



ENCAPSULATION OF PARADIGM AND STEREOTYPE IN *BREAST STORIES* AND *LADIES COUPE*: A STUDY OF MAHASWETA DEVI AND ANITA NAIR

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ABSTRACT

The present research investigates that paradigm shift and stereotype of women since three decades. The study has undertaken a short story and a novel of two contemporary women writers. Both writers have encapsulated the subaltern state of women: Jashoda- after her marriage, Akila- remains spinster, and Marikolunthu- victim of man's lust and poverty. It shows that from dawn to dusk, suffering is like an essential organ of women, as body functions with the help of both internal and external organs. Feelings, emotions, and sufferings of protagonists are neither exaggerated nor diminished when it is encapsulated by women writers. Indeed, the notion of Julia Kerstiva, Elaine Showalter, and other feminists writers' features towards woman becomes a mouthpiece of woman is succeed in male oriented/dominated society. The protagonist of Mahasweta Devi, Jashoda becomes a professional mother: a mother –by-hire. Further Anita Desai's protagonist Akila remains spinster. It is identified that non-emancipation is common between Jashoda and Akila. In addition, they have trapped in the clutches of family through paradigm and stereotype of society.

Key words:- emancipation, subaltern, mother (profession), gender-suppression

INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that women are marginalized every nook and corner of society, particularly at domestic life. Further they are becoming male chauvinists. It is identified in the case of

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Jashoda, she takes the role of *professional mother* to look after the family when Kanganalichar, her husband has lost legs. It brings the statement of Toril Moi's "a matter of biology" (cited from Peter Barry's *Beginning Theory* 117). Alienation of women in literature: women's feelings, emotions, and desires have been brought out by male writers. It is promulgated by many women writers to begin their own work of arts through the voice of women. Indeed, Elaine Showalter's statement advocates that women are students of male teachers, and they have influence by them. Further she states that women must produce their own literature. To support her notions and to create female writing, she has coined a term i.e. *Gynocriticism*: study of gynotexts (books by women). It depicts that women have been marginalized till the first half of twentieth century. Besides, the place of women in literature as well as society is actually constructed by patriarchal. Female writing may be a representation or reproduction of previous art, as they have distinguished language. It is postulated in *A Room of One's Own*, "language use is gendered, so that when a woman turns to novel writing she finds that there is no common sentence ready for her use" (121) by Virginia Woolf (cited from Peter Barry's *Beginning Theory*). In addition, men hierarchy have prominent place to suppress women. Mahasweta Devi as a feminist, activist, and Marxist her protagonist, Jashoda has sound voice, she is constructed through the right voice of a female and more or like a mother, she represents a true woman of such alienated female family. The family of Kanganalichar revolves around Jashoda and she becomes a "centre" (Jacques Derrida). Similarly, Anita Nair's Akila and Marikolunthu turn the "centre" of family. The present study concentrates on a deconstructive and psychoanalytical of chosen works, as centre becomes "decentre".

Jashoda

It is firmly believed that motherhood is respected everywhere. Besides, a woman is either respected or recognized when she delivers a baby or becomes mother. It clearly shows that stereotype of society is based on the doctrine to respect as well as consider a woman to her motherhood. Furthermore, a place of woman in family and society is determined through whether she delivers a baby or not. Whereas female gender is not respected/ considered to any other works. It is a crucial action against women for their natural reproduction. Since they are alienated/ determined for reproduction with the doctrine of ancient time, it travels to present scenario. Even in the history, there are few women scored high position while comparing with men. Women's oppression and suppression are present everywhere. It is the fact that women are suppressed by same gender. In order to maintain health and structure of Haldar family women, Jashoda is appointed as a professional mother or suckled mother or breast giver by Mistress of the family. She has been breast feeding more than twenty babies till she aged forty five. Her worthiness is postulated as two sides of a magnet, i.e. north and south which never be united, besides rejects each other. In spite of being a poor woman, Jashoda has plenty of milk in her breasts "a flood of milk although she was between



pregnancies and she didn't have any special food or pampering" (Devi 32). In addition, she undertakes the family through the prosperity of milk, and says to her husband on the day she is appointed, "Look, I'm going to pull our weight with these" (Devi 33) It states that paradigm is actually determined as well as maintained by women. It is very crucial to Jashoda that she never remembers a day without a baby sucking her breasts.

In India, women are often compared with "Goddess" which preserves, protects, and fertile. There are local rituals are happening for Sakthi (goddess) in order to get prosperity for family. A woman's place in family is almost like omnipotent, as she looks after the babies, husband, mother-in-law, father-in-law, niece, nephew, and so on. It explicates the paradigm against women. In addition, they are determined to look after house hold works alone. But, Jashoda empowers and enlightens to govern her family as well as Haldar's family through her milk. Further she feels happy and proud of this. Jashoda becomes a "Cow" which gives milk to all. Mistress expresses when sees her *mammal projections*, "the good lord has sent you down as the legendary Cow of Fulfilment" (Devi 44). But, the paradigm is shifted when she becomes a victim of cancer, Jashoda is placed in a corner of house partially looking after by house holders at beginning state, and given up by all at final stage. It is the pathetic situation of Kangalicharan, when he sees her breasts, "(Jashoda) showed him her bare left breast, thick with running sores and said, 'See these sores? Do you know how these sores smell? What will you do with me now? Why did you come to take me?'" (D57).

It interprets the stereotypical changes i.e. centre becomes decentre. Despite the fact that centre of her family: breast to be no more as well as children should not be nourished nutrient food here after, she should not be recognized, her death might be deconstructed the ways/paths being reached Jashoda. Young, Marion Iris states that "the chest, the house of the heart, is an important centre of a person's being. I may locate my consciousness in my head, but myself, my existence as a solid person in the world, starts from my chest, from which I feel myself rise and radiate"(28).

Likewise in *Ladies Coupe*, Akila tries to change the paradigm shift from *decentre* to center, she was not allowed to go alone by her brother that she denied. The most prominent characters are Akila, who is a woman of less identity, it is postulated as "she was always an extension of someone's identity; daughter, sister, aunt....Akhila wished for once someone should see her as a whole being" (Nair 202) and Marikolunthu in *Ladies Coupe*, due to their refusal, protests against the male domination stereotyped.

Marikolunthu overcomes with struggle and wants to live in the society without a shadow of patriarchal society especially, when she is raped: she was with her mother in Chettiyar Kottai. This express an inhuman thought against women in society, many radical feminist were



against the injustice like Helen Cixo was talking about “ecticture feminism”. Even Spivak brings out the concept of “womb envy” in her feminist criticism, where she accuses man for being envy on womb, in the same way *Breast giver* concern about woman as labour. Julia Kristiva talks about immasculation, which means woman forced to act as male/masculine, in order to compete with male but here Marikolunthu discards the idea and feels proud to be a women, who has escaped from male domination and come out from the Chettiyar Kottai along with her son.

In *Ladies Coupe* the protagonist also represents herself as radical feminist when she has refused to go under any patriarchal, sometime she feels happy to be alone ,think freely and act independently which all women cannot posses what she considers as freedom from male .The five women thinks that a journey is not a usual thing but it is a self discovery of the women who lost life and it was an opportunity not only to share their feelings ,emotion but also to make them to feel proud of their character when they compare each other for instance, Marikolunthu is miserable by financially, physically when she compared with Margaret Shanthi, who is rich, wealthier but lamenter against to her husband’s domination in working place and home, here Marikolunthu was not the character to lament like her .

Ladies coupe

There are six characters shared their view but mainly two strong characters reveals their inner agony: Akila’s love and how it broke down due to the cultural truma and being a pillar of the family. Akila had a love affair with Hari, a north Indian young man. It was a diminutive love affair though they made physical love several times. Akhila suddenly broke this relationship. She says, “Hari this is goodbye I will never see you again” (Nair153), as he was younger than her and she was also anxious what people and society would think if this love affair would be disclosed? She is so agonized that she mentions, “every time I look at someone watching us, I can see the question in their minds: what is he doing with an older woman? That bothers me very much, Hari. It bothers me very much that we are not suited so she decides to remain single” (Nair159).

Through this incident Nair explores the protagonist struggle. The next pathetic character is Marikolunthu, a low -caste woman, she was raped by Murugesan, an upper- class man and one of the relatives of her employers. A ferocious result of the rape came when she became pregnant. She is forced to marry a rapist “a filthy animal” (Nair 245). She refused to marry him. She is a victim but everyone blames her, “the girl must have led him on and now that she is pregnant she’s making up a story about rape” (245).



The word rape is the most awful word in women's life. When a girl is raped, she feels ashamed as she is helpless and unable to protect her own self. When Marikolunthu is raped, instead of showing sympathy, everyone blames her. Here Anita Nair tries to delineate the psychology of all the members: male or female in society find fault with the woman who has been exploited as she herself is regarded responsible for her tragedy. Spivake argues about "womb-envy" in the work of *Feministic Struggle*(15) on the character of malw how he has envy with women womb, *Womb envy* denotes the envy men may feel towards a woman's primary role in nurturing and sustaining like unconsciously Marikolunthu made us to be envy with her womb ,which means even though she raped, she is ready to beget a child, so she came out from Anitha Nair's first novel *The Better Man* which explores the same character, as if we use to see in *Ladies Coupe*.

In *The Better Man*, the character Valsala wants to hold her rights from the patriatical society even though she crossed forty "I am just forty year old .I do not want to be pushed into old age before it is time. I want to live. I want to know the ecstasy, she told herself .night after night" (Nair 130) through this readers can easily understand the struggle of Akila in *Ladies Coupe* and struggle of Valsala in *Better Man*. Furthermore, the author's portrayal of Marikolunthu freezes the attention towards stereotype of practical society, even though she is victim of man's lust, becomes an outlaw in the present scenario i.e. her poverty has a chip on her back to accept the merciless deeds of society, as a mother of illegitimate boy. Her feelings are brought out as, "I was a restless spirit warped and bitter. Sometimes I would think of the past and I would feel a quickening in the vacuum that existed within me now" (Nair 266).

CONCLUSION

The present research has identified that Breast giver and ladies coupe have remarkable place in Indian writing in English about the emotions, feelings, sufferings, and overcoming of women in the present scenario at every nook and corner. According to Tyson, in every area where patriarchy is in control, "woman is *other*: she is objectified and marginalized, defined only by her difference from male norms and values, defined by what she (allegedly) lacks and that men (allegedly) have" (92). In "Feministic Perspective in Anitha Nair's *Ladies Coupe*", Bhuvanewari advocates that all the women characters have identified their self and dilemma in relationship is shifted. It is supported by Ramana Devika, as women have masculine qualities/responsibility within their self with their strength and modes of existence to reinforce the perspective of society. The death of Jashoda, liberty of Akila, and self-realization of Marikolunthu has shown that the clutches which has been pinched them neatly deconstructed. The sufferings and it's bunches which follows the women lot its way to reach the centre.



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