



S H A N L A X
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGLISH
editorsij@shanlaxjournals.in | www.shanlaxjournals.in

Vol. 7

Special Issue 1

June, 2019

Impact Factor: 4.110

ISSN: 2320 – 2645

FEMINISM AND POST COLONIALISM

Special Issue Editors

Dr. M.P. Ganesan
Dr. C.S. Jeyaraman

PREFACE

Feminism and Post Colonialism, hold a remarkable position in English literature today. Feminism focuses on the rebellion and protest of women through the written medium, against the dominating and chauvinistic men. The book attempts to discuss how the women are exploited as weak and second sex and this attitude came to the colonies only from the colonizers. The scholars have discussed how the women are violated at various levels, in the literary works of various writers in a feminist perspective.

Post colonialism is a recent branch of study in the emerging new literature after 1950s. It analyses the notions and perspectives of the western countries, about the non-western and newly independent nations in the world. In the book, the scholars try to explore how people reject the supremacy of European culture and also it insists on the rights of women. The scholars have also attempted to picturise the plight of the cornered and the working class commonalty. The postcolonial study in the book proclaims, that all the human beings in the world are equal.

The book also attempts to analyse and find the unseen interconnection between feminism and post colonialism because treatment of women as the weaker sex and second sex is inherited from the colonies who ruled the colonial nations around the world. We hope that the book will provide critical views on feminism and post colonialism through the research papers of various authors. It provides a deep insight into the concept of feminism and post colonialism for the better understanding of the readers.

The book is not the outcome of a single man's research rather, a collection of people and their research articles on the concerned topic given. Of course, we have many people to thank. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Lord Almighty for his precious blessings on us, to edit the book successfully. My humble and heartfelt thanks goes to our god father and well wisher **Dr.G.Dominic Savio**, Professor, the former Head of English Department, and former Dean of The American College for his constant support, encouragement and motivation. Our sincere thanks goes to **Thiru. Mr.S.Lakshmanan**, the managing director of Shanlax International Journal and his team, for bringing out the book in time.

Dr. M.P. Ganesan
Dr. C.S. Jeyaraman

BOOK EDITORS

Dr.M.P.Ganesan, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sourashtra College, Madurai. He received the honorary D.Litt from the International Economics University for SAARC countries. He has eleven years of teaching experience. He has given lectures in various reputed institutions. He has presented articles in National, International Conference and Seminars. He has also published the articles in National, International and UGC approved Journals. He has published a book for NSS Volunteers titled National Service Scheme : An Overview He conducted State Level Seminar on “Roles and Responsibilities of NSS volunteers in the Society” and he was the convener of that seminar. He held the position of Placement Officer, Youth Red Cross Officer and NSS Programme Officer in Sourashtra College. He produced fifteen M.Phil scholars and he is the Guide and Supervisor of Madurai Kamaraj University. He is specialized in Indian Writing in English, Canadian Literature, and Communicative Skills and he is a motivational and inspirational Speaker in Tamil and English.

Dr.C.S.Jeyaraman, Assistant Professor in the Department of English, Devanga Arts College, Aruppukottai, Virudhunagar District, Tamilnadu State. He served the College as the Head of the Department of English (UG & PG), Dean of Arts, Deputy Controller of Examinations, Controller of Examinations, Vice-Principal, and also coordinator of Certificate Course in Communicative English (COP), Coordinator of Youth Red Cross, Coordinator of Blood Donor’s Club, Coordinator of Vivekananda Studies Centre and active member of Gandhian Study Centre, attached to the College which is sponsored by UGC. He is also the advisory committee member of the College Research Journal “Devanga Arts College Manas”. He has specialized in Indian Writing in English, Gandhian Thoughts, Positive Thinking, Personality Development, Value Education, and Communicative English. He has delivered talks in many reputed institutions and Government Schools. He was also the resource person and chair person in various Colleges. He has published book on Harmony. His contribution to the field of literature comprises a number of papers and articles presented in various seminars both at National and International levels with ISBN/ISSN. He got the approval and completed one minor research project on “Child as a Fulcrum of Family Narration in Select Novels of R.K. Narayan” which was sponsored by UGC-SERO, Hyderabad.

Contents

S. No.	Title	Page No.
1	Post Colonial Perspectives in Badal Sircar's <i>Indian History Made Easy</i> B. Charanya & Dr. A. Selvam	01
2	Breaking the Shackles of Tradition; A Study of Manju Kapur's <i>Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman and Home</i> Mrs. A. Visva Sangeetha & Dr. G. Dominic Savio	05
3	The Concept of Feminism to Liberation in Atwood's <i>The Edible Woman</i> B. Marimuthu	09
4	Marital Relationship and the woman's thirst for freedom in <i>The Day in Shadow</i> by Nayantara Sahgal Ms. M. Backialakshmi	14
5	An Exploration of Motherhood in the Fiction of Anita Desai Dr. A. Ajmal Khan	17
6	Reading of Draupadi as 'The Celestial Astra, the Feminist Weapon Invoked with Special Chants' in Chitra Banerjee's <i>The Palace of Illusion</i> Dr. Mrs. G. Beulah	22
7	Postcolonial Perspective in Salman Rushdie's <i>Shalimar the Clown</i> Dr. M.P. Ganesan & N. Moorthy	26
8	A Study of Female Identity Development in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's <i>The Mistress of Spices</i> Dr. S.M. Nandini	30
9	The Image of New Woman in Select Novels of Shobaa De Dr. A. Selvam & S. Thanigaivelan	34
10	Restricted Woman in Girish Karnad's <i>Naga-Mandala</i> J. Priya & Dr. K. Anuradha	37
11	Post Colonial Issues and Women in Asif Currimbhoy's Plays V. Karthiyayenee & Dr. C. Chitra	40

12	Female Space in the Select Works of Shashi Deshpande <i>N. Subhathara & L. Muthulakshmi</i>	43
13	A Study of East-West Colonialism in Jhabvala's A New Dominion <i>Dr. M.P. Ganesan & Mrs. R. Chitra</i>	46
14	The Feminine Sensibilities in Kamala Markandaya's Select Novels <i>R. Jayachandran</i>	50
15	A Feminist Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's <i>The Mistress of Spices</i> <i>V. Devarajan</i>	56
16	A Study of Postcolonial Society in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's <i>Heat and Dust</i> <i>Dr. C.S. Jeyaraman</i>	60
17	Memory as a process of Woman in the novel of Atwood's <i>Alias Grace</i> <i>P. Murali Arasan</i>	64

Post Colonial Perspectives in Badal Sircar's Indian History Made Easy

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Charanya, B and A. Selvam. "Post Colonial Perspectives in Badal Sircar's Indian History Made Easy." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1–4.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3268973>

B.Charanya, M.A., B.Ed., M.Phil., SET., (Ph.D)

Ph.D. Part Time Scholar in English

Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Dr.A.Selvam

Former Head & Associate Professor

NMSS Vellaichamy Nadar College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu

Abstract

Badal Sircar is the most Prolific playwright of the post-Independence period. He has written and published many street plays in Bengali. His plays portay the very minute aspects and themes of post colonialism. He discloses the pathetic condition of the contemporary society in his plays. He founded the new form of theater called the "Street Theater". Badal Sircar as a playwright has his chief focus and attention on post colonialism. He discusses about its impacts on our country through his plays that are written in fragments without any connection. Badal Sircar has focused on the colonial rule of the British in India in Indian History Made Easy. British came in to India during the Mughal period in the name of business. The British got permission to do business in India. Gradually, the British got a strong hold of our country by controlling the economic and political systems of India. They imposed their traditional, cultural, political and economic values on the colonised in India during the colonial period which had created a negative impact in the lives of the Indians even in the post colonial era.

Keywords: British Colonial rule, Hegemony, Colonisers, Colonised, Ruling Class, Subordinate Class.

The British rule is considered to be the worst rule because of the damages it caused to all the political, financial, social and psychological systems in India whereas the other rulers like Mughals, Aryans were beneficial and not harmful to the country. Since the Mughals gave permission to the British to conduct business in the seventeenth century, Sircar calls it the dark period of Bharat's history in the play. The Mughal emperor Jahangir is entirely responsible for the British colonial rule in India. Kulsoom Fatima states in her "Postcolonial Content in the Plays of Badal Sircar": "Through this play Sircar has successfully delineated the nature of exploitation and trickeries played by colonial oppressors on Indian natives during colonial period" (213). Sircar also wants to praise the positive side of the Mughal rule in India. Because the Indian villages flourished well and the people in the villages live a self sufficient life each. The revenue tax paid by the farmers, potters and weavers were so reasonable and were directly paid to the king.

As India is a country of rich natural resources, the British made a very good use of it. They paid Silver worth 30,000 Sterling pounds to the India for doing business every year. "Took clothes-cotton, silk, muslin, and benarasi. . . . Took iron, brass material. . . . Took what not!" (8). In return they gave ". . . silver worth 30,000 sterling pound-s to India every year" (IHME 10).

After the battle of Plassey in 1757, during the Governor Generalship of Robert Clive, the Nawab of the smaller kingdoms of India had become the puppet in the hands of the East India Company. After it, the British found it easy to buy any good at the cheapest rate in Indian market and at the same time the company sells their goods at an extremely high rate. In *Indian History Made Easy*, the Governor General informs Mother Britannia, "There's no need to worry now. Silver's needed no more. Got dewani of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. The Nawab's puppet in our hands. What we'll buy-we'll buy for a penny. But sell at a price that's four times" (11). Moreover they levied and inflicted heavy taxes on the Indians

30 September 1765. Respected Directors. It is expected that your company will be able to extract revenue worth two and half crore of sicca rupees this year on account of the dewani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Later it will increase by twenty to thirty lakh in a year. . . . Therefore there is a net profit of one crore twenty-two lakh of sicca rupees or sixteen lakh fifty thousand nine hundred sterling pound-s. Your, Robert Clive. (12)

Due to the unbearable taxes imposed on the weavers, potter etc., has a deep impact and effect on them. They could not earn any profit out of their business and so they decided to move to the village and become peasants in the golden rule of Jahangir who concentrated much on the development of the villages and agriculture. But in the village, the Zamindar was made the owner of the land by the East India Company whereas it was owned by the common people in the village earlier.

During the colonial era, in the seventeenth century, one third of the farming land turned into forest because of Zamindari system practiced by the colonizers in the villages. They collected taxes from both the landlords and landless, poverty stricken farmers in an equal manner. During the Governor Generalship of Lord Cornwallis, he introduced a Permanent Settlement policy for the revenue tax which aimed at exploiting the peasants or farmers.

Lord Cornwallis introduced a new revenue system under the permanent settlement of Bengal in 1793 with a view to stabilize land revenue and create a loyal contented class of Zamindars. This abolished periodic auction of Zamindari rights and established permanent Zamindari rights to collect land revenue from the tenants and payment of a fixed amount to Government treasury every year"

Peasants who also own a land of their own turned out to be the tenants due to famine. Zamindars and the rich land lords were given the power to kick the peasants at any time. Peasants are exploited to the core and they are used only as servants or slaves by the Government through the Zamindars. In *Indian History Made Easy*, Sircar conveys that there were thirty one famines in 125 years from 1776 to 1900 in India. Due to famine, about thirty million Indian died. During the third period of British colonization, "Industrial capital was changed to Financial capital" (31) pg 144 and it is made evident by Sircar in the play.

The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 rebelled against the British rule in the disguise of East India Company and it ended the rule of it. The Sepoy Mutiny was a violent and very bloody uprising against British rule in India in 1857. So the Sepoy Mutiny's uprisals were punished by the British colonizers in a very harsh and cruel manner. The Sepoy Mutiny ended the rule of East India Company and India came under the rule of British queen. The Britain's tactics of monopolization of the Indian markets was the one of the major reason of the First World War.

After the First World War some anti liberation movement emerged in India and they started to demand Independence at the time in August 1917 Edwin Samuel Montague was the British liberal

politician. He was a radical liberal and the third practicing Jew to serve in the British cabinet. Montague announced that the aim of British rule in India is to concentrate in “The gradual development of self governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of the responsible government in India as an Integral part of the British Empire”

In the colonial India many Indians were educated according to the ideas imposed by the British government in the field of education. British colonizers called these educated people as their children on the intellectual ground because the methods, facts and the culture involved in the education was completely westernized. Our Indian languages were pushed down and English played a dominant role as an official language from those days till today. The colonizers had also corrupted some rich and fortunate Indians who were “Zamindars, money lenders, brokers, Babus.” The fortunate natives stood by the side of the colonizers in order to cheat and grab unbearable revenue and land taxes, from their fellow people which had pushed the major parts of India to the poverty line.

According to Sircar the Second World War made British become weakened, because of the people’s protest against capitalism and the Quit India Movement or the India August Movement. It was a movement launched on 8th August 1942 during World War II and it demanded an end to the British Raj of India. Though in 1947, India was liberated and become independent out the impact of colonialism left an enduring and undying marks on the Indian Society Culture politics and economy.

Sircar concludes the play with the point that though India has become Independent with wealth, prosperity, happiness and development in the lives of the people, there is discrimination based on race, caste, sex and religion and violence. Sircar feels that in equality, lust for job power, money and reputation are found everywhere in the post colonial India.

Sircar seems to be very much influenced by Karl Marx’s writings while writing Indian History Made Easy. Though Karl Marx is strongly against capitalism, he has never attempted to criticize or attack capitalism in a frank manner. The colonizers used the colonial expansion to develop their capital.

Sircar never failed in reviling capitalism in the needed situations. But after the first war of Indian Independence, Indian came directly into the hands of the British Queen. The Queen stood strongly in favour of capitalism and ordered her sons to increase factories, labourer, products or goods and especially the banks so that they can increase their capital and the manufacture of goods and commodities. The queen directed her sons to go to the far off villages, forests, mountains and deserts to sell the commodities.

The prohibition of socialist revolution which is necessary to bring about structural changes in the society and to bring transition from capitalism to socialism is very much favorable to the elite or the bourgeoisie. Because they find it easy to exploit the lower class and poor people and have easily damaged the Indian social and economic systems immensely.

In the play, Sircar has made it evident, “Millions of efficient Indian artisans are unemployed!”, “The population of Dhaka goes down from two hundred thousand to thirty thousand!” and “The unemployed artisans move to the villages in groups. They have become peasants” (Sircar, IHME 26). Thus, readers can understand that the industrial revolution that took place in modern colonial era has pushed the lower, working class below the status and level of human beings and used them as instruments or tools to overlook the machine work to produce capital. In order to increase their capital, it is essential to create a economic imbalance in the colonized country. The British had done it in a very clever manner in the disguise of free trade and East India Company. They have totally caused destruction to the Indian economic system and had got hold of their business and increased their capital.

Hegemony is an important feature of the post colonial studies and it is made clearly visible in the play *Indian History Made Easy*. Hegemony is,

. . . initially a term referring to the dominance of one state within a confederation, is now generally understood to mean domination by consent. This broader meaning was coined and popularized in the 1930s by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who investigated why the ruling class was so successful in promoting its own interests in society. Fundamentally, hegemony is the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy, and over state apparatuses such as education and the media, by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. . . . Hegemony is important because the capacity to influence the thought of the colonized is by far the most sustained and potent operation of imperial power in colonized regions. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies* 116)

Hegemony is an important post colonial characteristic that gives economic and political power to the elite ruling class to rule and dominate the subordinate class. The ruling class persuades the working class and convinces them by declaring that the heads and concerns of the former should be the interests of all. The elite class exercises the dominance over subordinate class by brilliant persuasion and not by power. Sircar has highlighted "Hegemony" as the theme in *Indian History Made Easy*.

Due to the establishment of big factories the Indian markets were flooded with factory and machine made goods and commodities. The Indian cottage industry products were not able to compete with those goods. Moreover the natives were very much attracted and yielded towards the factory goods and not the hand made goods. Due to these facts, many efficient artisans, weavers gold smiths, blacksmiths were directed to work in fields and do agriculture. When the plight of these unemployed Indian workers was questioned, Mother Britannia replied thus in *Indian History Made Easy*. "They'll work in the fields. India is an agricultural country. This is history. . . . From today onwards. With time, the Indians will believe it too. My sonny will make them believe. My son, my child, my lululululu!" (24). Thus the readers can understand the British's hold over the Indian economy through which they hegemonise the native Indians.

The colonizers extended the hegemony to the next phase of interpellation in which the former made the colonized accept the imperial culture, beliefs and Eurocentric values to be superior and the native culture and tradition to be inferior. Moreover, interpellation is imperial processes in which the imperialists make the colonized accept their marginality and the colonial superiority of the rulers. Hegemony served the British as a good beneficial factor.

The political control of the ex-colonised country in the hands of the colonized and the economic control of the ex-colonised country in the hands of the ex-colonisers is called as neocolonialism. Like hegemony, neocolonialism is also a significant feature of post colonial studies. Neocolonialism is defined by Khume Nkrumah in 1961. According to Nkrumah the Indian Independence is deceitful and ambiguous, because it gives only political possession of the country to the native and not the economic possession of the country. Neo-colonialism is understood to be the modern imperialism.

Work Cited

1. Sircar, Badal. *Two Plays: Indian History Made Easy and Life of Bagala*. Trans. Subhendu Sarkar. New Delhi: OUP, 2010. Print.
2. Fatima, Kulsoom. "Postcolonial Content in the plays of Badal Sircar." *RSIRJLE*. 1.2 (2013): 213. Print.
3. <https://www.gktoday.in/gk/lord-cornwallis/>
4. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montagu%E2%80%93Chelmsford_Reform

Breaking the Shackles of Tradition; A Study of Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman and Home*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Visva Sangeetha, A and G. Dominic Savio. "Breaking the Shackles of Tradition; A Study of Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman and Home*." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 5–8.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3268975>

Mrs.A.Visva Sangeetha

*Ph.D. Research Scholar, Madurai Kamaraj University
Assistant Professor of English
PSNA College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul*

Dr.G.Dominic Savio

*Professor, Research in Department of English
The American College, Madurai*

Absrtact

Manju Kapur's novels attempt the exixtential problems faced by the educated Indian woman with genuiness and insight. They fight between tradition and modernity. They become strong in their sufferings, and they constantly fight back to exist, to free themselves from the shackles of tradition and other prejudices. Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur tells how virmati is torn between her family duties, the desire of education and illicit love. In A Married Woman, the life of Astha as depicted by Manju kapur reveals her earnest quest for equality, for considering her an equal being and a worthy member of the society. Manju kapur's Home also explores Nisha as a new woman appears before us more assertive, self-secured and confident one. By equally footing with man, she proclaims her womanhood in a bold manner. Manju Kapur deals with excess of marital problems that attack the educated working middle class wives of India.

Keywords: Freedom, self-realization, suffering, equality, identity, family, marriage.

Manju Kapur has offered a new protagonist in her novels whom we can call a new woman. In all her novels, she has come with a new woman with more dignity and determination. Her protagonists are very bold that they can give up anything for their own identity and this was a new tendency which emerged in the novels of Manju Kapur.

The women in her novels seem to be the epitome of new women who have been carrying the burden of inhibition since ages and want to break that tradition of silence now. In the traditional social background of her novels, she shows the survival of mothers and daughters. In the same society where marriage is considered as the ultimate goal and destiny from which these women have no way out. Manju Kapur's female protagonists from Virmati to Nina are the representatives of that female folk who yearn to be free from the rotten social customs and traditions but are never allowed. Her

female protagonists are mostly educated. Their education leads them to independent thinking, for which their family and society become intolerant towards them. They fight between tradition and modernity. It is their individual struggle with family and society through which they thrust into a dedicated effort to shape an identity for themselves as qualified women with flawless backgrounds.

Her novels attempt the existential problems faced by the educated Indian woman with genuineness and insight. These novels depict the fight against taboos, social limitations and manmade code of conduct in a traditional society and insight. Her heroines from *Virmati* to *Nina* are the pictogram of female imagination responding to pressures and oppressions of patriarchal culture where marriage is seen only as a compromise. Her novels are a story of struggle for self-determination and search for an existence at various levels. She tries to bring out significant new meanings in the changed paradigm of cultural encounters in which conjugal roles, dual burdens, equal opportunities and social constraints are seen from the existential point of view. The protagonists of her novels try to maintain stability all the time. They become strong in their sufferings amidst the dual standards and they constantly fight back to exist, to free themselves from the shackles of tradition and other prejudices.

In short Manju Kapur has portrayed a mature understanding of the female consciousness and the inner delicacy of a woman's mind. She has been highly bothered by the suffering and meaningless living of the female folk in the patriarchal society, but the stoic woman in her novels constantly tries to set her female protagonists free from the meaningless existence hence we find them constantly struggling against the odds of social and familial system.

Difficult Daughters by Manju Kapur is a fascinating story of a woman torn between contradictory forces of society and her keen desire to break that silence. Though she does her best to break that stillness and to raise arms against social customs and norms but social norms are malicious enough to allow her not to succeed. The story tells how she is torn between her family duties, the desire for education and illicit love. Although *Virmati* succeeds in breaking all manmade limitations, there are certain polarities so deeply implanted within her that she struggles to shake through the chains. She grows up from a native girl to a woman matured by suffering and through experience. Throughout the novel she is found in the pursuit for true love, quest for freedom, search for the realization of the self... the thirst does not stop. She fights and fights to get what she wants, but in the process of struggle to express herself, she loses an important part of herself and realizes triviality of things.

The term *Difficult Daughter* refers to *Virmati*, who is the daughter of prosperous merchant family of Lala Diwan Chand. In the generation of *Kasturi*, it was branded that woman's role was to child-bearing and kitchen work, but in the generation of *Virmati*, she took bold and radical steps in joining the political movement for India's freedom, insisted the importance of women education and independence. As we have quoted elsewhere, "as a nonchalant representative of the middle generation, *Virmati* breaks away from the tradition-bound limits of Indian women. We see a woman, who fights, but falters and fails"(56). *Virmati*'s character is the destiny of a typical Indian woman. We cannot devalue *Virmati*'s struggle just because she failed, but through her courageous attempt, she breaks the patriarchal mould in the forties.

Kapur's obsession with the female revolt against age old customs, traditions, one sided family values and the institution of marriage is followed through her second novel *A Married Woman*. It is the story of love set against the backdrop of the consequences of the demolition of the *Babri Masjid*. *Astha* the protagonist is a typical middle class woman brought up in Delhi. She agrees to an arranged marriage and initially exults in passionate sexuality with the bounds of marriage. Though she appears to be quite happy being a teacher and a mother of two kids, there is always a stream of bitterness against being treated as one of the inferior sex. Hemant, her

husband, shares the burden of looking after their first born and is quite broad-minded in his views. Gradually the outer sheen wears off and Hemant proves to be an autocratic husband. Astha objects and pleads, "Surely, equals could relate better than master and slave". (A Married Woman : 76) she again and again feels her nowhere existence. Her voice of protest and rebellion ultimately results in broadening of silences and the two gradually drift apart. Towards the end we see the silently suffering woman ultimately becomes strong enough to go with Pipeelika on a tour of the country to create an awakening and awareness.

The life of Astha as depicted by Manju Kapur reveals her earnest quest for equality, for considering her an equal being and a worthy member of the society. When she learns that the books had been donated to a library, she quarrelled with Hemant and shouted at her mother.

She feels crushed as she was not consulted before taking any minor and major decisions. One more instance is when Astha's mother sells her plot and gives the balance to Hemant to manage. It is again found that this type of behaviour treating women as weak and inferior aggravates her. It is not that Astha wants to take the position of a man. She accepts her duties at home besides she wants to be a partner in sharing all the accomplishments and managements. This aspiration makes her a new woman who wants to break the tradition of silence among women.

Manju Kapur through the medium of the character of Astha seeks for a space in the life of the women folk. She also demands the position which is equal to man in a society. Astha represents the woman who asks for a bit more of life than tradition. Astha is, thus a new woman who instead of security, comfort and respectability wants her emotions and spiritual needs to be recognized.

Manju Kapur's *Home* also explores the complex environment of the Indian family and reveals many issues that are deep rooted within the family viz. Revolt against the old traditions, struggle for survival, quest for identity and of course woman's never ending struggle to survive and to break the silence against her own suppression. Nisha, the protagonist of the novel, in the due course of her struggles for identity and survival refuses to reconcile with the patriarchal and male governed society. Nisha as a new woman appears before us more assertive, self – secured, and confident one. By equally footing with man, she proclaims her womanhood in a bold manner.

Nisha, the protagonist, does not accept the traditions as they are, She wants a separate room for herself in home and society. She, as an educated and strong-willed new woman, decides to refuse to be treated as an object instead she tried to establish her own identity. She does not want to wrap her entire life into home; like her brothers she wants to work in shop. She requests her father Yashpal; If only you could take with you, Papaji," She pleaded in a rush, "I have seen girls working in shops. Why should it be only Ajay, Vijay and Raju? There must be something I too can do." (*Home*:2006:268).

This behaviour of Nisha reveals her inner quest for independent survival. It also seeks for equality of sex. This does not stop here even at the time of her marriage, she places condition to her groom that she should have the freedom to run her business even after their marriage. As a business woman, Nisha worked for last two years. It brings to her sense of achievement in life helping her to create her own uniqueness, her own voice, and her own place in the society and in home.

It is necessary to note that she belongs to a middle class family in the metropolitan area and she is born and brought up in India, Where social and cultural scenario is different from that of western countries. Her quest for self identity, struggle for economic independent existence, and her equality with men depend upon Indian social ethos. Manju Kapur, through the character of Nisha, expresses her passionate desire to provide complete liberation to her female characters in Indian socio-cultural scenario. As she herself studied for a few years in the early 1970's, she maintains the character of Nisha to create awareness of women's liberation and equality along with men.

She, through her novels, takes a deep and satisfying look at the sense of displacement often felt by women in the traditional institution of marriage. Manju Kapur deals with the excess of marital problems that attack the educated working middle class wives of India. The displacement that they suffer and their suffocation in the traditional limits of marriage, family and society as a whole is clearly brought out by the novelist in her novels.

The novels of Manju Kapur show that the women of India have achieved success after sixty years of independence, yet there is still a lot to be done. She has to pull herself out of her existential stupor and bring out her essential self by breaking the age old silence of suffering. She should raise her voice against the mental torture that she has undergone down the ages by creating a separate identity and space for herself.

Works Cited

1. Ghosh, Arpita. "Women's Vulnerability to violence as portrayed in the novels of Manju Kapur." *Literary Insight* 4.(Jan 2013): p. 129-Print.
2. Gunjan. "Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman and Home of Manju Kapur: A saga of New Indian Women." *Emergence of New Woman Indian Writing in English*. Ed. Qamar Talat. New Delhi: Adhyayan Publishers & Distributors, 2012. pp. 91-116. Print.
3. Savio, G. Dominic and A.Visva Sangeetha, "Braving Barriers of Culture in Manju Kapur's Difficult Daughters: A Study in Indian Culture" in *The Atlantic Literary Review*.15.3(July-September2014). pp. 49-59.Print.
4. Sharma, Ram. "Quest for Feminine Identity in Manju Kapur's Novel Home." *Post Colonial Indian English Literature*. Jaipur: Aavishkar Publishers & Distributors, 2012, p. 66. Print.
5. Velmani, N. "Woman's Abnormal Relationship as an Antidote for Masculine Superiority: A study of Manju Kapur's Novels." *The Atlantic Criterion* 45.4(2010): p. 17.Print.

The Concept of Feminism to Liberation in Atwood's the Edible Woman

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Marimuthu, B. "The Concept of Feminism to Liberation in Atwood's The Edible Woman." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 9–13.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3268979>

B.Marimuthu

*Assistant Professor of English
Devanga Arts College (Autonomous), Aruppukottai*

Abstract

*Margaret Atwood, the Canadian feminist writer is concerned with the issues and the problems of the Canadian women. By addressing the concerns of the Canadian women folk, she represents the socio-cultural, economic and political back-drop of the Canadian women. Feminism is the condition in which an individual gets an opportunity to act according to his or her own will. This feminism to liberty is restricted to women in a male dominated society. It is believed that a woman is subordinate to man. Atwood portrays her protagonists as women thriving to achieve freedom and emancipation. Atwood, with a wide Canadian cultural canvas, depicts the essentials of woman's sense of individuality in her novels. She has to initially overcome the physiological hurdle as being a woman, and then establishes herself as an individual. Atwood depicts Marian in *The Edible Woman* as a liberated woman releasing herself from the clutches of marriage. In this novel Marian, protagonist liberates herself from the women related problems and begin to subscribe to a style of living where she is ample space for individual's desires and ultimately, for absolute freedom. However, one should remember that the protagonist willingly position herself within the framework of her east and west society.*

Keywords: feminist, liberty, liberation, liberated, bondage, postcolonial, etc.,

Margaret Atwood, the Canadian feminist writer is concerned with the issues and the problems of the Canadian women. By addressing the concerns of the Canadian women folk, she represents the socio-cultural, economic and political back-drop of the Canadian women. Atwood, as Commonwealth writer focuses her attention on postcolonial issues related to women and thereby attempt to bring out the struggles of the suppressed and marginalized women in Canada. Her unique combination of latent energy and personal history equips her to join the ongoing political discourse in order to interpret this cultural moment to a growing audience. Her texts question social, political, and literary ideas, beliefs, and conventions as they delight, inform, intrigue, and sometimes, irritate the readers. Her first novel, *The Edible Woman* (1969) is about a woman who cannot eat and feels that she is being eaten.

Feminism is the condition in which an individual gets an opportunity to act according to his or her own will. This feminism to liberty is restricted to women in a male dominated society. It is believed that a woman is subordinate to man. She revolts against the

existing social order and tries to create a new order of life. At times, she subverts the codes of the conventional society in order to withdraw from a state of restraints and compulsions. In the existing social structure a woman faces discriminations for being a girl, a wife, a mother and also a woman, and these drive her to choose a free path of her own choice, a path of revolt and resistance. This attitude of resistance is a recurring theme in most women's writings. Much of women's writing can be seen not as an attempt to define an isolated individual ego but as a venture to discover a collective concept of subjectivity which foregrounds the motif of identity in relationship.

Atwood portrays her protagonists as women thriving to achieve freedom and emancipation. Atwood, with a wide Canadian cultural canvas, depicts the essentials of woman's sense of individuality in her novels. In a conservative society a woman is taught to be shy, gentle and dignified as a person, pure and faithful as a wife, and selfless, loving and thoughtful as a mother. The male-dominated society has imposed certain traditional norms on women, thus restricting them from going beyond stereotyped roles. These roles prevent them to think individually and act independently. Whenever they attempt to cross the barriers they face many hurdles both physically and psychologically. Many of them resist the conventional social order and choose to lead a life of their own, thereby becoming indifferent to their society. Gender-discrimination, in any society, is a stumbling block to a woman who wants to be successful. She has to initially overcome the physiological hurdle as being a woman, and then establishes herself as an individual. Atwood depicts Marian in *The Edible Woman* as a liberated woman releasing herself from the clutches of marriage.

Marian suffers to a very great extent while they try to resist or deviate from the existing social environment. Atwood makes her heroines experience the taste of freedom while they concretize her desire for individuality and freedom. In the Canadian soil, enforcement of individualism in one's life is perhaps possible. Marian, a young woman, rebels against her forthcoming marriage. She finds her fiancé Peter as too ordinary for he finds the role of wife as simply conventional. Brought up amidst Canadian moralistic values, Marian believes in liberal social values. She shares her room with Ainsley who contradicts her in all familial issues. Both go to the house of Clara, Marian's colleague. Clara's husband Joe helps her in bringing up the children. Clara is pregnant for the third time. Ainsley, who is against the concept of marriage, finds fault with Clara. But Marian thinks that Joe and Clara are placed in an ideal situation for rearing children. But, for Ainsley the father-image of Joe and the mother-image of Clara are confusing. She says, "The thing that ruins families these days is the husbands. Have you noticed she isn't even breast – feeding the baby?" (40). On seeing Clara's children, Marian develops a liking towards making a home of her own with Peter her lover, whereas Ainsley who does not believe in marriage wants to beget a baby outside the premises of marriage.

By projecting these two polarized characters Atwood highlights the feminist dimension of liberty and individuality. In this novel, *The Edible Woman* Marian, at the beginning, likes to get married to Peter, a conventional young lawyer. Later, she decides to run away from the system of marriage. Her quest for normalcy makes her violate all conventions. Marian considers herself a victim while Peter and Ainsley pursue their prey. By refusing to marry, she liberates herself from social expectations and also from incompatible marriage. Marian accepts Duncan probably for the reason that he will allow her to continue to remain herself. In exercising her desire to remain an individual she unfolds a new path in her life. Her individuality makes her remain single and destroy the cultural links between the external world and her inner self. Ainsley has no faith in marriage. She declares, "I'm not going to get married. That's what's wrong with most children, they have too many parents" (40). But she believes in giving birth to children. She wants every woman to have at least one child. Marian, on hearing this, gets shocked and tries to prevent her from going for an

illegitimate child. These two basically opposed women characters operate differently in the process of resisting conventions. Marian resists the existing system. She thinks she has every right to live with a man of her choice. But she likes to be free from bondage, as she does not want to be a victim in the system of marriage. On the other hand, Ainsley who dislikes marriage intends to give birth to a son. But after giving birth to a son she goes in search of a father and chooses Fischer as her husband. While Marian advises her not to do so in the interest of her child, Ainsley responds that if she does not show a father to her son, he would become a homosexual.

Marian represents Seymour Surveys, a market research company that is collecting details to improve the quality of beer. This profession gives her ample opportunities to meet different types of men. It is here that she meets Fischer, Duncan and Trevor who live in one room. She is very much impressed by Duncan's behaviour. All her questions are answered by Duncan philosophically; to Duncan's one question as to why she chooses this job Marian quietly answers that she has to survive and that she holds only a B.A degree. Clara, wife and mother of two children, says that she was attracted towards Joe only for his ordinariness that has raised him to perfection. On the other hand, Marian and Peter give importance only to face values: We had been taking each other at our face values, which meant we had got on very well. Of course I had to adjust to his moods, but that's true of any man, and his were too obvious to cause much difficulty. (61) Peter wants Marian to cook, but she deliberately avoids cooking for the reason that her cooking would be a threat to him. She even curbs her wit while commenting on Peter. She checks her height to see whether it suits Peter's. Though she wants to contradict some of his views, she checks herself as she does not want to spoil her marriage with him. She changes herself in such a way that she becomes a suitable companion to Peter.

Marian thinks that Peter feels jealous whenever she talks to some one. But when Peter talks to Len and other friends along with Ainsley, Marian expects him to pay heed to her. When Peter ignores her she starts crying and runs into the Ladies Powder Room to hide her tears. She admits that she wants Peter to run after her: "I must have been expecting Peter to chase me..." (72). Len, a television man, and also a friend to Marian, becomes Peter's good friend. Marian and Peter quarrel over their right to be the first friend to Len. Marian feels happy when Peter is in search of her. She also realizes that Peter and she herself deliberately avoid talking about their future because they know that there is no such thing. At this juncture, Ainsley warns Marian that Peter is monopolizing her. Gradually, Marian musters her strength to ascertain her self. She says, "I would have to decide what I wanted to do" (77). After the incident in the Powder Room and her flight from the party Marian reveals her state of evasiveness. She develops a mental conflict about establishing a career and maintaining her love affair with Peter. Marian turns out to be a typical twentieth century woman facing the contradicting and divisive tendencies of the society. Her profession requires her to manipulate words as she has to read the minds of people and render them into words. As Marian does not have a home or mother she automatically takes her room-mate and colleagues as her role models. In this way, Ainsley strikes Marian as one with a different life style. At Marian's office, her friends who are her elders encourage her to get married. She knows that Ainsley and Clara give importance to child-bearing. She finds in Clara an ant queen and an egg producer. She is aware that Ainsley likes to give birth to a child without getting married. Marian is totally confused.

Throughout the novel, Atwood discusses the problem of procreation that makes society look down upon women. Marian describes the office structure as an ice – cream sandwich with the male executives at the top, the mechanical equipment at the bottom, and her department in the middle. In the words of Raren F. Stein, "The culinary description of her office echoes the motif initiated in the book's title. And at the crux of the food imagery lies the heroine's awareness that women in contemporary western society are perceived as consumable commodities. (46) Marian's running

out from the friends' meeting and her hiding under Len's bed imply that she tries to create a sense of awareness in Peter about herself and Len. Her actions and quarrels with Peter make him ask, "How do you think we'd get on as... how do you think we'd be, married?" (83). Ainsley comes to know that Peter and Marian are engaged. Without showing any interest, she tells Marian, "Well, if I were you I'd get married in the states, it'll be so much easier to get a divorce when you need one. I mean, you don't really know him, do you?" (84). Marian ascertains herself and discloses to Ainsley that she is going to marry Peter. But Ainsley is in search of a good breed who can father her child. Marian goes to Clara's house along with Ainsley; there she happens to see Clara's sufferings with two children and a third one in her womb. Since this time Marian takes care of the domestic work with all care and commitment. Simultaneously, Ainsley who closely absorbs every thing slips away from the principle of remaining single and getting into the system of marriage. Marian argues in favour of marriage and the need for adjustment in life. While Clara speaks to Ainsley, she admits that she has lost her identity as an individual due to her marriage. "She had read a French novel and a book about archaeological expeditions in Peru and talked about night school. Lately, she had taken to making bitter remarks about being, 'just a housewife'" (38).

Marian hesitates to get into wedlock as she closely watches the suffering of her friend Clara with her children. At Clara's residence, the discussion about breast-feeding makes Marian think more about marriage and she foresees the dangers in the system of marriage. She intends to free herself from the bondage of contingency and to carve for herself an identity not dependent on marriage or man. Though women's career is understood as a promoter of their identity, Marian's job as a consumer consultant for Seymour Surveys does not help her in any way in elating her identity. While she goes for her survey she meets Duncan and Fisher with whom she develops friendship. To Marian, her work is not satisfying in nature; it seems dead by nature. Even her office women, most of them are elders to her, are eager to listen to Marian about Peter and their marriage.

On the other hand, Atwood's Marian decides to escape from the bondage of marriage before falling into the traps of Peter. Her professional skill as a market researcher helps her to assess Peter and his attitude towards life. To Peter, marriage is a tool to subdue women. As a typical representative of the patriarchal set-up he spells out his idea of marriage: "you can't continue to run around indefinitely; people who are not married get funny in middle age, embittered or addled or something; I've seen enough of them around the office to realize that" (102). But Marian sincerely wants to marry Peter and make a home of her own. She likes to continue her job for a while longer to make money. "We'll probably have to live in an apartment at first, but later we can have a real house, a permanent place; it will be worth the trouble to keep clean" (102).

Marian wants to write a letter to her home about her marriage which may please her parents. Peter never speaks about his parents to Marian. It is on this line of logic he moves out and buys a book on marriage. At the beginning, despite the warnings given by Ainsley, Joe and Clara, she thinks of man and marriage as means to selfhood. Though she is defined and limited by Peter she does not object to his habit of making her whatever he wants her to be. To him, she is "the kind of girl who wouldn't try to take over his life" (61). She also admits, "Of course I had to adjust to his moods, but that's true of any man, and his were too obvious to cause much difficulty" (61).

In Atwood's *The Edible Woman*, after her accidental meeting with Duncan at the Laundromat, Marian observes, "We stood facing each other are absolutely. As though someone had pulled a switch, we dropped our laundry bags... Found myself kissing him" (100). Marian's friendship with Duncan and Fischer at the Laundromat enables her to escape from Peter's conspiracy which was to enslave her in the name of marriage. Duncan, who acts as a shrewd psychologist, is perfectly aware of the impression he makes and uses it to play on Marian's last illusions, illusions that her pride is her own sexual competence and her concept of herself is the 'Nurse bringing the Gift of life'. He

persuades her to bed, with his concocted tale that he is a virgin who needs to be introduced to sex and so to be initiated into life. This makes Marian realize her self and here she decides to escape from Peter. Her involvement with Duncan forces her to refuse to eat, and she takes a successful flight away from Peter and his party. Atwood's Marian realizes that she has been used as an edible item by Peter, whereas Duncan allows her to think freely and act. Peter encroaches into Marian's mind which reveals his attitude of consumerism. In the name of marriage Atwood's Marian is trapped. The institution of marriage mostly treats women as a saleable commodity and sex object, in brief, a consumer product to be used up and thrown out.

To Peter Marian is an edible item. The first time, on a Valentine's Day Marian prepares a cake in the shape of a heart and offers it to Peter. She wants him to take it. Marian identifies her with the heart that is happily tasted by Peter. For the second time, she prepares another cake in the shape of a woman and offers it to Peter. As Peter sees the image of Marian in the cake, he refuses to take it and leaves the place. But when the same cake is offered to Duncan who is able to understand the difference between an 'image' and an 'identity', he accepts it. Marian also eats the cake because it is just a cake.

After leaving Peter, Marian takes Duncan as a confidant and a true friend. She takes his voice and suggestion as an oracle. But Duncan does not take her views seriously. While she decides to meet a psychiatrist for her problems Duncan prevents her from doing so. He gives an evasive answer: "Don't ask me, that's your problem. It does take as though you ought to do something; self-laceration in a vacuum eventually gets rather boring. But it's your own personal cul-de-sac, you invented it, you'll have to think of your own way out" (264). Marian gains her strength to reassemble her lost self. At the beginning when she was ignored by Peter at the party with Len she madly ran on the road. This flight seems ridiculous and stupid to her now. She is ready to face Peter with a clear vision. She invites him to her room where she offers him a cake in the shape of a woman. While offering the cake she says, "You've been trying to destroy me, haven't you... You've been trying to assimilate me. But I've made you a substitute, something you'll like much better. This is what you really wanted all along, isn't it?" (271). Marian, remains single in order to escape from marriage and to retain her 'self' intact. Their problems come to an unresolved stand-still as they have to go back to their family. Their search for identity continues, even as their problems persist.

Atwood's *The Edible Woman* novel takes up for study address the issue of the protagonist desire to get her self free from the clutches of the male oriented social norms. Marian McAlpin, the protagonist releases herself from the bondage of marriage when she comes to know that Peter wants to marry her only to keep her as a good cook. Marian wants to escape from the society that treats woman as an edible item. She hates Peter for his male chauvinistic attitude and promotes her liking towards Duncan, and thus she facilitates her individuality; subsequently she remains single and keeps her self intact. In this novel Marian, protagonist liberates herself from the women related problems and begin to subscribe to a style of living where she is ample space for individual's desires and ultimately, for absolute freedom. However, one should remember that the protagonist willingly position herself within the framework of her east and west society.

References

1. Atwood, Margaret. *The Edible Woman*. London: Virago Press Ltd., 1992.
2. Powe, B.W. "How to Act: An Essay on Margaret Atwood" *A Climate Charged*. London: Mosaic Press, 1985.

Marital Relationship and the Woman's Thirst for Freedom in the Day in Shadow by Nayantara Sahgal

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Backialakshmi, M.
"Marital Relationship
and the Woman's
Thirst for Freedom in
The Day in Shadow
by Nayantara Sahgal."
*Shanlax International
Journal of English*,
vol. 7, no. 1, 2019,
pp. 14–16.

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.5281/
zenodo.3268989](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3268989)

Ms.M.Backialakshmi

Research Scholar, L-45, R.M. Colony, East Govindapuram, Dindigul

Abstract

Nayantara Sahgal is a socio- political novelist. She gives great social awareness of contemporary sensibilities in her novels like movement of social forces, memories of the colonial past and its impact on the people. She explores the collective dreams of the Indian people through her novels as an angry Gandhian of early generation of post-colonial India. The novel, The Day in Shadow, is set in Delhi and close to the seat of power and justice. The novel also revolves around a female Protagonist Simrit who believes ardently in the concept of freedom and is refused to take decision individually. The other characters are the vibrant in the novel. The Day in Shadow gives a sensitive account of the suffering of a woman in Indian society when she opts to dissolve a seventeen year old marriage. A divorced woman is stigmatized forever and she is curiously watched by others.

Keywords : Post colonial, Post Independent, feminism, Patriarchy.

The Day in Shadow is the story of Som and Simrit and it begins at a point where divorce between the husband and the wife has already taken place and the seventeen year old marital bond is already dissolved. Through the technique of flashback and reminiscences, the reader is allowed to have a plunge into the world of Som and Simrit where the factors like understanding, sympathy and compassion are missing. Right from the beginning, Simrit's selection of Som as a husband was not a result of any deep thought. She was simply attracted by the flash, the glitter, colour and enthusiasm which were the hallmarks of Som's personality. Simrit's Brahmin parents as well as her friends disapproved of Som. But Simrit, ignoring the warnings of her parents and friends, decides to marry Som:

Her Brahmin parents with their instinctive withdrawal from anything outside the fold had been frankly upset at her choice of a businessman husband, but her friends had not liked him either. They had thought him a boor. People always disliked and distrusted commercial flash and flair if they did not possess it themselves (The Day in Shadow 9)

Som wants to become a popular and successful man in the society. So he works towards them. Simrit is fascinated by Som's flash. She sees this aspect of Som as capable of filling the void of her "solitary,

book loving childhood” (4). Their marriage could end for seventeen long years because the relationship works smoothly on the surface level. Neither Som nor Simrit try to care the deeper layers of relationship. It is like “a game of its own in which intensity depth and devotion were never brought into play at all” (4). Conflict or final breakage of relationship, lack of partnership and sharing spirit between the husband and wife are enlisted by Nayantara Sahgal in this novel. And sadly enough, these are missing in Som- Simrit relationship.

Simrit is dominated and expected to play a meek role. Simrit who is essentially traditional in nature, never nurture any desire to have an edge over Som. She only wants to ‘be’, to realise herself as a living, feeling human being, tender and energetic with life and action. She likes to take own decisions. But being practical and optimistic in outlook, she never questions Som’s authority in the greater, wider interest of having pleasant relationship with Som. She preferred not to affirm herself, because doing so will mean “a battle - and she had never been prepared to fight” (4). Her optimistic can be seen unity.

Simrit shares her experience about the world with Som kindly. Som expects her to confirm to the ideal of submissive womanhood and considers the discrimination of their relationship as the right order of things. Simrit is denied to have freedom. She does not have rights to take decisions of everyday life, not even in the choice of curtains or chair covers. “Even there Som had a veto. Not even about servants. She had dismissed the cook twice for drunkenness and bad behavior and Som had kept him on” (38). Overall plight, pain and deep discontent culminate her for divorce. Simrit’s desire to ‘be’ is expressed by Nayantara Sahgal thus: “She wondered if she could be like that ever again, look ahead, make decision, actively be, instead of just getting past each day, feeling as if large pieces of her had been cut out with scissors, with an icy wind blowing through the gaps” (16).

Som believes that a woman is to beget the children, look after her children, husband and home. Simrit uses the opportunity tactfully to convey her feelings and beliefs to Som through Vetter. But she feels so turbulent. Moreover, Som has faith in Vetter and his intervention in this matter may have influenced Som. But Simrit is not an opportunist or otherwise a tactful person. She is genuine and pure at heart. She is beyond such pretensions. She is not elegant enough to turn things to her benefit. Moreover, the acute suffering snowed under her mind to such an extent. She cannot think systematically and logically in this way. The result is that both Som and Simrit remain at bay from each other. They have gap between them widened day by day because of the absence of contact between them. Both Simrit and Som are to be blamed for that. Simrit has never opened her heart to pass on Som of the volcano of feelings bump in her mind day by day.

Raj proves to be a very good friend to Simrit. After having considerate and understanding relationship with Raj Simrit marries Raj. The new marriage relationship between Simrit and Raj gives heavy attack to Som. Nayantara Sahgal reacts sharply when an interviewer remarked that Simrit’s break-up with Som turns out to be a joke towards the end when she accepts Raj as her man and thereby losing reader’s sympathy and admiration:

No., I certainly do not agree with this explanation. Perhaps you get baffled when Simrit finds happiness with a man, may be because you are an orthodox male who resents such a development in a woman’s life. I personally do not believe a woman has to be a martyr to prove her goodness (20).

Simrit is a subservient follower of Raj after marriage. Raj gives equal preference to Simrit to take decision in her life. For instance Simrit turns down Raj’s proposal to have dinner in a hotel and “Raj accepted defeat” (14). Later Raj’s proposal to have a coffee at a restaurant is turned down and she suggests instead of restaurant they shall go home and have coffee there. Raj says: “All right, let’s go. With you I face a dead end at every turn, unlike Som who must have ridden roughshod and triumphant, didn’t he?” (157). Apart from these matters of lighter vein, even in

serious issues, Simrit doesn't blindly listen to Raj. She decides to meet Som's company lawyer Moolchand against his [Raj's] wishes. Even Raj recognizes her independent spirit: "Her new life had nothing to do with him or any man... She didn't need a man for identity or status" (139).

Raj had claimed to recover Simrit for his own sake. Simrit fails to understand Raj's biased nature. She blindly pays divine respect to him and feels lively in his company: A smile from him, as N. Shamota says "radiated an atmosphere of suppressed jubilation that lapped around her in waves". (Shamota 106-107)

Sahgal opposes and rejects in tradition Manu's idea of an ideal wife, the idea of a virtuous woman through Simrit, one can see oppression of women in the name of religion, the passivity of Hinduism and social injustice sanctioned by religion. What she values in traditional is compassion, charity, love, preaching of non-violence, values like courage strength, single-minded endeavour, a tendency for non-material etc., She rejects materialism, violence, corruption, etc in modernity. She accepts and appreciates autonomous of individual, freedom, including sexual freedom to women, equal rights for women, the utility and significance of communication and direct approach in the modern concept.

Simrit's life reflects the crisis of contemporary and traditional India society. It affects not only women but also men. Sahgal portrays Not only women are suffering on account of the system of patriarchy even men are affected adversely in this novel. Som is also a sufferer of the patriarchal system. He is a loser. He loses love and family. He fails to see that women are trying to change the existing world order. Here, is place for sincerity, pretence and dual morality.

Work Cited

1. Sahgal, Nayantara. "My New Novel: *The Day in Shadow*," *Point of View: A Personal Response to Life, Literature and Politics*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1997, p. 11. Print.
2. ----- . New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1991; first published in New Delhi by Vikas Publications and Penguin Books India in 1971. Print.
3. Shanmota, N. *On Aristic Freedom*. Moscow: Progress. Print.

An Exploration of Motherhood in the Fiction of Anita Desai

Dr.A.Ajmal Khan

*Associate Professor, PG and Research Department of English
Jamal Mohamed College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Ajmal Khan, A.
“An Exploration of
Motherhood in the
Fiction of Anita Desai.”
*Shanlax International
Journal of English*,
vol. 7, no. 1, 2019,
pp. 17–21.

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.5281/
zenodo.3268995](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3268995)

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the realm of Indian motherhood within the fiction of Anita Desai and Indian Literature in English in general, and present the complicated ideologies and histories that inform its position. Anita Myles states “The novelist (Desai) makes it clear that there is no simple, straight forwards solution to the dilemma of woman. It is the awakening of her consciousness which imparts the required strength to conquer the bastion of male dominance” (60).

Keywords: Feminism, Post colonialism, Motherhood

In his essay “Women Writing About Women: Feminist Perspectives in Indian Women’s Novel in English,” Santosh Gupta describes the history of Indian women’s writing in English, which emerged in the nineteenth century after it was introduced “into the antahpurus of some aristocratic liberal Indians” (73). He goes on to state that in the twentieth century, Indian women writing in English explored a women’s world “that was beginning to be influenced by the emergence of educated self-conscious women....Woman’s relation with the new society generated in the consciousness of the changing milieu which is reflected in the writing of this period,” of which most is characterized as belonging to the literary genre of social realism (80)

1) Social realism is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “The realistic depiction of contemporary (esp. working-class) life as a means of social or political comment,” and this form was used by many Indian novelists during the time of the Independence Movement¹ as a means to dispel inaccurate portrayals of India, especially in terms of its colonial past, and also to raise awareness of significant issues such as communalism, dowry murders, and caste violence in the Western world. Anita Desai does draw on this tradition some, and as Santosh Gupta relates, there is commonality between her novels and the novels of Nayantara Sahgal, both “portray the acute sense of entrapment and suffering of women in the upper and lower middle classes” (85). Literary critic Dhawan says that Anita Desai as a writer outside of this movement, though, stating that she

ushered in a new era of psychological realism in this genre [referring to Indo- Anglian fiction] with her novel Cry, the

Peacock in 1963. Her novels are materially different from those of other eminent Indian women novelists writing in English, such as Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabvala and Nayantara Sahgal who concern themselves mainly with social and political themes of the East-West encounter. Anita Desai's serious concern is with 'the journey within' of her characters, the chief protagonists being female characters. (12)

Although Anita Desai emerged as a writer during a time period when female Indian writers were actively exploring this genre of social realism, her fiction clearly belongs to a different realm, the realm of modernism. Desai's preoccupation with the inner psychic distress of her main characters and their personal struggles to define and assert an individual identity yields itself more easily to a modernist novel construction. Scholar Brajesh Kumar agrees with this assertion and claims that "among these eminent Indian women novelists writing novels in English, Anita Desai is one, who is more interested in the interior landscape of the mind rather than in politics or socio-political realities" (65). Writing in a prescribed format, she would not be able to explore the mythical aspects of Indian femininity while simultaneously exploring entirely individual responses to specific incidents, thereby increasing the complexity of her female characters and reducing the risk of homogenization and essentialist representations.

Desai has often commented that she has been greatly influenced by the works of Virginia Woolf and Russian writers such as Fyodor Dostoevsky, and it is clear after reading her novels that this is unquestionably the case. Her style and investigation of feminine sensibility is reminiscent of that in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, among other works. Asha Kanwar notes the similarities between the two authors in her essay "Anita Desai and Virginia Woolf: A Comparative Study," clearly identifying both authors' preoccupation with the way time, memory, and nostalgia operate over a long time period, changing histories and changing the perceptions of the people involved. Kanwar notes similarities in both novelists' works:

there is a constant shift from past to present to future. The past is defined in terms of human memories and the future in terms of human expectations. There is an underlying strain of longing for the past, of nostalgia....It informs not only the content of their work, but shapes the structure as well. For it posits two different times – the present and a longed-for past, upon which the whole novel can be built....we find almost obsessive involvement with the character's past as a key to their consciousness, their life. A preoccupation with Nostalgia and Memory thus becomes an integral part of their craft. (11, 20)

As is the case in Virginia Woolf's famous work *A Room of One's Own*, female characters in Desai's novels similarly search for an independent identity and place to call their own, a place safe from patriarchal intervention and male domination. Desai's use of narrative voice and her investigation of the psyches of her female characters allow for further insight into her protagonists and also question what constitutes identity and what identity means for different women. Kanwar's delineation of Woolf's goals as a novelist compared with Desai's and says "the exploration of the human personality so as to attain a vision of life's meaning. Her characters live, think and unfold in time and hence her preoccupation underlies her concern with the phenomena of memory, change and death and drives her to ask several different questions" (15).

In Anita Desai's short article "A Secret Connivance" (1990), she states, "If literature, if art has any purpose then it is to show one, bravely and uncompromisingly, the plain face of truth, and here in the West, just as in the East, we must learn to distinguish and recognize, and to value. Once you have told the truth, you have broken free of society, of its prisons. You have entered the realm of freedom" (976).

This point made by Desai in regards to her fiction writing encapsulates her artistic intent in literature: to portray truthfully and realistically complex characters that transcend stereotypes

or simplistic images. Although she declares that she is not interested in social and political commentary, her honest characterizations of both men and women allow numerous insights into authentic Indian experiences and opens space for scholarly criticism and debate. Most critics focus upon her depictions of Indian women, using her multi-dimensional female characters to challenge typical representations of Indian women in literature that commonly either evokes the mythical woman or the eternal oppressed victim. In contrast, her fiction makes a new space in which Indian women might explore selfhood, and she does not place any limits or constraints on how that identity can be discovered. In order to map the daily realities of Indian women, and to investigate the developments of the autonomous female self as depicted in fiction, a critic must look at novels that show the heterogeneity of Indian women's experiences and explore what those experiences foreground. Anita Desai's novels offer a variety of female characters that span the entire spectrum of Indian femininity, and through the various characters she investigates feminine sensibility and the female psyche. Desai has been a writer for over thirty years, and so her novels also span decades, easily illustrating how Indian gendered self-identity has changed and developed over time in response to a variety of native and foreign factors. It is clear through both Desai's fiction and her comments on the subject that she is interested in breaking down stereotypical representations, whether these are of Indian women, Indian mothers, or India in general, and she challenges her readers to do the same. In "A Secret Connivance," for instance, she states that the West

has two fixed notions about India. One is that it is a romantic land, full of holy men, maharajas, palaces and elephants: the other is of India as a land of horrors – a place of intolerable poverty and squalor, hunger and disease. How can one country have two such contradictory images? The reason is that neither is true – each is only a half-truth. You may have been made familiar with the face of the maharaja and the face of the beggar child, but have you learnt anything of the human being within? (976)

This question she asks the readers, and Western readers in particular, is indicative of what she is exploring in her novels, how stereotypical representations inform depictions and perceptions of people and why those stereotypes need to be revealed, explored, and broken down. In order to understand Indian mothers, one needs to note the variety of circumstances and experiences that affect and shape each individual person without resorting to a formulaic illustration imposed onto an entire community, nation, or gender.

Specifically, this paper focuses on Anita Desai's concern with the way mythical and ideological representations of Indian women contort and make the image of motherhood and maternity prescriptive within the context of her novels and, of course, in the larger Indian society. Figures such as Sita and the mother goddess constrain Indian women in two explicit ways, since they imply that every woman should be a mother but at the same time present an ideal which no woman can attain. In "Mapping Motherhood: The Fiction of Anita Desai," literary critic Geetanjali Chanda notes that Desai often "weaves the traditional duality of the mother as creator and destroyer and embeds the text in an Indian reality where actual mothers are often ignored or ill-treated; whereas in folklore, myth and nation building the idea of motherhood is venerated and iconic mothers are worshipped" (75). Critic Radha Chakravarty agrees and adds that "in India, women's self-worth and value are usually dependent on their reproductive functions. This valorization of motherhood has its own built-in paradoxes: maternity is associated with a capacity for voluntary self-sacrifice which entitles the mother to her quasi-divine status" (77).

Although there is much about Desai's fiction that lends itself easily to the exploration of the female psyche and the effects the Indian social order has upon Indian mothers, her exploration is not necessarily a complete picture of Indian women. Desai often focuses on middle – to upper-class women, which is clearly not representative of even half of India's population, a fact one should

keep in mind while reading her work. Some critics have criticized Desai for this elitism, but as she states in “A Secret Connivance,” her purpose is to portray honestly unique characters, and since her background is unmistakably middle – to upper-class, it makes sense that she wishes only to depict the experiences and psychological workings of this specific, familiar class group. Although Anita Desai does portray a limited class, she does not fall into the trap of essentializing Indian women, or mothers in particular, vividly illustrating instead the variety of complexities and intricacies through her female characters and their search for their own authentic sense of Indian motherhood and also their own sense of authentic self.

Another qualifier often made by critics of Anita Desai is that she is writing about India in a novel format explicitly not the social realist novel and, further, in English. If she writes in the style and for the purposes often ascribed to Nayantara Sahgal or Kamala Markandaya in English, they argue, her work would make more sense since the purpose of the social realist novel has often been to raise the consciousness of the Western world and to represent the actual reality of Indian life, but to write in English about the deep, complicated realms of the psyches of Indian upper-class characters appears to cater to a specific readership in India and, in essence, to negate much of Indian life. Although English fluency is greatly on the rise in India, Desai’s novels will be most read by the Indian elite, the educated middle and upper classes. Indian critics also add that on top of the limited readership within India, English itself is too easily associated with India’s colonial past. Literary critic Meena Alexander illustrates this fear of colonialism via language choice declaring, “Language has of course been an immensely controversial issue for Indian writers, the colonial trappings of English, when raised to consciousness, impossible to evade” (368).

Despite this viewpoint, Desai’s association with and eventual choice of English as her medium for expression seems less of a means to make a political statement and merely the consequence of a series of circumstances. These circumstances include a mixed heritage of Bengali and German, and an extensive education conducted in English. Desai has continually contended that English was simply the first language she was taught and thus became the obvious medium through which she expressed her thoughts in writing. Desai remarks in her essay “The Indian Writer’s Problems” that “according to the rules laid down by critics, I ought to be writing half my work in Bengali and the other half in German. As it happens, I have never written a word in either language. Possibly I found English to be a suitable link language, a compromise. But I can state definitely that I did not choose English in a deliberate and conscious act” (7). She further goes on to explain that “By writing novels that have been catalogued by critics as psychological, and that are purely subjective, I have been left free to employ, simply, the language of the interior” (9).

Like Anita Myles, I agree that there is no conclusive way Indian motherhood can be explained or defined, due to its immense complexity. Furthermore, defining Indian motherhood as only an oppressive construct or, in contrast, only an empowering construct, is not helpful for doing nuanced research or for understanding the actual lived reality of Indian mothers. Through the fiction of Anita Desai and specifically the three novels this project focused on, one is able to see how motherhood functions in Indian society and what informs its construction but also how difficult it is to speak of motherhood in generalities. Completing the research necessary to this project also reified the belief that there cannot be an overarching category of women or mother. Even in similar contexts or situations there are different histories, ideologies, mythical constructions and actual lived experiences. In order to understand Indian motherhood and have the ability to both critique its failings and celebrate its successes, one cannot merely ascribe characteristics to all Indian women or even all Indian mothers, and must explore the complex, often contradictory realm of Indian motherhood. This type of research is also necessary to avoid homogenization and essentialism, especially for those outside of the context of Indian society. In conclusion, this paper has operated

as an exploration of Indian motherhood, which sought to dispel essentialist misrepresentations and truly understand the societal role of mother and it has successfully portrayed the both the intricacy and heterogeneity of the ideological construct of Indian motherhood.

Works Cited

1. Desai, Anita. "A Secret Connivance." *The Times Literary Supplement* 14-20 September 1990: 972, 976. Print.
2. Desai, Anita---. *Clear Light of Day*. London: Vintage, 2001. Print.
3. Desai, Anita. *Fasting, Feasting*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000. Print.
4. Desai, Anita. *Fire on the Mountain*. New York: Harper & Row, 1977. Print.
5. Dhawan, R. K---. "The Indian Writer's Problems." *Indian Women Novelists*. Ed. R.K. Dhawan. Vol. 2. New Delhi: Prestige, 1991. (7-10). Print.
6. Dhawan, R.K. "Introduction: Indian Women Novelists." *Indian Women Novelists*. Ed. R.K. Dhawan. Vol. 1. New Delhi: Prestige, 1991. (7-26). Print.
7. Gupta, Santosh. "Women Writing About Women: Feminist Perspective in Indian Women's Novel in English." *Women about Women in Indian Literature in English*. Ed. Ram S. Singh and Charu S. Singh. New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 1998. (73-90). Print.
8. Myles, Anita. *Feminism and the Post-Modern Indian Women Novelist in English*. New Delhi: Sarup & Son, 2006. Print.

Reading of Draupadi as ‘The Celestial Astra, the Feminist Weapon Invoked with Special Chants’ in Chitra Banerjee’s *the Palace of Illusion*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Beulah, G. “Reading of Draupadi as ‘The Celestial Astra, the Feminist Weapon Invoked with Special Chants’ in Chitra Banerjee’s *The Palace of Illusion*.” *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 22–25.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269005>

Dr.Mrs.G.Beulah, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.,

*Sri Meenakshi Government Arts College for Women (A)
Madurai, Tamil Nadu, South India*

Abstract

*Draupadi is the epitome of feminine excellence and the single representative of the entire novel *The Palace of Illusion*. Divakaruni makes Draupadi as the “Celestial astra, the weapons that must be invoked with special chants! They come from the Gods and return to them after being used. The most powerful ones can be used only once in a warrior’s lifetime.” She is used as a “Brahmastra” to destroy the evil things in the entire world. Because cleansing is the essential factor for the overall social change. Here Draupadi also “ascends the pyre” not to die but to live with her husband with the purity of heart, mind and soul. Fire cleanses her physically, emotionally, and mentally to start a fresh life with her husbands. A woman could create the kind of transnationalism in her own country with her binary efforts discarding the power and the western ways of Eurocentric dominance. She is the combination of all five elements so as to live with all the five husbands representing all the five elements. She becomes the atma of all the five husbands who represent the five elements.*

Keywords: Celestial astra, Brahmastra, pyre, transnationalism, chants, atma.

Introduction

The representative of the South-Asian immigrants, the multi-faceted personality Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has been recognized with “The American Book Award” for her short story collection *Arranged Marriage: Stories*. An Indian-American author published *The Palace of Illusion* through the eye of Draupadi from the Indian epic *Mahabharata* highlighting the age old struggle for power between the sons of Pandu and Dhristarashtra where men dominate the entire orbit with female helpers (wives). Despite the core theme of struggle, Divakaruni spreads a red carpet for the feministic excellence in Draupadi as she narrates the entire story from her winning point of view.

According to mythological stories, Draupadi is the incarnation of five women, representing all five elements, a rare combination to be seen in a single woman. Divakaruni shows Draupadi as the epitome of feminine excellence and the single representative of the

entire novel *The Palace of Illusion*. She is the Princess of Mahabharata with an unbending will, not born of woman, but from fire (agni), an enigmatic woman, the daughter of Drupad, the King of Panchaala, and above all the incarnation of Kali, the powerful deity to destroy evil. Draupadi was an unexpected gift to Drupad while he was expecting a son to take revenge on his enemy Drona.

Discussion

The words “diaspora,” “otherness,” “postcolonialism,” and “displacements” are the synonyms and self orientation of a feminine gender. Feminism talks of the establishments, and the social equality given to the women on par with men in the society. It may be a range of political propaganda but it is an ideology to be carried out equality to share a common goal and the equality of sexes. This may lead to establish educational and professional opportunities for women to have equal opportunities like men. Gayathri Spivak’s *Can the Subaltern Speak?* becomes a great challenge to be answered by the so called scholars with their great mastery over the colonial domination.

Spivak points out ‘sati’ which was at practice among the Hindus: “The Hindu widow ascends the pyre of the dead husband and immolates upon it. This is widow sacrifice (33).” Thereby the Europeans stopped that practice so as to show that the Indians are barbarians and the British are civilized by saving the “brown women from brown men” and constructed the identity over Indians. Spivak brings the suicide of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri which was misinterpreted by her family as an outcome of love failure rather than a protest. This subaltern can never speak as she is not alive to defend her case. Divakaruni makes Draupadi as the “Celestial astra, the weapons that must be invoked with special chants! They come from the Gods and return to them after being used. The most powerful ones can be used only once in a warrior’s lifetime (PI 28).” She is used as a “Brahmastra” to destroy the evil things in the entire world. Because cleansing is the essential factor for the overall social change.

Divakaruni strongly created her protagonist powerfully. Though a woman becomes an inferior being to undergo this kind of punishment, she has no chance to win her case. Here Draupadi also “ascends the pyre” not to die but to live with her husband with the purity of heart, mind and soul. Fire cleanses her physically, emotionally, and mentally to start a fresh life with her husbands. Draupadi’s conjugal life exhibits a spiritual contention over her five husbands with a tremendous self control. Honest relationship with faith and love could bring a greater change in the entirety. Draupadi was not given due respect as her brother. The plight of women in India is clearly given through the words of the tutor as he says “women were the root of all world’s troubles” (PI 24). This is the preconceived notion of the entire world of male domination. In the eyes of men, woman who gives birth to a new life becomes the root cause of all troubles in the world. The same tutor repeats “a kshatriya woman’s highest purpose in life is to support the warriors in her life: her father, brother, husband, and sons. If they should be called to war, she must be happy that they have the opportunity to fulfill a heroic destiny: (PI 25-26). What kind of juxtapositioning ideology is adopted to differentiate the gender discrimination, especially with women. Though the entire novel depicts the life history of Draupadi from birth to death in the first person narrative, Draupadi is very particular to fulfill the astonishing prophecy of her birth as she was emerging from the smoke there was the voice “behold we give you this girl, a gift beyond what you asked for. Take good care of her, for she will change the course of history” (PL 4-5).

In *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*, the term has been explained as a “journey across civilizations” and “this diasporic movement marks not a postmodern turn from history but a nomadic turn in which the very parameters of specific historical movements are embodied...scattered or regrouped into new points of becoming” (3). According to William Safran, the unique quality of the diaspora is that “they consider that they should, collectively, be committed to the safeguarding or re-

establishment of their authentic hometown and to its safety and richness” and in “constructing their communities” they become “independent centre of cultural creations; alternatively their creations continue to include convinced ethnosymbols, customs, and narratives of the homeland.” Draupadi’s role as a constructor of her community is specially designed after the deconstruction of the whole community with their “colonial domination of the other” as mentioned by Edward Said in *Orientalism*. Here Draupadi gives the solution that there is no need of European “civilizing mission” to make a new modern world as she could do away with the mythic visualization of predefined images of the savage people and lands beyond their imagination. A woman could create the kind of transnationalism in her own country with her binary efforts discarding the power and the western ways of Eurocentric dominance.

Draupadi keeps everything in her mind and waits for the right time to show her power and strength. She always ready to take up studies along with her brother. “A girl being taught what a boy was supposed to learn? Such a thing had never been heard of in the royal family of Panchal! Only when Krishna insisted that the prophecy” (PI 23) at her birth should come true to “get an education beyond what women were usually given” and it was the duty of the king to provide such education. So she “hungered to know about the amazing, mysterious world extended past (PI 23).” Her readiness to accept things with positivity for a transformation of the older order of savagery is very clear. She couldn’t accept the “blindfolded Gandhari” with her wifely virtue as she is “docile and overtly traditional” who has never expressed her opinions but “focused her entire attention on her blind husband’s needs” (PI 129). Dai ma also commented as “she’s dangerous with more power than most people realize, and one of these days she just might decide to use it” (PI 129). Draupadi has to tackle many people of her cadre like Gandhari, Sakuni, Duryodhan, and Dussanan. Though she is the princess of Hastinapur, the queen of the sons of Pandu she has been played upon by Yudhishtira at a game of dice with Duriyodhana, entrapping him to get Draupadi as his Dhasi.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni highlights the psychological sense of displacement subtly in *The Palace of Illusion* through Draupadi, as she had to move from Hastinapur. This is the second diasporic experience from her father to Hastinapur and from Hastinapur to an unknown place to live with her unknown husbands. “The chastised Dhritarashtra agreed to hand Yudhishtir his birthright” and “divide the kingdom in two... give the Pandavas the bigger half, leaving the smaller portion for his own son” (PI 137). But Draupadi could convert those diasporic experiences into finding a new world with new civilization by destroying the older form of ruling, socio-cultural set up, despair and disappointments, fundamentalism and revolutionary violence. She prepares herself as the sacrificing astra to set everything in the right order. She tries to fulfill the reason for her birth. She recounts the generational barrier of class discrimination and individual complexities with her first hand experiences. The problems of all diasporic women are identified with Draupadi with rootlessness, nostalgia, cultural assimilation, alienation, and identity crisis.

Summation

As Draupadi crossed the country along with her husbands, their vehicles “broke down on the poked and uneven road,” Krishna came for their rescue with soldiers, food, tents, and several sturdy horses (PI 137). The storyline drags while they construct a palace which Draupadi calls as “the Palace of Illusion” (PI 146). The palace has been constructed with stunning visual aesthetics which unravels a beautiful “Indra Prastha” as the “unparalleled grandeur of the Pandava Court” (PI 147). Now the orbit formed as “they were a unit together, five fingers that complemented each other to make up a powerful hand – a hand that would protect” (PI 148). Draupadi has the proud feeling that she is greater than the status of all the Pandavas because of her unique birth. She is the real chaste woman. She cleansed her body with fire after one year living with one husband. She is

the combination of all five elements so as to live with all the five husbands representing all the five elements. She becomes the atma of all the five husbands who represent the five elements. When Draupadi was so happy about her palace, Krishna advised her:

Don't be so attached to what is, after all, no more than stone and metal and asura sleight of hand. All things in this world change and pass away – some after many years, some overnight. Appreciate the Palace of Illusions, by all means. But if you identify so deeply with it, you set yourself up for sorrow (PI 149).”

Hence she is the celestial astra to be used once by the creator to create a new world with her profundity. Beyond all theories and ‘isms’ Draupadi is the first feminist in a real sense. Panchaali is the challenging female redefining the feministic perspective by removing all warriors, Gods, enemies, fateful events and ever manipulating male domination. Draupadi became the self created leader and saviour of her people through her power of feministic weapon. Draupadi a Celestial persona who is a creator and a creation with her feminine amalgamation imbued with her magical powers could create a new world and changed the course of history as prophesied earlier. She is not the destroyer but a constructor of a new order.

Works Cited

1. Divakaruni, Chithra Banerjee. *The Palace of Illusion*. Macmillan, USA: 2008. Print.
2. *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. Edited by Bill Ashcroft et al. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Routledge, Indian Reprint: 2008. Print.
3. *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader*. Edited by Jana Evans Brazil and Anita Mannur. Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 2003. Web
4. *Race and Racialization: Essential Readings*. Das Gupta, T. et al(eds). Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. 2007. Print.
5. Safran, William. “Concepts, Theories, and Challenges of Diaspora: A panoptic Approach.” University of Colorado at Boulder. Italy, September 18, 2007. web

Postcolonial Perspective in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Ganesan, M. and

N. Moorthy.

“Postcolonial

Perspective in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown*.” *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 26–29.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269011>

Dr.M.P.Ganesan

Assistant Professor of English

Sourashtra College, Pasumalai, Madurai

N.Moorthy

Ph.D Part Time Research Scholar

Assistant Professor of English, GTN Arts College, Dindugul

Abstract

*This Paper focuses on the postcolonial perspective in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* and especially focuses on the main character of the novel, *Shalimar*. The rapid explanation is used to emphasize the different postcolonial propensity in the fictional village *Pachigam*, in *Shalimar the Clown*. This village *Pachigam* is a place of hybridists, fluidity, and also a space marked by distinction. It is distinctive but not a smooth postcolonial space, one which Brennan ignores in his definition of post colonialism. The paper describes essentially about the vague relationship of the village *Pachigam*, a microcosm of Kashmir with the larger 'postcolonial', 'post-imperial' entities of India and Pakistan. The paper also analyses the women's sufferings, psychology and injustice in postcolonial India.*

Keywords: Verbal confrontations, neo-colonialism, conventions, border issues, revenge.

Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* is a case of how the current postcolonial novel verbal confrontations fear mongering, the neo-colonialist procedures of post-war US outside strategy and the Indian military nearness in Kashmir and how India suffered from terrorism. It also extends premise of their argument about conventions and economic globalization, resurgent separatist and fanatic movements and its impact on every individual. *Shalimar, the Clown* across many hurdles of different periods of time and territories, challenges the empire's legacies, nationhood and emergent new empires.

Shalimar the Clown discusses the repressions and exclusions that the postcolonial state imposes on its border, exemplified in the continuing unannounced war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. *Shalimar the Clown* routes postcolonial patterns by examining transnational fearer networks and their regional and international force on politics, cultures and religion. It is perceived how terrorism has affected the whole humankind with its hurtful results. Through the character of *Shalimar, the Clown*, the reader notices how exact revenge makes him fear based tyrant who later on turns into the motive for killing of individuals and afterward disguise turns into the reason for onslaught. Fear based oppression is a worldwide marvel which needs exceptional consideration. Hostile

to fear based tyrant activity is upheld by popular assessment. This has been the explanation behind the end, danger of psychological tyrant and also it promotes worldwide clashes. Patriotism gets to be distinctly forceful and it makes the general population intolerant of different group of people and nations. One has to understand that no men are alien and no nation is strange. In this way to control the psychological cruelty common understanding is likewise important between various societies and groups.

Salman Rushdie depicts the social conventions, cultural practices, and religious faiths, familial and familiar relationship, the reliable burden of traditional authority that has generated a rebellion against the organized forces of oppression and injustice to women. Through his novels, Salman Rushdie promotes the idea that women must try to come out of their suppressed roles. He has been successful in creating strong women protagonists who refuse to get crushed under the weight of their personal tragedies, and face life with great courage and strength.

The novel describes partly in a small village in the region of Kashmir. The village itself is imaginary and it is located in Srinagar. The book is divided into five parts, which are told through the eyes of the five main characters. The first section, set in present day Los Angeles, revolves around the life of India Ophuls, a beautiful documentary maker and the daughter of Max Ophuls, a former American ambassador to India and the later the US counterterrorism Chief.

A twenty four year old ambassador's daughter, India Ophuls sleeps badly through the warm, unsurprising nights. At times, she cries out in a language she does not speak. No men would stand in front of her while she sleeps. Her words would be science-fictional like Klingon, like a throat being cleared in a galaxy far, far away. Before her death, Boonyi has revealed the truth about her father who is an ambassador, to her daughter, India Ophuls. Her mother has been a Kashmiri, and is lost to her, like paradise, like Kashmir, in a time before memory. She trembles before her mother's absence and has waited without knowing she is waiting. After her father's death who was once a brilliant, cosmopolitan, Franco-American, "Like Liberty", often absent, irresistible father.

So, until her father's death, she was not an easy woman to sleep with, though she was a woman with whom men wanted to sleep. The pressure of men's desires was tiresome to her.

The pressure of her desires was for the most part unrelieved. (SC 4)

A few lovers she has taken are unsatisfactory and soon, she gives up serious consideration to her proposal of marriage. One day, the ambassador is slaughtered on her doorstep like a halal chicken dinner, bleeding to death from a deep neck that was caused by a single slash of the assassin's blade. India presents India Ophuls as a disciplined, groomed nuanced, inward, irreligious, understood and calm girl. In her behaviour she is not heated, but cool. The problematic child within her is sublimated into her spare-time pursuits, the weekly boxing sessions at Jimmy Fish's boxing club on Santa Monica and Vine. The arrow is her weapon of choice. India sees the desirous, old women flirting on the verandahs, the lurking spiteful old men.

The antique Russian super, Olaga Simeonovna, a bulbous denim-clad samovar of a woman, greets the ambassador and told the Ambassador that his daughter keeps waiting for him. She is known to all in the town as she is good at potato magic. A woman like her lives in between America and Astrakhan. She has been born a few miles east of the Volga River delta, within sight of the Caspian Sea. Then, the history of 20th century is shaped by her potato magic. She has told the old ladies and gentlemen that she can corner her wherever and whenever she could for India and now she is invited for the twenty-fourth birthday of Ambassador Max Ophuls's daughter. She is not ridiculous, and she never permits herself to sink into fantasy. She notices a driver waiting patiently nearby the elevator, holding the door and he tells his name as "Shalimar" when she asks.

Shalimar's English is not good, barely functional-even and he is unaware of that phrase. His eyes are blue; his skin colour is lighter than hers; his hair looks grey with a memory of fair. He

escorts her downstairs. India Ophuls's father asks her what she has wanted for her birthday. She has asked pornographic questions looking at the driver. She wants to see his smile. But he couldn't have understood the word and smiles without knowing what he is agreeing to. She too wants her mother. She asks her father to tell about her mother, to show her letters, photographs, to bring messages from the dead. She wants her lost story to be found.

The freedom that Boonyi chooses for herself is "false, a fantasy, an attraction to tempt her to sin, which she ... like Eve, is easily tempted and eagerly accepts the Ambassador's offer of a change ..." (Mathur 2007:92) In the poor village of Boonyi she finds the keenness for freedom, lured by which she symbolizing Kashmir, loses herself courting devastation.

"Rushdie expresses sadness for the ideal that has been lost in Kashmir and in so many parts of the Muslim world, the ideal of tolerance and secular pluralism" (Cowley 2005:27). This novel is the moving story of Noman, who called himself Shalimar the clown partly in the honour of his lady love, son of the village headman. He is a sweet innocent boy, "clown prince of the performing troupe" (SC 50), a young boy madly in love with Pandit Pyarelal Kaul's daughter, Bhoomi or Boonyi as she prefers to be called.

The Ambassador gifts a car to India Ophuls. "There is no room for three people in this rocket ship" (SC 12), She says aloud. She has appointed a handsome driver, Shalimar from Kashmir. She has felt the driver wanting to touch her in the elevator that is she feels herself transformed into an abstraction. She wants to be the kind of woman who could ask a driver, "who do you want to touch when you want to touch me ... we can have sex in elevators and never mention it.

Sex in transit Zones, in places like elevators that are between one place and the next, sex in cars... and the rest of the time, forget it, you're my father's employee" (SC 13).

The driver could not understand her language anyway; she really has no knowledge of the level of his language skills. This is the last day she and her father would ever spent together. She has her first subject for a documentary film and there is money enough to begin work. They eat hungrily in a High Canyon Lodge. Father and daughter are alike in their appetites, their high metabolic rates, their love of meat, and their slender high-toned bodies. She offers an invocation aloud to make his father smile. "This flesh whereof we eat is not their (ass) true flesh but the flesh of others like them, through whom their own lost forms may be conjured up and honoured" (SC 14).

India Ophuls talks about Shalimar to her father, the ambassador. She has pictured the other Shalimar, the great Mughal garden of Kashmir, descending in verdant liquid terraces to a shining lake that she has never seen. The name meant "abode of joy". She sets her jaw, "it still sounds like a candy bar to me." (SC 25) Khomdram Shyamsundram Singh writes:

The novelist has indeed designed a blot of sorts each for all the women characters, not with an ulterior motive to lend them an aura of being only flesh and blood, but to either demean or stigmatize them: Padma is like a plaything for Saleem; Reverend mother is conventional to a fault; Alia is vindictive; Emerald has no love for her sisters; Amina Sinai, Pia and Lila Sabarmati are tarred with the brush of infidelity; Elvyn and Brass Monkey embody both wildness and violence; Parvati's life ends on a very sordid note and the historical personality Indira Gandhi is depicted as a demon in the form of a woman. (Singh 55)

Max Ophuls is a bastard and she wished he is dead, but that is just her way of talking, she is an artist of passion, a hot-blooded woman, and everyone thinks how such a woman speak of a man who has proved himself unworthy of her love. She herself is incapable of murder; she is a woman of peace; her eyes are innocent and she has been paying attention to the confession that she could have saved a human life, even if it is only the life of a human worm like Max Ophuls.

Boonyi's presence is an indication by Salman Rushdie that Kashmir will not be lost; it will emerge from the darkness into the light of true freedom and hope for its entire people, a new

life. She symbolizes this new beginning in her realization and acceptance of her true identity and ultimately in her emerging victory by executing the hatred and violence of Shalimar. She was no longer a prisoner of fury when she lets her arrow find its mark. In the end of the novel, Salman Rushdie says, “She was not fire but ice” (SC 398).

Salman Rushdie has depicted the corrupted individual and terrorist during post colonialism in *Salimar the Clown*. The history of India and the entity are corrupted because of the sensitive feelings of a few characters like Boonyi, Salimar and India Ophuls. Kashmir becomes a place of hell and it is rotted by itself because of the people as represented by Salman Rushdie. The emergence of violence is delineated during postcolonial period.

Works Cited

1. Rushdie, Salman. *Shalimar The Clown*. London: Jonathan Cape, 2005. Print.
2. Singh, Khomdram Shyamsundara. “Misogynist Undertones in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*”. *Modern Research Studies: An International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Print.
3. Cowley, Jason. “From here to Kashmir”, Rev. of *Shalimar the Clown*. *The Guardian Weekly*, Vol.173 No.14 Sep. 2005, p.27. Print.
4. Mathur, O. P. “Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown: The Enigma of Terrorism*”, *Points of View*, Vol. XIV, No.1 Summer 2007, p.92. Print.

A Study of Female Identity Development in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Nandini, S. "A Study of Female Identity Development in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 30–33.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269013>

Dr.S.M.Nandini

Assistant Professor of English, Sourashtra College, Madurai

Abstract

*This paper scrutinizes the character of Tilo in Chitra Banderjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* and evaluates how she develops herself in the course of her life. Tilo is an ageless wisewoman clothed in an ancient body. After a long apprenticeship to the "Old One," who tries to curb Tilo's arrogance in her own precocious ability, she becomes a "mistress of spices". Overcome by her attraction to Raven, Tilo yields to her own wishes rather than those of the spices. At this flouting of their rules, the spices themselves rise up against her, demanding that she has to choose between love and power. Tilo is forced to rethink her role as a healer beyond the simplistic split between her desire to help others and to help herself. This point is further explored through the female identity development theory of the famous feminist critic Carol Gilligan.*

Keywords: female identity development, Pre-conventional, Conventional, Post-conventional and psychic progression

'Female Identity Development' has been a vital discourse in the feminist studies. Whether women are professionals or non professionals, inspired by nature or nurture, a woman's understanding of her inner development certainly augments her self esteem and makes her to feel personhood. Perhaps this is one of the most important things that Feminism aspires. Many Feminist critics have worked on Female Identity Development and have successfully forwarded reasonable theories, the well known critics being Downing and Roush (1985), Carol Gilligan (1982) and a group of critics Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986/1997). Of these theories Carol Gilligan's moral development theory has been widely accepted. Carol Gilligan's book *In a Different Voice: Psychological theory and Women's Development* (1982), a path breaking venture challenges the male centered personality psychology of Sigmund Freud and Eric Erickson, also questions the moral development psychology postulated by Lawrence Kohlberg, her teacher. Gilligan proposes a stage theory of moral development for women, which indicates three levels of development, Pre-conventional, Conventional, and Post-conventional, with transitional crossroads that are as significant as the levels and are relationally situated for women in their care for

and about others. Based on Carol Gilligan's moral development theory, the female protagonist in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices* will be scrutinized to recognize her psychic progression.

The *Mistress of Spices* is a splendid novel. It is a beautifully crafted story of dreams, desires, hopes and expectations. Tilo, the protagonist of the novel was born in India and had a sad story. She is ugly and unwanted in a small village in India. She is discarded by her family for the sin of being born female.

They named me Nayantara star of the eye, but my parent's faces were heavy with fallen hope at another girl child...wrap her in old cloth, lay her face down on the floor...is screaming until they fed me milk from a white ass, perhaps that is why the words come to me so soon. Or was it the loneliness, the need rising angry in a dark girl left to wander the village unattended. (7-8)

She is gifted with predicting the future and other supernatural powers. People from every walk of life praise her and the pirates come to know of her. They carry her through the burning village. She becomes the queen of sea pirates who name her Bhagyavathi. But the snakes help her to escape from the place. She wants to go to the island of spices. When Nayantara has been driving with pirates on the sea, she throws herself in discovering the magical island of spices. Then she has been adopted by the old, fraud ancient figure and given training to use the spices for healing the pain. After training each apprentice choose a new name. That is not only symbolic of their new identity in new world.

To her the transition between the stages is triggered by changes in the sense of self rather than the changes in the cognitive capability. Level I, Pre-conventional stage is the 'Orientation to Individual Survival' where one is oriented toward self-interest, survival and preservation of self. Nayantara chooses the name Tilotamma. Every spice has medical remedy, connecting on the uses of "til" and meaning of "Tilotama" she says:

Til is the sesame seed, under the sway of planet venus, gold brown as though just touched by flame. The flower of which is so small and straight and pointed that mothers pray for their girl children to have noses shaped liked it. Til which ground into paste with sandalwood cures diseases of heart and liver, till which fried in its oil restores luster when one host lost interest in life. I will be Tilotama, the essence of til, life giver, restorer of health and hope. (42)

The old one accepts the name, as the name Tilo on her part stand for the most beautiful apsara of rain at God Indira's court. At the same time, the old one warns her not to give her heart to anyone like the court dancer of Indira. Tilotamma is warned by Brahma not to give her heart to man but only to the dance. Tilo has to accept her lot as Tilotamma accepted it in Indira's court. As a young girl, Tilo is initiated as one of several young Mistresses of Spices by the First Mother, who warns the girls about certain rules they must follow, or face dire consequences. They are instructed never to leave their respective stores all around the world, physically touch the skin of the people they meet, or use the great and incomprehensible strength and power of the Spices to their own ends.

The first transition, from Level I to Level II, is identified as 'From Selfishness to Responsibility'. Here the woman develops attachment and connection to others, with an ability to see within herself the potential for social acceptance/approval. She learns to integrate responsibility and care into moral decision-making.

Tilo, an immigrant from India, is a shopkeeper, an unusually strong clairvoyant, and a chosen Mistress of Spices. The spices she gives to her customers help them to satisfy their certain needs and desires, such as "sandalwood to dispel painful memories; black cumin seed to protect against evil eye." Tilo ends up in the San Francisco Bay Area in a store called "Spice Bazaar". Tilo's

customers include Haroun, a cab driver, a grandfather are dealt an American-born granddaughter Geeta, Kwesi, a man trying to impress his girlfriend and Jagjit, a teenager trying to fit in at school.

In Level II, the 'Conventional stage'— 'Goodness as Self-Sacrifice', a woman develops greater engagement with others. Her survival now is based on social acceptance and she may give up her own judgment in order to be accepted. She may also experience disequilibrium over conflict between her self-definition and her care for others. The journey of Tilo is a novice from the spices island to America as a mistress of spice store involves transformation. As a mistress of spices she has to follow the rules which have been instructed to her by the Old one. She finds herself in the store after she has entered the Shampati's fire. "Shell within shell, and in most of all my heart beating like a bird" (125). She also notices that apart from the walls of the store that protected her, the spices also form a shield around her. Not only the walls and spices but her wrinkled aged body shields her from outside interference. But despite all these barriers her heart is like a bird within. The word 'bird' conveys her yearning to be free in spite of her willful acceptance to be a mistress, if her freedom is curtailed, it saddens her.

At the end of the story, Tilo thinks that because of her supernatural power she has to forget her personal life and desire. Her life takes a turn one day, when a handsome man on a motorcycle crashes outside her store. Tilo tends to his injuries while trying to ignore their strong mutual romantic attraction to each other. Her life changes when he touches her and they begin to fall truly, madly in love. Tilo falls in love with handsome American Raven and decides to transform in to a young woman to fulfil her desires. But the Spices are suddenly angry and jealous, and things soon start to go sour in her relationships with her other customers. Haroun gets in an accident, Geeta's family situation does not improve, Jagjit falls in with the wrong crowd at school, and Kwesi's girlfriend breaks up with him. Doug comes to meet her that night and sadly tells her that his Native American-born mother has died. Then she is in dilemma whether to be selfless or selfish.

The second transition occurs from Level II to Level III and is called 'From Goodness to Truth'. Here the woman moves from self-sacrifice for conformity to a new inner judgment. As she begins to see her own needs as truth and not as selfishness, she begins to take responsibility for decisions. At the end of the novel Tilo, becomes Maya, the young woman, She has left her job as mistress of spices. She says: "I who now have only myself to hold me up". (MS-317). She found her new identity and new home through an act of cultural translation. Divakaruni succeeds in presenting the consciousness of South Asian diasporic women and the process of identity formation.

Tilo recognizes that the source of these misfortunes is her breaking of the rules. The first other comes to her in a vision and scolds her for choosing Doug over the Spices. She vows that he will return to india, and posts a notice about a closing sale. She goes all out to help her customers one last time and tells the Spices that she will spend just one night with Doug, and then she will give herself utterly to them. She closes the store and goes off with Doug for the night. After a sweet night of romantic, passionate love-making, she leaves him a note that she must leave and cannot return, but that will always truly, madly and deeply love him forever. Then she goes back to the store and sets the Spices on fire, with her at the center of the flames, as sign of eternal servitude and slavery to the mystical Spices.

In Level III, Post-Conventional stage, 'The Morality of Nonviolence', the woman has a new respect for the self, with no dichotomy between selfishness and responsibility to others any longer. She balances a moral equivalency between self and others, between survival and care. Gilligan states that a morality of nonviolence is then extended to self and others. Doug comes searching for her, and finds the store devastated. But Tilo has not been burned. She is still alive. There is no sign of fire, but there has been an earthquake. Since she demonstrates her willingness to give up everything for the Spices, she can have everything she desires and the spices will never desert her

again. Doug agrees to help her rebuild the store, and she happily reunites with him. Their romantic relationship blossoms again as strong and pure as ever. Tilo seems to exemplify Carol Gilligan's 'post-conventional stage', the third stage of her theory of moral development as she shows no difference between self-interest and responsibility.

Tilo is forced to rethink her role as a healer beyond the simplistic split between her desire to help others and to help herself. In doing so, she conjures up a new American identity. Tilo can be compared to Jasmine of Bharati Mukherjee. Jasmine revolves around the Protagonist with various identities in the confused world as Jyoti, Jazzy, Jane and Jase. She is constantly made to face one name or another, one culture or another and one challenge or another throughout her tiring journey of life from Hasnapur to Iowa. The identity crisis is reflected in Tilo's journey of life as a foreteller, as the queen of pirates, as a novice, as a mistress and as a lover. She goes through four distinct incarnations in different bodies such as Nayantara, Bhagyavathi, Tilo and Maya.

Work Cited

1. Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *The Mistress of Spices*. London: Transworld Publishers, 1997. Print.
2. Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard U, 1982. Print.
3. Roy, Anita. Rev. of *The Mistress of Spices* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, *The India Magazine* 17.11 (October 1997). Web
4. https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/25522/7/07_chapter%202.pdf

The Image of New Woman in Select Novels of Shobaa De

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Selvam, A and S. Thanigaivelan. "The Image of New Woman in Select Novels of Shobaa De." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 34–36.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269027>

Dr.A.Selvam, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.,

*Former Head & Associate Professor
NMSS Vellaichamy Nadar College, Madurai*

S.Thanigaivelan

*Ph.D. Research Scholar in English
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai*

Abstract

The Indian English novel has witnessed a significant growth particularly over the last three decades. There is a certain multiplicity of themes and variety of styles seen in this genre today. Apart from the political and social themes, there are gender-based themes, ethnic-minority themes and themes dealing with the expatriate experience. The present paper provides a modest study of the novels of Shobha De, the most popular Indian Woman writer in English. It has made comprehensive critical comments on her fiction with an emphasis on the image of woman portrayed in her novels. She has an extraordinary ability to discuss very sensitive aspects of human relationship in general and man-woman relationship in particular. The researcher explores and explicates the overall images of women appeared in her novels. She has portrayed a variety of women from the traditional, subjugated and marginalized to the extremely modern, liberated and emancipated women. The study focuses on the image of ne woman depicted in the novels of Shobaa De.

Keywords: Subjugation, Marginalization, Liberation, Emancipation, Marriage and Patriarchy.

Shobaa De, portrays the image of liberated and emancipated women in her novels. As a feminist, she projects the ideas of the liberating woman through self-realization and the quest for self-identity. She believes that the woman has to be aware of her own identity as a human being and should think for herself.

In *Socialite Evenings*, Karuna wants to move out of her middle-class background. Karuna's self-actualized portrayal reflects her longing to initiate and regulate her life on her own. In contrast to the weak and submissive traditional Indian woman, she is strong and courageous enough to get emancipated from the orthodox role of women. She does not need the protection and umbrella of a male partner in her day-to-day routine. Right from her childhood she is above the limiting restrictions of an individual family. Modern 'New Woman' Karuna is independent in every way. She breaks the bonds of marriage and lands her feet firm into the profession of her choice that is modeling and as an independent journalistic essayist.

Like *Socialite Evenings*, *Starry Nights*, also has the theme of liberated woman. It depicts the modern woman's struggle and search for identity. Aasha Rani comes from the south Indian middle class background. But the moment she steps in the tinsel town of Mumbai, she becomes a liberated woman who lives for her own pleasures and knows no moral codes and value system. De reinforces her plea for liberation through the example of Sudha.. Just like Aasha Rani she is modern, bold and capable enough to survive in the declining moral values of life. De describes aptly how Sudha is liberated and proud of her achievement.

Through the novel *Sisters*, Shobhaa De dives deep into the hearts of the liberated upper class women in the contemporary society and depicts the real characters as they are and not as they ought to be. Mikki and Alisha pass through the unpleasant experiences of life and how they eventually realize which is the their freedom, a freedom to live a life of their own choice. Mikki is neither shocked nor upset by the tragic death of her parents. She is a stranger even to the funeral ritual and the crowd. Being an educated, liberated young woman without any legitimate guardian to look after her, she attends many parties. Alisha is determined to smash the traditional image of woman. She indulges in free sex using men as playthings. She wants Dr. Kurien to leave his wife and children and marry her. Thus, De's women break all sorts of taboos and feel liberated. De seems to show the arrival of new women who rebel against the existing subordination and passivity of woman and "project their own passions onto others as a female power play in order to deconstruct the male ego" (Swain 135).

Shobhaa De's *Strange Obsession* is the unique creation as it depicts the lesbian relationship between two women. The idea of woman as a free and independent being is repeatedly emphasized. The story of the novel moves around the life and lesbian relationship of two young women namely Amrita Aggarwal and Meenakshi Iyengar. The protest against male hegemony takes another form in sexual matters in this novel. In *Sultry Days* Shobhaa De's skill in depicting the female characters is simply remarkable. Besides this, what is interesting to note is her treatment of the position of women and their attitude to marriage. The novelist presents a group of modern women who are the liberated and emancipated new women who highlight the changed perspectives of women in recent times. K.K. Sinha rightly says: "Shobhaa De stands for equal and normal treatment to the woman in this hurly-burly world of ours....She stands for the New Woman casual looking but ambitious professional focused and in control" (59).

Shobhaa De in *Second Thoughts* uses the city of Mumbai as a metaphor for freedom. In the beginning of the novel it is used as a rationale for the protagonist Maya's decision to accept the role of a housewife in an arranged marriage. However both the city and her marriage shatter her expectations. Maya's desire to lead a free life in the licentious set up of Mumbai is frustrated, as she fails to understand her husband's outlook. Maya begins to discover that her own position as a wife to a man who is a western-educated bank official, is undermined by his traditional attitude towards women. The world of Shobhaa De's novel *Snapshots* is entirely dominated by women. It is a world full of adventures of powerful unrestrained free new women. The writer while exploring the experiences of six women Swati, Aparna, Reema, Noor, Surekha and Rashmi, presents a very candid picture of the metropolitan lifestyle through a transformed version of the traditional values.

Shobhaa De's women characters are rebellious and new women and liberated human beings. De delves deep into the hearts of the liberated upperclass women in the contemporary society and depicts them as they are and not as what they should have been. De's novels indicate the emergence of a new woman curious to revolt against the traditional moral orthodoxy of the patriarchal social system. She tries forcefully to undo this distorted image of woman who cries for freedom and equality which is still an unheard melody in the patriarchal world.

Works Cited

1. De, Shobhaa. *Socialite Evenings*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd., 1989. Print.
2. ---. *Sisters*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd., 1992. Print.
3. ---. *Starry Nights*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992. Print.
4. ---. *Strange Obsession*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1992. Print.
5. ---. *Snapshots*. New Delhi: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995. Print.
6. ---. *Second Thoughts*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1996. Print.
7. Swain, S. P. "ShobhaDe's *Socialite Evenings* – A Feminist Study". *Feminist English Literature*. Ed. Manmohan K. Bhatnagar. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 1999. Print.
8. Sinha, K. K. *The Commonwealth Review* 9.2 (1997-1998): 15. Web.

Restricted Woman in Girish Karnad's Naga-Mandala

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Priya, J and K. Anuradha. "Restricted Woman in Girish Karnad's Naga-Mandala." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 37–39.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269033>

J.Priya

*Ph.D Scholar in English, Bharathiyar University
Velavan Nagar, S.Kodikulam, Madurai*

Dr.K.Anuradha

Assistant Professor in English , Government Arts College, Coimbatore

Abstract

Girish Karnad has emerged as a living legend in contemporary Indian English Drama. The male dominance is apparent in all the plays of Girish Karnad. In his plays the women characters became pawns in the games that the male characters play and are relegated to background. In 'Nagamandala' he not only exposes male chauvinism, the oppression of women, the great injustice done to them by men and patriarchal culture but also stealthily deflates the story of Rani. In the Indian tradition, the woman is forced to love her husband even though he is not to be her aspiration. Appanna visits Rani only in noon to have his lunch. The picture of Rani, shut in old and huge house for most part of the day and night, alone. He warns her not to talk to anyone other than him in a server indictment of male-dominated Hindu society. Appanna suspects his wife of adultery asks her to take snake ordeal to prove her chastity. Rani's trial reminds us of Sita in The Ramayana and it shows the affinities with traditional Indian values.

Keywords: Male chauvinism, oppression, patriarchy, adultery, snake ordeal and chastity.

Girish Karnad is regarded as one of the three great writers of the contemporary Indian drama, the other two being Vijay Tendulkar and Badal Sircar. While Badal Sircar and Vijay Tendulkar deal with the problems of the middle class, Girish Karnad takes refuge in the Indian myths and legends and makes them a vehicle of a new vision. Karnad says that the issues of the present world find their parallels in the myths and fable of the past, giving new meanings and insights reinforcing the theme. By transcending the limits of time and space, myth provides flashes of insights into life and its mystery. They form an internal part of cultural consciousness of the land, with different meanings and it reflects the contemporary issues.

Girish Karnad presents Rani as the only child of her parents and she is their queen. When Rani grew up, her parents get her married to Appanna whose parents are no more. When she enters the house of Appanna he asks his wife to stay inside, shuts the door and locks it from outside and leaves the place. Such a danger treatment breaks her into pieces and in the absence of love and care, under the stress of loneliness and isolation she dreams like a child, longing for parents and their affection. She imagines that she is carried away by an eagle.

She dreams like child and she feels that the eagle is rescuer from the difficult condition in her life. The dream makes her to forget the torture that her husband gives her.

Appanna leaves his wife alone and he spends his night with a concubine. Kurudava a friend of his mother gives some roots to Rani to feed Appanna and make as love maker. She tries to give the root through food to Appanna but she fears if there would be a negative result of that on her husband. Therefore she puts the liquid of root into the anthill. Rani is a traditional Indian woman who does not dare to do any harmful act against husband. When she pours the curry into the anthill there lives a cobra called Naga which tastes the liquid and starts to love her. Naga took the shape of Appanna and showers love on Rani. But Appanna had the usual behavior during day time. Rani also experiences the dichotomy of the warm loving embrace of her ideal lover and the cold, authoritative contemptuous behavior of her real husband Appanna. She is in a dilemma but accepts the difference between the passionate lover and the dominating husband because she has inherited the submissiveness by tradition. The husband's dominating nature is finally expressed in Rani's words "but day or night, one motto does not change; don't ask questions. Do as I tell you"(51). When he comes to know that Rani is pregnant he beats her with at most anger. Because he only knows that he has not touched her. He takes her to the villagers and asks her to prove her chastity.

The concept of chastity is trusted only on women and not on men. The village elders know well that Appanna has a concubine and lives with her and not with his wife. They never take that as a destruction of moral code and never question him why he is doing such a degraded activity. But when Appanna questions about Rani's chastity, the village elders come readily to test Rani's fidelity through barbaric ordeals like holding the red hot-iron in the hand, plunging the hand into the boiling oil and the ant-hill.

Appanna has an illegal relationship with another women but he does not accept his wife having extra marital relationship. Appanna did not even pay heed to Rani's words:

Why are you humiliating me like this? Why are you stripping me naked in front of the whole village? Why don't you kill instead? I would have killed myself. But there is not even rope in this house for me to use (p.33).

The words of Rani present her very sad condition in her marital life. Rani has the personality as a traditional Indian wife who believes her husband as a god in her life. Rani slaps herself on her cheeks when she believes that she is going to do something against her husband. It is clear that Rani has much social pressure so she behaves according to the norms of male-dominated society. Through the image of Rani, Girish Karnad presents evils related to female in patriarchal society. Traditional institution of marriage is not good for women in Indian society. Because such tradition women have secondary place and they are not treated as equal to men in marital life.

Girish Karnad presents the problem of chastity which is majorly related with women. As Sita has to face fire ordeal to prove her chastity in the presence of all elders and her husband, Girish Karnad presents snake ordeal for Rani to prove her chastity. It shows even the Goddess Sita was exploited in the name of chastity. The concept ordeal is related with only women from the ancient age to modern age. Such incidents show the reality that women in Indian society have only the secondary place and they have to suffer in the name of purity in marital life.

Appanna enjoys extra-marital relationship but Rani has to face snake ordeal to prove her chastity in the society. Karnad presents the problem of social attitude which makes injustice to women. At the end, to prove her chastity Rani accepts the snake ordeal and she puts hands into the snake pit. When she pulls the snake, it binds itself around her and does not bite. She is declared as a goddess. Appanna felt guilty and lives with her. The submissive woman has started to understand her equal rights in family and society. The suppressed woman reacts against the orthodox male-dominated society:

I was a stupid, ignorant girl when you brought me here. But now I am a woman, a wife, and I am going to be a mother. I am not a parrot. Not a cat or a sparrow. Why don't you take it on trust that I have a mind and explain this charade to me? Why do you play these games? Why do you change like a chameleon from day to night?(p.32)

These words of Rani present herself as conscious woman who justifies her equal rights in the family.

Nagamandala portrays the commoditization of woman in a society where woman are not valued as objects of individuality but as objects of possession. They are subjected to social indoctrination and their voices are marginalized. The place of woman is shaped by topical references and the idea of a woman holding power of any sort over a man attacks the male ego.

The submissive Rani has emerged into a confident Rani towards the end of the play, when Appanna objects her going and talking to Kurudava she snarls at Appanna, "if you don't let her go, I'll... (shocked at her anger, Appanna lets her go)"(57). After the snake ordeal Rani becomes the head of the family. Appanna accepts her superiority and says to her that she is not a common person and she is a goddess. However Rani, unlike Appanna never orders him. Thus showing a trace of matriarchy at the end, the play anticipates that matriarchy is to follow patriarchy if our society is to change for better.

References

1. Karnad, Girish. Naga-Mandala. Oxford University Press, New Delhi. 2009. Print.
2. Nimsarkar, P. D. Women in Girish Karnad's Plays A critical Perspective. Creative Books publisher, New Delhi, 2009. Print.
3. Mukherjee, R. M. Women in India. Pen craft international. New Delhi. 2008.

Post Colonial Issues and Women in Asif Currimbhoy's Plays

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Karthiyayenee, V
and C. Chitra. "Post
Colonial Issues
and Women in Asif
Currimbhoy's Plays."
*Shanlax International
Journal of English*,
vol. 7, no. 1, 2019,
pp. 40–42.

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.5281/
zenodo.3269035](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269035)

V.Karthiyayenee, M.A., M.Phil., B.Ed.,

*Part Time Ph.D., Research Scholar in English
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai*

Dr.C.Chitra

Assistant Professor of English, NMSSVN College, Madurai

Abstract

Asif Currimbhoy is the notable Bengali writer. He goes back to Socio-political condition in the society with a view to making them a vehicle of another vision. The paper attempts to examine the plays of Asif Currimbhoy from a women's perspective. Theme, portrayal, picture and psychology of the women have been focused with the reason to assess Asif Currimbhoy's vision, concern, attitude and treatment of the female issue. His profound pull humanism and worry for the upliftment of Indian women have delivered two sets of characters one the traditional representing the gendered subalternity.

Keywords: Feminism, suffering, modernity, tradition, desire.

Asif Currimbhoy as "a man of the theatre" because his plays hold theatric significance and his plays are actable unlike his predecessors plays which are rarely or seldom actable due to the importance given to lyrical and allegoric forms. He chose the themes from the real life incidents that hold social, historical and religious importance. The reason behind his selection of the unusual themes is the socio-literary condition in which he grew. He gets to know the culture of various people due to his visit to various places because of the nature of his job and it helped him in depicting realistic characters. He wrote about twenty nine plays and Asif Currimbhoy is purely a playwright and he did not contribute to any other literary forms. In his plays women characters significant role. M. K. Naik writes: "As a playwright he has no equal: ever since he began writing in the late fifties, he has averaged almost two plays a year" (262). Till his death on 1st June 1995, he had produced twenty nine plays of all shades of thought. Naik is of the opinion that 'sheer quantity' in the absence of the 'quality of vision' cannot make him a great dramatist.

The Miracle Seed, The Hungry Ones and The Dumb Dancer are the three selected plays written by Asif Currimbhoy that are taken for study. The readers can see that the women characters do not seem to have much significant role to play in his dramas. But still, in almost all his plays, though women have minor roles to play, it has its own many layers of interpretations which are symbolic and

one can see the skill of the playwright in the art of characterization. Meserves comments thus: “In Asif’s best plays the power of his women characters dominate the action... in retrospect one finds Asif Currimbhoy’s women character, whether minor or major, stronger and more memorable than his men”. (XXI)

Malti in *The Miracle Seed*, Razia in *The Hungry Ones*, Prema and Sakuntala in *The Dumb Dancer* are some of the remarkable women characters portrayed by Asif Currimbhoy in his plays. Malti in *The Miracle Seed* is portrayed as a responsible family woman, who stands by the side of her husband at the crucial time of famine as a moral support. Malti is portrayed as a full-fledged woman which means that she plays the role of a daughter-in-law, wife and mother. Malti is presented as a clever as well as wise character and she has never failed to update herself about the steps taken by the government to help the suffering people. In *The Miracle Seed*, when Ram gives importance to his pregnant wife Malti. Malti becomes so happy to hear her husband words: “I like to see you smile. It is careworn ... and sweet” (10). Malti is also pious and she worships the Lord Ganesha regularly for the well being of her family by garlanding the God. When Ram spits on the idol of the God, in the mood of desperation due to famine, Malti becomes so much worried for her husband’s indifferent behavior towards God and asks for his forgiveness to Ram or to punish her for her husband’s mistake. Indian women always have the heart and sacrificing mind to bear even the sins committed by their beloved and Malti is an example for that attitude. While the treatment of women is one side, the femine is a post colonial issue to be discussed. Due to the absence of canals and dams in the villages, there is famine over there. Due to the irresponsible and indifferent and biased attitude of the government people suffer in famine. Moreover the above mentioned attitude is inherited from ex colonizers British government in India.

Razia is a Muslim woman who stands as a tribute to the Indian culture and she is the symbol of virginity which is the part and parcel of the Indian culture. Razia is a typical Indian woman character through whom the playwright symbolically represents the holy culture of “One man for one woman”. Razia makes her escape good when Al, an American tries to rape her to take revenge on Ramesh who is her lover. Razia also strictly follows her religious norms that are engraved in the holy Quran like offering food to the beggars and the suffering lots with motherly love and care during the month of Ramzan.

In *The Hungry Ones*, the post colonial issue to be discussed is the Hindu- Muslim Unity. The British gave freedom to India with an agreement to divide India in to India and Pakistan which resulted in the discrimination between the Hindus and Muslims. It has also further resulted in the frequent communal riots that affected the lives of many innocents and women.

Prema and Sakuntala in *The Dumb Dancer* show a different dimension of women characters. Prema is depicted as an evil woman who has gone to the extent of killing Sakuntala to keep Bhima as a lover for herself. As a coin has two sides as head and tail, women also have two extreme nature. One is to do anything under the sun to keep their beloved always at peace and with happiness. Sakuntala falls under this type. Another is going to any extreme level of evil to spoil the enemy’s life or to kill someone or to spoil something that serves as an obstacle to obtain their loved favourite things or a person (may be lover).

Asif Currimbhoy’s women are presented as strong, powerful and energetic in *The Miracle Seed* and woman as an ideal, faithful wife and loving and caring mother in providing food to the needy and the hungry people in *The Hungry Ones*. Asif Currimbhoy has not failed to project right on the dangerous character of woman going ever to any extent of killing another woman to keep the latters’ man for herself. He portrays the violent nature of women as well as the sacrificing nature of women for their beloved in *The Dumb Dancer* through the character of Prema and Sakuntala.

Prema in *The Dumb Dancer* is a psychiatrist who treats Bhima. Sakuntala is his lady love. Prema starts to develop a sort of liking towards Bhima because of his love for Draupadi in a lunatic state. Prema goes to the extent of murdering Sakuntala in order to keep Bhima for herself and she persuades Sakuntala to come in the guise of Duryodhana telling that she strives hard to cure Bhima by creating a real life situation in which he will kill Duryodhana who insulted Draupadi. Here the readers can see that the women are powerful and their power can be used for creative as well as destructive purposes like this.

Thus in this study of the women in the dramas of post-independent dramatist, no strict pattern is followed. Sometimes, the play of the playwright is compared. In short, one can say that the drama of Asif Currimbhoy, can be called as the mirrors of the society that reflect the status, and position of the women in the contemporary period.

Work Cited

1. Currimbhoy, Asif. *The Miracle Seed*. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1973.
2. *The Hungry Ones*. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1965.
3. *The Dumb Dancer*. Calcutta: A Writers Workshop, 1992.
4. Meserve, J, and Meserve, I. "Foreword," *The Hungry Ones*. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1978. XXI
5. Naik, M.K. *A History of Indian English Literature*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademy, 1995. Print.

Female Space in the Select Works of Shashi Deshpande

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Subhathara, N and

L. Muthulakshmi.

“Female Space in the Select Works of Shashi Deshpande.” *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 43–45.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269037>

N.Subhathara

*Ph.D., Part Time Research Scholar
Madurai Kamraj University, Madurai*

L.Muthulakshmi, M.A., M.Phil. B.Ed.,

*Chief Academic Officer
Lakshmi Matric School Higher Secondary School
Thiruvathavoor, Madurai*

Abstract

In India the focus naturally falls on women and backward classes. Post-colonial New English /literature have been generally preoccupied for the last few decades. In this era women empowerment is different. It is speaking of Gender Bias against women we cannot wash it away in the name of tradition. According to the Bible, God created man in his own image. Man is created first. From the Bible to this day everywhere one can see a deep rooted gender-bias; the bias has become part of the historical/textual traditions. In all traditions women have always been considered inferior and incapable of any serious thinking: irrespective of religion, country, race the period in which they live, more or, less the same perception and sex-stereotyping is seen in language and literature.

Keywords: Violence against Women, Suppression Woman, Oppression Woman.

Shashi Deshpande has held a mirror before us. Her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* is a harrowing tale of Gender-Bias prevalent in Indian society since centuries. It is the story of Sarita (Saru) who is a victim of her mother’s biased behaviour towards her. Her mother’s bitter words uttered when is a little girl she is unable to save her younger brother Dhruva from drowning, has left an indelible scar on her soul. Since her childhood Saru has always felt that to her mother, she herself is nothing when compare to Dhruva.

Saru is haunted by the words she has once written in a note book : “Nobody wants me...”(83). There is always a puja on Dhruva’s birthday, while on Saru’s birthday there was no puja. After DhSaruva’s death there are no more celebrations. Saru feels that she has been disowned. Her father has never taken any interest in her school or college: “I died long before. I left home” (32).

A woman has no right to a room of her own. She has right to choose nothing, not even her career. Saru’s decision to take up medicine as a career stuns her mother who opposes it toothe and nail. She objects Saru’s aspiration to become a doctor because she is a girl. Saru knows the truth: “yes, I am a girl. But it is more than that, I am not Dhruva”(144).

Shashi Deshpande portrays many women who have no identity of their own. One can find gender bias even in Shakespeare's treatment of women in his dramas. Shakespeare has a typical man's view of life- the man at the centre, the women always on the periphery. Gayatri Spivak writes in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" "Between patriarchy and imperialism subject constitution and object formation the figure of a woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'Third World Woman' caught between tradition and modernization."

Saru marries Manohar, a handsome romantic love poet. For some time, all goes well. But as soon as Manohar's career moves nowhere, he suffers from inferiority complex and turns a sadist. He begins to attack Saru in the darkness of night inflicting untold physical and mental suffering on her. But now she hates herself for letting her husband do it to her. She feels that there is no escape from a loveless marriage. Saru presents herself as woman who wants to go in self-quest and in the process, free herself from the inhibitions of the society, culture, nature and also from their own conflicting emotions.

Shashi Deshpande has given clarion call to the women through her novels to awaken them to their worth in the society. Educated middle class women are focused in her novels which form the bulk of our society. She cannot be called a true feminist as per the definition put forth by her foreign counterpart because she stresses feminine freedom without open revolt and exclusion of male from their life.

In *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande discusses the mute submission of Jaya not only to her husband Mohan but her elder brother and finally the most to her husband. Jaya life is a reflecting a middle-class educated woman of today's society. Jaya is a good writer who has won a prize which is snubbed by her husband who is looked hurt instead of dated at her achievement. Jaya is Suhasini and also "Seeta", the pseudonym. She assumes to write columns about the plight of the middle-class house wife. Both "Suhasini" and "Seeta" are, as Jaya says, "the many selves waiting to be discovered like Siamese twin to a self of another person, neither able to exist without the other"(69).

Traditional barriers and Cultural shackles have no place in Shashi Deshpande's heroines. Even Jaya has kept silent childhood till the day her husband forsakes her to clean himself from the charges against him, decides to resume her writing and establish her own existence because through her son Ragul comes back to her in the end and her husband's return is confirmed, she realizes the fact that life goes on and instead of pining for what has not been achieved, one has to make it worth living as one cannot escape from it. For example, Sita has been edified though she has led a miserable life and has to give an evidence of her sanctity. Consequently, Shashi Deshpande's protagonists stridently fight to come out from being framed as such and live a full life on the earth and on equal footing with men.

Deshpande's heroine Jaya on reverting to her role as angry young writer with new revelations breaks that long silence which has shackled the women and have made martyrs out of them.

Educate your women first and leave them to themselves for we want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own foot. With such education women will solve their own problems. In the end, it is suffice to state that courage and not escapism is what woman of today requires. A headlong plunge into the social milieu with pertinacity can along bring harmony and fulfilment in her life.

Indian women are not like their western counterpart. they have always been socially and psychologically oppressed, sexually colonized and biologically subjugated against a maledominant social set-up. Any attempt by a woman to rise above the oppressive forces rooted in the middle-class margins has either been curbed mercilessly or ignored in the name of social dignity. Shashi

Deshpande all through the gamut of her ever-expanding creative horizon always makes it a point to provide a separate space for her characters.

The study of the female space in Shashi Deshpande has portrayed feminism is really trying to search its identity through the multiplicity of voices. But some may argue at the point of “feminism”. Equality of women is nothing but a myth and it is proved from many sources. Deshpande’s novels are one of the sources. So everyone can look forward to the equality of woman. Only then women can be entirely brought into the dominant discussion.

Work Cited

1. Deshpande, Shashi. *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., 1990. Print.
2. Deshpande, Shashi. *That Long Silence*, 1988. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1989. Print.
3. Spivak, Gayatri Chakraborty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999.

A Study of East - West Colonialism in Jhabvala's A New Dominion

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Ganesan, M and
R. Chitra. "A Study of
East-West Colonialism
in Jhabvala's A New
Dominion." *Shanlax
International Journal
of English*, vol. 7, no. 1,
2019, pp. 46–49.

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.5281/
zenodo.3269039](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269039)

Dr.M.P.Ganesan

*Assistant Professor of English
Sourashtra College, Pasumalai, Madurai*

Mrs.R.Chitra

*Assistant Professor of English
Devanga Arts college (Autonomous), Aruppukottai*

Abstract

The Indian writers regard the East-West problem not so much on Indian –British aspects of dilemma but as the Indian— Indian conflict. The two cultures have probably proved a challenge for many creative writers in Indo-English Literature. G.V.Desani views the encounter of the two cultures on more mundane plane and against of background of colonialism where there are meaningful attempts to blend Western and Indian cultures. The encounters take several forms such as social, cultural, political or religion-philosophical, Ruth Praver Jhabvala in her "A New Dominion" also dealing with the experiences of the Western in India. She is thoroughly familiar with life and manners of her adopted country and endows her with unique in insight into the typical traits of Indians. She presents with utmost care the Indian tradition, culture, civilization, manners, systems, pattern of living and values.

Keywords: East-west encounter, cultural, religion-philosophical and Indian spirituality, etc.,

Ruth Praver Jhabvala's experience of India, invariably described by her in terms of 'excitement', 'rapture' and 'love' in publication of her novel. Looking two type characters, Jhabvala consistently bases the conflicts that arise between Indians and Westerns in her novels upon the complexities of culture and history, avoiding the simpler, more obvious issue of color. Her Indian characters, as seen by Western eyes, range from the comic to the beautiful; her Westerners, as seen by Indian eyes, range from the sexually titillating to the grotesque. Once they have crossed the initial barrier set up by what is unfamiliar or foreign, her characters respond to one another as individuals. Those who are unable or reluctant to do reveal their immaturity, or the falseness of their claims to liberalism or spirituality. Gopi (A New Dominion) is characters on both sides of the cultural prejudices that betray their immaturity and superficiality of their sophistication. As time and experience revealed how much there is and always will be to learn about India, Jhabvala's lens shifts from the comic incongruities of Indian life to focus more and more searchingly on those who pretend that such knowledge is easily acquired or inherited by birth.

A New Dominion, like Jhabvala's other major novels dealing with the experiences of the westerner in India, takes up the responses of a group of Westerners, differentiated by the degree and nature of their involvement in Indian spirituality embodied in the worship of the guru. Though none of the characters measured up to group of Britishers Jhabvala studies in *Head and Dust*, the novel throws up with irony and ambiguity, the magnetism and dark attraction of India, about which not even the most rational of the Britishers in *A New Dominion*, Raymond (though he is not without his 'darker' side in the relationship with the college student Gopi), can supply the right answers. The dominion (control) of India's spirituality over the forces of western materialism, seen in the carefully individualized single girls-Evie, Margaret and Lee-is Jhabvala's problem theme in the novel.

Gopi is possibly Ruth Jhabvala's most satiric study of an ignorant Indian who sets himself up as an authority on India's cultural traditions, deeming himself better qualified by his 'Indianness' to penetrate to essential truths than any Western seeker after knowledge, however intelligent they may be or earnest. These sketches acquire deeper ironic shading when they begin to include Westerners who seek to interpret India to the Indians.

These three girls "on a spiritual quest" come to India for different reasons and meet different fates according to the bent of their own nature. Evie, is shown in her last phase (Passivity and humble adoration) in relation to the Swami who heads the ashram ten miles out of Benares, which appears to be the middle of nowhere to lee. Evie has been appointed note-taker and chronicler of the Swami's dialogues and thoughts-her will is not separate from his. Of the three, she has been longest at the ashram. Margaret has rebelled against the "modern materialism" of her family back home, and has walked out of her own sister's wedding to find solace in India. She interest Lee, and their discussions as fellow boarders at Miss Charlotte's mission in Delhi, centre on the westerner in India, divided historically into two groups. Lee has been told by Margaret that... "...people just don't come any more to India to do good, those days are over. What they come for now is - well, to do good to themselves to learn, to take from India..." (37)

The truth of her remark is exemplified in the extradition orders Miss Charlotte (the missionary in whom Raymond finds his own 'rational' and collected kind) receives for her mission in the ebbing of the missionary tide, Jhabvala records the fade-out of British dominion. She is orthodox and unambiguously western and it comes as no surprise when, thoroughly looking forward to the return, she exclaims "still, home is home...." Miss Charlotte has kept clear of the attraction of India.

Lee becomes the first-person, the narrator of this story. Unlike Margaret, fluctuates in her perceptions of an appetite for the Swami. She starts out with an exultation which makes her write to Raymond: "... You are wasting India which has such supreme things, such gifts, to give those of us ready to take them..." (92). She lets her will resists the Swami's: "I was proud, I was obstinate - but I couldn't help myself." She was troubled by his neglect, missing his piercing eye singling her out for attention amongst a group of disciples. Lee visits him in his hut on a moonlit night. His well overcomes hers, as he first hypnotizes and then sexually dominates her. Hurting and abusing her through sex, he frightens Lee into running away from the ashram to Asha (Rao Sahib's sister and Gopi's mistress), who is herself seeking solace in love from Banubai. Lee's restlessness, her swings of mood her attraction to the hidden meaning of India, bears links with Jhabvala's own responses to India. Lee confesses, while staying in the mission house: "But all the same - I don't know - I do get bored sometimes... I feel restless. I don't know what to do.... It's so disturbing out there in the garden.... I keep thinking there must be tigers behind those bushes ready to spring, and surely there must be snakes in all that uncut grass" (39). Lee's way looking, places her between a die - hard missionary like Miss Charlotte and a die - hard devotee like Evie. She is against the "tourist" approach for "tourists don't live... they only look- and looking is nothing, it doesn't help

you really and truly find yourself" (39). Responding as outsider to the "smell" which poor people in India exude, Lee notes sympathetically that it is because "they don't have the opportunity to wash well, or change their clothes very often". Decisively rejecting Gopi's desire for sex in the hotel room overlooking the monuments they visit, she gives in within minutes hoping she can explain herself to him, and they could be "closer in understanding". "...She was glad to be doing this for him, and, at the final moment, thought to herself that perhaps this was part of the merging she had so ardently desired..." (55).

Raymond rejects India on aesthetic grounds. He misses his mother's taste in literature and music. His regular correspondence with her-sometimes even two letters a day -reflects a mother-dominion which provides a resistant force to India's visiting Gopi's house he is forced to conclude that "...aesthetic living isn't something they ever pay much attention to" In a year off from the publishing firm he works in, he visits the sights in India, and enters into an apparently deep relationship with homosexual currents. Neither Raymond nor Gopi come true - to - life in Jhabvala's portrayal. She rests content with Raymond as the representative of the rational west, misunderstood for his "coldness" by Indians: "self - control, a certain stoicism he had grown up with and used all his strength to develop - these two came under the heading of coldness and were equally reprehensible" (206). Raymond is characterized as a sensitive being, kind to his Indian servants, helpful to his western counterparts in India, seeking to save them from India, and ultimately preserving himself for a journey to a home he remembers nostalgically. Banubai, the spiritual Indian 'mother' in the novel hates the Swami, and labels him "dangerous". Viewed ironically by Jhabvala for the sexuality she generates under the guise of spirituality, she is Asha's spiritual counselor in Banaras. With a weakness for "nice-looking boys" as much as for sweets, she is able to command devotion from neither Asha, Lee nor from Gopi consistently.

Jhabvala is able to separate the stock attitudes of the Indian about the Westerner and vice versa, since her expatriate identity is sensitive to both sides of the matter. Lee, witnessing the young woman, a dowry death, finds the whole business bizarre, but the Indian community's reaction, through philosophy is to say, "Such things happen", and "who knows what goes on". A submission to Fate and Destiny (Gopi to his arranged marriage), and individuals to the Guru, whatever the tragedies that ensue, constitutes the Indian philosophical tone. The irony is turned against the West when Gopi realizes the casual meaning of Lee's apology for ignoring him: "Gopi was no longer as impressed by apologies as he had once been. Living with Raymond, he realized that these people said sorry very quickly, perhaps even took some pleasure in it..." (33).

Gopi, the spokesman for simple, perceptive India, makes fun of British: "How these people cared for views". His stereotype image of Western girls, contrasts them with their "inexperienced, unknowing" Indian counterparts: "Everyone knew that Western girls were brought up on sex, lived on sex". Ironically, the earlier generation of Britishers represented by Asha's English governess Miss Hart, has believed: "it was eating all that spicy food that made Indian boys and girls grow up so quickly for it heated the blood and caused premature lust" (56). Jhabvala's satire exposes Indians like the lady Minister of State, who is proud and complacent about her communal centre 'Shantinivas', because it has "the old type of privies and it has now been proved by German doctors that these are best type for health, especially for women who are carrying." (102-103).

The western characters look with skepticism the purity of Hindu religion which glides between the sexual and the spiritual with an easy conscience: "The lord has many aspects..." Indian's spiritualism is pathetic in such organizations as the University of Universal synthesis whose founder-president is an old man cheering up at the sight of good food. His thesis again functions through the stereotype about Indian's and Westerners: "For the Westerner the mind comes first, then the heart. With us it is topsy-turvy, or vice versa. It is the aim and basis of my University to unite these two tendencies of the human constitution..." (166).

Thus, *A New Dominion or Travelers* is a novel that contains four major characters who travel from Delhi to the holy city Banaras and then to Manipur. The novel's title suggests the themes operating at different levels. On the surface A New Dominion refers to a new India, characterized by an Indian chauvinism that has replaced British imperial arrogance. It is a colonialism novel about a new economic entrepreneurial in India in which modernity creates new kinds of stress within the patterns of traditional life and class position.

References

1. Jhabvala, Ruth Praver. *A New Dominion*. London: John Murray, 1983.
2. Prasad, Kameshwar. *The Novels of Ruth Jhabvala: A Critical Study*. Shree Niwas: Jaipur, 2006.
3. Shahane, Vasant A. *Ruth Praver Jhabvala*. 2nded. New Delhi: Arnold Heinemaan, 1983.

The Feminine Sensibilities in Kamala Markandaya's Select Novels

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Jayachandran, R.
"The Feminine Sensibilities in Kamala Markandaya's Select Novels." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 50–55.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269041>

R.Jayachandran

*Assistant Professor in English, Ph.D., Research Scholar
P.M.Thevar College, Uslimapatti*

Abstract

The research paper explains the female writers feel that women have been poor victims of male domination and exploitation. So, the reality of the miserable plight of women, anguish and unspoken feelings encouraged them to voice their problems through the medium of writing in fiction in English. Being the women, they can dive deep into their psyche and understood their grievances. Therefore, feminism in literature has brought a new awakening, awareness to the people exclusively for women as literature gives a sense of reality. In the post-independence era women novelists have marked their presence by highlighting feminist issues in their writings. Among the galaxy of writers Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Pravar Jhabvala, Shashi Deshpande, Kamala Das, Bharti Mukherjee registered themselves as the successful novelists of Indian English fiction. They have projected the suffocated psyche of their protagonists by the virtue of their feminine sensibility and psychological insight. They have exposed their problem and the cause of their psychological and emotional imbalance. Women of the contemporary era feel inhibited to raise their voice against the male dominated society. They have sketched that women in spite of being highly educated undergo traumatic experiences due to repression. The feminine sensibilities in the novels of Kamala Markandaya depicted as narrators, opponents for male. They can find out the path to dilute the uncontrollable angry against male. From their works, they can insult and irritate the male character like taking revenge through the story narration. Kamala Markandaya's novels, in comparison with those of her contemporary women writers, seem to be more fully reflective of the awakened feminine sensibility in modern India as she attempts to project the image of the changing traditional society. The variety and complexity of the achieved content of her novels represent a major trend in the history of the Indo - English novel. Kamala Markandaya is one of the most outstanding woman novelists on the canvas of Indo-English fiction. She is undoubtedly one of the major novelists on the commonwealth scene.

Keywords: woman as mother, wife, daughter, employee, unfulfilled expectations, love and marriage, family relationship, exploitation, patriotism, attainment of freedom.

Kamala Markandaya projects the image of national consciousness on many levels of aesthetic awareness, the complication of her family, and personal feelings and emotions. Likewise, many female characters are appearing and fighting for their rights through the literary works. The author herself transmute into the character with her feeling and emotions in her novels. Though she is a post-independence female novelist, her novels touched the east and west cultural conflicts, women empowerment and used many images like

house and she is close to the women in different and its condition during the contemporary life and expresses her feeling, notions and ideas with power.

Nectar In A Sieve has been translated into seventeen languages which brought her worldwide fame. Markandaya is such a novelist who exemplifies the different kinds of women in her novels. She depicts peasants, westernized women, English women, spiritual women, prostitution, selfish and selfless women. As the title shows all the feminine qualities and their anguish in her novels. The motherly touch in Rukmani, Kunti, Ira, Sarojini, Nalini, Mohini shows the maternal instinct found in all women as common. They represent the realistic picture of a mother in society. The good mother and evil mother are generally found. Markandaya has succeeded in drawing attention towards the prevailing modernity during the contemporary days. Her modern characters like Mira, Lalitha, Saroja are seen today. They resemble other women working in private company or being home makers. She also traces the disadvantages and evils of extreme modernity. India is a spiritual country and being an Indian, Markandaya presents spiritual characters like Sarojini and Swami. The effect and loss of the spiritual values are showing very clearly through the eyes of the novelists characters.

In Her ten novels, Markandaya presents the vivid description of India after independence. The female characters are from the rural and urban places. For instance, her character Mira in “Some Inner Fury” 1955, “Nowhere Man”, Caroline in “Possession” 1963, In “Nectar In A Sieve”, Rukmani struggles in a changing village and is shown as exploited. In “A Silence Of Desire”, Sarojini Dandekar battles between tradition and modernity in contemporary India, Nalini in “A Handful Of Rice”. These characters are recognized in her novels. They are being the society women reflection as the common human beings. In her novels, she portrays the rural and urban scene, spiritual quest, modernism, attitude toward feminine superiority, East - West encounter, conflict between tradition and prevailing modernism and somewhat historical attitudes and also deals with the theme of “Spiritualism, mysticism, pious and holy notions, the rural and urban areas of South India and its conflicts in regard to both Indian and British, since many features are overviewed in her novels, the superiority of female has been discussed in her novels in regard to the male tendency to be superior.

However Kamala markandaya shrewdly presents the female characters in her novels in the village and city. she can be favourably compared with foreign novelists of distinction. Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar malgonkar, Kamala Markandaya and Ruth Pravar Jhabvala are among many others. R. P. Jhabvala and Kamala Markandaya have excelled others in presenting young Indian women in love with foreigners.

Woman is the most adorable, meaningful and scarifying characters in every man’s life like goddesses. The extraordinary grandeur that she embodies gets fully evolved and expressed in motherhood, provided she is able to rightly conceive, understand and make use of her motherhood, not just to ‘mother’ her children but for the enfoldment of the ‘Spiritual Truth’ within her. It is then that she transforms herself into a lighthouse of wisdom, a dynamo of ‘Shakti’ and a harbour of solace and peace. From then onwards her contributions to the welfare of her family get reflected in society in a subtle but powerful way. She then turns into an evolutionary force of unlimited possibilities, directly or indirectly guiding the destiny of mankind. It is said that behind every successful man stands a woman - as wife or mother.

Marriage is a bondage between two souls but now it is a compromise. Marriage between Rukmani and Nathan is an ideal while Mohini’s relation with Bawaji Rao 3rd is illegal. Rukmani is honoured, respected and an ideal for others women. Getting married is an end in itself for many women and, in such circumstances, gainful employment becomes of secondary or no importance. A modern woman, however, would not mind combining work with marriage, where as a less modern woman would remain satisfied with being just a housewife.

Woman in India now enjoy equal status with man and there is a large percentage who still feel that women do not enjoy equality of status. Earlier, it was that thought man is 'by nature' superior to women and it is because of his superior physical strength that he holds a dominant status compared to that of woman Indian woman still believe in the natural superiority of man to a large extent. If many women feel that man is superior, it is because of their dependence and subordination to man but modernization brings in increasing in dependence and equality in the man - woman relationship. The more modern a woman is the greater is her belief in treating a husband as an equal partner than as an inferior or dominant partner. It may be pointed out that none of the women replied that the husband should be treated as an inferior partner. Indian culture puts heavy premium on the birth of a male child because it is said that a man cannot attain salvation unless his last rites are performed by a son. A writer points out that a woman's position as a 'mother of sons' gives her authority in the household. It also assumed here that with the onset of modernization this particular attitude would also undergo a change, and people would not distinguish between the birth of a male child and a female child. Emphasis on the birth of male child also points out the fact of the 'inferior' or subordinate position of woman to man.

The women seem to be walking on a sharp - edged knife. If they are a little below the expectation of their spouse, they are dubbed as backward and useless. she gains fulfillment and satisfaction from her life and at the same time not draw unwarranted comments and criticism and also maintain her status of independence, cooperation, amiability etc. According to the modern view there are two things that stand out as solid expressions of the advantages to a society when women get good education. woman has been presented either as the embodiment of endurance, understanding and sacrifice, or, being immune to a large extent to the cultural impact of the West, as custodian of Indian culture. It is her virtue that counts, not her beauty. Therefore, the highest aim of an Indian woman has been to sacrifice for her lawful husband her flesh and personal ambitions. Such as her heroine Mira in "Some Inner Fury" 1955 and Caroline in "Possession" 1963, are women of flesh and blood. Yet each is an embodiment of the totality her country is known for. Mira's dramatic rejection of her English lover when he sided with the English men is indicative of her preference for her nation to her personal love. It is reflected her personal life.

Indeed, women are superior to man because she has power as Rukmani in "Nectar In A Sieve", Mira in "Some Inner Fury" and Sarojini in "A Silence Of Desire". The 'mission' or the search for freedom, is the priority of the masculine, whereas the search for love is the priority of the feminine.

Three of Markandaya's novels "Nectar In A Sieve 1954, Some Inner Fury 1955 and Possession 1963, are presented in reminiscential mood. All the three narrators are women and the plots are circular". (K. SS. N. Rao)

Every time the story begins when the narrator gets into the mood of recollection and ends when the experiences of a whole conscious life leads her to a moment of decision to shake off her ambivalent attitude.

In "Nectar In A Sieve 1954, Rukmani narrates her life story beginning with her marriage in such a way as to depict concurrently the agony of the Indian peasants. After returning to the village Rukmani cast a longing glance on the expanse of time that had elapsed between her marriage and the death of her husband. But Nectar In A Sieve is more than Rukmani's autobiography : The critics analysis whether a woman is superior or inferior in its own way. Generally, it regards woman superior in heart and inferior in mind but in the present day, this preamble is changed. Woman is successful in all walks of life. Home is the safe place for woman but now she is a working woman and going outside.

Rukmani is the feminine Superior in her novels, markandaya evinces the woman as mother, wife, daughter and prostitute in her "Nectar In A Sieve". the protagonists have taken their own

place and projected as different types of woman as peasant woman, English woman, westernized woman and spiritual woman have their own superiority. Rukmani is a peasant woman and able to endure all sufferings. She is an idol of an Indian woman. Living in a village, she is literate and bears six children. She is superior both in heart and mind. She is different from other peasant ladies. Despite the difficulties, she could not involve in evils and keep her path clean while Kunti and Ira involve in prostitution. She becomes a good wife and a good mother. The marriage between Rukmani and Nathan was “a poor match.” (Markandaya Kamala p2) as it had been thought by Rukmani’s relatives and her village people. Even her mother was not happy with this marriage because it is below her social standard. In a village community, in setting marriages the social prestige and economic standard of the bridegroom family must be higher than that of the bride’s. Rukmani herself, at another place in the novel, describes the married life of Kunti who has also been “married beneath her”. (Markandaya Kamala p8) On the whole, Rukmani’s married life is happy despite the fact that her husband has illicit relations with Kunti, a woman of unscrupulous behaviour in the village. But there are other marriages in this novel which have turned into tragedy, sorrow and sin. The marriage of Rukmani’s eldest daughter, Ira and married life of Kunti tell tales of woe. It is also, by implication the story of the modernization of Indian villages. Rukmani is a traditional woman while Mira is a modern woman having Indian attitudes, culture and behavior.

The narrative thread is against put in the hands of a woman in “Some Inner Fury” 1955, the concept of family sentiment with the love experience of Mira and fight for the nation portrayed in it, unlike Nathan’s in *Nectar In A Sieve* is westernized and the central concern of the novel in the clash between passion and patriotism. In this novel contains a wider exploration, sociological and economic in the novels of Kamala Markandaya. She portrays a large repertoire of women in a changing Indian society.

In “A Silence Of Desire”, Sarojini Dandekar battles between tradition and modernity in contemporary India. Kamala Markandaya’s novels is an awareness of the socio - economic forces and their impact on women. So The protagonist, Sarojini in “A Silence Of Desire” is a good wife, mother and woman. She is a spiritual woman. She has all good qualities but she believes in a swamy and loses her time in the service of that swamy. She forgets her responsibilities towards her family and stands before the swamy. This spiritual and modernity conflict tries to break her family but fortunately her husband succeeds to put his wife from that trap.

Kamala Markandaya deals in all her novels with different attitudes of women. Saroja in “Two Virgins” and “Mira” in “Some Inner Fury” also deals with and narrates the story.. Her story is a love story with political crises. Saroja is a young woman, studying in a school, views about modernity. Her sister Lalitha is an advanced and modern girl and to go ahead she forgets all limitations and is engaged in evil. She becomes a film star and dazzles to see the lure of the film city. Lalitha is different from Rukmani and Mira. Despite all differences, Rukmani and Mira are superior than Lalitha. They never forget their limitations and remember their modesty and grace.

In the development of the Indian novel in English, the feminine sensibility has been assuredly well recognized, if a trifle overmuch and over - zealously at times by the Indian as well as foreign critics of Indian writing in English.

“Rukmani of *Nectar in a sieve* and Mira of *Some Inner Fury* recollect their tales in the comparative tranquility of a reverie- like style.” (Iyengar 332-333) Markandaya creates two totally different but compelling and compassionate narrators. Rukmani dominates her novel, Markandaya also successfully creates Mira as literate, city dweller woman dominating the novel. Both are perfected at their own level.

Mira is neither a flashy debutante nor a silly little rich girl but a thinking, independent, rather high – principled woman confused by the love. She feels for people who are at odds with each

other Mira pains takingly shows that her beloved Richard is an English man in a million, a veritable Fielding. Richard avoids the English community, is remarkably at home with Mira's family, relishes Indian food and clothing, knows stories from the Mahabharata, and is commonly gentle and gentle mainly is pressing his love for Mira. A pattern emerges in Markandaya's character sketches. Her women - Rukmani, Ira, Nalini, Mira, Roshan, Premala are all nobler, wiser, stronger, better than their male counterparts. But among the female characters, Rukmani is noble, ideal strong, wise, understood, patriot and liberal. Mira is literate, strong, powerful, modern, wise, patriot and understood. Rukmani is superior among all Indian views women and peasants women. Mira is superior among modern Indian women. Nalini in "A Handful Of Rice" is also good, lovely, beautiful, traditional and cooperative woman. She is superior to her elder sister Thangam and others who live in that society. Rukmani is narrator and victims of all events that happened with her and her surroundings. Nalini is not like Rukmani. She is neither a narrator nor an ideal for society. Roshan and Caroline in "Possession" are westernized and English women. Premala is also an Indian, city dweller and understood woman and die for the sake of the country. She has tried to be a modern as her husband wants. Modesty graces a woman. It is not right for a young woman to go among young men. Mira's mother comments about woman that a young woman should not go with young men it denours her personality and grace. Whenever we talk about marriage of a girl generally struck about dowry in mind. Most want dowry. It is rare ho are against this system. Kit is against this system he said,

"Was he to marry a woman for her money?"

But Mira's mother approach about this is that,

"the dowry is not for your benefit, it is for the girl's self respect, that she may not have to beg from you for her keep. You may be sure, she said, the money will be in her name and the jewels will be upon her body".
(Markandaya Kamala 50-51)

A woman is supporter to a man in all aspect whether she is mother, wife, sister and friend. She suggests, guides and nurses him. Premala as a loving girl, is suitable for Kit. She cares for him as a wife and told Kit.

It shows the superiority of a woman. Modernity changes the mind of a people. Foreign returned Kit changd while he was an Indian but his thinking about dress, changed from Indianness to modernity. As he provoked Pramela in "Some Inner Fury", "You ought to try wearing shorts like Mira".(Markandaya Kamala 53) Pramele, an idol of an Indian woman tried to compromise with this modern man and lost the modesty of Indian woman, she "came to borrow my shorts. Put them on, blushing, blushed again, furiously, when Kit looked at her bare legs, for she had never worn anything but a sari. But this modesty, which is supposed to grace awoman, found little favour in Kits eyes".(Markandaya Kamala 53)

Markandaya takes as her characters - from a very wide spectrum : Indian peasants, students, Film producers, Indian émigrés in England, English engineers and their wives on contract service in India, English working class types culled from London pubs and suburban flats. Her women are peculiarly memorable - Rukmani, Mira, Caroline Bell, Saroja and Lalitha. And she has a particular interest in analyzing women characters and suggesting as in "Two Virgins" the unusual poignancy of their fate. The narrators too are likely to be female and even when not, the novel will be told mainly from a woman's viewpoint. It becomes clear what attracts Markandaya in human beings.

References

1. Cf. K. SS. N. Rao “Kamala Markandaya : The Novelistas Craftsman”. Indian Writing Today, April - June, 1969.
2. Ibid p. 53.
3. Ibid p. 53.
4. Ibid p. 8.
5. Iyengar, Indian Writing in English, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1973, p. 332 - 333.
6. Markandaya Kamala, Nectar in a Sieve, Jaico Publishing House, Mumbai, 2003 p. 2.
7. Markandaya Kamala, Some Inner Fury, Putnam, Great Russell Street, London, 1955, p. 50 - 51.

A Feminist Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:
Devarajan, V. "A Feminist Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Mistress of Spices*." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 56–59.

DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269043>

V.Devarajan

Research Scholar, Prist University, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Divakaruni's second novel The Mistress of Spices is a demonstration in magical realism of Hindu mythological and superstitions belief with the existing American social issues including, immigrant assimilation, spiritual emptiness among the rich Indians, teenage rebellion, forbidden inter-racial romances, abusive and broken marriage. This novel which is allegorical in nature, tries to dissolve the boundaries of prose and poetry. It is a supernatural story that deals with the magical powers of an ageless mystical woman Tilotamma. This article focuses on feminist study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Mistress of Spices

Keywords: Identity, Racism, Struggle, Self-Perception, Restriction.

The story of *The Mistress of Spices* deals with two cultures of the Tilo, where Tilo is caught between her heritage and her new found world. The two edges that Tilo find herself caught up in the harsh reality of immigrant Indians in America and the mystical heritage of India. C. N. Eswari brings out the plight of women in a patriarchal society:

Women from the postcolonial world face double effacement of race and gender. Their lives are shaped not only by the western hegemonic discourse but also by the patriarchal discourse. Ironically, after independence from imperialism, the gender division in the once colonized nations became more prominent (214).

Divakaruni is able to cross the boundary of interdisciplinary and creates a new magical world. In India it is natural for the people to believe one's foremothers or grandmothers' folklore, stories and myth. Since, India is a store house of oral tradition from various section of the society. The novel does not deal only with the mystic nature of Tilo but its goes far deeper than the surface reading. It also questions one major issue of hybrid identity in a foreign country. The fantasy and the reality in the novel complement each other rather than separating them.

Tilo is allowed to work her spells and magic only within the confines of her grocery store and only on her Indian immigrant customers. Tilo the architect of immigrant dreams, life giver, restorer of health and hope. The spice shop, where the whole Indian

community converges is like a microcosm in itself. The novel is about the familiar immigrant tales of dreams, desires, pain and struggles which eventually end with hope. We see myriads of faces, there the bougainvillea girls, the rich men's wives and Mohan. Each face tells a story. Many of their immigrant dreams lie shattered in the dust, but there are also some success stories. The most vivid among them are the faces of four whose fates are inextricably linked with that of Tilo, the spice and spell marker: Lalita, Haroun, Geeta and Raven.

Tilo is incapable of self-perception and can only perceive her through the eyes of others when she lives in America. Though she fails in her effort to perceive herself, she succeeds in rendering her service to the mankind. She has an insight to understand others' problems and to help them in solving them. Tilo finds herself that she is composed of numerous identities. When she is trained on the island with other mistresses, she remains a silent spectator; she undergoes the purification silently by shampathi's fire and accepts her transformation into an old woman. Tilo carries over her thoughts to America. She is left with the memories of her past life in the island. She finds it difficult to suspend her thoughts about the island, first mother, the old woman and her training. During her training, first mother presents a knife to Tilo as a symbol of removing the memories and keeping her engaged in the present life to cut her moorings from the past, the future and to keep her always rocking at sea.

Tilo's diasporic journey begins when she is carried away by the pirates in a ship to the island. When she travels to the island, she doesn't feel the loss of home. She gets dislocated but does not long for her native place or her life with the family members. She finds many girls like her on the island. She meets the first mother, an elderly woman, training the mistresses to equip themselves to serve the mankind. First mother is represented as traditional and maternal figure, but trains the mistress to a progressive change. Thus, she is a juxtaposition of two elements of old and new trends differing geographical spheres, times and cultures. First mother tells them after their training that it is the time for getting new names for the mistresses. "Daughters it is them for me to give you your new names, for when you came to this island you left your old names behind, and have remained nameless since" (The Mistress of Spices 40).

Tilo loses her identity in her native land itself and receives new identity in the island. The first mother gives her the new identity as Tilo and transforms her into her own woman. Thus she is purified by the shampathi's fire before she is sent to Oakland, America. Divakaruni is again foreshadowing the process of Tilo's identity formation. Shampathi's fire is symbolized as phoenix, the legendary bird. As the bird gets life again from its ashes, the novelist has implied that Tilo recreates her after coming out of shampathi's fire. Tilo's journey to America is like her re-birth. Like the phoenix bird, she recreates herself to render service to the mankind. The ashes are found in her spices store as it reminds her about the past and are scattered as her remnants from where she raises. It is also symbolized as a substance reminding death and life linked together.

Divakaruni treats spices as characters in her novel as they listen and speak to Tilo. They react and restrict from using the magical powers. Tilo and the other women like her who become mistress are plopped down around on the world in little shops to sell spices one of the cruel tricks played on the mistress is that no matter their age, they exist trapped within the body of an aged woman. The spices do this in order to prevent their mistresses from being tempted by bodily bending the spices to help others in difficulties, however, when Tilo begins to feel the pleasures. Tilo uses spices to her own will, ignoring what they say she should prescribe, she discovers how quickly the spices can turn their magical powers against her. When she falls in love with raven all the magical powers she had from the spices and herbs begin to recede and hollow her bones. The spices song becomes a receding song. Though Tilo survives in America, she lives with the memories of the island and the first mother. It reminds her about her training and the instructions. After meeting raven, her

loves she hears first mother's voice often due to her guilty consciousness. Tilo interacts with her to justify the actions done on her interest. "The spice's silence is like a store in my heart, like ash on my tongue. Through it I can hear back to long ago, the old one laughing bitter as bile. I know what she would say where she here" (48).

The memories of her past do not simply haunt her but become the past of her. It is impossible for her in the present to live without the memories. The present itself is not the permanent one for her. This new sense of time is explained in the text, for Divakaruni jumps from one secular location within readers by every chapter. Divakaruni creates a somatic reaction within readers by oscillating between Tilo's childhood, her days spent on island, and the various stages of her life in America, causing us to experience the same sense of temporal dislocation. When Tilo comes to know about the brutality of racism, by reading in the newspaper, she splits seeds to heal the wound. Here Divakaruni once again mentions the existing racism in America. When Tilo thinks about the injured Mohan, she thinks: "O Mohan broken in body broken in mind by America, I come back from your story in pieces, find myself assembled at last on the on the chill floor of the shop" (30).

The story ends with Tilo's transformation into a middle aged woman and renamed her Maya, which means an illusion. Divakaruni indirectly points out that reality of the human condition is only an illusion. She also gives the hidden messages that no human being has real identity. Tilo chooses the name Maya that means many things. It is a name that consists of the multiplicity of her identities, various consciousnesses' that lie within her.

Divakaruni neither encourages complete assimilation with the host culture, nor stimulates alienation from the old culture. This novel teaches that the immigrant experience can be successful through the union of different cultural values. It also informs about the lives of Indian immigrants in America and about Indian culture, culinary culture in particular, and about the lives of Indian immigrants in America. Divakaruni perhaps also wants to show why Indian immigrants maintain certain aspects of their Indian culture even in America. In this manner she tries to evoke the readers' compassion and understanding for such immigrants.

In the feminist view, *The Mistress of Spices* deals with the sufferings and emotional battles inside the women in this society. The novel clearly states the problems faced by the women in foreign land and their inner conflicts in choosing their identity. For an immigrant it is not easy to adapt the cultural displacement and overcome it. Their inner dilemma makes them to strike between the Indian and American cultures. In this novel Chitra Banerjee, tells us about the hopes and dreams of Indian immigrants in the foreign land. Through her own experience she becomes well known about the differences in Indian culture and American culture as she herself moved to the United States from India. She portrays the adjustment through food and dress habits. As Fanon points out: "the native cannot talk to the western doctor accepting the (western man's) medicine is demonstrating confidence in western technique/ science, swallowing it in one gulp is literally getting even with it" (qtd in Nayar 173).

Self-perception is the foundation of identity within these texts, but the self that emerges from the various self-perceptions is not one characterized by double identities vying for unification. Rather, the South Asian diasporic women are comprised of multiple selves existing together, conflicting with each other but ultimately, to one degree or another, accepted in their contradictions by the women who possess them. The notion of a problematic double consciousness envisions a future synthesis of identity as a solution, where it is possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, the women in the texts are examined and that reject such a synthesis.

Divakaruni develops a new narrative technique. The technique she adopts is a magical realism which aims to seize the paradox of the union of opposites. *The Mistress of Spices* stirs magical realism into the new conventions of culinary fiction and still-simmering caldron of Indian immigrant

life in America. The novel, also to a great extent, reveals Divakaruni's understanding of the human psyche, particularly female consciousness. Divakaruni, in her novel, *The Mistress of Spices* is actively engaged in the task of re-imagining the space for the diasporic community. In the voice of her heroine Tilottama, Divakaruni locates an authentic feminine voice which is at once a voice of power and gentleness that has made new in the diasporic location. It is by re-articulating south Asian American subjectivity re-inventing myths, relocating the power of the female voice and blending the real and the fantastic. Divakaruni's novel gives a cross-cultural experience of the south Asian Community in the United States.

Work Cited

1. Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *The Mistress of Spices*. London: Black Swan, 1997. Print.
2. Eswari, C. N. "Post-colonialism and Chitra Banerjee's *Sister of My Heart*." *Contemporary Indian Writing in English: Critical Perceptions*. Ed. N. D. R. Chandra. 1st ed. Vol. II. New Delhi: Sarup, 2005. 202-219. Print.
3. Nayar, Pramod K. *Literary Theory Today*. New Delhi: Asia, 2002. Print.

A Study of Postcolonial Society in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's Heat and Dust

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Jeyaraman, C. "A Study of Postcolonial Society in Ruth Praver Jhabvala's Heat and Dust." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 60–63.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269045>

Dr. C.S. Jeyaraman

Assistant Professor of English

Devanga Arts College (Autonomous), Aruppukottai

Abstract

Ruth Praver Jhabvala has as a literary artist. She is a European. Her novels deal with the themes like love, sex, and marriage in the bourgeois society, East-West encounter, pseudo-modernism in Indian society, the post-independence Indian ethos, affectation and hypocrisy in the Indian middle-class society. Jhabvala's literary works are concerned with the postcolonial situation of the lives of Europeans. Her novel Heat and Dust presents outrageous human relations through the power of romance set in two distinct eras, colonial India of the 1920s, during the time of Raj and the independent, freewheeling India of the 1970s. The human relations can refer to at least two groups of people: those with mixed Indian and British ancestry. The first story is about Olivia. Olivia Rivers is a young lady from London who has accompanied her husband to British colonial India. The second story is that of the narrator, a descendant of Douglas, and his second wife. The novel deals the story with enough romance, political, and history. We have encountered the characters - the heat, dust, poverty, superstition, British postcolonial administrators. Thus, it explores human relations through the power of romance in postcolonial society.

Keywords: Indian society, the pre and the post-independence India, fashions, psychology of expatriate, and postcolonial .

Traditionally women have excelled in all walks of life. In the field of literature, they have made debut due to their superior imagination and sense and sensibility. The novelists have given a new dimension to the Indian Literature. They have incorporated the recurring female experiences in their writings, and it affected the cultural and language patterns of Indian Literature. Their novels/fictions consist of the latest burning issues related to women as well as those issues that exist in society. Ruth Praver Jhabvala has as a literary artist. She is a European. Her novels deal with the themes like love, sex, and marriage in the bourgeois society, East-West encounter, pseudo-modernism , the post-independence Indian ethos, affectation and hypocrisy in the Indian middle-class. She handles her ideas with presents a penetrating and a compassionate picture of human relationship.

Jhabvala's literary works are concerned with the diasporic postcolonial situation of the lives of Europeans. Her works abound with female characters struggling to survive in the unfamiliar surroundings and situations. She deals with the common problems, loneliness and fulfillment.

Jhabvala's novel *Heat and Dust* presents outrageous human relations through the power of romance set in two distinct eras, colonial India of the 1920s, during the time of Raj and the independent, freewheeling India of the 1970s. The human relations can refer to at least two groups of people: those with mixed Indian and British ancestry, and people of British descent born or living in the Indian subcontinent. The people were the product of the confident European expansion of the 16th century. In the years of British colonial, intermarriage between the British and the native females was encouraged. But soon after British power was establishing in India, this policy had reversed: it was feared that a mixed community might threaten the British rule.

The Novel *Heat and Dust* tell two parallel stories about two ladies in different periods and their adventures in India. The first story is about Olivia Rivers. Olivia is a young beautiful lady from London. She has accompanied her husband to British colonial India. She comes to India in the conventional role of a wife to the sub-collector of Satipur. Her husband Douglas Rivers is an English ICS Officer. She is spoiled, and spirited young woman beauty. She finds it difficult to adjust to life in the British colonial community of Satipur. Douglas's official duty, he spends very little time with his wife. Olivia loves her husband very much, but she feels suffocated by the inbred group. She longs for independence, intellectual stimulation, and more passionate life. She is suffocated by the social constraints of her position as the wife of an important English civil servant. She hopes that a baby will solve her problems, but finds it more difficult to become pregnant than she has thought. In India, Douglas, Olivia and some of the other members of the community has invited to the palace of the Nawab of Khatm. Olivia is drawn passion and independence into the spell of the Nawab of khatm. The Nawab is extremely attractive and handsome. She is intrigued by the Nawab's charm and aggressive courtship. She begins to spend most of her days in his company. Soon she develops her friendship turns passionate. She makes frequent visits to the place of Nawab.

The Nawab is deeply involved in gang raids and criminal plots. Harry informs this shocking news to Olivia: "When we go from here, Olivia, will you go back to Satipur and say yes, the Nawab is a bad person, now I have seen with my own eyes that he meets with outlaws, dacoits he is hand in glove with them." (147) The Nawab is the ruler of a state. He has drained the exchequer of the poor state of its last pie by his vulgar extravagance. Also, when the state coffers are not in a position to support his decadent style of living. He joins notorious bandits to rob and plunders his people. Olivia's experience in India is limited to the Nawab. He gives her a sense of belonging and the kind of importance that flatters her ego. Her illicit relations with the Nawab after she gets the results into pregnancy. Olivia has ever known to become the lover. She hides the fact of her pregnancy from her husband: "When Olivia found that she was pregnant, she didn't tell Douglas. She put it off from day to day, and in the end it happened that she told the Nawab first." (154-155) Olivia tries an abortion with the help of the Nawab's friend, Harry. Douglas divorces her when he comes to know about the affair. Then he remarries, and Olivia remains in India for the rest of her life. Olivia then resides in Town X for her remaining years.

In the second story is that of the narrator, a descendant of Douglas, and his second wife. His wife arrives in Bombay intending to make it her home for a while. She wants to reconstruct the story of the doomed marriage of her grandfather, Douglas and his first wife, Olivia. She presents her adventures, thoughts, and reflection in the form of a journal. She tries her best to discover what motivates Olivia to change her life. She stays in the town where her grandfather and Olivia fifty years before. She has portraits of India. She accepts the sick and deformed men of Satipur as part of the landscape. She visits the places her step- grandmother. She also interviews people who know of her. Certainly, she adopts to live her life in the Olivia way. Her subject of research slowly widens from Olivia's life in India to herself in India. She reads the letters and journals that Olivia wrote so

long ago. She ventures into experiences similar to Olivia's adventures but more acceptable in our modern time. Her spiritual and sensual journey in the 1970s parallels Olivia's like the colour, heat, exotic landscapes, and people of India penetrate her western upbringing. Anne writes in her own diary: "Fortunately, during my first few months here, I kept a journal, so I have some record of my early impressions. If I were to try to recollect them now, I might not be able to do so. They are no longer the same because I myself am no longer the same. India always changes people, and I have been no exception."(2)

In this novel, the protagonist Olivia falls in love with an Indian man. He is a clerk named Inder Lal. He comes from the lower middle-class, and he is a representative specimen of the new India. In this role, he offers a contrast to the Rajas and Nawabs of British India. He is married, and Ritu is his wife, but he develops a relationship with the narrator. His relationship with Anne is an only a mechanical one. He makes her pregnant. Unconsciously, Anne falls the same path of her step-grandmother. As Olivia did, she also has an Anglo-Indian love affair and picks up where Olivia left. She has a casual attitude to her pregnancy. Unlike Olivia, she decides to have a child of Inder Lal. At the end of the novel, she decides to spend her years in Town X, just as Olivia did, "I have taken a room in the town of X and live there in the same way I did in Satipur. The town is the same too — the houses are ramshackle, the alleys intricate and narrow; only here everything is on slope, so that it looks as if the whole town might slide down the mountain any minute."(196) When we analyze text, we can find out that both Olivia and Anne led the same life. Olivia seeks merger into Indian through sex but remains to suffer. She does not return to England but stays in a house upon hills. Then she hopes to find the resolution of the conflict of two cultures. But the narrator is different from Olivia in some matters. She imbibes the spirit of the land; she naturally identifies herself with India. She offers an image of India which contrasts the fragmentation and alienation of the West. To her, India is a big country that accommodates many ideas and things which are incompatible in nature, "Town is used to accepting and merging all sorts of different elements for instance, the grand old tombs of Mohammedan royalty on the one hand and the little grey suttee stones on the other. There are also the town's cripples idiots and resident beggars". (78-79) Olivia consents to abort the child in her step-grandmother. Anne is determined to have her baby. Both of them have the influence of Anglo-Indian culture. They fall under India's spell. Jhabvala observes that India is a magnet for Europeans in search of a spirituality that they have failed to find in western religions.

A study of the technique of two parallel narratives within one narrative also helps in setting up a comparative study of Indian society, and the possibility of analyzing two different racial relations living with passion in two 'Indias'- the pre-independence India and the post-independence India of the postcolonial society. In the narrative, two-time frames are running parallel to each other, and sometimes, they merge into each other too. There are some occasions when the time frame of one narrative merges with the second narrative. At the surface level, events and situations in both the stories are quite similar, but the attitude of the narrator while narrating two different narratives is not so. Two similar seeming plots end in different fashions. This technique of juxtaposing seemingly similar events of two parallel narratives helps in establishing a relation of similarity between the two fabulous happenings in two different time frames and allows the reader to have the advantage of the comparative study of the postcolonial society. The narrative gives insight into the psychology of the expatriate as both the women in the plots are dislocated from their original land and go through the romantic encounter in a foreign land. It also reveals the narrator's impression about India, as the narrator is also present in the narrative as a character.

Thus, Jhabvala's *Heat and Dust* deals the story with enough romance, political, and history. We have encountered in almost every scene and character - the heat, dust, poverty, superstition, the

rigidly emotional British postcolonial administrators, the catty British wives, the noble and rogue natives, the reaction of British men and women who are seduced by the setting scandalizing the communities. All the characters were realistic. It is the presentation of Indian society. It explores human relations through the power of romance in postcolonial society.

References

1. Ashri, Sumita. 2010. Ruth Praver as a Novelist: A Postcolonial Study. Jaipur: Aadi Publications.
2. Jhabvala, Ruth Praver. 1994. Heat and Dust. Penguin: England.
3. Williams, Haydn Moore. 1973. The Fiction of Ruth Praver Jhabvala. Calcutta: A Writers Workshop Publication.

Memory as a Process of Woman in the Novel of Atwood's *Alias Grace*

OPEN ACCESS

Volume : 7

Special Issue : 1

Month : June

Year: 2019

ISSN: 2320-2645

Impact Factor: 4.110

Citation:

Murali Arasan, P.
"Memory as a Process
of Woman in the
Novel of Atwood's
Alias Grace." *Shanlax
International Journal
of English*, vol. 7, no. 1,
2019, pp. 64–67.

DOI:

[https://doi.org/10.5281/
zenodo.3269059](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3269059)

P.Murali Arasan

Assistant Professor of English

Devanga Arts College (Autonomous), Aruppukottai

Abstract

Margaret Atwood depicts life memory as a process, a journey into one's self that results in self-realization, self-assertion and reconciliation. She brings out the sufferings of women under her writings portrait of Canadian Women. Atwood's Alias Grace (1997), the central character, Grace Marks who is accused of double murders spends nearly twenty nine years in the penitentiary. Grace, at the beginning, is taken to a lunatic asylum for her madness and amnesia. Later she is transferred to Kingston Penitentiary and she remains there for long. Consequent on Dr. Simon's interviews, Grace is proved to be innocent. In his meetings with Grace, Simon employs several experiments, and methods to recover her lost memory but all his efforts go in vain. At last, Simon becomes mad, and he leaves a medical report in support of Grace's pardon. Remaining in the penitentiary for twenty nine years, she scorns the codes of patriarchy. By marrying Jamie Walsh at the age of forty five, she not only fulfills her desire for owning a home and doing the quilt work but also caters to the desire of Mary Whitney, another victim of the same society.

Keywords: Lunatic asylum, fits and hysteria, melting-pot, amnesia, self-realization, self-assertion and reconciliation.

Margaret Atwood depicts life memory as a process, a journey into one's self that results in self-realization, self-assertion and reconciliation. She, while establishing the Canadian identity in the making of Canadian literature, discusses the place of women under the British empirical colonization and the influence of Americanism. Atwood brings out the sufferings of women under her writings. She can be used on the ground that they are not only feminist writers of the Commonwealth nations but also are involved in the plight of the marginalized women in their writings. While Atwood deals with the life of Canadian women.

Atwood's *Alias Grace* (1997), the central character, Grace Marks who is accused of double murders spends nearly twenty nine years in the penitentiary. Grace, an Irish immigrant, at the age of sixteen works as a maid in the household of a gentleman called Thomas Kinnear. Together with James McDermott, Mr. Kinnear's stable man, she is alleged to have convicted the murder of her employer and his mistress, Nancy Montgomery. McDermott is sentenced to death but Grace escapes death due to her lawyer's brilliant defense. Her sentence is commuted to life imprisonment. Initially, she is sent

to a lunatic asylum in Toronto for her frequent fits and hysteria. Though she is convicted of the crime, she pleads not guilty and her crime is not proved.

Atwood fictionalizes the true story of Grace Marks in this novel. Along with the historical characters, she depicts Dr. Jordan, a New Englander, and an expert in treating patients suffering from amnesia. He tries to discover the truth from Grace Marks during his psychoanalytical sessions held in the Governor's sewing room. Using detective methods, he attempts to show whether Grace actually committed the crime or she was insane at the time of murder. Atwood gives a three-layered story in *Alias Grace*. Grace's narration about her life comes as the prime story. Dr. Simon Jordan's attempts to find out the truth about Grace unfold the possibilities of a second version of the story about Grace. The third layer of story is fabricated with facts and fiction. Atwood fictionalizes Grace's story based on historical events. While narrating her story to Dr. Simon Jordan, Grace Marks is selective in phrasing the events. She accuses the society in spite of her being accused. She feels that her society wants to see her as a celebrated murderess, and later she accepts the title, 'Murderess'. "Murderer is merely brutal. It's like a hammer, or a lump of metal. I would rather be a murderess than a murderer, if those are the only choices." (25)

In this novel, Grace, a child among four brothers and four sisters, loses her mother at an early age. Her mason father, who turns out to be a drunkard, starts exploiting the labour of his children. He makes Grace work as a servant-maid since her childhood. She serves nearly six masters. When she works at Mrs. Alderman Parkinson's house with Mary Whitney, she learns more about men and the world. Due to the large size of her family and the drunken nature of her father she sacrifices all pleasures related to childhood. She thinks of killing one or two of her brothers and sisters: "I might just push one or two of them over, and then there would not be so many to feed, nor so many clothes to wash." (124) Against her wishes to be free from the household duties Grace has to start her career as a maid. After the death of her mother she is forced to be in the custody of her drunken father who in turn expects money from her. She accepts Mary Whitney as her model. In fact, Mary, who teaches her about moving with men and other female problems, dies of abortion. Once she warns Grace: "at once you are found with a man in your room, you are the guilty one, no matter how they get it." (231)

Having learnt several lessons from Mary Whitney, Grace gradually develops into a strong woman. When Mr. Haraghy, her employer, attempts to misbehave, she thinks of Mary's advice about kicking between the legs. In his letter to Dr. Edward Murchie, Dr. Simon writes about Grace: "...the gentle Grace, having been hardened in the fire now for some fifteen years, will be a very hard nut to crack" (61). Her real story remains at one side; the other story she fabricates, as she quilts in the Governor's wife's sewing room when she answers Dr. Simon. Atwood, through Grace, interrogates the nature of forgetting, the secrets of human soul and the art of the patchwork quilt. She carefully tells the past to Dr. Simon as she confesses in the trial. In this context it is worth quoting Elaine Showalter who argues that patchwork, "an art of making do and eking out" that reflects the fragmentation of women's time, has come to replace the melting-pot as the central metaphor of American cultural identity." (Rogerson 5)

Grace, having acquired the name Mary Whitney, not only pays a dubious identity, but also narrates different stories about her life. Her quilting art enables her to withhold her secrets from her male inquisitor Dr. Simon, as he attempts to recover her lost memories of the crime using the traditional method of suggestion by association. Her art of sewing gives Grace a voice through which she can articulate her secrets. It is a story of a woman who has no means of proving the truth due to the biased society and due to a section of society that deserves no sympathy. Grace Marks' experiences with the male dominated society, inclusive of her father, make her remain silent and pretend to be mad in order to wreak vengeance on the society. As she loses all faith in her father she is even prepared to kill him: I had begun to have thoughts about the iron cooking pot, and how heavy it was; and if it should happen to drop on him while he was asleep, it could

smash his skull open, and kill him dead, and I would say it was an accident;.....(149) Alongside her own sufferings in the hands of her father, Grace thinks of the pains of Mary Whitney and Nancy Montgomery, the mistress of Mr. Kinnear, who suffer in the hands of men. Mary Whitney, though she introduces various safety measures to Grace, becomes a victim of male chauvinism. Her lover, who is not known to any body, impregnates her. To escape the biological trap, Mary goes to a doctor. After returning from the doctor, she gets profuse bleeding and dies the same night. Her unknown lover creates an awkward opinion about men in Grace's mind. Nancy who lives as a mistress in the house of Mr. Kinnear wants to become Kinnear's wife, but Mr. Kinnear tells her that a mistress is a mistress. The defeats faced by Mary and Nancy force Grace to act on society vengefully.

When James McDermott, the stable man of Mr. Kinnear decides to kill both Nancy and Mr. Kinnear, Grace has to go hand in hand with McDermott in executing the murder, for otherwise he would kill her too. James plans to kill Nancy for the reason that she has removed him from service; and he wants to kill Mr. Kinnear as thereby he can gather all the valuable things from him. James compels Grace to accompany him in committing the murder. She reveals this to Dr. Simon: Cried, sir, in the Kitchen. I did not want to leave, and I had no new situation to get to. It had been so sudden; I'd had no time to seek for one. And I was afraid she would not pay me after all, and send me off with no reference, and then what would I do? And McDermott feared the same. (359)

In the course of their regular meetings in the Prison Governor's wife's sewing room, Grace and Dr. Simon develop a liking towards each other. But Dr. Simon immediately drops the idea as she is a female prisoner and an amnesiac too. By bringing back Dora, the servant maid, and helping the land lady, Simon proves himself to be a patron of women. With a soft corner and hope, Simon starts his interrogation with Grace very carefully. But in the course of their interviews Grace's way of telling past irritates him and he declares: "To speak plainly, her madness was a fraud and an imposture....She is an accomplished actress and a most practiced liar." (81)

While narrating her story Grace keeps sewing the quilts. When Dr. Simon requests her to reveal everything, she says, "A lady might conceal things, as she has her reputation to lose; but I am beyond that." (104) Simon, with his own apprehensions, examines her with all admiration as she is young and beautiful. Then, the comment on Grace from another psychoanalyst by name Verringe that she is innocent, Simon doubts very much. He thinks that every one believes in the innocence of Grace only due to her outward appearance. Simon, during to the kind of response he receives from Grace, identifies Grace as a 'negative female variety'. He thinks, "She can deny and reject much more easily than she can affirm or accept." (421) He also finds in her a foil to Mr. Mac Kengie, Grace Mark's lawyer. The lawyer in turn admits that Grace is a "Lady of silences." (433) Simon goes to the graves where Mary Whitney is buried and finds the grave with no dates on it. He recounts, "... the Mary Whitney buried beneath it may not have any connection with Grace Marks at all. She could be just a name, a name on a stone, seen here by Grace and used by her in the spinning of her story." (451)

Through Dr. Simon, Atwood depicts the conversion of history into story. The primary plot is based on a famous nineteenth century murder case. In the summer of 1843, Thomas Kinnear, a gentleman farmer and Nancy Montgomery, who was both his housekeeper and his mistress, were murdered in Richmond Hill near Toronto. Kinnear had two other servants, James McDermott and Grace Marks who were charged with the murders and found guilty. The second plot starts when Grace Marks meets Simon Jordan sixteen years after the murder in the Kingston Penitentiary. Jordan wishes to examine Grace not only because she is believed to be a murderess but also because she suffers from amnesia. After a long debate that goes on between psychoanalysts, Grace gets her pardon on Tuesday, August 7, 1872 after twenty eight years and ten months. By fabricating all these historical details with the story, Margaret Atwood portrays a strong woman who silently fights against the male-dominated society, in her *Alias Grace*.

While narrating her life-story, Grace thinks of telling a lie to the society and tries to hide the events of her life. By doing this, she erases her past and escapes into the future. Margaret Atwood in this novel *Alias Grace*, fictionalizes history, past and present. Both historical documents and fictional ones contain the so called truths about Grace's character and the representations of her inner essence.

References

1. Atwood, Margaret. *Alias Grace*. London: Virago, 1997.
2. Nuderhoff, Burkhard. "How to do things with History: Researching Lives in Carol Shield's *Swann* and Margaret Atwood's *Alias Grace*". *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 35.2. (2000).
3. Rogerson, Margaret. "Reaching the Patchworks in *Alias Grace*". *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. 33.1. (1998).