjects fluently. Hulme makes her comment on Kerewin Holmes: “A broad general knowledge, encompassing bits of history, psychology, ethology, religious theory and practices of many kinds. Her charts of self-knowledge. Her library. The inner thirst for information about everything that had lived or lives on Earth that she’s kept alive long after childhood had ended” (90). In the Maori tradition, there are some women who are seen as deities in their own right. They include Hineteiwaiwa, the atua (goddess) of childbirth and Te whare pora (weaving and female arts), Hineraukatamea, the atua of entertainment and Hineraukatauri, the atua of music. Kerewin can be seen as a re-representation of these gods carrying the art, life and treasure of her culture with herself.

Kerewin Holmes is portrayed to be an independent and strong woman given the ample resources that is available in her tower. She depends on no human in her town, doing jobs that are usually done by men only. Women in the Maori community are on par with the men. Maori legends abound with stories of powerful women. Wairaka another woman saved the Mataatua canoe, which is held sacred from drifting into the sea single-handedly. Maui, the legendary hero inherits a magic jawbone from his ancestress, Muriranga Whenua, who was all powerful in the

underworld, by which he accomplished great feats. Only women were allowed to do the welcoming calls for a meeting, dance and storytelling. Maori women had more rights than other tribes of the time. They owned lands in their name and the community itself offers all the freedom. They were also very strong and courageous. Kerewin also displays extreme confidence, physical strength and boldness when she confronts Joseph who had battered Simon ruthlessly. She openly accuses him for being horrid with his child and when tensions mount up at Moerangi beach she knocks him down. She even boldly faces racial remark from hurled at her by an Australian in the bar. She is straightforward, speaking out the truth in any circumstance that once brought painful reverberations with her former family but which eventually resulted in the good of the others.

Female courage and determination can be found in a number of legends. The story of Hinemoa and Tutanekai tells of Hinemoa guided by the sound of lover's flute, risks her life by swimming across Lake Rotorua to join her lover. Kerewin Holmes after resolving to reconcile with Joseph and Simon recovers from her illness and goes in search of them and finally unites with them. Kerewin considers herself not fully feminine she looks outwardly like a man dressed in denim jackets, silk shirts with cropped hair and considers herself a neuter. It is Kerewin and not Joseph Gillayley who shows leadership. Joseph though a learned Maori man, merely supports and concedes to Kerewin's wishes. Kerewin takes absolute control over the lives of both Simon and Joseph. Set in the post- colonial New Zealand, which bore the assimilation of the European (Pakeha) culture with that of Maori, Keri Hulme breaks the stereotype of subservient women and constructs a strong powerful character in Kerewin Holmes founded upon Maori culture. Mikaere quotes Jenkins' description of the conflict in values and the British reaction in her article "Maori Women: Caught in the Contradictions of a Colonized Reality":

Western civilisation when it arrived on Aotearoa's shore, did not allow its womenfolk any power at all - they were merely chattels in some cases less worthy than the men's horses. What the colonizer found was a land of noble savages narrating ... stories of the wonder of women. Their myths and beliefs had to be reshaped and retold. The missionaries were hell-bent (heaven-bent) on destroying their pagan ways. Hence, in the re-telling of our myths, by Maori male informants to Pakeha male writers who lacked the understanding and significance of Maori cultural beliefs, Maori women find their mana wahine destroyed.

The central role of women in Maori society is based on the connection to Papatuanuku, the Earth mother from whom all life originated and is nurtured. Maoris refer to women as Te whare tangata (the house of humanity), recognising the vital roles women play in providing life and nurturing future generations. The term is synonymous with land 'Whenua' meaning placenta, binding people to their source of life, physically through women and spiritually to the land. Kerewin acts as a mediator in keeping peace between the Gillayleys. She prevents Joseph numerous times from lashing Simon and the little boy looks to her as his mother, saviour and preserver of his life and who could understand him perfectly. She solves many rifts between the two of them. When they are separated she retreats into isolation to die alone. But her motherly compassion for them surfaces and she reconciles and starts a family life. When asked by a supernatural character as to what she loves, she ruminates and says, "but not me alone. He's the bright sun in the eastern sky, and he's the moon's bridegroom at night, and me, I'm the link and life between them. We're chance we three, we're the beginning free" (424). Even Hana Joe's wife saves Simon's life from a shipwreck. She cares for him affectionately though he's not her son who turns out to be the only comfort for Joe who loves him profusely but out of the frustration of having lost his wife he changes into a brute father.

Complete harmony is achieved only through the efforts and the role played by Kerewin Holmes, who stands as a model of how influential and strong a woman can be. This feat is possible when women rediscover and reassert their cultural importance. It is this realisation of who she is that transforms Kerewin Holmes into a complete new woman, whom Keri Hulme skilfully delineates in an epic manner. This dynamic character is indeed an inspiration and model for every woman to follow.

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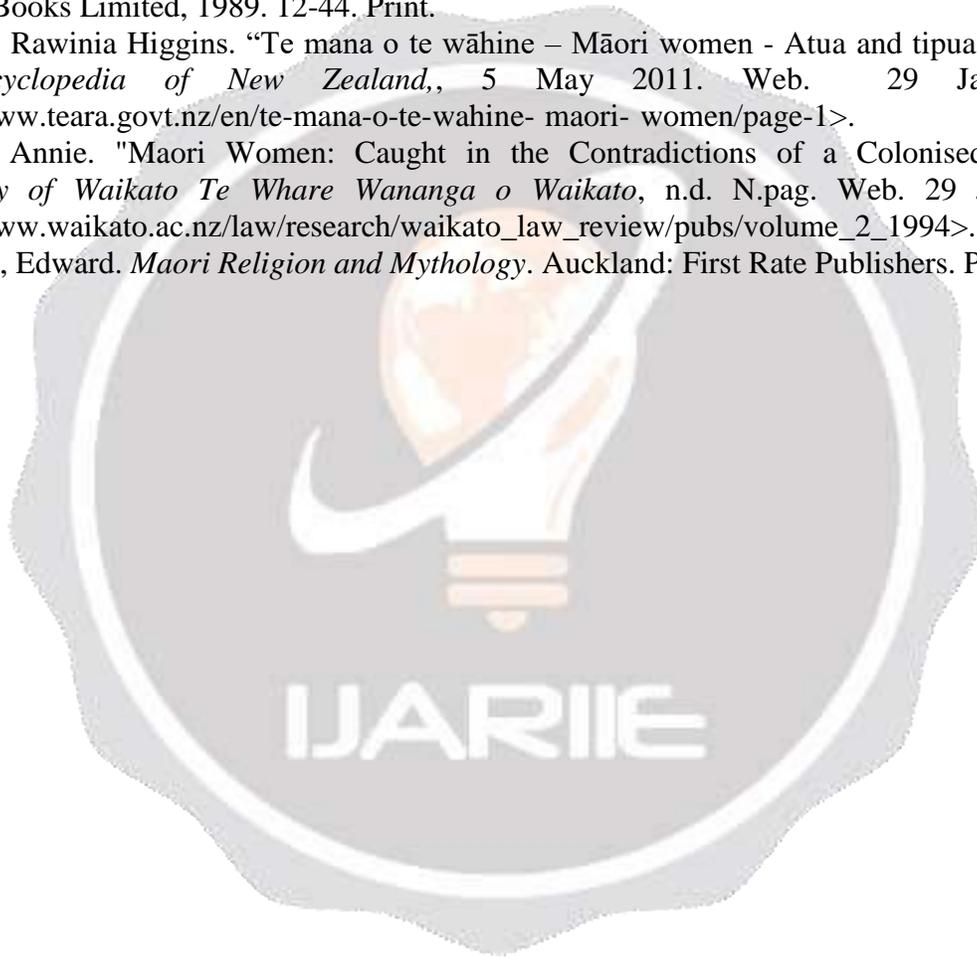
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Emergence of New Woman in Sudha Murthy's Novel *Mahashweta*

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Abstract

Sudha Murthy also known as Sudha Kulkarni is an iconic writer in India for her unique piece of works. Her social work covers the healthcare, education, empowerment of women, public hygiene, art and culture etc. Her women characters are well educated, respectable and overwhelmed one by the disagreement pertaining to modernity in the society. Mahashweta one of her notable works is an inspiring story with the well- educated female protagonist Anupama. It is a kind of inspiring story with a courageous modern female protagonist who is suffering with the disease Leukoderma. The evolution of the character of Anupama is seen when she refuse her husband Anand and Vasanth the one who loved her. The paper focus on the study of emergence of new woman out of adversities in life in the novel. The clear picture of the setting is brought out by the simple language of the author.

Great personalities like Raja Ram Mohan Roy including some foreigners had influenced social reforms which had its impact to raise status of women in Indian Society and upheld them to get out of the tyranny of the social evils. But the relief from the dependency was still out of reach for most women in the society. Few educated women who were able to communicate to the world their own bitter experiences as woman is found to be an eminent writer in literature. Indian women novelists depict the diversity within each woman rather than limiting the lives of women to one ideal in the recent years.

Among the Indian writers who have explored the female subjectivity in order to establish an identity that is not imposed by a patriarchal society Sudha Murthy has her stand. The place of women in the traditional bound society makes even the well- educated modern woman to remain as the prey for customs through pushing them to the embarrassing situations. But the certain new ideologies have been imposed in the literature by the writers during the last couple of decades.

Sudha Murthy born in 1950 is an Indian writer in Kannada and English. She is a member of public health care initiatives of the Gate Foundation and the Chairperson of the Gate Foundation as well. Murthy is best known for her social work and the plethora of stories. Sudha Murthy has written number of notable books. Her women characters are well educated, respectable and overwhelmed one by the disagreement pertaining to modernity in the society. Her works are simple, understandable and unique in its appeal. She is the recipient of many awards including the R.K.Narayan's award and the Padma Shri award for her contribution to the literature. Sudha Murthy is famous for many of Philanthropist works. She aims to empower women. She spreads the awareness of rural education, poverty alleviation and much more. Being an author Mrs. Murthy has published many stories. Her writing had a flavor of common lives.

Psychological realism has its place in literature since 21st century. It is the way in which the writers bring out the characters internal thoughts and the feelings deeply. In such kind of writing it is notable that the writer brings out the mind of the character than the other

novels. Sudha Murthy, as one of the leading and successful women writers has the picture of realistic portrayal of the socio-psychological issue in her works. Dealing with the psychology of the main character there are number of inner monologues identified in the novel. For the long time there is an idea that exist not only in the real life but also in literature reality is something what we see and spoken out by the people. But no one at many times discusses the inner feelings of any person which also consist of numerous realistic feelings within them.

Mahashweta is a kind of inspiring story with a courageous modern female protagonist. Anupama is a beautiful woman from the humble background. Dr. Anand a handsome person is bewitched by her physical beauty. Just like the story of Cinderella she gets a life as dream comes true. But everything shatters when she discovers that she has Leukoderma which is still treated in India as a curse.

Leukoderma is a cutaneous condition with localized loss of pigmentation. It is largely a cosmetic problem. It is found to be neither infectious nor contagious. The exact loss of melanocytes cells causes the disease which is hard to cure. She faces objections from her mother inlaw as well as from her father's home. She even thinks of suicide but gathers courage and decides to live the life that God has given her. A small white patch ruined her life.

Initially Anupama remains to be in the absolutely confused state but changes when she realized that her condition had become lower than the servant all of a sudden. The kind of isolation feeling filled her mind when she was not able to think beyond her family life. But at once when she becomes strong out of the adversities she faced during that chaotic situation in life she completely break the invisible borders that restricted her to be independent women so far days suddenly.

Anupama moves to Mumbai with the help of her friend and works as a lecturer. Meanwhile she met with an accident and meets Dr. Vasanth who also loves Literature and Arts just like her. Dr. Vasanth proposes her and the reader expects that she will accept the genuine love of Vasanth but it doesn't happen. Even when Anand met Anupama with the sense of guilt to continue their married life as "I will beg Anupama to forgive me. She is far superior to anyone I know in morals, intellect and conduct. With new found determination he got up." (128) But she makes her decision clear that their relationship is over. "Was it my fault that I got this white patch? Is it my fault that I am poor man's daughter? Now that you are here, answer me." (150)

The evolution of new woman is seen with the value of identity and revolt against the tyranny and the patriarchal society. It is very clear through the action of Anupama the present age women have realized that they are not helpless and are not dependent. The novel thus clearly shows how women always gain self-esteem in facing the failures in their lives, assert the individuality and aspire self-reliance through their education.

The decision of Anupama not holding on to their married life is very well explained by her words to the readers through her conversation with Anand as, "How can you possibly expect a burnt seed to grow into a tree? Husband, children, affection, love... all are irrelevant to me now. It is too late for us. I am no longer the naïve Anupama whose world revolved around you. I know what my goals are and where I am heading and I don't need anyone's help to reach my destination." (150)

It is clear that her education uphold her to exclude her emotions from her heart and help her to build confidence in her mind. The ideas are very well brought out in the novel that literature being the mirror of life, the characters that exist in the real life with their realistic feelings could be identified in the work. The demonstration of the character of Anupama in the novel remains absolutely as the inspiring one to the readers at any period.

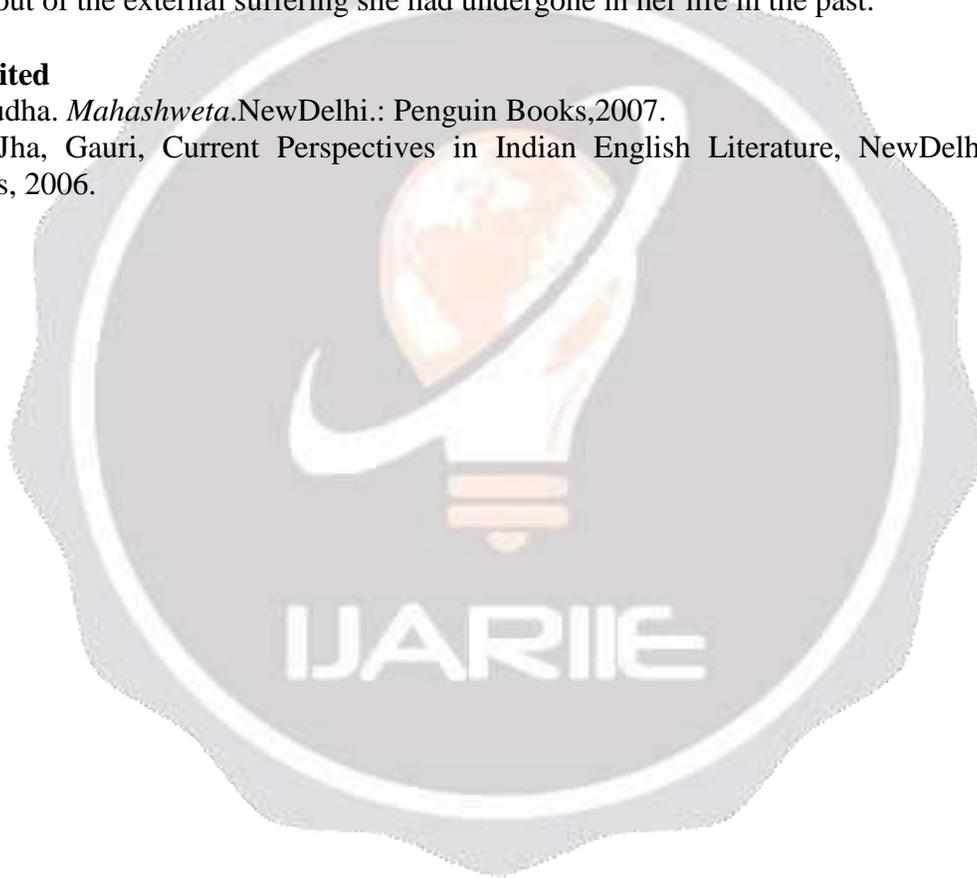
As the protagonist is charged with huge internal motivation out of the sufferings she undergoes by the others she decides to lead her life independently there -after. It is notable through her rejection of Vasanth, that her level of motivation is at its peak in the end of the novel as she doesn't need any person's company in her life. These ideas could be related with the concept of Cognitive Evaluation Theory.

According to the theory, the external events will impact intrinsic motivation for optimally challenging activities to the extent that they influence perceived competence, within the context of Self- Determination theory. As per the concept of the theory it is notable that the personal events differ in their qualitative aspects. Thus the certain events deemed internally controlling events experienced as pressure toward specific outcome. Therefore the theory could be related to the climax of the novel as Anupama becoming herself as a new woman excludes the idea of dependency. The determination found in the character of Anupama is absolutely the positive outcome out of the external suffering she had undergone in her life in the past.

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Women as Crisis Managers as Depicted in Arunima Sinha's "*Born Again on the Mountain*"

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Abstract

Arunima Sinha was born in 1988 in Uttar Pradesh, India. She was a former volleyball and a football player. Born Again on the Mountain is an autobiographical work of Sinha. She has been honoured with the Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India, in 2015. In the year 2011, Sinha planned to attend her examination for CISF. During her train travel she was shoved off by some thieves and she had lost her legs. With so much trouble, she recovered herself from the injury. After two years, she prepared herself to climb Mt. Everest and became the first female amputee to scale the Mt. Everest. The story deals with the experiences of Sinha as a woman how she recovered herself from the injury and also how she worked hard to scale the Mt. Everest with her injured limb. This paper aims at highlighting the efforts of Sinha on managing serious problems around her to emerge as a successful woman.

Arunima Sinha was born in 1988 in Uttar Pradesh, India. She was former national level Volley ball and Foot ball player. She is the first female amputee and the first Indian amputee to climb Mount Everest. She has been awarded with *Padma Shri*, the 4th highest civilian award of India, in the year 2015. She is currently setting up a free sports academy for the poor and differently able persons.

"*Born Again on the Mountain*" is an autobiographical work written by Arunima Sinha. This book was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 12 December, 2014. The story wholly deals with the experience of Sinha, as she lost her left leg in a train accident but with her spirit she scaled Mount Everest.

In the year 2011, Sinha planned to attend her examination in CISF for head constable post. On that day she was thrown out from moving train by thieves when she attempted to fight them off. Throughout the night she was unnoticed by people and her left leg fall in between the tracks at that time train passed over it. In the morning she has taken to the hospital in Bareilly station with so much suffering she recovered from her injury. The remaining story deals on, with this injured limb how she accomplished her goal to scale Mount Everest and what all the sufferings she undergone.

During her travel in Padmawat Express she was attacked by thieves and she didn't get any help from public. From the childhood onwards Sinha was grown up with strong thoughts in her mind and she always thinks that women are not less than men. So, these facts made her to fight for herself and Sinha lonely fought with three men in moving train. It shows that, as a girl one should know how to protect them in trouble situation and they couldn't depend on others. Every girl should know or to be trained to manage their troubles.

Train passed over her left leg and she experiences a worst condition throughout the night because no one was there to help her. She herself boost her with some hopeful thoughts, if one

put up in a trouble they themselves should help them, is the only way to manage the trouble. When doctors said it is time to say farewell to her left leg, she accept with that and tried to adapt with her new artificial limb. Once she says, *"I had started falling in love with this 'stranger' with whom I was wedded for life"* (Sinha84). It shows her spirit to adapt to any situation. It is not an easy thing to forget which once part of our body. Women have all the ability to adapt to any situation; it may differ on how they brought up in society.

A case was filed against GRP by Sinha's family but GRP wanted to save its skin so, they blamed Sinha as great liar and she not at all national level player. Now whole media stand against her, which once gave support to her. She fed up with everything but she didn't lose her hope and she always nurture with encouraging words of her family. She got an idea to climb Mount Everest and she wanted to prove herself to this country. And she says *"the country knew me as a victim. I wanted them to know me as a winner"* (Sinha92.) It is hard to digest the words of society but Sinha overcome all these problems with spirit and hope within her.

When Sinha's family comes to know about her idea, they encouraged her but others feared about her idea. Once she tried to walk alone in staircase and hurt herself, at that time all worried about her action. At that time she says that, *"I told them that having set my sights on Mount Everest I would have to learn to climb these stairs on my own"* (Sinha90).

She got the help of Bachendri Pal, and started her training. One day during her training she encountered a steep climb, there was a snow fall and she lost her way. At that time, other mountaineers left her alone but she had a strong hope that important thing is not to lose the track of her mission. This strong belief in herself and support from Sahib made her to pace up with crisis. In beginning of the training Sinha lack behind other trainees because of her amputate leg and lack of time management. But later, she has more concentration on her mission and she trained herself to keep time in control. *"It was true that I suffered from a handicap but then I wasn't here to give sympathy. I was here to accomplish a mission"* (Sinha112). Everyone will face crisis in their life but in order to overcome that one should believe in them.

Her mission to scale Mount Everest started with difficulties, she was accompanied by Sherpa. And during her climb to mountain she underwent various sufferings such as bleeding and heavy pain of her leg which made her Sherpa scared and he suggest return back. But Sinha replied to it with a smile *"I hadn't come this far to return"* (Sinha 162). She fought with her pain and fear and also gave boost to other mountaineers who planned to give up. *"Sometimes when you help someone else, you also end up helping yourself"* (Sinha163) these are words of Sinha, she energised herself and boost up others through her action. She herself nursed her leg with warm water because there is no one for help. Eventually she learnt to carry the pain with her to bed and sleep through it. If one put up in terrible situation they should not depend on others for help and simply self- help is the best crisis manager.

On her way to summit she encountered with blue ice, she got worst cuts in her hands and even her artificial leg stump had been damaged and bleeding made the situation worst. Many other members crossed that area left her back and at times emotional bond outburst had delayed her journey. *"Staying mentally healthy is one of the key to success here where nature test your resolve, your ability to stay focused at every step"* (Sinha 178). At the worst condition when her nose get started bleeding but Sinha never step back to climb top of the mountain. Even though Sherpa warned her and asked her to return back, Sinha never give up her hope until she accomplish her mission *"Everyone has a reason to be alive, a role to fulfil. May be this was mine"* (Sinha192). She believe in herself and thoroughly the hope of Sinha only brought her to

this level. With her hope and support from her family she copes up with all the crisis come across her life.

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Women under Orthodox Society in Vijay Tendulkar's *Silence! The Court Is In Session*

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Abstract

In the beginning, the feminist writers in India were actually men. Among them Vijay Tendulkar is a notable feminist writer. He was a leading Indian playwright, movie and television writer, literary essayist, political journalist and social commentator primarily in Marathi. Silence! The Court is in Session (Shantatal Court ChaluAahe) is the English translation of a Marathi play. It reveals the single battle fought by Miss. Benare where her acting turns out to be real burst out of her emotions as a result of the mock charged against her of infanticide. This paper aims in bringing out how women are under male chauvinism and society, with the female characters Miss. Benare and Mrs. Kashikar in this play as stereotype.

The emergence of East India Company on the political horizons of India enabled English education to take roots in our motherland. English education in India not only nourished the critical study of western drama and the classical Indian drama, but also led to the founding of English theatre in India. The birth of Indian theatre in English took place to cater to the need for entertainment of the English dignitaries in India. It has introduced western dramatist to contemporary India as well as profoundly influenced the regional theatre.

India is a traditional country that holds its history from several years back. Even after the entry of Western culture and technology, India is still known for its uniqueness of age old tradition and culture. From past till present women are considered with great importance in matters of spirituality and even the rivers of India run in female names. But practically women were known only with the identity of men under whom they lived. Their place was only inside the house. But now the condition of women in India has attained a great change. They shine in all sectors like competitors of men and their tasks are really challenging. All these developments apart, women are still considered as sensitive ones and they are often noted in the society.

Practicing of tradition and culture is common to the people of any place irrespective of their age and sex. But they are imposed on women strictly and men are left liberal. Men are preferred as if they are exceptional and any different deed by them is not spoken out in the society.

For a long time there has been a great argument for gender equality which caused rise to many feminists. Women have become and are becoming great achievers which shows that their bounds have loosen but they are put back in the name of tradition and culture which is the root of the society. Their aims, wishes and efforts are given the least or no place. The same happens to Benare in the play, *Silence! The Court Is In Session* by Vijay Tendulkar.

The first Marathi playwright who has transformed the regional theatre into the national theatre is Tendulkar. Witnessing his plays enacted on the stage by various county wide theatre groups, the audience has an exposure to the country's national theatre and its rich and varied dramaturgical legacy and theatrical culture. His plays disturb the audience by raising complex

issues that remain unsettled even today in the contemporary society. Most of Tendulkar's plays are seen written in naturalistic vein. He depicts the scenes and situations from the day to day life. He intends to make people conscious of their vices and limitations and directly or indirectly or even secretly wants them to mend their ways.

Vijay Tendulkar's *Shantata! Court ChaluAhe* (1967) is a well-known Marathi play. Priya Adarkar translated it as *Silence! The Court is in Session* (1978). As is usual with him, the experience of a play originates not from a concept but a real incident. This play discusses the problem of unmarried motherhood through the conflict between an individual and society where innocence is ruthlessly crushed by cruelty. This play is all about the accusation of Miss. Benare for the offences that she has committed against the society.

Miss. Leela Benare is a talented woman and a good teacher. She is disciplined, punctual and a woman of free mind. She travels with her career in life not as a profession but a passion. She is modern woman with a strong will who says "Who are these people to say what can or can't do? My life is my own – I haven't sold it to anyone for a job! My will is my own. My wishes are my own. No one can kill those – no one! I'll do what I like with myself and my life!" (Act I). Behind all these great qualities, lies the darkest side of her life. She is a pathetic character who is placed as a victim of betrayal of love.

At the age of fourteen her innocence was destroyed by her maternal uncle who was not ready to marry her. She was completely shattered which made her to attempt suicide. Through this incident, Vijay Tendulkar brings out the tragic state of young innocent girls who are shown false love for pleasure. Benare thought of being aware in future but again she fell in love with Professor Damle for his intellect but what he adored was her body and made her pregnant.

Benare's maternal uncle loved her but never had guts to marry her. Professor Damle was already married but still had affair with Benare and refused to marry her. This shows the quality of few men in the society who approach women with the pleasure as intention but later refuse to marry them.

When Benare and her group of actors decide to stage a mock trial for pass time, Benare is made to act as a victim who is charged of infanticide. As the play goes on, the actors get severe to mention all the offences of her real life. Miss Benare feels unbearable like amidst in the fire. She tries to leave the room weeping but she is not allowed to go. The actors want her to stand there which can be ironically interpreted as the actors enjoy Miss. Benare suffering of the charges.

There are continuous accusations by the witnesses. Karnik and Ponshe comes out with the complaints of how miss. Benare insisted them to marry her. Balu Rokhde becomes the eyewitness of who has seen Benare in professor Damle's house. Even Samant, the local village man who supports the drama troupe as a character, blames Benare of her misconduct.

Mrs. Kashikar, is an orthodox married woman, who is childless. She and her husband adopted a boy by name Balu Rokhde. Mrs. Kashikar acts like a good wife for the sake of the society but in truth she has discontent in her heart towards her husband. She is materialistically made happy by Mr. Kashikar but he fails to understand her emotions and never bothers even to hurt her in front of others. She always tries to keep Balu under her thumb. Her relationship with Balu her foster son is suspected to be an incest relationship. There are also chances that her behavior with Balu may be in order to overcome the depression that she has because of her husband and thus she might want to show her superiority to him. She seems to be good at the end of the play towards Benare, but blames Benare for her immoral deeds, during the mock trial which shows that she may be jealous of Benare's independence and motherhood. "Free! Free! She's free all right – in everything! I shouldn't say it. But since it's come up in court, I will.

Just hold this a minute. [She puts her knitting into Sukhatme's hands.] Why must she have professor Damle, and Damle alone, to see her home after a performance?" (Act III). May be her desire for a child makes her to do so.

Benare is stabbed with the continuous acquisitions of her real life in the name of mock trial. When she hears from Mr. Kashikar's mouth that she is to be dismissed from the school, she tries to drink poison. Benare overcame the sorrows of her life when she taught the children at school with full interest. Rather than a profession it proved to be a medicine in her life. But when she heard that this career was about to leave her, she could not bear it anymore.

Benare, trying to consume poison in the mock trial shows that there are many women in the society who face several problems in their life and still tries to succeed overcoming them. But as like in the case of Benare, though these women are strong, it is the society that discourages them and pulls them down with their useless comments and mocks.

Every person does not willingly commit sin but there is some situation behind that makes them to do so. There is no sinless person too. Benare thought both her love to be true each time but she was cheated which means she is not wrong but those men were not loyal to her. She pleaded Ponshe and Karnik to marry her not because she wanted to be happy but all she wanted was a father to her child. She did not want her child to be fatherless.

There was not even a single person to speak on Benare's side. Everyone found fault with her but failed to look at her positive side. Though she is accused of many deeds, she is a perfect and talented teacher. She always taught her children without mixing up her personal life with her profession. Even after being such a good teacher, Mr. Kashikar mentions that she is to be dismissed from her school. The feelings deep in her are poured out through her heart provoking soliloquy.

"Only one thing in life is all – important – the body! You may deny it, but it is true. Emotion is something people talk about with sentiment. It was obvious to me. I was living through it. It was burning through me. But- do you know? - I did not teach any of this to those tender, young souls. I swallowed that poison, but didn't even let a drop of it touch them. I taught them beauty, I taught them purity. I cried inside, and I made them laugh. I was cracking up with despair, and I taught them hope. For what sin are they robbing me of my job, my only comfort? (Act three)

For all the offences done by Benare, she is punished to the extreme of killing the child in her stomach while she can live. The court that has pronounced such a cruel punishment to Benare, does not even utter a word of condemnation towards professor Damle for his deed of adultery. There is not even summoning on his absence. This shows the partiality of the society towards women.

Any person in the society has their own rights to lead their life as per their wish. It is also true that they should abide by the tradition and culture of the place where they belong to as a sign of respect. Same way the tradition and culture are set up to be followed by every citizen of that place. Be it a rule or punishment, justice should be maintained as a matter of gender equality.

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M T's Women in Bhima: Lone Warrior

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Abstract

The use of mythology as the crux of novels has become a trend nowadays especially among young writers. They try to bring new dimensions to the already known story by exploiting the impregnate silences and the blind spots in mythology and render something new. M T Vasudevan Nair's Randamoozham is one such novel which retells the story of Mahabharata through the eyes of Bhima.

Madathil Thekkepaattu Vasudevan Nair is an Indian author, screenplay writer and film director. Randamoozham is widely accredited as MT's masterpiece and it is translated into multiple languages. Bhima: The Lone Warrior is the English translation of it by Gita Krishnankutty. Women characters play a pivotal role in this novel but the characterisation of them is quite shocking. The women that we know from Mahabharata are not the one M T Vasudevan Nair has depicted in his novel. This paper is an attempt to illumine M T's portrayal of female characters.

Mahabharata is one of the two great epics of Indian literature. It is a gift of India to the world classics and in every way stands par in excellence to the much celebrated Greek epics, The Illiad and Odyssey. Mahabharata is a family saga which talks about the great Kurukshetra war fought between two families of the Kuru race, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. This great epic was composed by Veda Vyasa, the true grandfather of Kauravas and Pandavas. It was written many centuries before and even today it has not lost its lustre. Many modern novels are written based on this great tale and one of the forerunning novels that stood the test of time and is considered as the master piece of the writer is M.T. Vasudevan Nair's Randamoozham.

Madathil Thekkepat Vasudevan Nair is an Indian author, screenplay writer and film director. He was born in 1933 in the village of Kudallur in Kerala's Palakkad district. He has directed seven films and written the screenplay for around 54 films. He has won the National Film Award for Best Screenplay four times for: Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha, Kadavu, Sadayam and Parinayam which is the most by anyone in the screenplay category. He was awarded the highest literary award in India, Jnanpith, in 1995 for his overall contribution to Malayalam literature. In 2005, India's third highest civilian honour Padma Bhushan was awarded to him. He has won numerous other awards and recognition including Sahitya Akademi Award, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award, Vayalar Award, Vallathol Award, Ezhuthachan Award and Mathrubhumi Literary Award. He was awarded the J.C. Daniel Award for lifetime achievement in Malayalam cinema for the year 2013. He served as the editor of Mathrubhumi Illustrated Weekly for several years. His major works include: Manju, Kaalam, Nalukettu, Asuravithu, Vilapayathra, Pathiravum Pakalvelichavum, Arabipponnu, Varanasi.

Randamoozham is the retelling of Mahabharata through the eyes of Bhima, the second eldest of Pandavas. This novel is translated into multiple languages and Bhima: Lone Warrior is

the English translation of it by Gita Krishnankutty. For M.T Vasudevan Nair, Bhima is the real hero not Arjuna, it was he who had wiped out the Kaurava army with his might but people tend to praise Arjuna for his valour. The novel is a brilliant tale unfurling many incidents through the perspective of the mighty Bhima.

The female characters play a pivotal role in Bhima's life, although he stands tall as the chief character in M T's narration, the role played by women in Bhima's life is of utmost importance. Only a few female characters are mentioned in the novel and they are not depicted in great detail but from the passing mention and little description, the readers can make out a great deal about these eminent characters. M.T. Vasudevan Nair has mentioned in his epilogue that: "I have not made any changes to the framework of the story that Krishnadvaipayana, the first Vyasa, codified. The parts where I have taken liberties are those in which he maintained a silence that those who came later were to find meaningful" (364). This move of the author is daring and unconventional and the way he has portrayed his female characters are quite shocking especially to those who have grown up hearing this great legendary epic. What M T has tried to bring here is the glorification of Bhimasena and to do so he has demythified and demystified the original tale and to prove him right, M T has wronged other characters.

Draupadi, the wife of Pandavas is considered as the epitome of beauty, chastity and femininity. "Her story is a saga of suffering and disgrace but she took everything in her stride and vanquished each one of the perpetrators of her humiliation and agony" (Guin). When compared to other female characters of the Indian epics she is wilful, outspoken and stood for her rights. She is a person who has shown tremendous mental courage unlike many who would not have withstood half the mental traumas she has undergone. She is a woman of substance whose steadfast determination to avenge those who had disgraced her makes one call her the first feminist of India.

Draupadi in M T's eyes is a strong woman but she is extremely jealous, selfish, bloodthirsty and partial. The novel begins at its end when the Pandavas have begun their eternal journey towards salvation and it is Draupadi who drops down first before reaching their destination, no one except Bhima cares to look for her, and what is surprising is Yudhishtira's words, he accuses Panchali as partial. He says: "She loved only Arjuna. Even when she was seated beside me for the Rajasooya sacrifice, her eyes were on him" (12). According to the epic, Draupadi is a chaste woman even though married to five men. She came to the Kuru family taking Arjuna as her husband but she had to accept her destiny of becoming a bride to five brothers. She does her duty unfailingly and never had she shown any traces of partiality. The next outrageous projection of Draupadi by M T is that of her being someone who loves violence. Kurukshetra war was fought for dharma; Draupadi wanted the war to happen solely because she did not want anybody in future to molest a woman just like how she was abused in the gambling hall. She wanted the war to set a warning to those who dare to go against the righteousness. For her vanquishing adharma was her dharma and hence wanted the *mahayudha* to take place knowing that the lives of her husbands and children are at stake. But in *Bhima*, Draupadi is a blood thirsty woman and the author has evidently brought out this characteristic in many instances, one of it is when Bhima recounts the *swyamvara* scene : " How wrong I was to have assumed that the poor girl would be terrified . Her veiled smile seemed to suggest that she had enjoyed watching the spreading riots; she wanted more of it!"(127).

Draupadi is also portrayed as a selfish person by M.T. According to him, Draupadi has only loved Arjuna and she has used her femininity as a bait to lure Bhima to do difficult things and grant her extreme desires. He even suggests that the reason why Bhima did not take up the throne offered to him by Yudhishtira is because Draupadi has pleaded to him no to do it lest she will have to lead an ascetic life in woods along with Yudhishtira.

The portrayal of the character of Kunti is full of surprises. The Kunti that we know from *Mahabharata* is not what the author has in his mind. Kunti has suffered immensely throughout her life and has endured everything silently without pointing fingers at anybody. She is a loving mother, a devoted wife, an obedient daughter and a dutiful sister. These are the images that come to one's mind when the character of Kunti is discussed. In the novel *Bhima*, Kunti is pictured as an intelligent, compassionate, headstrong and scheming woman. It is Kunti who deciphers the secret message of Vidura about the impending danger surrounding the lac palace and to convince others of their death, it is she who invites a mother and her five sons to feast and take shelter in their palace leaving them charred to death.

Kunti is far sighted and she has used Draupadi as her trump card to tighten the bond between Pandavas without which the Kurukshetra victory would have been impossible. As per the legend Kunti asks her sons to share the alms they have brought without knowing that it is Draupadi, but M T suggests the readers that Kunti has done it deliberately so that her sons will not fight over a woman. She says: "All the eyes that looked at Draupadi had passion in them, even Sahadeva's, though he is still a child. I saw it. Only I could see, being a woman" (136). It is Kunti who convinces the Pandavas to get into the war as she thinks it is their duty, she also objects Bhima from becoming the king. In order to justify that Bhima was a lone warrior M.T. Vasudevan Nair goes to an extent of saying that his own mother showed second handed treatment towards him.

The real twist in the narrative comes with Kunti's revelation of her son's parentage. After Kunti reveals to her sons that Karna was their elder brother Bhima mourns for his death and regrets for calling his elder brother a *soothaputhra* but Kunti replies to him that Karna was indeed a *soothaputhra* as his father was a charioteer to Kuntibhoja. M T shocks the readers when he makes Kunti say that Yudhishtira is the son of Vidura and Bhima is the son of a forest dweller whose face she does not even like to recollect. M T tries to give answers to Kunti's treatment of Bhima by citing this as a plausible one.

Hidimbi, the first wife of Bhima is brought in a positive shade in contrast to the other two leading female characters. She is his first love and with none has he ever felt such completion. Although Hidimbi is a forester she has all the sophistications one look for in a wife. Bhima leaves Hidimbi in the forest when she is pregnant with their child but she does not stop him from doing this and later when Kirmeera approaches her with a marriage proposal she proclaims that: "The husband that I love came for me. I carry his child in my womb" (194).

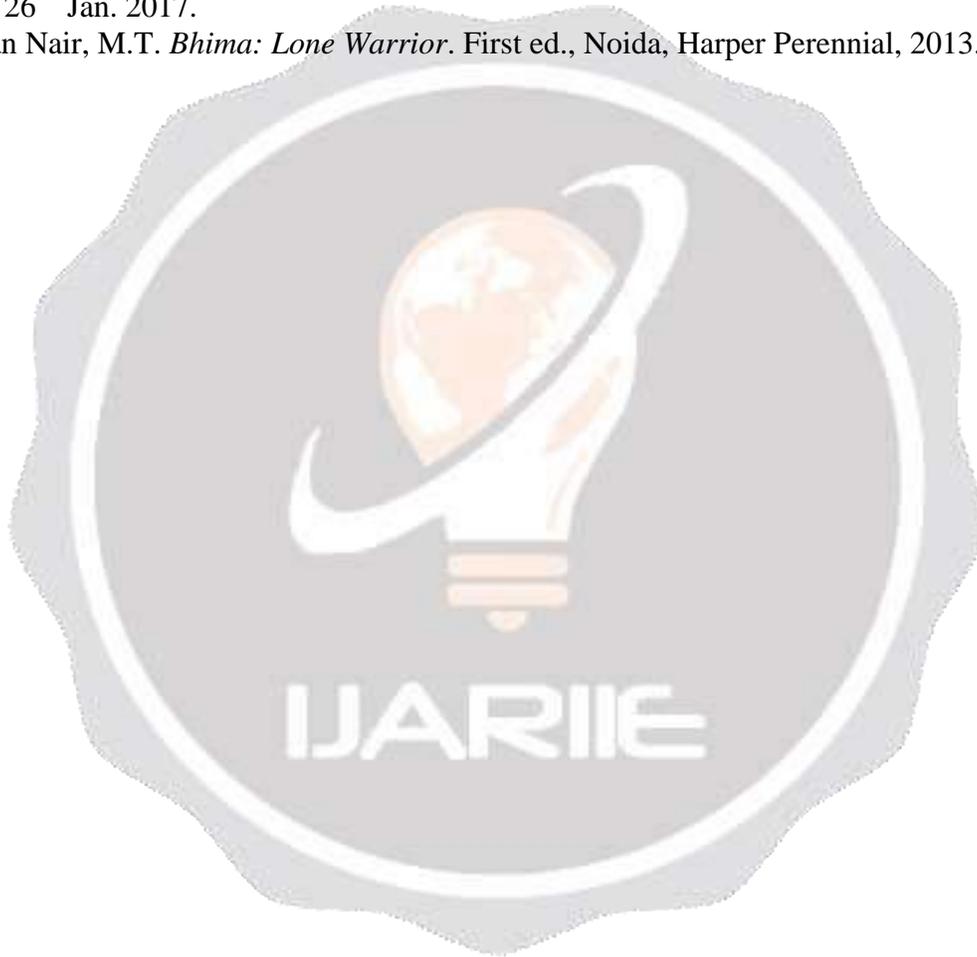
The women characters play an irreplaceable role in Bhima's life and it is especially Draupati and Kunti who controls all the movements of Bhima. M.T. Vaudevan Nair has given a new outlook to the female characters in his novel. To some extent it is welcoming but to those who adore the legendary heroines it is quite bitter to swallow whatever he has brought in. After

the war Bhima says about Draupati that: “She looked contended. The memory of her dead sons did not seem to trouble her” (346). The very idea of a mother seeming satisfied after the death of all her sons is beyond the accepted norms. Despite all this it could be said that M.T. Vasudevan Nair has given voice to the unvoiced and his novel *Bhima: Lone Warrior* is a new experience to the readers and he has explored all the possibilities an author can explore with the pregnant silences in the original myth.

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A Vision of Dreams in Lorraine Hansberry's Play *A Raisin in the Sun*

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Abstract

Dreams will always remain 'a dream' and to make it a reality is the greatest challenge. Here A Raisin in the Sun a play by Lorraine Hansberry exhibit the aspects of dream, sacrifice and love which are evidently seen through the women characters portrayed in this play. The women characters are shown in the light and darker shades which thus highlight the concept of leading an optimistic life inspite of being suppressed.

Through the characters shown in the play, Hansberry mentions it as an autobiography which brings out the plight of Afro Americans living in America. It is the first play of Hansberry that portrays African American characters, themes and conflict in a natural and realistic manner.

Dream will always remain as 'a dream' and to make it a reality is a greatest challenge. Every individual carries a dream to fulfill their unfulfilled life, whereas most women's dreams are concern with the welfare of their family members and at times they tends to the extent of sacrificing their dream for the wellbeing of others wishes and desire. Lorraine Hansberry in her play *A Raisin in the Sun* exhibit the aspects of dream, sacrifice and love which are evidently seen through her women characters. They are shown in light and dark shades of the society which highlight the concept of leading an optimistic life inspite of being suppressed.

Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* is an autobiography in which she creates realistic portraits of African-Americans living in America. It is her first play which depicts the plight of Afro-American characters in a natural and practical manner. The title of the play is derived from Langston Hughes's poem *Harlem* which appears in a sequence of the poem. The play has received The New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play of the year 1959. It focuses on the important issues such as poverty, discrimination, and the construction of African-American racial identity.

This paper highlights the dreams of women characters that drives and motivates themselves throughout the play. Hansberry has presented three strong women, Beneatha, Lena and Ruth who revolt against racial oppression and emerge out with new energy and hope even when the social condition remains the same.

The play portrays the life of Youngers family, an Afro-American family living on the south side of Chicago in 1950's. This play was considered as a turning point of American art because it addresses so many important issues of United States after World War II. Each member of the Younger family grapples with a 'dream deferred'. It shows the struggle to deal with the oppressive circumstances that rule their lives and it refer to a dreams whether it shrivel up like a raisin, in the sun.

All the characters in the play have unfulfilled dreams. Their dream mostly involves money. They live in a stereotypical American dream, of having a house with a yard, a big car, and a happy family. They live in a world in which being middle class is also a dream. Hansberry depicts the women characters, Lena, Beneatha, Ruth in dark light and they are able to restore their identity through their dreams.

Lena Younger a woman with the essence of high dignity, proud, strong and brave. Who maintains her moral boundary. She condemns the idea of Walter investing the money in liquor business because she is not interested in un-Christian business. She demands her family members to respect themselves and take pride in their dreams because she thinks more than material wealth, dreams are more important. Her dream is to own a house with a garden and yard in which Travis can play:

“We was going to set away, little by little, don’t you know, and buy a little place out in Morgan Park. We had even picked out the house. Looks right dumpy today. But Lord, child, you should know all the dreams I had ’bout buying that house and fixing it up and making me a little garden in the back” (28).

Mama’s plant serves as a symbol of her vision of their dream. She cares for it as if she cares for her family. She tries to give the plant enough light and water not only to grow but also to flourish and become beautiful. This ensembles her constant attempt to provide for her family with meager yet consistent financial support. Mama also imagines a garden that she can tend along with her dream house. The small potted plant act as a temporary stand-in for her much larger dream. Her relentless care for the plant represents the protection of her dream: “Lord, if this little old plant don’t get more sun than it’s been getting it ain’t never going to see spring again” (22). Despite her cramped living situation and the lifetime of hard work that she has ensured, she maintains her focus on her dream, which helps her to preserve. Her dream of house and a better life for her family remains tenuous because it is so hard for her to see beyond her family’s present situation:

“Fixing my plant so it won’t get hurt none on the way.... It expresses me” (108).

Hansberry portrays Beneatha as an intellectual, high spirited and independent. Her dream is to become a doctor. Thinking of the profession of Medicines she says: “I always thought it was the one concrete thing in the world that a human being could do” (123). She decides to find her identity and pursue an independent career without relying solely on a man. Her dream of being a doctor depends mainly on her interest of helping the society from being sick. She is shown as liberated women and has no faith in god and has an intense racial pride:

“Mama, you don’t understand. It’s all a matter of ideas, and God is just one idea I don’t accept. It’s not important. I am not going out and be immoral or commit crimes because I don’t believe in God. I don’t even think about it. It’s just that I get tired of Him getting credit for all the things the human race achieves through its own stubborn effect” (36).

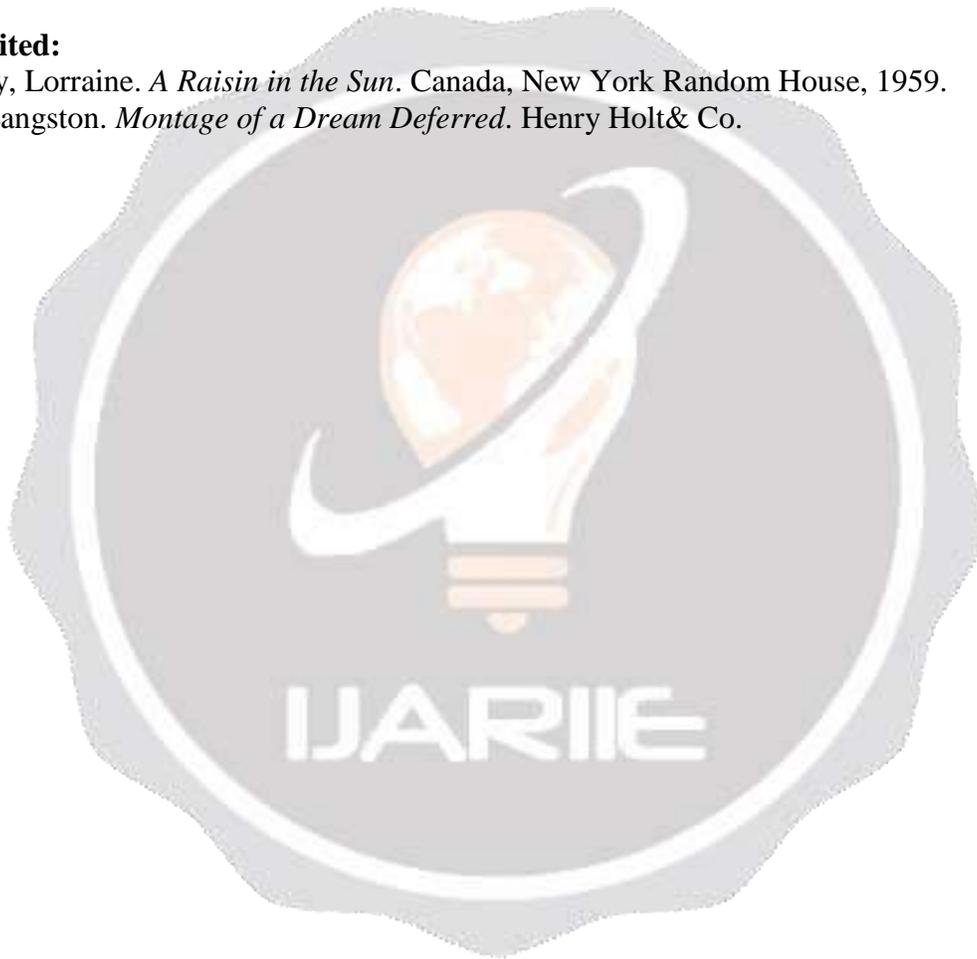
The other women character of the play is Ruth Younger, who is consider being the epitome of African womanhood. She proves to be a source of intense strength to the family at the time of dire need. She tend to the stage of sacrificing her dream by aborting her child because of poverty. The author has drawn her with struggles and hard work in which she overcomes with hope and love for her family. When, Walter lost the money, she tries to bring her family to be optimistic that she will work twenty hours a day in the kitchens in Chicago. It was her who determines firm and encourages Mama to move to their new house.

“Lena- I’ll work ... I’ll work twenty hours a day in all the kitchens in Chicago... I’ll strap my baby on my back if I have to and scrub all the floors in America if I have to – but we got to move ... We got to get out of here ...” (129).

Lorraine Hansberry brings out her women characters as females with strong dreams and they stand as an epitome of African identity. All the three characters in the play are brave enough to face the society even though the society does not accept them. The play ends with hope and determination in finding the roots of African womanhood in America. It was Mama’s dream to buy a house; finally all the characters find the importance of Mama’s dream as it unites the family. The play is a wonderful celebration of womanhood which showcases that their love and sacrifice is what which serves as a background for their men’s dream.

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An Empirical Study on Veronica Roth's *The Divergent*

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Abstract

From the idea of individualism seen in Dystopian Novels, the beginning of broadmindedness was unmistakably perceived through Beatrice 'Tris' Prior in The Divergent Series. She is the main protagonist and the narrator of the Divergent Series. The Divergent is a novel written by the author Veronica Roth. Veronica Roth has eminently brought out the aspect of teen empowerment through this novel that highly deals with the struggles of Tris Prior who is a Divergent and finally emerges being successful. Divergent is understood as a rare trait that includes all of the four factions. Thereby once she is known of herself as a Divergent she would never reveal it to anyone as it may kill herself. Roth emits the concept of braveness among the teen to fight anything and anyone that is obviously seen through Tris Prior. Tris was initially weak enough but through constant practice she becomes a strong attacker.

"Eyes make their pace in difficulties

With wounded lips and salted cheeks

And finally we step to leave

To the departure lounge of disbelief"

The future belongs to those who know and our decision in life comes down to us with the path we choose; but just one choice can transform you entirely. Hailing from America the author of *New York Times* bestselling Divergent Trilogy, Veronica Roth has created a dystopian world which morally depends on the choices people make in life, because their choices define who they are as a person. The trilogy consists of Divergent, Insurgent and Allegiant. The term Dystopian is something that is related with highlighting the ethos, poverty and similar issues that happen in the real world. Here Veronica Roth has depicted a futuristic world where everything seems very unusual compared to the lives we lead today. Amongst her world it is divided in to five factions with each faction representing something different from each other. They are Abnegation (the Selfless), Candor (the Honest), Erudite (the Intelligent), Amity (the Peaceful) and Dauntless (the Brave) which were made up to prevent war and bring peace to the world. The people are made to choose their factions at the age of sixteen as they undergo a test to find out which faction they belong to.

In the simulation, Beatris is first made to choose between the cheese and knife, which she questions and refuses. After two more events, she wakes up to see a baffled Tori Wu saying that her results were inconclusive, only having ruled out two factions, Amity and Candor. Her choice in the simulation showed equal instances of Abnegation, Dauntless and Erudite. Tori tells Beatris that she will delete the computer records upon telling that she is Divergent and warns her not to tell anyone, not even her family.

The protagonist as well as the narrator, Beatris Prior and her parents belong to Abnegation and she chooses to leave Abnegation and join Dauntless. Dauntless is regarded as a faction that resembles Bravery acting in life threatening situations to prove who is the most daring to participate. Tris Prior resembles bravery itself. She showed people that bravery is not

just being strong and committing acts of ruthlessness, it is about standing up for what you believe is right and being the most important person in a situation when no one else can. Her bravery from the first day at Dauntless till the very end of it makes her the hero. *"I believe in ordinary acts of bravery, in the courage that drives one person to stand up for another"*. (Roth 207)

In addition to the above, Tris Prior is a foil to her own character because if she had never joined the dauntless, she would have never have been able to save the world in her own way. Through bravery she was able to channelize other traits in her from other factions and create a new her. Because of her willingness to be brave she was able to change herself and the way she thought. She was no longer the old Beatris who belonged to Abnegation instead turned in to brave, courageous, strong, smart, and selfless Tris of the Dauntless. Any obstacle that came in to her life she was able to overcome it and beat it because of the choice that she makes in her life to be brave. *"I feel like someone breathed new air in my lungs. I am not Abnegation. I am not dauntless. I am Divergent. And I can't be controlled"*. (Roth 442)

It makes us understand that she has emerged herself from Abnegation to being a brave Dauntless giving all her strength, the determination and courage to get out there in the midst of all as the world is crumbling to stand up for her own kind. If she had never got the chance to change the factions she would never have had the chance to find her and truly identify who she is and make the friends she did, and learn to overcome the fears.

Roth portrays that even though she was raised in Abnegation where she learnt to be selfless, forgiving and merciful but when it comes to being a Dauntless she never has those as Ai apologises her for his mistake. She would forgive him within herself and finds that the society at Dauntless has changed her completely and adopts the belief that cowardliness is a sign of weakness. These were the lines told by Tris to Ai *"Stay away from me. Never come near me again. If you do, I swear to God I will kill you... You coward"*. (Roth 300)

Tris initially finds it very hard to stay there at Dauntless as she was physically low. Her determination to jump first to the hole of Dauntless marked her first stage of being mentally strong and brave. She was on the lowest grade then and worked very hard on the fights and other tests being held. She was graded slowly and slowly. Tris earns the respect of many during the initiation tradition of capture the flag, in which she has the idea to climb to the top of a Ferris wheel in order to see the other team's location. Four comes with her, and for the first time she realizes the feeling she gets when she's around him. She also earns Eric's respect when she volunteers to take a punishment meant for Al - standing in front of a target while four throws knives around her. It was Four then who tests her. He comes to know that she is a Divergent and protects this secret of hers. She would be asked to undergo the tests and he trains her on how to change her divergence or else she would be killed. They undergo lot of missions together where he would continuously train her to show that she is not a divergent.

The feelings that both have for each other goes on a higher level when Tris and Four start loving each other and as they stand for each other. When Jeanne Mathews comes to see the results of everyone Tris would do exactly what Four had taught her. She comes to know on how to tackle situations and have all the traits of the five factions within her. She also knows that she cannot be controlled as she is a divergent. In spite of all this she takes the lead in protecting the city as Jeanne plans to destroy the city. Tris also encounters the phase where she has to see her mother and father die in front of her. Through all these instances Veronica Roth tries to make it to the lime light that Bravery is not just something that happens on its own, but it lies on the act of bravery that only you can decide to commit to and play a factor on your life. Roth makes it

very clear from the novel that, through such a dystopian novel that talks of the future has encouraged and inspired the readers to instill amongst them the thought of being strong. There can be many instances where woman can be questioned and even suppressed to an extent but whatever risk it takes women should always follow their heart. Evidences and justifications can be showed as the act of Tris Prior who got evolved from Abnegation to Dauntless.

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Discontentment of Women in Diaspora in Noyomi Munaweera's *Island of A Thousand Mirrors*

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Abstract

The novel Island of Thousand Mirrors was written by Nayomi Munaweera who is a diasporic writer. She was born in Sri Lanka and later on settled in America. The novel Island of Thousand Mirrors is based on Sri Lankan civil war which prevailed for over twenty six years from 1983 to 2009. The victims of the war are the innocent common people including women and children. Due to this war the island country faces political and sociological imbalance which resulted in first generation migration from Sri Lanka to the various parts of the world. The main protagonist of the novel is Yashodhara and her younger sister Lanka were the first generation immigrants to America. Both the sisters were born Sri Lankans but were dispersed to America due to the socio-political reasons. Their life in America which was knitted with their dreams, desires and ambitions on one side and struggles sufferings on the other side is depicted in this novel.

This paper's aim is to bring out the sensible expectations of women about the alien country where they are forced to settle and it also throws light on their discontentment regarding their life in the that country.

One of the basic needs of living is a shelter for all the organisms on earth. Each shelter is inter-bound and interdependent on the other one to form a community which has its own way of leading life. People belong to certain community will follow their own rituals and customs according to their own beliefs and practices which will form a culture. A culture not only represents a culture but also gives an identity to a person. So culture is based on beliefs, customs and place in which the culture survives. Migration of people from their homeland to an alien land will lead them to lose their identity which in turn gives them discontentment and loss of hope. The reasons for migration are compulsion and search for living. In both the cases people will face disappointments and struggles. This paper deals with the sensible expectations and the discontentment faced by the immigrants and it narrows down in focusing the feelings of women in diaspora based on NayomiMunaweera's *Island of a Thousand Mirrors*.

The novel *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* is based on Sri Lankan civil war which prevailed for over twenty five years, nine months, three weeks and four days from 23 July, 1983 to 18 May, 2009. The island country was once colonized by the British empire and it struggled for its independence and finally succeeded in getting its freedom during the year 1948. From then onwards Sri Lanka is considered as one of the commonwealth countries and its literature is termed as New Literature.

The novelist NayomiMunaweera has brought out the struggles and turmoil faced by women in diaspora. She is a Sri Lankan writer who was born during the year 1973 in her mother country Sri Lanka. At the age of three she was migrated to Nigeria with her family. The political turmoil and struggles in Nigeria made a second migration to Los Angeles, America. Munaweera

earned a B A and M A degree in literature and emphasis in south Asian studies. Realizing her interest in writing she started to work on her novel *Island of a Thousand Mirrors* during the year 2001 and it was published after twelve years.

This novel is divided into twelve chapters. It focuses on the lives of two female protagonists. The plot of the novel is complex in construction with two alternative narrations, one through a Sinhala girl's narration and the other through a Tamil girl's narration. Munaweera tells the story of diaspora sufferings through the eyes of these two young women.

The term diaspora is derived from the Greek language meaning "to scatter about". People of a diaspora scatter from their homeland and to the various parts across the globe spreading or hiding their culture. The term diaspora is seen in the lives of both the female characters, one of them is Saraswathi who belongs to the Tamil settlers in Sri Lanka and the other one is Yesodhara was born in Sri Lanka and migrated to America along with her family. Both the character possess the essence of their own traditions in them and they also intake the essence of the alien culture. The life and character of Yesodhara is dealt in detailed in this paper.

The novel begins with the beauty of love and nature on earth which can be compared to the beautiful and peaceful life of Yesodhara. She is the elder daughter of Nishan and Vishaka who are well educated and well settled Sinhala family. She has a younger sister named Lanka who was the only companion right from the beginning till the end.

As a child Yesodhara enjoyed her life in her own land Sri Lanka. She possesses several memorable incidents in her life. She plays with her little boyfriend named Shiva while is a Tamilian. Every evening her father Nishan took his two daughters along with the little Tamil boy for a walk on the rushed and crowded streets of Colombo. The old servant Alice inspired Yesodhara as a good human being on the earth. Alice taught her the purpose and the joy of living. In simple words Yesodhara learnt the wisdom of caring and loving in her days in Sri Lanka.

Yesodhara's these days did not lost for a long time. Due to the political and linguistic turmoil the whole family shifted to the city of Los Angeles, America. "I won't bring up my child here" (90) these are the words of Vishaka which brings the horror and terror of the civil war. The family trusted Anandha the maternal uncle of Yesodhara for their living. The story of Anandha reveals the truth the Americanized citizens from various parts of the world. They suffer a lot and face several problems to survive in that alien country due to which they lose their identity.

The Rajasinga family is well used to the American way of living. Everyone in the family forgets about their homeland and is drifted towards the new modern western culture. They became fully materialized and urbanized. America fulfilled all their expectations, were Anandha says "This country. You can be anything here. You can become a president. Here anything is possible." (95). But for Yesodhara it provided discontentment. She is well off financially and she is provided with a good education and luxurious life but she lacks something and she is incomplete in something.

Yesodhara secured a degree in literature and so she alone realized the essence of life. She had already reached the age of marriage. She is wedded to a well off doctor named Siddharth who is born and brought up in Sri Lanka but settled in America. Everyone praised Yesodhara for her good luck. Though she is not interested in marriage she obeyed her parents as a good daughter who shows that she is a culture bound girl. After marriage she slowly falls in love with her husband Siddharth. Her husband showered care and love on her. But this fruitful marital life did not last for a long time. She came to know that her husband was in relationship with an American woman her dream as a good wife and her love for him is shattered. Though she knew

the disloyalty of her husband she reminded quite believing that her husband will regret for his mistake. But she was mistaken.

It is Yesodhara who is blamed by the people for not getting hold of her husband. Nobody witnessed the disloyalty of Siddharth. This made her think about her childhood days were she was happy and prosperous were she could see the true love and affection of the innocent people, and she remembers the day she came to America with empty streets were nobody bothers anybody which shows the self-centered life of modernized humans “But I see only cars here and there. There is no one walking, no shops spilling into the streets, it is profoundly lonely.”(96).It is at this point she realizes that she was provided with a life of prosperity yet she has anadversity inside her, in chapter seven she says “It is our first experience of immigrant nostalgia .A force that we will all succumb to more or less at various times”(97). This is because she had forgotten her motherland and she avoided her people who are suffering. She regrets for that. She decides to leave America and go back to Sri Lankan to serve the refugees of the civil war in her country. “I enter a crowd of expectant faces, grandmothers and husbands, mothers and brothers gathered to welcome home those lost beyond the dark seas”.(187).

To conclude, the decision of Yesodhara makes it clear that women are bound to men and they create certain limitations by themselves. But this does not mean that they are inferior to men and they are dependent the do this because the respect their culture and they possessthe wisdom that there are certain truth and good reasons beyond every customs, beliefs and practices. These things are lacking in an alien country.Yesodhara is a good illustration of an independent, courageous and country-loving young women in this modern age.

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The Study of The Life and Death of The Great Queen of Egypt, Nefertiti

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Abstract

The Nefertiti was the daughter of Ay, the crown prince's (Akhenaten's) teacher. Akhenaten met Nefertiti on a royal occasion of the thirtieth jubilee of the pharaoh's reign at the Sed Festival. Nefertiti impressed the prince and the queen mother and was made bride to the crown prince. Nefertiti was a shrewd lady, and she admired Akhenaten for his immense loyalty towards his religion. Rumours were spread that Queen Nefertiti was a seeker of power to the throne. She took care of the administration of Akhetaten. She was equally influenced by the new religion and stood along with Akhenaten. She gave birth to six daughters of Akhenaten. She left Akhenaten as she could not bear to see him perish because of his immobility towards violence. Nick Drake in his novel Nefertiti tries to bring out the life of the lost queen Nefertiti.

Nick Drake was born in 1961. He lives and works in London. His first book-length collection, *The Man in the White Suit*, was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation, which had won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection in 1999, and was selected for the Next Generation Poets promotion in 2004. *From the Word Go* was published in 2007. His most recent projects include a stage adaptation of Philippe Petit's *To Reach the Cloud*; the screenplay for the Australian film *Romulus, My Father*, which won Best Film at the Australian Film Awards; *Success*, a play for the National Theatre's Connections project; and a trilogy of historical novels; *Nefertiti*, shortlisted for CWA Best Historical Crime Novel, *Tutankhamun* and *Egypt: The Book of Chaos*. He is a screenwriter, and is also work in an opera in the composing line. In September 2010 he was invited to join Cape Farewell's trip to the Arctic to explore climate change, and from that journey arose a commission from United Visual Artists to create poems and texts for their ground-breaking installation *High Arctic* at the National Maritime Museum (2011). Those poems, together with others inspired by the Arctic and its voices, are gathered in his collection *The Farewell Glacier*.

“She is Nefertiti - beautiful and revered. With her husband, Akhenaten, she rules over Egypt, the most affluent, formidable, sophisticated empire in the ancient world. But an epic power struggle is afoot, brought on by the royal couple's inauguration of an enlightened new religion and the construction of a magnificent new capital. The priests are stunned by the abrupt forfeiture of their traditional wealth and influence; the people resent the loss of their gods - and the army is enraged by the growing turbulence around them. Then, just days before the festival that will celebrate the new capital, Nefertiti vanishes.”(Preface)

Nefertiti, the Book of Dead is one among the many books of the Rahotep series. In this novel Rahotep is the main character who is the chief detective inspector from Thebes and who has been summoned by none other than pharaoh Akhenaten who manages to know about

Rahotep and who is asked to find the queen of Egypt Empire. The novel is taken during the time when Akhenaten's reign had crossed the twelfth year in his more than the life city Akhetaten. Akhenaten had lost his dearest queen in his twelfth year in a mysterious way and Rahotep is asked to find the whereabouts of the queen. Will he be able to justify this and find the lost queen and restore the order or will he be banished and executed like any other officer who had failed to find her out. Nefertiti is absent throughout the novel but the novel is based on how mysteriously she had vanished from the flourishing kingdom at the peak hour when the crown festival was taking place. Her role is her name, her name defines the power that she used to hold in the capital, the administrator who represented the role of modern women in the erstwhile, stereotype Egyptian society. She had been the backbone of her husband the pillar of Akhetaten and the mother of six girl children. Nefertiti was lost, lost in the world of dead valley and Rahotep had been vested with the job of finding her among the lost members of the Egyptian valley.

Nefertiti was the chief consort of the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten (formerly Amenhotep IV), who reigned from approximately 1353 to 1336 BC. Known as the *Ruler of the Nile* and *Daughter of Gods*, Nefertiti acquired unprecedented power, and is believed to have held equal status to the pharaoh himself. However, much controversy lingers about Nefertiti after the twelfth regal year of Akhenaten, when her name vanishes from the pages of history.

In Akhenaten's new state religion centred on the sun god, he and Nefertiti were depicted as the primeval first couple. Nefertiti was also known throughout Egypt for her beauty. She was said to be proud of her long, swan-like neck and invented her own makeup using the Galena plant. She also shares her name with a type of elongated gold bead, called nefer, that she was often portrayed as wearing. Long forgotten to history, Nefertiti was made famous when her bust was discovered in the ruins of an artist's shop in Amarna in 1912, now in Berlin's Altes Museum. The bust is one of the most copied works of ancient Egypt.

Nefertiti is depicted in images and statuary in a large image denoting her importance. Many images of her show simple family gatherings with her husband and daughters. She is also known as the mother-in-law and stepmother of the Pharaoh Tutankhamun.

Nefertiti's parentage is not known with certainty, but it is generally believed that she was the daughter of Ay, later to be pharaoh after Tutankhamen. She had a younger sister, Moutnemendjet. Another theory identifies Nefertiti with the Mitanni princess Tadukhipa.

Nefertiti was married to Amenhotep IV around 1357 BC and was later promoted to be his queen. Images exist depicting Nefertiti and the king riding together in a chariot, kissing in public, and Nefertiti sitting on the king's knee, leading scholars to conclude that the relationship was a genuine one. King Akhenaton's legendary love is seen in the hieroglyphs at Amarna, and he even wrote a love poem to Nefertiti:

“...And the Heiress, Great in the Palace, Fair of Face, Adorned with the Double Plumes, Mistress of Happiness, Endowed with Favors, at hearing whose voice the King rejoices, the Chief Wife of the King, his beloved, the Lady of the Two Lands, Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti, May she live for Ever and Always...”(Amarna)

The couple had six known daughters, two of whom became queens of Egypt: Meritaten (believed to have served as her father's queen), Meketaten, Ankhesenpaaten/Ankhesenamen (later queen to Tutankhamun), NeferneferuatenTasherit, Neferneferure, and Setepenre.

Nefertiti and the pharaoh took an active role in establishing the Aten cult, a religious mythology which defined Aten, the sun, as the most important god and the only one worthy of worship in Egypt's polytheistic canon. Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaten (also seen as "Akenhaten" in some references) to honor the deity. It is believed that the king and queen

were priests and that it was only through them that ordinary citizens could obtain access to Aten. Nefertiti changed her name to Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti, meaning "beautiful are the beauties of Aten, a beautiful woman has come," as a show of her absolutism for the new religion. The royal family resided in a constructed city called Akhetaton—in what is now known as el-Amarna—meant to honor their god. There were several open-air temples in the city, and at the center stood the palace.

Nefertiti was perhaps one of the most powerful women ever to have ruled. Her husband went to great lengths to display her as an equal. In several reliefs she is shown wearing the crown of a pharaoh or smiting her enemies in battle. But despite this great power, Nefertiti disappears from all depictions after 12 years. The reason for her disappearance is unknown. Some scholars believe she died, while others speculate she was elevated to the status of co-regent—equal in power to the pharaoh—and began to dress herself as a man. Other theories suggest she became known as Pharaoh Smenkhkare, ruling Egypt after her husband's death or that she was exiled when the worship of the deity Amen-Ra came back into vogue. During her reign as queen, Egypt went about many radical religious changes. Hundreds of years of culture and worship had been exchanged for a new radical concept—Monotheism. The old gods had been disregarded, temples shut down, and priests forced to change their ways. Many historians believe this transition could have been hostile and was not adopted so easily by the citizens or priests.

Her reign with Akhenaten was unlike the traditional ways Egypt had seen. She was more than just a typical queen and helped to promote Akhenaten's views. Her reign was only 12 years, but she was perhaps one of the most powerful queens to ever rule. Supporting her husband's beliefs she changed her name to Neferneferuaten-Nefertiti meaning, "The Aten is radiant of radiance [because] the beautiful one has come." Her importance was greatly valued by Akhenaten and he went to great lengths to show her as his counterpart. As queen, she took on powerful roles and showed herself in ways only Egyptian kings did. For example, she was often shown with the crown of a pharaoh or was depicted in scenes of battle smiting her enemies. Akhenaten valued her so much, that he also allowed her to practice that art of priesthood and she too was allowed to make offerings to Aten. Many Egyptologists believe that perhaps Akhenaten was born with deformities that hindered his role as king. One of the ailments that was believed he had was bad vision. This illness could have made his job difficult, in turn, he could have put trust into Nefertiti allowing her to decide many important matters. He trusted her so much, that he went as far as placing her name next to his in his royal cartouche. This was very unique and could have symbolized her as equal status next to Akhenaten.

Other depictions show the couple side by side often with their children in a utopic fashion. In one stela, found in Tell el Amarna, the couple is seated together. Akhenaten is giving his daughter an earring while his wife Nefertiti has the other two daughters on her lap. In this depiction, the queen is having a wonderful time and is shown in a loving manner with her husband and children. Both are shown as equal counterparts in their status and family affairs.

Twelve years into the Amarna Period Nefertiti disappears. She could have simply died of a terminal illness; however, many refuse to think so. Little is known about her disappearance due

the damage caused by Akhenaten's successors. It seems they wanted no memory of his existence and that included memories of Queen Nefertiti. Everything was destroyed or buried in the sands of Egypt. Though very little evidence has survived, it has still sparked theories as to how she disappeared.

Shortly after her disappearance from the historical record, Akhenaten took on a co-regent with whom he shared the throne of Egypt. This has caused considerable speculation as to the identity of that person. One theory states that it was Nefertiti herself in a new guise as a female king, following the historical role of other women leaders such as Sobkneferu and Hatshepsut. Another theory introduces the idea of there being two co-regents, a male son, Smenkhkare, and Nefertiti under the name Neferneferuaten (translated as "The Aten is radiant of radiance [because] the beautiful one is come" or "Perfect One of the Aten's Perfection"). Some scholars are adamant about Nefertiti assuming the role of co-regent during or after the death of Akhenaten. Jacobus Van Dijk, responsible for the Amarna section of the Oxford History of Ancient Egypt, believes that Nefertiti indeed became co-regent with her husband, and that her role as queen consort was taken over by her eldest daughter, Meryetaten (Meritaten) with whom Akhenaten had several children. (The taboo against incest did not exist for the royal families of Egypt.)

Also, it is Nefertiti's four images that adorn Akhenaten's sarcophagus, not the usual goddesses, which indicates her continued importance to the pharaoh up to his death and refutes the idea that she fell out of favour. It also shows her continued role as a deity, or semi-deity, with Akhenaten. On the other hand, Cyril Aldred, author of *Akhenaten: King of Egypt*, states that a funerary shawabti found in Akhenaten's tomb indicates that Nefertiti was simply a queen regnant, not a co-regent and that she died in the regnal year 14 of Akhenaten's reign, her daughter dying the year before.

Some theories hold that Nefertiti was still alive and held influence on the younger royals who married in their teens. Nefertiti would have prepared for her death and for the succession of her daughter, Ankhesenpaaten, now named Ankhsenamun, and her stepson and now son-in-law, Tutankhamun. This theory has Neferneferuaten dying after two years of kingship and being then succeeded by Tutankhamun, thought to have been a son of Akhenaten. The new royal couple was young and inexperienced, by any estimation of their age. In this theory, Nefertiti's own life would have ended by Year 3 of Tutankhaten's reign. In that year, Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun and abandoned Amarna to return the capital to Thebes, as evidence of his return to the official worship of Amun.



Women as Cultural Archetypes: An Anthropological Approach

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Abstract

Cultural archetypes are defined as original models with which other similar things are patterned in a certain culture or tradition. Women are made archetypes -professional, familial, societal with respect to the comfort zone of culturists, who belong to the world of 'subalterns'. They are knowingly and unknowingly made symbols of cultural patterns which subjugate them into a mythical arena. They are viewed as 'the other' or the marginalised, provoking to various archetypes set by the patriarchs - the biological pattern, cultural inhibitions and the gender myth. This research paper tends to analyse factors leading to cultural archetypes imposed upon women in an anthropological perspective with respect to Indian Writing in English.

Keywords: *Cultural Archetypes, Globalised Culture, Subalterns, Cultural Inhibitions, Global Archetypal Cultural Patterns.*

“Our culture does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfil their potentialities as human beings, a need which is not solely defined by their sexual role.”(124)

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Emerging trends in Indian Writing in English and increase in the number of women writers, who lay much emphasis on mythological works from a feministic perspective throw light on unexpected areas in research. Trend setting writers like Sudha Murthy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharathi Mukherjee, Preeti Shenoy and many others try to induce ‘Global Archetypal Cultural Patterns’ in their classics. ‘Global Archetypal Cultural Patterns’ deconstruct the constructed mythical patterns in a particular culture and in turn contribute a globally accepted cultural identity to the culturists. This research paper contributes the coinage of this new term/concept which may modify the archetypal patterns created by the patriarchs on the gendered subalterns.

Ancient Indian thinkers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Tilak, Gokhale, etc. have used English as a language to communicate Indian thoughts to the western audience. Factors leading to the emergence of Indian Writing in English would be incomplete if the three stalwarts – Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan are not mentioned. The publication of the first Indian novel in English, *Raj Mohan's Wife* by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1864, marks the real beginning of the Indian Writing in English.

In Vedas, the well known Hindu scriptures, wife is addressed as the ‘ardhangi’, the best half of man. The Hindu culture highlights the role of woman as the guardian and savior – strength of her spouse, the bearer, fosterer, humanizer and divinizes the coming generation. Christianity symbolizes woman as a divine being, since God has created woman from the uniquely strong and sturdy substance, a rib – which means solidarity and equity. Islam

recognizes woman as an acknowledged person who possesses spiritual aspirations and human qualities as men. The historical evidence from *The Sigvole Sutta*, recorded work on Buddhism advocates the role played by a woman and her contribution to familial set up.

Women writers like Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Pravar Jabwala, Nayantra Sahgal have depicted the female self from one dimensional point of view that is, either from social or cultural or political or economical point of view. These writers try to emphasise the role of women as sacrificial elements in a culturally bound Indian society. The research paper has been narrowed down to, women as cultural archetypes as portrayed in Indian Writing in English. On the other hand, creators like Shoba De, Anita Nair, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni show the spotlight of radical feminists who emerged out of suppressed situations in modern Indian society, which still sticks to archetypal patterns for defining 'A Woman'.

Empowerment, Independence, Education, Literacy, Space, Gender Equity – such terms and concepts are widely used in newspaper articles, research papers, theses, journals, novels etc, but the norms created by the patriarchs remain unaltered. The expectations of an Indian society on women are biased, since they are equated with the archetypes that are set as patterns on every Indian psyche. Men are not to be completely blamed. These archetypal patterns are created by the traditionally bound mothers, sisters, daughters, wives and in-laws, who get suppressed and try to suppress the future generation through 'Cultural Norms'. The liberated woman is looked down as a vagabond, away from cultural ethos, a non-member of Indian traditional society. Though Indian Writing in English tries to entangle the knots laid by cultural patterns, the solution to dissolve the archetypes still remains a hundred dollar question.

In a pluralistic cultural Indian society gender shapes a person's social identity. Colonialism and patriarchy are seen as power structures that exploit the human society. This research paper states the importance of identity formation in a postcolonial society which can be used as a weapon to subvert patriarchal and colonial powers. A woman's physicality and mentality is unconsciously shaped by these cultural norms. Cultural enslavement primarily exists within cults and immigrant population in a country. Cultural enslavement is the isolation of one subset of a population within a larger population for purposes of control. This control system is effective against any special interest which can be isolated from the surrounding population by a strong internal identity.

Historically, common beliefs are more at the heart of a culture than the geographical location that it originated in. This type of enslavement initializes by isolating a population through hybridity. Enslavement through culture is easiest to institute when there is natural isolation that leads to dependence. This has been instigated in India for ages, which is clear through various historical evidences. Cultural empowerment and gender equality are both two sides of the same coin. Empowerment refers to increasing the spiritual, political, social, educational or economic strength of women as individuals and communities. It becomes possible when there is a change in the mindset of society on a fundamental level. Thus, gradually gender has become a political construct, instead of a biological distinction of men and women. These lines of division are present in all cultures.

Gender does not simply symbolize difference, it also symbolizes discrimination. For example, the ever-obedient, ever-suffering Sita of the epic, *Ramayana* who ended her life in self-immolation has remained the dominant feminine archetype. Since the totalitarian expertise in destroying the gender identity, women who are steam-rolled and flattened into the family roles tend to be dehumanized as they are invariably stripped of all the individualizing traits of a sentient being.

Theorists Simone de Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter have constantly pointed out that womanhood is a social construct and the inequality of the sexes is not nature's design, but a result of various social forces. Woman's first and major limitation is that she is physically weaker than man. The values reflected in art, religion and culture are prescribed by men and not by women. Consequently man remains at the centre, driving woman to the margin or periphery. Even the so-called liberated working women in an Indian culture has to reconcile her career with her marriage which is something that a man does not have to do.

Roles of women as achievers, as leaders or as strong individuals are, by and large, either non-existent or rare. A woman's individual self has very little recognition and self-effacements in her normal way of life. Indian woman, as a part of the archetypal pattern, has accepted it and lived with it for ages. They are projected as women who break codes and women who follow the rules; women who are bound culturally and women who unbind the culturally laid barriers. The existing myths created by the society can never be denied. Unless and until new myths are constructed, replacement models cannot be constructed.

A Woman's role in the post-colonial era is altered with a boom in the field of education. The steady transformation in social, cultural and economic patterns of life have expanded and altered the nature of actuality for women in the social order. But still the increase in the number of rape victims, acid attacks and eve teasing incidents portray the enslaved, unaltered state of the oppressed sex. The Delhi gang rape case (Dec 2012), the Suryanelli rape case (1996), acid attack victims Vinodhini and Vidhya are only a few embossed examples of the enslaved state of the gendered subalterns in independent India. The inducement of global archetypal cultural patterns should be encouraged, so that the suppressed gender never falls a prey to cultural norms, thereby highlighting humanistic concerns. Humanism is a primary means to human liberation of men as well as women.

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Quest for Identity in Bharati Mukherjee's *Desirable Daughters*

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Abstract

This paper aims to study the quest for identity in Bharati Mukherjee's Desirable Daughters. Bharati Mukherjee is an Indian born American writer and she considers herself to be an American writer. The protagonist Tara Lata struggles with the identity of self in society and goes to the verge of self destruction but at last emerges victorious with self discover. The novel focuses on the attitude of the three sisters and their techniques of managing with circumstances. Tara is found depressed with her cultural displacement. She is unable to manage the new culture because of the strong bonds with Indian Culture. Bharati Mukherjee's female characters are bold enough to come out of sufferings. In this novel, the author shows different experiences and efforts of the three sisters to find their identity against the backdrop of the two cultures.

Bharathi Mukerjee was born on July 21, 1940 at Calcutta. She is an Indian born American writer. She is well known as one of the immigrant writers of America. Her female protagonists are immigrants and suffered cultural shock but they are courageous women and are anxious to establish their identity by undertaking their journeys. Her other works are *The Tigers Daughters*(1971), *Wife*(1975), *Jasmine*(1989), *The Tree Bride*(2004), *Darkness*(1985) and *The Middleman* and other stories(1988). She won national book critics circle award in 1989.

Bharathi Mukerjee novels show her personal experiences in crossing the cultural boundaries. *Desirable Daughters* gives the diverging paths taken by three sisters Tara, Padma and Parvathi who were born to a rich Brahmin family presided over by her father and traditionalist mother. Tara is the narrator of the story who struggles for self discovery. The three sisters shared same Indian background but their displacement way of life separates them. Padma and Tara leave to the United States while Parvathi stays in India.

Tara undergoes various struggles and difficulties. Her father was a Hindu Brahmin and they spoke Bengali, this set her identity. She grew up in patriarchal society. She never voices her opinion, blindly follows all the rules set by her family and society's expectations.

After her marriage to Bish, Tara moves with him to the United States and let the typical life of an Indian wife. Even in America she follows the traditional aspects and engaged herself at home duties. Tara was found to be a dedicated wife, mother and good daughter in law. As like in India, Tara was found serving *pakor*s and drinks, while Bish and his friends watching football match. This shows her torn identity that where she belongs either to India or America due to same way of living. Though Tara was a modern educated lady, looked forward to have a different environment in America, but soon realized that was a fake idea. Her expectation was to lead a free life in America, in contrast she continued to be a typical Indian wife who has to care for her husband and children.

Apart from the search of identity, there was a main need to cross racism because being a member of minority group and colored woman, her aimed freedom was totally curbed. Tara found a way to come out of typical life, thus she took advantage of the American society to get a divorce and move to San Francisco. Being a single parent, Tara faced difficulties in fulfilling the needs of her son who belongs to American background. Thus, she slowly began to adopt an American lifestyle and starts to get rid of Indian identity.

In hope freedom and model culture, she involved in multiple relationships and found a new lover Andy. Due to her new relationship, her quest for identity increases. Tara tried her best to assimilate in American society, letting go of Indian traditions and culture. Her new partner Andy became a symbol for the American identity which she looked forward. Though she tried to create a new gender identity, she was still under her culture that disliked revealing her divorced life.

Tara lived under the illusion that she was an assimilated immigrant who managed to repress her past and confined her link to India to a couple of phone calls with her sisters. Parvathi was totally an Indian woman and her life with family appeared stress free. Padma lived in New Jersey but looked like an Indian woman. Padma, like Tara found her own identity in terms of race, the white American society would always label her as a colored woman or an Indian regardless of her class or caste. In terms of class, unlike Tara, Padma led the life of a wealthy Indian woman in America thus she undertook various jobs. Tara and Padma faced same problem in India and tried to get freedom in America. Padma differs from Tara in finding her identity. After a visit to Padma, Tara realized that she was attached with Indian background. After the explosion of the house, Tara decided to go back to India to find her identity whether she was an Indian or American and also to check the originality upon her. In America, she had a chance to explore new identity which she was not aware of. Finally, Tara was found embraced to her Indian identity than to obtain identity by crossing race, class and gender.

Tara was found changing and evolving in an alien land to prove her identity which is totally different. But at the same time, she does not lose her former identity which is totally different. But the same time she does not lose her formal identity i.e., Indian culture and tradition. Unlike Tara, her sisters tried to preserve their own culture even in America. Mukherjee shows her heroines break the myth of single identity and tried to balance the 'world of origin' and 'world of adoption'. Her character Tara proved the strategy to accept changes and transforms oneself according to the situations. Mukherjee skillfully gives the story back and forth in Indian and American life.

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The Impact of Ethnic Conflict in Nayomi Munaweera's

Island of a Thousand Mirrors

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Abstract

*Sri Lanka is a beautiful country devastated by the horrible civil war that lasted for nearly 26 years. The peace and happiness of the people who never bothered their ethnic difference, is totally shattered by the war. The war made many people to find refuge in other countries which shattered their identity. The feelings of distress at having to leave the place one loves, heightens the feelings of nostalgia and longing. Many migrants show their love for their motherland in writing novels on their past blissful days in Sri Lanka. The memories of the past play an enormous role in shaping the destinies of these migrant writers. Nayomi Munaweera's first novel, *Island of a Thousand Mirrors*, relates the story of Sri Lanka's civil war through the eyes of two Sri Lankan young women, Yasodhara Rajasinghe and Saraswathi, a Sinhalese and a Tamil. The paper brings in a vivid picture of the region and things that unite and divide the women. It gives an account of immigrant life with its attendant traumas.*

Sri Lanka is a beautiful country devastated by the horrible civil war that lasted for nearly 26 years. As Reddy says, "The ethnic and religious composition of Sri Lanka has made the country one of the most complex multi-ethnic, multi-religious societies in any part of the world" (349). The peace and happiness of the people who never bothered their ethnic difference, is totally shattered by the war. The war made many people to find refuge in other countries which shattered their identity. The feelings of distress at having to leave the place one loves, heightens the feelings of nostalgia and longing. Many migrants show their love for their motherland in writing novels on their past blissful days in Sri Lanka. The memories of the past play an essential role in shaping the destinies of these migrant writers.

Nayomi Munaweera, though born in Sri Lanka, went to Nigeria to escape the turmoil created by civil war in Sri Lanka. Her first novel, *Island of a Thousand Mirrors*, relates the story of Sri Lanka's civil war through the eyes of two Sri Lankan young women, Yasodhara Rajasinghe and Saraswathi, one Sinhalese, one Tamil. The paper brings in a vivid picture of the region and things that unite and divide the women. It gives an account of immigrant life with its attendant traumas. This novel has won Commonwealth Book Prize for the Asian Region in 2013 and was shortlisted for a number of other awards such as The Man Asia Literary Prize in 2012.

Island of a Thousand Mirrors starts with the end of the British colonial era and the dawn of Sri Lanka's independence in 1948. It also traces the events of the country's postcolonial history until the end of the military conflict in 2009. The novel mainly focuses on the psychological conflict of both refugee and terrorist characters. The plot develops parallel to the development of the ethnic clash in Sri Lanka but the narrative traces Sri Lanka's colonial history from the time the British left the Island in 1948.

The story begins in the childhood of the Yashodhara's parents, Nishan and Visaka dealing with parental ambitions, marital disappointments, and betrayal of love. It opens in a double storied building in Colombo where Yashodhara's grandmother, Sylvia Sunethra rents out her house to a Tamil family after the death of her husband who is described as "the Judge" and a

“brown skinned sahib” (31). The house is finally occupied by the Sinhalese family who actually owns the house and the upstairs is occupied by a Tamil family. The narrator says:

Soon thereafter, ancient furniture, cooking pots, bags of flour, statues of Ganesh and Shiva, Tamil and English books are borne upstairs and the Shivalingams settle in. Overnight, the upstairs becomes foreign territory, ruled by different gods and divergent histories, populated by thick braided, Kanjivaram sari-ed women, earnest bespectacled young men, a gang of kids, one walnut lined grandmother and the unsmiling patriarch. (37-38)

Even the children in Sri Lanka grow up with the awareness of racial difference. Seeni Banda, the one-legged fisherman gives the children lessons in teashop politics, “We Sinhala are Aryans and the Tamils are Dravidians. This island is ours, given to us from the Buddha’s own hand long, long before they came” (26). Nishan witnesses how a Tamil schoolgirl is nearly killed by an angry mob. When the narrator Yasodhara is close with her Tamil friend Shiva in her childhood, her grandmother admonishes her saying, “... they are Tamil. Not like us. Different. ...Can’t you see child? They’re darker. They smell different. They just aren’t like us” (73).

The riots of 1983 made all of them scatter to find refuge in different places in order to save their lives. Yasodhara, her sister Lanka and their parents flee to America to find a peaceful life and the Shivalingams go to the north of the country. In Jaffna, the Sinhala policemen and paramilitaries ransack the old Tamil library and set fire to all the books. An angry mob of Sinhalese force roam in the streets with knives, metal poles, machetes, dusty hoes and large white cans full of incendiary petrol in search of Tamil families. They enter each house to bring them to streets. As the narrator says, “They dragged out fathers and mothers, girls and grandmothers, ripped clothing, shattered bone and cut through flesh. They burned homes and houses, bodies and businesses. ...they committed the usual atrocities in the usual ways” (81).

As the violence escalates in Sri Lanka Yasodhara’s family migrates to America for the sake of their lives. The pressure of changed circumstances brings in a strain in the relationship between Yasodhara’s father and mother during their new immigrant days. In America they become refugees and here the novelist portrays the effects of the civil war on those who leave the country. The feeling of lament and regret at leaving one’s loved home brings in the feelings of nostalgia and longing. Andersson states that:

A refugee has to live between two worlds. He has changed countries and cultures. The language and customs are different. Values, religions and moral codes, even modes of thinking may differ. He may have a different appearance than inhabitants of the new country. Within the individual, a process seems to begin of homeland and childhood and adult experiences with those of the new country. He seems to be forced to see, remember, question and compare the old with the new. A long, difficult and sometimes painful psychological process of questioning oneself and one’s life, lifestyle and values begins which may be experienced differently. (Wanninayake 23-24)

The war of ethnic conflict has traumatized both the Sinhalese and Tamil people at varying degrees. As the trauma of the past starts to haunt their present they become either refugees or terrorists. Our second narrator Saraswathi, a sixteen year old Tamil girl from Jaffna, was docile, intelligent and academically gifted. She turns out to be an answer to the novelist’s doubt of how a female figure becomes a suicide bomber. In an interview with Marianne Lonsdale, Munaweera says, “I was consumed with how a girl could grow up and become a suicide bomber. What would drive a woman to do that? My character’s identity develops over

the course of the story as a reaction to her deep family ties, the violence inflicted on them, and a thirst for violence (1).

Saraswathi's brothers have disappeared during the civil war, and her ambition to become a school teacher is shattered due to a tragic incident that turns her ordered life topsy-turvy. Her dreams for her future are stamped when a group of Sinhala soldiers arrest and brutally rape her. She is victimized twice, once due to ethnicity and once due to her gender. Along with the trauma of rape, she has to bear with the rejection of her own community. She is considered to be spoiled and therefore is no longer marriageable and even her younger sister is considered to be tainted and deemed ineligible to marriage. Thus vengeance becomes a resorting reason for terrorism and she eventually joins in the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam). Despite her pleas to stay at home, Saraswathi's mother urges her to join the LTTE, "What will you do here? What man will take what the soldiers have spoiled? Who will give their son for your sister? If you don't go, you will ruin us all....You must go. Show people that you are a good girl. If you don't go, no one will believe that you were taken by force (152). The transformation of Saraswathi is shocking and heartbreaking but it is inevitable.

As a Tiger cadre, Saraswathi is trained to kill people callously and use the cyanide pill as a means to escape jeopardy. She is haunted by the brutal memory of her rape and eventually chooses to take the mission of a suicide bomber and destroy the lives of her others. She believes that by becoming a suicide bomber she will be elevated to the position of heroes and will be liberated from the taint of rape. She decides to sacrifice her life for her community. She says that:

They will remember me. All of them. My portrait, miles high will hang everywhere extolling my bravery, the new cadres will come to stand in front of it, inhale the scent of my jasmine garland, be inspired by my fearlessness, my dedication. Amma and Appa will be proud. Luxshmi will be the sister of a martyr. I cannot give them more than this. (203)

The novel ends with the death of the LTTE leader Prabhakaran which is considered to be the end of the civil war. The narration ends with the words of Mahinda Rajapakse, "I don't want to dig into the past. I don't want to open up this world" (223). Munaweera depicts the experiences of the different communities that reside on and even away from the war afflicted island, Sri Lanka. Samanth Subramanian says that, "For months and months after the end of the war, the north-eastern shoulder of Sri Lanka, the territory that had been shredded and pitted by the final months of the fighting, was off limits to civilians"(308).

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Identifying the Role of Women in The Applicant by Sylvia Plath

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Abstract

The debate about feminism and the role of women in the family and in society keep exerting its own momentum down the generation. Though feminism has been argued and encouraged with the changing phases of time under gradual process, the answer for the question if women have actually attained status on par with men actually seems to be a bitter “no”. This paper focusing on a poem “The Applicant” by Sylvia Plath striking portrays the institution of marriage and the parameters required to weigh women as “commodities and as profitable products”

In “The Applicant,” Plath holds her scathing views about the male oriented female society and thus presenting a disoriented female society where nothing seems to be of the choice of women. However, what she criticizes she attributes to society. The poem opens, “First, are you our sort of person,” (1). The use of “our” indicates that the speaker is not one person, and the lines that follow suggest that the speaker is, in fact, society at large.

The poem takes up an interview scenario where an applicant is interviewed to get married. The theme of the poem primarily is about the role of women addressed directly and the fuming criticism of the patriarchal society underlying evidence. Because she is obviously not pleased with the traditional roles of women she is criticizing them. She is describing the roles of women in a satirical way, in the poem the speaker would appear to be stating what they believed to be factual, but Plath does so in such a way that it is sarcastic. The poem starts so stating,

First, are you our sort of a person?
Do you wear
A glass eye, false teeth or a crutch,
A brace or a hook (1-4)

where an applicant eagerly waits for his future woman, but that does not seem an easy process for him. He is expected to possess certain qualities only to meet out the requirements to gain a woman in marriage. One could hardly skip the framework in which women are placed to accomplish goals, according to the whims of the society they are placed in. The interviewer questions the applicant following which he is consoled and convinced by the fact that he is given the hand of a woman in marriage (where the woman is treated as nothing more than a commodity). The woman is addressed as “it”.

Stop crying.

Open your hand.

Empty? Empty. Here is a hand

To fill it and willing

To bring teacups and roll away headaches

And do whatever you tell it.

Will you marry it?

It is guaranteed. (8-15)

This other hand, belonging to a woman, a bride, will “do whatever you tell it” (13), and, as the speaker says, willingly so. This line, and the following stanza, seems to be mocking the expectations of women in marriage. The speaker says that the hand, representing the future wife of the Applicant, “is guaranteed / to thumb shut your eyes at the end / and dissolve of sorrow” (15 – 17) which represents the expectation that a woman attend her husband until his death. This final stanza, when the speaker says, “You have a hole / it’s a poultice / you have an eye, it’s an image” (37 – 38), emphasizes the idea that a woman’s purpose is to serve her husband. However, these expectations are not ones that the Applicant, the groom, seems to be aware of. While the Applicant is marketed a bride, he is also introduced to different ideas about the role the bride will play. Plath is calling attention to the fact that men are merely products of our culture.

But in twenty-five years she'll be silver,

In fifty, gold.

A living doll, everywhere you look.

It can sew, it can cook,

It can talk, talk , talk. (30-35)

This poem is about the objectifying of women; Plath uses this theme of commercialism to compare women to the products. In essence Plath is critiquing a number of things such as the poor status of women and the ridiculousness of our over materialistic society. In the second to last stanza the speaker describes women as a “living doll that can sew, cook, and talk.” The purpose of this poem would appear to be to show the reader the author’s opinion on the status of women.

Another important aspect to be analyzed here is the freedom of choice available to the man to choose the woman or rather an object in terms of this poem. “My boy, it’s your last resort. Will you marry it, marry it, marry it.” (39-40). She is left with no available option rather than to go by the way life comes and takes her up for a predestined role. This is not only about losing one’s own identity, but also of acquiring the identity that is being imposed on her without any room for hope or change.

On interpretative note, there can be a lot of thrust given to it in terms of the status of woman. Though one could trace the various supporting phases of feminism to record the growth

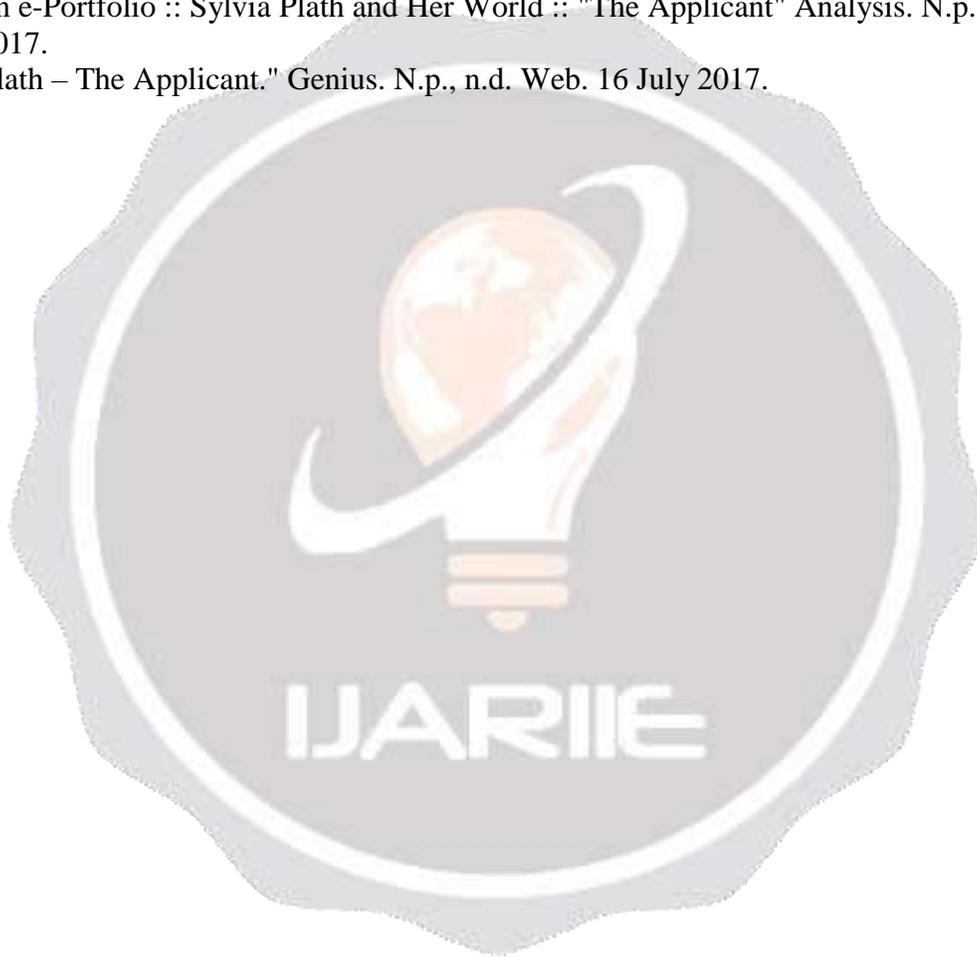
of women down the years, it is also undeniably true that there are places in the world where woman are still objectified with no hope or space for an upliftment. Arguments project a paradigm shift in the thoughts of people who value women in the present scenario. On the other hand claiming a complete, satisfying victory is yet to be achieved. When one holds a responsible position to identify the potential of women, one should also understand that this must also happen in the primary belts of the society.

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Quest for Women's Empowerment with The Special Reference To Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces Of Night*

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Abstract

Githa Hariharan's novels are so special because she deals with the aspects, though it is familiar and dealt with by other authors too, in a different way. It touches us so deeply. Githa Hariharan's novels should be taken into consideration when comparing with other novelists. It is so because she was born in Coimbatore and she knows very well about the traditional and cultural background of Tamilnadu. She is closely associated with the people of Tamilnadu. When we read the works of Githa Hariharan, we feel that we are reading our own story. Unlike the other female characters, the characters of Githa Hariharan never fear to question men no matter whether it is father, husband or son. They openly fight for the rights when it is denied for them. The present paper talks about a girl's search for her own identity and her courage to ask about her own existence.

Keywords: *Githa Hariharan, The Thousand Faces of Night, Gandhi.*

'[An] exquisitely woven tale.... tackles huge issues of femininity and identity in a layered, haunting way... Hariharan's language is poetic and teasing, but always measured, drawing us in and never providing answers so we shift and yearn with Devi as she realizes how many different faces and roles she has inherited.... a narrative that constantly challenges expectations about what it is to be a good wife, mother, woman....an important and truly international book.' Many feminists, including Githa Hariharan implicitly follows Gandhi in their fight against female injustice. Men think that marriage is an instrument through which they can reduce their burden. When Baba turned twenty-one, his mother called him aside and said, "....A man needs a wife to help him with the business of living..." (Page 61).

There are men who view women as machines; a machine to do errands to their family; a machine which bears child. According to Gandhi, woman was neither man's plaything nor his competitor, struggling like him. He felt what she needed most was education, the recognition of her birthright to be free and equal to steer her own destiny side by side with man. Some men think that women are physically weak. But Gandhi argues,

To call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then, indeed, is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior. Has she not greater intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage? Without her man could not be. If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman. Who can make a more effective appeal to the heart than woman? (*The Ceaseless Crusader*, pg no: 66).

Woman feels that marriage will ensure her some protection, love, compassion, happiness, empathy, mutual understanding and a protective atmosphere given by her husband. But what happens is unexpected. She feels disappointed, dejected and loneliness. "I can't help admiring his restraint, his detachment which views marriage as a necessity, a milestone like other. It is a gamble, he says (Page 49)."

According to Githa, 'womanhood' especially 'Indian womanhood' is represented as a perfect mix of tradition and modernity.' The grandmother in the story tells how a traditional woman should be. She says that one day her husband sat in the prayer room where he could not find the things he needed. The flowers had not been picked, the floor unclean. He called his daughter-in-law, Devi's mother. She didn't respond. He entered into her room and yelled, "Put that veena away. Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law" (30). Then she reached for the strings of her precious veena and pulled them out of the wooden base. They became apart with a discordant twang of protest. Then she never touched the veena. She became a dutiful daughter-in-law, the neighbors praised.

But in the beginning, Githa Hariharan portrays Devi in a different way. Githa, through Devi's behaviors in the last day in America, shows how a modern woman wants herself to be. Devi's plan to watch a movie along with her friend Dan and her intention to smoke and drink, her happiness to swim in the sea, all of which she had never done before, show how a modern woman is. She wants to enjoy by doing the things which usually a man does. She wants to break the gap between a man and a woman.

The female body can be made docile, submissive, erotic, usable and productive. *The Thousand Faces of Night* represents a variety of female characters, mythological (ideal) and real with varied wishes and frustrations, desires and agony searching for self-identity or self liberation. Githa's female characters revolt against considering marriage and motherhood as ultimate goals of an ideal woman. Economically women might not be equal to men, socially they are deprived of power and culturally they are not given similar treatment. This is what happens in the novel. Devi, the protagonist of the novel, a young educated girl with "the American experiences" struggles to cope with her husband Mahesh, who is often away for his business. At this time she feels loneliness and feels alienated in her own house. Like other woman, she searches for an identity and tries to free herself from the bondage of marriage which is an usual thing for these kind of women and try to free herself from the work assigned to her. The stories from her grandmother that have been narrated during her childhood inspired her and so she tries to replicate them with her own life. The stories which she heard during every summer from the mouth of her grandma are a type of inspiration for her future. Devi rightly puts it in these words:

My grandmother's stories were no ordinary bedtime stories. She chose each for a particular occasion, a story in reply to each of my childhood questions. She had an answer for every question.... A comparison had to be made, an illustration discovered, and a moral drawn out.... Her stories fashioned moulds. Ideal moulds, impossibly ambitious, that challenged the puny listener to stretch her frame and fit into the vast spaces, live up to her illustrious ancestors (27).

Devi undergoes an identity crisis even after following the norms set by the society. She constantly faces the dilemma of tradition versus modernity, dilemma of cultures western versus eastern, dilemma of mind (knowledge) versus heart (true knowledge) and dilemma of being a 'good girl' versus 'bad girl', The crisis 'to be or not to be a good girl' haunts her and the agony of identity crisis attains the desired intensity through the use of myths. The "good" girl in her wins. She leaves her past life in U.S and comes to India to marry. A victim of her own

imagination of herself as a “Devi”, she is trapped easily into a traditional marriage, forgetting her past.

The denouement of the novel and especially in Devi arises when she gets married with Mahesh. He takes her for granted. She is not able to adjust with the situation in his husband’s house. She feels sad, dissatisfied and loneliness. Then she says,

...this then is marriage, the end of ends, two or three brief encounters a month when bodies stutter together in lazy, inarticulate lust. Two weeks a month the shadowy stranger who casually strips me of my name, snaps his fingers and demands a smiling handmaiden. And the rest? It is waiting..... My education has left me unprepared for the vast, yawning middle chapters of my womanhood (page 54).

Suddenly she asks her husband, “Why did you marry me?” He answers, “Whatever people get married for (Page 54).” The only companion in her husband house is her father-in-law. It is he who brings out again her “good” girl. He shows her the path of becoming a virtuous wife. But the contradiction in her character arises again when she hears the stories of her house-keeper, Mayamma. She feels frustrated with the repression of women surrounding her. The “bad” girl in her arises again.

Woman has been considered a machine which carries babies. In the prelude, the reader can find the very intention of Githa Hariharan about how a woman is viewed just as a machine that carries babies. Woman is only to bear the baby but not the world. Woman can bear the pregnancy pain but not the pain of her family.

‘When I lost my first baby, conceived after ten years of longing and fear, I screamed, for the only time in my life, Why?’

The oily pock-marked village doctor, his hands still dripping with my blood, looked shifty. A woman must learn to bear some pain, he mumbled. What can I do about the sins of your previous birth?

But my mother-in-law was far more sure of herself. She slapped my cheeks hard, first this then the other. Her fists pummeled my breasts and my still swollen stomach till they had to pull her off my cowering, bleeding body. She shouted, in a rage mixed with fear, “Do you need any more proof that this is not a woman? The barren witch has killed my grandson, and she lies there asking us why!”

Gandhi puts this in right words. According to Gandhi,

Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in all debates, deliberations and activities and offer her suggestions along with men for bringing about a better social order and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him (*The Ceaseless Crusader* 67).

Githa tries to break this idea. Through this, she upholds feminism. Devi’s decision not to have children is a feminist. When she asks Mahesh why he wants children, he answers because everyone has them. Devi does not want to produce children because everyone is doing so. Here she tries to overcome the pressure of the society or expectations of feminist by her independent decision. Here Githa’s perspective matches with Shulmith Firestone who believed the women’s capacity for reproduction was the source of her oppression. This distinction allowed her to examine reproduction as the driving force in history. Women should seize control over the means of reproduction in order to eliminate sex class discrimination. This can be achieved through wider access to contraception, sterilization and abortion.

Her decision of not having children, by not trying continuously to conceive, symbolizes her search for self. Inspired by her mother-in-law who left her husband's family to lead a new life, Devi also leaves her husband's house. She begins to find her identity. Now only she realizes that in her past years, she tried to project herself as a "good" or "ideal" woman who herself acted as so. She did so only because to fulfill others' expectation and to satisfy others by suppressing her own self. She decides to fulfill her own expectations not for others. She decides to live for her but not for others. She is under her own control but not others. She questions herself;

Am I neurotic because I am a lazy woman who does not polish her floors every day? An aimless fool because I swallowed my hard-earned education, bitter and indigestible, when he tied the *thali* round my neck? A teasing bitch because I refuse him my body when his hands reaches out; and dream instead, in the spare room, of bodies tearing away their shadows and melting, like liquid wax burnt by moonlight? (Page 74)

At first she does not go to her mother's home because she is told, "A woman without a husband has no home" (Page 38). Devi finds an alternative with Gopal. She escapes from "unconcerned" husband and goes to "concerned" husband Gopal. She becomes a muse for Gopal and stays with him for some time but till she feels trapped. She again leaves Gopal finally to return to her mother or her roots to rediscover her own identity. So she tries to live her own life, free from all hurdles. While entering into the home, she hesitates to go inside. But soon she walks fast after hearing her mother plays veena.

But to conclude, escaping from her husband and his family is not the only way to show women's empowerment. There are other means to show her feminism. A woman should think of her children and their future. The thing which makes the westerns to admire us is our family system. They wonder how a husband and a wife live for quite long decades. So woman should not try to break the tradition by moving out. Alternative has to be found. But "what is the alternative?"

But Gandhi has an answer for this.

My suggestion is that women can play a very important role in establishing peace. Instead of being carried away by science and its marvel they should follow the path of non-violence because women by nature are endowed with the quality of forgiveness. Women will never succeed in aping men in everything, nor can they develop the gift nature has bestowed on them by doing so. They should neither allow their family members to have, nor should they themselves have any connection with anything relating to war. God has endowed women with hearts overflowing with love. They should utilise the gift properly. That power is all the more effective because it is mute. I hold that God has sent women as messengers of the gospel of non-violence. (*The Ceaseless Crusader* 67).

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Naye zamaney ki birhan by KishwarNaheed

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Abstract

Women studies is a field of hypothetically, diplomatically, and empirically affianced cultural analysis that focuses upon the political subtleties of modern culture, its ancient nitty-gritties, defining traits, and conflicts. I have chosen a poetess Kishwar Naheed and have explored the presentation focusing upon her views and contradictions in the changing trends of the society, with particular reference to one of her masterpiece 'I am not that woman'. My paper aims to explore the changing trends in Cultural Studies and also will discuss that is the change momentary or everlasting, whether actually received by the society. Does the society permit the change practically or only studies are being made for the namesake.

Kishwar Naheed, Sitara-e-Imtiaz is an Urdu poet from Pakistan known for her pioneering feminist poetry. She is an outstanding shaira of Pakistan. She holds an M.A. degree in Economics from Punjab University, Lahore. She is a prolific writer and 12 volumes of her poetry were published from Pakistan and India. She has also written eight books for children and has won the prestigious UNESCO award for children's literature. Her Urdu poetry has also been published in foreign countries. Her love for children is as much as her concern for women. Born in 1940 in a Syed family of Bulandshahr, India, Kishwar was a witness to the violence associated with partition, and herself moved with her family to Pakistan in 1949. Kishwar had to fight to receive an education at a time when women did not go to school; she studied at home and obtained a high school diploma through correspondence courses, but went on to receive a masters degree in Economics from Punjab University, Lahore. Kishwar was married to Poet Yousuf Kamran, raised two sons with him as a working woman, and then continued to support her family after his death in the Eighties. She expresses this concern in her poem, 'AsinBurian We Loko,' which is a touching focus on the plight of women in the present male-dominated society. Kishwar Nahid's *sher-o-shayari* includes her popular works like, Lab-e-Goya, BenaamMusafat, Nazmen, Galian, Dhoop, Darvaze, etc. KishwarNaheed held administrative roles in various national institutions. She was Director General of Pakistan National Council of the Arts before her retirement. She also edited a prestigious literary magazine Mahenaw and founded an organisation Hawwa (Eve) whose goal is to help women without an independent income, become financially independent through cottage industries and selling handicrafts.

She has numerous awards to her credit, to name a few, Adamjee Prize of Literature on Lab-e-goya (1969), UNESCO Prize for Children's Literature on Dais Ki Kahanian, Best Translation award of Columbia University, Mandela Prize (1997), Sitara-e-Imtiaz (2000) and many more. The paper aims to explore through this one leaf from Naheed that identity of Men and woman are surviving because of cultural rootedness. The moment it gets uprooted, all the sense essence and ethos of life will vanish, and all of us will be no less than barbarians.

I am not that woman

I am not that woman
 Selling you socks and shoes!
 Remember me, I am the one you hid
 In your walls of stone, while you roamed
 Free as the breeze, not knowing
 That my voice cannot be smothered by stones,

I am the one you crushed
 With the weight of custom and tradition
 Not knowing
 That light cannot be hidden in darkness.
 Remember me,
 I am the one in whose lap
 You picked flowers
 And planted thorns and embers
 Not knowing
 That chains cannot smother my fragrance
 I am the woman
 Whom you bought and sold
 In the name of my own chastity
 Not knowing
 That I can walk on water
 When I am drowning.
 I am the one you married off
 To get rid of a burden
 Not knowing
 That a nation of captive minds
 Cannot be free.
 I am the commodity you traded in,
 My chastity, my motherhood, my loyalty.
 Now it is time for me to flower free.
 The woman on that poster, half-naked, selling socks and shoes-
 No, no, I am not that woman!

This poem exemplifies the stereotyping of women in a patriarchal society. As she is limited to the domestic domain and household chores, she iterates that her reputation is not limited to selling socks and shoes, for she too possesses an intellect. The speaker asserts that she possesses an individuality that the man tries to conceal. In 'I Am Not That Woman', the poet has been oppressed in her culture of the Asian society. She has been oppressed by the traditional values of the Eastern culture but especially by her father and husband. She is also trying to overcome this suppression but is not really sure where she wants to go next with her life. She continues to end with feelings of hope mixed confrontation. The gesture to her poetry in a strategy of healing I resist that their powerful narratives compel us to reassess the restrictions of contemporary feminist historiography and dissertations of nationalism in South Asia. She leans to light on how she, as feminist,

has used poetry to revise delicately the complex relationships between women and men, and gender and nationalism in Pakistan. KishwarNaheed challenges the capacity of society, God, and Islam to restrict her movement. In an interview, “she reflected on her life as a woman coming into her own; her shotgun wedding at the tender age of twenty to her fellow classmate and poet Yusuf Kamran; her family’s disapproval of the relationship and of the consequences of giving up the relationship.”

J. S. Mill, in *The Subjection of Women* says that, “It arose simply from the fact that from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman owing to the value attached to her by men, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength was found in the state of bondage to some man.”

Many of the sentiments expressed in her poems, like the one cited above, have come out of a direct engagement with the seclusion (pardah) imposed on her as a result of married life within a conservative family in Pakistan. The lines, “even after you have tied the chains of domesticity/ shame and modesty around my feet/ even then this fear would not leave you/ for though I cannot walk/ I can still think” raise the issue of an embodied resistance from within—both conceptually and literally for women like Naheed who are committed to life within Pakistani society, resistance cannot be measured with the yardstick of liberal feminism, but must be understood as complicating any simplistic reading of how Muslim women negotiate and mediate such constructions of center and periphery, insider and outsider, writer and activist.

Poetry facilitates intimate self-expression, as it allows an author to explore sensitive issues of identity, kinship, marriage, and sexuality (to name just a few) under the protective blankets of metaphor, symbolism, and literary convention. I noticed the gulf between the perceptions of some of Kishwar's contemporary male writers and my own humble understanding of her personality.

She has given some cherished rhymes to Urdu literature, both in metered poems as well as in the genus of free verse. In prose and poetry, she sightsaw some melodies connected to women that were not impressed by poets, such as corporal ferocity meted out to women, subjugation under the appearance of defending women and female circumcision. Her life's work has indeed firmly connected her as a frank archetypal of women in literature.

The fact is that anyone who knows KishwarNaheed loves her for her great sense of humour, her unconquerable essence, her nerve, her resolution to carry on in spite of seemingly impossible footraces of linguistic, the God-forsaken syntax and discomfotingly mandatory attachment of ideas for making understandable style, her advocating of the right causes, her enthusiasm for life and her liveliness. She is a poet because she has always had poetry in her heart. She writes prose because she has something to say.

She is not only an icon, she is the darling of contemporary Urdu literature in the whole South Asian subcontinent. Long Live KishwarNaheed! She really needed no special issue of any literary journal to enhance her credentials. The proof of this sweet is in its matchless, pleasantflavour.

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Phenomenal Women of the Era

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Abstract

A society without women is unimaginable, and their role in the society is an important factor for the development and upliftment of the society as well as to mark an individual identity as a human being with capabilities and skill. Literature plays a prominent role in reflecting the realities of the society. Right from the evolution of the universe women are portrayed as meek and submissive to masculine characters. Literature mirrors the development of mankind, and provides a various perspectives of thoughts and especially in emphasising the development of women and their evolution in all walks of life. Our literary history emphasises on notable and significant personalities who have excelled in life by overcoming many hurdles and obstacles. To face the actuality, to overcome hurdles women should be instilled with inner strength, unfathomable confidence and faith to mark her identity. This aim of the study is to lay emphasis on and investigate the works of Maya Angelo and Oprah winery that proved to be phenomenal.

“You may encounter many defeats,
but you must not be defeated.
In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats,
so you can know who you are,
what you can rise from,
how you can still come out of it”(www.brainyquote.com)

The works of Maya angelou’s is a reflection of probing deep into the psyche of the struggles, hurdle and hindrance in life which paved way for triumph and achievement. Her works concentrate on the inner turmoil of humanity which kindles self confidence and a source of inspiration and motivation.

Maya Angelou a prominent writer, who won the Pulitzer Prize, is widely known for her inspirational works that created a positive impact for the African American people. Apart from a poet, she is also an essayist and actress. Angelou works focuses on race, society and gender issues. She is still considered as a role model by women across the globe

Maya Angelou’s poem expresses the views of women; especially she focuses on the positive aspect of life, which offers glimpses of reality. She is an exemplary figure in literature who marked her success through her efforts. Added to her laurels she was honoured with a Pulitzer Prize for her books of poetry *Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water*. Some of her autobiographies are *Gather Together in My Name* (1974), *The Heart of Woman* (1981), *A Song Flung Up to Heaven* (2002), *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (2004) and *Me & Me & Mom* (2013).

“We have to confront ourselves. Do we like what we see in the mirror? And, according to our light, according to our understanding, according to our courage, we will have to say yea or nay - and rise!”(www.brainy quote.com)

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.

I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size
 But when I start to tell them,
 They think I'm telling lies.
 I say,
 It's in the reach of my arms,
 The span of my lips.
 I'm a woman
 Phenomenally.
 Phenomenal woman,
 That's me (1-13)

Phenomenal women is a manifestation of the inner strength of women, 'phenomenal women' which was published in the year 1978 is an extract from her collection of verse 'and still I rise' this poem expresses the confidence of women and reveals the real beauty which a women must possess .it also highlights her own identity and her accomplishments.

It also highlights the inner strength of women apart from giving substance to colour and race, emphasises on the wisdom and conviction the outstanding virtues which is celebrated in her poem.

Like Maya Angelo who is a drawn as a source of inspiration, Oprah Winfrey is also celebrated across the globe, "The challenge of life, I have found, is to build a resume that doesn't simply tell a story about what you want to be, but it's a story about who you want to be." (www.brainyquote.com)

Oprah winery is another living example where her life highlights the trials and tribulations which she had to overcome a difficult path to reach the pinnacle. Oprah is known for her talk shows and she is also well known for philanthropic activities. Added to her profile she is considered as the first black American multi-billionaire. Apart from her media background she is also an author, even though her childhood days was not a remarkable period, because right from her birth, she was brought in poverty, she was the victim of child abuse and molestation. Oprah Later on, started her career in media in Nashville. Her first talk show people are talking fetched her great fame and popularity. Then later on hosted a television show in Chicago which lead all over the country fame. She also launched her Oprah Winfrey show in 1986 which ran for two and half decades. Women empowerment is not an easy task, to shine in this male chauvinistic society, women has to fight for her identity and responsibility. Thus our history and literature mirrors trials and tribulations of prominent personalities and their perseverance to overcome the fate, so in reality to human race they prove to be a great source of inspiration and admiration.

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Portrayal of Women in Girish Karnad's *The Fire and The Rain*

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Abstract

In The Fire and the Rain, Karnad explores modern woman's desires through the torture of the youthful woman, Visakha. Visakha openly denies Paravasu's orders and wants Aravasu not to follow him. The character of Visakha not only poses the conditions of elite women in ancient India who were fettered by the man-made laws of society, worshipped, abused and exploited but also provides an example of certain shades of her personality which are attributed to the feminist movement in the present times. Girish Karnad poses his women protagonists in such way that appears to challenge patriarchal tradition. He revises tradition folk tales and myths in order to create heroines enmeshed in the crossroads of tradition. While Karnad's presentation of the woman is romantic the solutions offered in his plays for the woman's dilemma is realistic with patriarchal overtones. This study finds that Girish Karnad represents the new face of womanhood. He projects his women characters as voice of wisdom which the male counterparts fail to understand it. The death due to jealousy, rivalry and violence could have been averted if the male characters had listened to female wisdom.

Keywords: Patriarchal tradition, elite women, feminist movement.

Girish Karnad in his *The Fire and the Rain* focuses on traditional Indian woman characters and describes their tragic life in male-dominated society. Though sometimes women try to break tradition but they are forced to follow orthodox patriarchal principles. Women are not given equal right in family and society. Karnad presents two main women characters, Vishakha and Nittilai in the Fire and the Rain. Though these women characters Karnad focused on the problems of traditional Indian women. Even in the modern age problems of women remain same though they have been given equal rights according to Indian constitution. Girish Karnad is playwright of Post-independence times so he is aware of social changes in modern times. So he focuses on woman's desire for completeness, how she strives to achieve her equal rights and her self-identity in family and society.

Karnad projects his women characters as voice of wisdom which the male counterparts fail to understand it. The death due to jealousy, rivalry and violence could have been averted if the male characters had listened to female wisdom. Vishakha in *The Fire and the Rain*, is the protagonist who projects her wisdom but male counterpart fails to understand. Similarly, Nittilai is only partially successful in dissuading Arvasu from the act of vengeance. Nittilai does not hesitate to express her wisdom and she is able to stop Arvasu initially from joining the violent paternal game. But once the mask takes over, Arvasu is unable to control his desire for vengeance, which finally takes its charge in Nittilai's life.

Nittilai in *The Fire and the Rain* due to traditional system, marries the man her elders choose for her. But when she learns the problems of her past lover, Arvasu, she comes running away from her husband, family and everything only to help him. She also says:-

Nittiali : I don't mean we have to live together-like lovers or husband and wife, I have been vicious enough to my husband. I don't want to disgrace him further.

Here Nittilai proves to be an Indian woman as she feels that in no circumstances she should spoil the reputation of her husband. But her husband and her brother do not understand the truth and out of suspicion kill her. It is very the ethos of Indian society which cannot accept a woman being in love with two men at one and the same time. In this respect, the play exposes male oppression of women and the great injustice done to them by men and patriarchal culture. Girish Karnad's women characters are portrayed as prisoners who are unable to escape from their miserable existence. Karnad's mark of genius is quite evident from his portrayal of real characters in real situation.

Girish Karnad represents the new face of womanhood. This is perhaps due to the changes in the perception of women brought about by the new awakening in women, the reform movements and the influence of realism and economic independence of the women in the modern age. Karnad's women openly protest against being treated as an object of exchange between men. Women characters of Girish Karand challenge the authority of her husband and questions and the religious tenets that prop up patriarchal power. In this respect Nittilai in *The Fire and the Rain*, not only does she free herself from a forced marriage shackles but boldly expresses her commitment to her first love, Arvasu. In her, it seems that the image of the free independent and self-respecting modern woman. However, it is observed that Vishakha appeals to her husband to grant her the rights and respect due to her as a woman and wife. Though she does not fight patriarchal domination in the true sense but merely marks a beginning in the long process of reform in the existing social system in the Indian context.

However, in *The Fire and the Rain*, Karnad explores modern woman's desire though the torture of the youthful woman, Visakha, Visakha openly denies Paravasu's orders and wants Aravasu not to follow him. The character of Visakha not only poses of the conditions of elite women in ancient India who were fettered by the man made laws of society, worshipped, abused and exploited but also provides an example of certain shades of her personality which are attributed to the feminist movement in the present times. Girish Karnad poses his women protagonists in such way that appears to challenge patriarchal tradition. He revises traditional folk tales and myths in order to create heroines enmeshed in the crossroads of tradition. While Karnad's presentation of the woman is romantic, the solutions offered in his plays for the woman's dilemma is realistic, with patriarchal overtones. The woman character seems destined to hover between the man- made rules.

The lives of Vishakha and Nittilai are organized around issues that favour male domination. Their oppression and tragic end is inscribed by the power struggle among the male characters of the upper caste as well as their domination in the marginalized community and in proportion to their lack freedom to control their destinies.

The identity of the two female characters is also problematic and illustrative of the anonymity they suffer as individuals. Vishakha belongs to an upper-caste Brahmin family and is dominated by learned men. Her social position does not privilege her in any way that is different from that of Nittilai, a tribal girl from a family of hunters. Though they represent two contesting representational social systems, both are subjected equally to violent displacement and silencing.

Thus both Vishakha and Nittilai, though belonging to a homogenized group as women, represent different backgrounds, one familial and another social, that determine their reactions and responses to life. The patriarchal system denies them both a subject-constitution that the male characters so easily claim as their historical, cultural and hegemonic privilege. They are thus pushed within the confines of object-formation, one cannot help anything that the male oppressors are all imprisoned in their selves, victims of their own narrow pursuits in life and the women become inevitable victims of power struggle.

Through the women characters in *The Fire and the Rain*, Girish Karnad gives importance to rich Indian tradition values simultaneously shows faults of it like woman as a victim of the patriarchal order, women are secondary to men in the patriarchal culture and the caste based difference and conflicts related to inter-caste marriage. Women characters like Vishakha, Nittilai are victims of the male-dominated society. The marriage between Nittilai and a boy who belongs to her tribe also the marriage between Parvasu and Vishakha is settled by the parents without considering bride's consent. Even women are used as instruments to avenge, for completion of lust. It is one of the characteristics of Girish Karnad that he focuses on modernity, shrewd nature of modern man and how male-dominated society is responsible to exploit the women by using rich ancient myths. He uses myths to show that how patriarchal system begins from very ancient times and it is present in modern times.

Karnad through his woman character Vishakha shows the problems related with Indian woman from ancient age to modern age. In Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain*, Yasakri uses Parvasu's wife to take revenge by seducing her. It is the tragedy of women from ancient to modern times as she is believed as only tool to fulfill emotional physical desires and is used as only tool to avenge some lost pride and reputation of the family. In brief both women in Karnad's present play are presented as bold, experimenting, opposing age-old customs and acting as per their own conscience.

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Women and Nature in Mary E. Wilkins Freeman's *A New England Nun*

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Abstract

Nature is a unifying force. There is a close connection between nature and human beings. They should work together to influence each other so that they can enrich and intergrate. Nature and women are intertwined and they cannot be separated. They are closely related to nature. They are constantly shaped and stimulated by the environment. Lousia Ellis is the protagonist of the story A New England Nun. Nature acts as a catalyst to convey her feelings. It is a prominent factor and it plays a vital role to set the mood and tone of the story. Nature captures the essence of the story's character. It is beautifully portrayed in the short story. The need of the hour is to maintain a close relationship with nature.

Man has a harmonious relationship with his universe. Nature is an entity invested with visible beauty and meaning. That is reflected in various forms such as poetry, fiction, drama and short stories. Nature is very powerful. Nature and culture are mutually transformable and sustainable. Literature has a unique distinction of being representational, mythical and visionary. Literature can go beyond what really happens and has a definite visionary tendency. If we trace the history of human beings, it is clear that there had been tremendous environmental impacts on societies. Agriculture, industry and mining affect our environment. Development process in these areas bound to have its own impact on the environment.

Nature and environment have always fostered literature. Creative writers and artist get their inspiration from the creation in Nature in which they see around, come across and are shaped by it. Nature never did forsake the heart that loved her. Man's dreams, greediness and his ambition and aspiration mars him and his and estranges him with Nature. As a result there is animosity between himself and Nature. It is a powerful weapon. It is a source from which springs all the activities of human beings.

England comprises of many islands, rolling hills and beautiful plains. New England is a geographical region comprising six states of the northeastern United States. They are as follows Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. It is bordered by the state of New York to the west and south and by the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec to the northeast and north, respectively. The Atlantic Ocean is to the east and southeast, and Long Island is to the south. Boston is the capital of Massachusetts. It is New England's largest city. Nature gives everything for our survival. If Nature is not there existence is not possible:

There was a difference in the look of the tree shadows out in the yard. Somewhere in the distance cows were lowing and a little bell was tinkling now and then a farm wagon tilted by, and the dust flew, some blue shirted laborers with shovels over their shoulders plodded past; little swarms of flies were dancing up and down before the people's faces in the soft air. (NEN 01)

Outside was the fervid sunnier afternoon; the air was filled with the sounds of the busy harvest of men and birds and bees; there were halloos, metallic clattering, sweet calls and long hummings. (NEN 17)

The role of women is very important in every society. They play significant role as daughter, sister, mother, daughter-in-law, mother –in-law and grand daughter. In some society women are considered as goddess. They play an important role in everyone’s life. They are more responsible. The women in each house and in each society are blooming flowers of the world. C. Joy Bell comments on woman as, “The strength of a woman is not measured by the impact that all her hardships in life have had on her; but the strength of a woman is measured by the extent of her refusal to allow those hardships to dictate her and who she becomes.”

Earth is a beautiful place to live in. The term flora in Latin means goddess of the flower. Earth is the source for all living beings and inanimate objects. According to Roman mythology, fauna or faunas is the name of the goddess of fertility. There is another source for faunas which means forest spirits.

Colours play a vital role in our life. Colours change our thought and action. It triggers our emotions and inspires us. It represents different meanings to different individuals and different cultures. It connects us with nature. Green represents freshness, harmony and nature. Green is relaxing and balancing. Blue brings happiness, peace, relaxation and comfort. Yellow colour is about energy and intellect. Red is about confidence. Pink is about romance, love and friendship. Lavender is represents beauty and femininity. White is associated with light, goodness innocence purity and virginity.

Somewhere in the distance cows were lowing. Lousia tied a green apron round her waist and got out a flat straw hat with green ribbon. Then she went into the garden with a little blue crckerybowl, to pick some currants for her tea. (NEN 01)

After the currants were picked she sat on the back door-step and stemmed them, collecting the stems carefully in her apron and afterwards throwing them into the hen-coop. (NEN 02)

There is always a tension between poets and short story writers who prefer to write about the natural or rural world. Many write about both urban and rural spaces in one way or another. It is very difficult to pin down these tensions as merely aesthetic or stylistic. This is applicable to short stories too.

“Caesar! Caesar!” There was a little rush and the clank of chain and a large yellow and white dog appeared at the door of his tiny hut, which was half hidden among the tall grasses and flowers. (NEN 02)

The twilight had deepened; the chorus of the frogs floated in at the open window wonderfully loud and shrill and once in a while a long sharp drone from a tree-toad pierced it. (NEN 03)

The landscape is imbued with spiritual and metaphysical properties. Man is the centre of everything which includes landscape. As a result landscape is more symbolic and at times it expresses the emotion of Lousia Ellis. Through this short story one can enjoy the rural scene and the world beyond through pastoral language. As people dig deeper into technology and spend less time in nature, there comes an important element called alienation between self and the world which increases wide gap.

A little yellow canary that had been asleep in his green cage at the south window woke up and fluttered wildly, beating his little yellow wings against the wires. (NEN 03)

Never had Caesar since his early youth watched at a woodchuck's hole; never had he known the delights of a stray bone at a neighbour's kitchen door. (NEN 10)

The greatest literature is the one which is universal and yet all great literature is local in the sense that it is based on a certain culture and all great culture is conditioned on the environmental values of the place where the writer belongs. The geographical position and the natural distinctiveness of a country is a fact which is fundamental to be ignored. It helps in assessing and appreciating its art, its culture and the psyche of the people.

There was a full moon that night. About nine O' clock Lousia strolled down the road a little way. There were harvest-fields on either hand, bordered by low stone walls. Luxuriant clumps of bushes grew beside the wall, and treed... wild cherry and old apple trees at intervals. Presently Lousia sat down on the wall and looked about her with mildly sorrowful reflectiveness. Tall shrubs of blueberry and meadow-sweet, all woven together and tangled with blackberry vines and horseberries, shut her in on either side. She had a little clear space between them. Opposite her, on the other side of the road, was a spreading tree; the moon shone between its boughs, and the leaves twinkled like silver. The road was bespread with a beautiful shifting dapple of silver and shadow; the air was full of a mysterious sweetness. "I wonder if it's wild grapes?" (NEN 13)

Nature is very important for our physical and spiritual development. The countryside with its hill, mountain, valley, river paves the way for the relationship between human beings and cosmic forces. Nature and human world is interconnected. Human culture is inextricably connected to nature. The environment should not be marred by human inventions and interventions. We should live according to the rhythms and patterns of nature.

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