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**Dr. R. Anuja, MBA, M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor**

**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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## **KG COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE**

(ISO9001:2008 Certified Institution, Accredited by NAAC

Approved by Govt. of Tamil Nadu & Affiliated to Bharathiar University)

**KGiSL Campus, 365, Thudiyalur Road, Saravanampatti,**

**Coimbatore-641035**

**Tamilnadu, India**

<http://www.kgcas.ac.in/>

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### **About the College**



KG College of Arts and Science was started in the year 2005 by the Founder and Director of KG Information Systems Private Limited, Dr. Ashok Bakthavathsalam. It is located in the KG

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**Dr. R. Anuja, MBA, M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature*** i

Campus, a sprawling 40 acre Campus, just 8 kms from the Coimbatore City. The College was started with four undergraduate courses and had the student strength of 140. At present, the College offers thirteen undergraduate courses, five post graduate courses, one five-year integrated course and one M.Phil. Research Program, with the strength of 3700 students.

The Institution has been accredited by NAAC with 'B++' grade. It is certified by TUV Rhineland, ISO 9001:2008 from 2009. The ISO quality management system includes the procedures for admissions, teaching-learning, staff and students evaluation, library recruitment and training, feedback, internal quality audit and overall development of students. The institution has automated all the work through a system called e-campus which is developed by our group concern. The automation includes Class Planner, Lesson Plan, Attendance and Continuous Internal Assessment and Analysis, etc.



## Greetings from the Managing Trustee

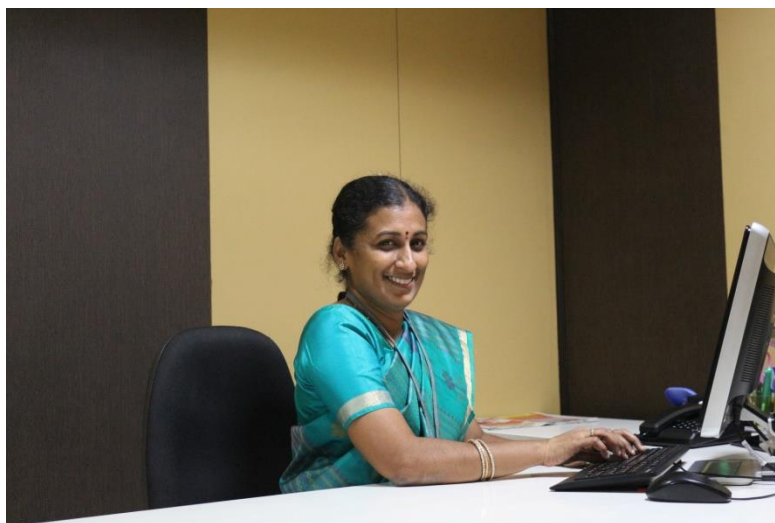


Dr. Ashok Bakthavathsalam

I am very glad to know that our **Department of English** is publishing the selected papers of the One Day International Conference on **Gender Conflicts as Evident in Contemporary English Literature 2017**, conducted on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in *Language in India*, [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com), a reputed online monthly journal. Our goal is to provide an open stage for the students/research scholars in various fields to advance their knowledge and contribute to the research community. For this purpose, we believe it is especially important to encourage the participation of research scholars from various colleges, and not just the experts in a narrow sense. At this juncture, I would like to express my thanks from the bottom of my heart for the Organizing Committee members who have made great efforts and conducted the Conference successfully. I congratulate all the students, research scholars and faculty members from various colleges for their participation in the Conference.

**Dr. Ashok Bakthavathsalam**  
**Managing Trustee**

## Greetings from the Principal



Dr. R. Anuja

The IRCGC 2017 International Conference organized by the Department of English Literature on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 was a resounding success. The conference was very well arranged with quality research papers and invited talks. In the recent trend, it has become a basic need for us to be well-versed in the internationally accepted language, English, for the success and progress in all our academic, business and technical, research fields. Language, Literature and Culture have various dimensions and they are interrelated with each other in our lives. I am very proud that our Department of English is publishing the Selected Papers in *Language India* [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com), a reputed monthly journal. I congratulate all the participants from various colleges and Universities who presented their research papers and also exchanged their research views in the conference. We are grateful for all the participants from various colleges, who made this Conference a grand success. I wish to express my appreciation to the Department of English for their meticulous planning and astounding effort.

**Dr. R. Anuja**  
**Principal, KG College of Arts and Science**

## Message from the Convenor

KG College of Arts and Science (KGCAS) is committed to build and sustain itself as an institution where quality is the hallmark in each and every activity. I am immensely happy that the Department of English is publishing the selected papers from the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on **Gender Conflicts as Evident in Contemporary English Literature** conducted on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in *Language in India*. This conference was the platform for exchanging innovative research thoughts of Faculty Members and Students. We believe that the conference has uncovered some of the latest research within the field of English literature. The papers will serve as a vital reference compendium for faculty, research scholars and students. I wish to congratulate the faculty members of English Department, who organized this conference with great spirit of enthusiasm.

**Mrs. Susila Victor, B.Sc., M.A., M.Phil., M.A., M.Ed.**  
**Head, Department of English**

## Editor's Note

The Department of English, KG College of Arts and Science conducted an International Conference on **Gender Conflicts as Evident in Contemporary English Literature** on 13th February 2017. The conference aimed to recognize and learn the existing scenario in gender relations, to understand the societal and individual conflicts between genders, highlights the oppression and injustice that create disputes and to blend harmony and peace by accepting and acknowledging the gender based reformations. This international conference offered an opportunity to the faculty members and research scholars of various colleges in Coimbatore city and nearby districts to showcase their research findings and their thoughts on the reformation needed to create harmony and peace and to negotiate societal and individual conflict between genders, especially relating to learning and teaching of English as a global language.

This online volume presents 17 selected papers presented in the conference. The papers submitted and presented proved to be thought-provoking and problem-solving and aimed at creating harmony between genders. Social problems relating to family life, inter-personal relations, gender conflicts and solutions to conflicts, place of women in the society are dealt with in these papers. Through reading this literature, we gain knowledge about the evolution of our own culture, inequalities and injustices in the societal cultures and issues around the world. Learning the language is greatly facilitated by reading literary works. The papers presented in this volume will be found useful for classroom and research activities on the selected topics. Addresses of authors of the papers presented in the volume are given at the end of each article. You are most welcome to correspond with the authors using their email addresses. Such communication will be useful for all of us and will be greatly appreciated by the authors themselves. We are glad that the research findings of the authors of this volume will be freely available for all around the world through **Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com).

We are thankful to the Publication committee for their continuous support in bringing out this volume successfully. We wish to express our sincere gratitude to all the authors and reviewers for their contribution and support.

**Dr. R. Anuja**  
**Principal**

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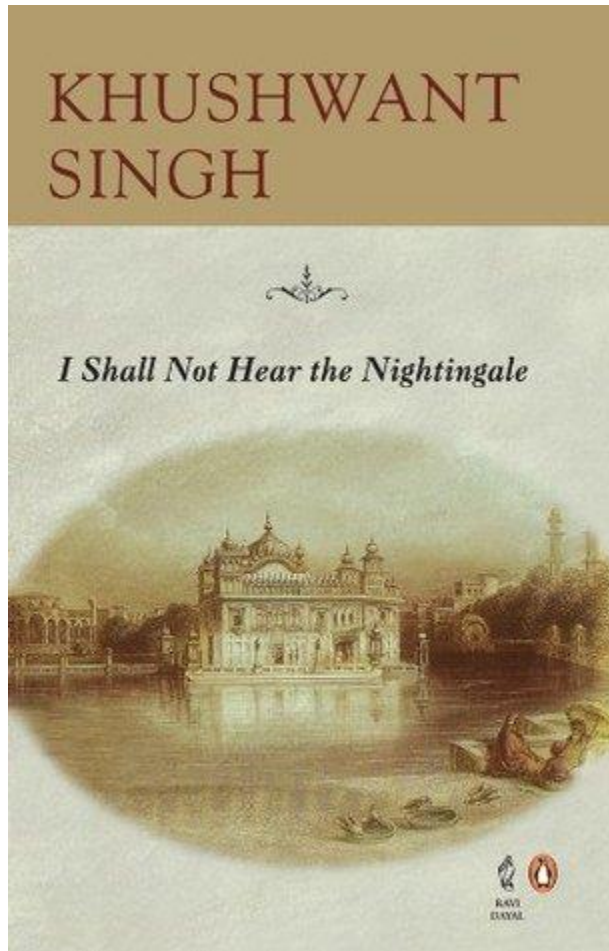
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**Feministic Concerns in Khushwant Singh's  
*I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale***

Arul. J., M.A., M.Ed., M.Phil. (Ph.D.)

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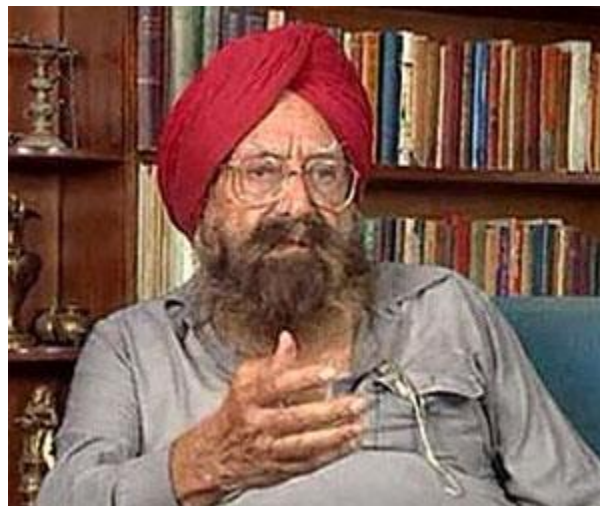
**Abstract**

The present paper seeks to present a modest study of the novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* of Khushwant Singh, the most popular Indian writer in English. It attempts to make comprehensive critical comments on this novel with an emphasis on his treatment of women

characters in the novel. His novel *I shall not Hear the Nightingale* basically deals with the maternal love. It is Sabhrai, whose matriarchal strength sustains the family in its time of crisis. On one side, where the novel is replete with sexual, amorous activities, practiced by different characters, Khushwant, on the other side, portrays a pious, religious character, which is without a stain. She is a source of muse not only for her husband but also for her son and daughter. It is through Sabhrai's character, we come across another illusive kind of love, i.e., divine love. A religious woman like Sabharai believes that this love is the greatest of all. While for Champak, Beena, and Shunno, love is skin-communicated thing.

**Key words:** Khushwant Singh, *I shall not Hear the Nightingale*, amorous, religious, divine love

## Introduction



**Khushwant Singh (1915-2014)**

**Courtesy:** <http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-heroes/khushwant-singh.html>

Khushwant Singh was an Indian novelist, journalist, and a lawyer. He was a man of many talents and served the Indian legal system, Indian journalism and literature all with equal passion and hard work. He was a well-learned man and studied in various institutes like Modern School, New Delhi, Government College of Lahore, St. Stephen's College, Delhi and King's College London. He set his foot in his professional life by starting out as a lawyer but soon he turned to Indian Foreign Service. Served in the service for a few years and later he found his place in mass

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Feministic Concerns in Khushwant Singh's *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale*

communication and journalism. He was the editor of many reputed newspapers and magazines like, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *The National Herald* and *The Hindustan Times*. Singh was more known for his writing and Indian literature is lucky to have received works like *Train to Pakistan* (1956), *Delhi: A Novel* (1990), *The Company of Women* (1999), *Truth, Love and a Little Malice* (2002), *The Good, the Bad and the Ridiculous* (2013), etc. from his side. For his brilliant service to the Indian society and culture, he was awarded with a Padma Bhushan, but due to his deep contempt for Operation Blue Star, he returned it back to the government.

### ***I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale***

*I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* is a colorful and moving pageant of an ancient people about to throw off the yoke of foreign rule. Essentially, it is the story of Buta Singh, a shrewd and wily official working with the British, and of Sher Singh, his vain and ambitious son driven to rebellion against the foreign master. It is also the story of the women of the family—Champak, Sher's beautiful wife, her wild passions bursting the bonds of century-old prohibitions, and Sabhrai, Sher's mother, whose matriarchal strength sustains the family in its time of crisis.

What happens to this family when a brutal and senseless murder sets father against son, wife against husband, is told against the background of an India torn by religious tension and fraternal strife.

### **A Feministic Approach in *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale***

This novel begins by showing the impact of men and women in colonial Indian society. All the male characters were shown as in form of superior and the female characters were shown as inferior.

### **Sabhrai**

This novel has four female characters, namely, Sabhrai, Beena, Champak and Mrs. Taylor. The very first major female character of this novel was Sabhrai, wife of Buta Singh, an uneducated religious woman who follows traditional rituals and has some fear in the sense of

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God and his violent act. Her borders were very much furnished by the author that she was a mother of two children, who longs for the love of her husband and finally a woman who supports his son even after knowing that he was a chief victim in case which against our mother country. She prays for her son's fast recovery from all his tragedies, she secures her daughter Beena from the hands of a rogue, she has been used as a bridge between father and son and also between his son and his country's official people. Through all her action she has been shown as savior of her family as well as our country.

### **Beena**

Beena, daughter of Buta Singh, an educated woman, tries to be perfect but fails to do so. She shows some kind of moralistic attitude in her action. When a men try to seduce her in the beginning as an immature woman, she shows interest in physical attachment but later through her mother's guidance she is able to identify what is right and what is wrong. So finally with the help of her mother she finds out the right morality and remains a chaste woman.

In this novel Beena has been pictured as a woman who longs for lustful experience, but cheered because of the god fearing attitude. Here the author tries to imply the boundaries for a traditional woman. She was not allowed to have any physical contact with any men other than her husband. If it happens so it is wrong in accordance with the tradition and mythology.

### **Champak**

Champak, wife of Sher Singh, an ordinary educated woman, loves to follow the thoughts of western world and tries to show herself as a good one towards society where as in real she was a sexual manic, who loves to enjoy loose physical attachment towards the opposite gender. She is shown as a woman who has impressive thoughts about western ideas and culture, tries to live her life in the similar way. She loves the physical touch and tries to get it from her husband but she fails to get it because of her husband's unlikeliest action, so she goes with other men. Here she was shown as a woman with no fear of tradition and morality.

### **Mrs. Taylor**

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Lastly Mrs. Taylor, a woman from England, loves the tradition of India and develops lasting love relationship towards Indian people. She helps Sabhrai to get back her son, because of her faith in God. She is shown as a woman who works for the betterment of women community. Even though she is from abroad, she loves the tradition of India and tries to follow the tradition. The way she is portrayed as a follower and lover of tradition of India is beautifully explained by the author.

## Conclusion

In this novel four characters are shown in different points of view: Sabhrai a woman of completeness, Beena a self-satisfied woman, Champak a woman with western thoughts and finally Mrs. Taylor as a great kind-hearted woman. Singh has justified all his women characters in this novel in accordance with their action. Through the acts of his characters, he tells us that making the people to know about tradition and moral is not important but asking them to follow and be a model for them is important. Here two full-fledged women characters show their heartfelt action and another two characters show their intolerant actions. So finally Singh justifies that woman are good in their characters if they are properly taught; if not, the society and they themselves will face the consequences.

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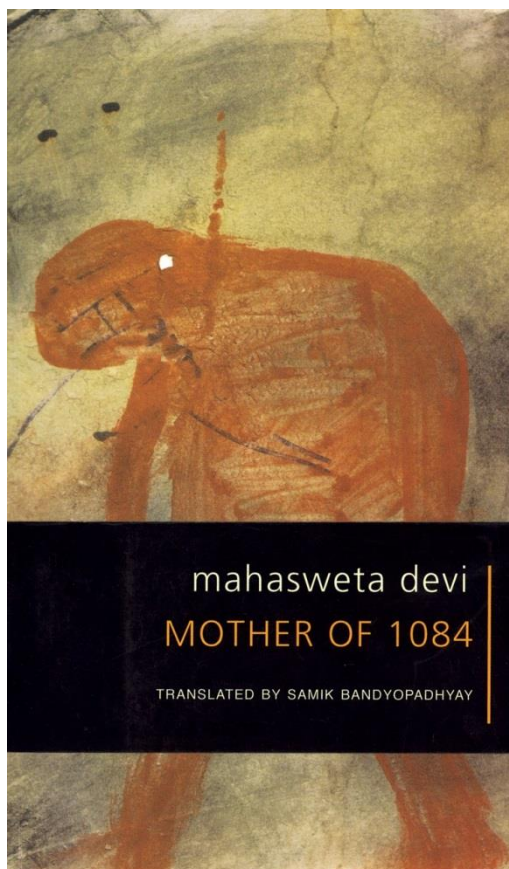
**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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**Emancipation of Women and World of Marginalization in  
Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084***

**R. Ayyappan, M.A.**

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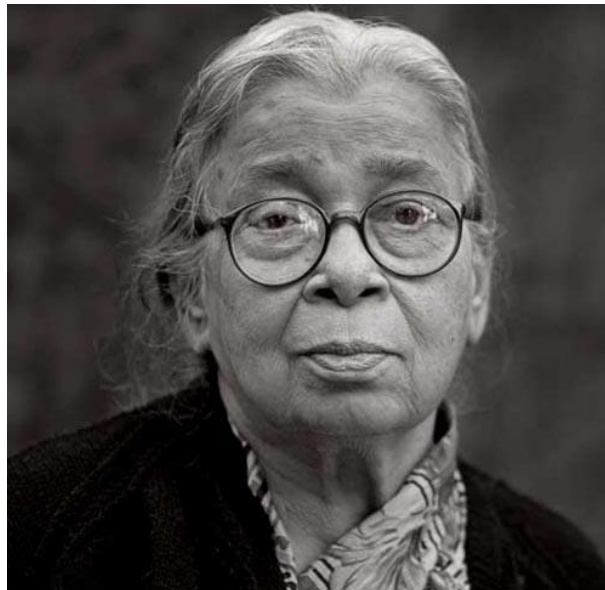
**Abstract**

Emancipation, this word expresses the theme that a person led their life without any hesitations and ready to overcome all the struggles in their life within which woman becomes a powerful change and so works not just toward her own liberation but that of her race, religion, community and sisterhood. The 'healing,' strategically positioned half way between the 'oppression' and the 'self-liberation,' which helps a woman, ultimately, becomes a 'person' or an

‘individual.’ Constituting an important stage in the evolution of woman’s consciousness, this narrative pre-supposes that much before a woman is able to raise the banner of revolt; she needs to recover from several inflictions of the ‘oppression’. For this reason, the ‘healing’ is an intermediate form of narrative, which looks back to the ‘oppression’ and forward to the ‘liberation.’ Though it combines the elements of both, it is unable to acquire the character. It expresses the limitations of both as a writer and as a social activist.

**Keywords:** Mahasweta Devi, *Mother of 1084*, Emancipation, Oppression, Religion, Marginalization, Male Chauvinism.

## Introduction



Mahasweta Devi

Courtesy: <https://alchetron.com/Mahasweta-Devi-499801-W>

Mahasweta Devi’s novel, it highly expresses the views of Women suffering are also strong influences on her writing, including her novel *Hajar Churashir Ma (Mother of 1084)*. Devi’s writing is the condition of India’s uneducated people and of other economically marginalized people. It describes about upper middle class woman whose world is forever changed when her son is killed for his Naxalite beliefs. In 1970’s Mahasweta has focused her

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attention primarily on the tribal communities with in India and helped their community to overcome from various problems that was created by the society. Mahasweta Devi has been actively associated with social movements, and helped for poor and needy people the society which includes communities like untouchables and tribals.

Devi is one of India's foremost political social activists who have been working in marginalized communities. The novel gives a beautiful description that people of the society they not give importance to the welfare of society. After the news of Brati's death came, everyone in the family, except his mother, started looking for ensures to hide this incident from the world. The grief of Brati's death got shelved before the more important purpose of elevating the family's prestige. Sujata found herself all alone weeping for Brati, who was lying before her as cadaver number 1084, cold, heavy and dead.

### ***Mother of 1084***

This novel focuses on a mother who awakens one morning to the shattering and painful news that her son is lying dead in the police were enquiring about a dead body of a naxalite, reduced to a mere numeral Corpse No. 1084. Through her point of view she difficulty to understand his revolutionary commitment as a Naxalite, she recognizes her own alienation as a woman and a wife from the complacent, hypocritical, and corrupt feudal society.

### **Marginalization**

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, 'marginalize' means 'to make a person or group feel less important or powerful'. Thus the term marginalized can be applied to the group of people who are not given their minimum rights or position in the society and are even exploited. Those who are marginalized generally suffer from a crisis of identity and this perhaps leads to a rise of social negligence for that person, while women and the physically handicapped, or mentally challenged, they were not give their equal rights and they were simply smothered and subdued into the acceptance without choice of whatever is offered to them, and views and beliefs are forced upon them. This marginalization of mothers and motherhood can be traced in Devi's writings. The issues like the plight of women who are breadwinners, women who are victims of

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male sexual violence, dependent widows, ill-treated wives, unwanted daughters whose bodies can fetch a price and marginalized mothers are closest to her heart.

### **Female Emancipation**

Theme of this novel expresses the World of Marginalization and Female Emancipation in *Mother of 1084*, Sujata was suppressed through male chauvinism by her husband. The concept of marginalization suppressed and oppressed women in the guise of protection. Violence against women is as old as the world. The type, frequency and intensity of violence may vary from time to time and place to place but it is there everywhere. Even today in the twenty-first century, in an age of globalization, where there has been tremendous progress in human achievements, crimes against women continue to exist. The gender based violence spoils the rights and dignity of women in the society.

### **Plight of Subaltern Mother**

*Mother of 1084* highlights the plight of subaltern mother Sujata Chatterjee, a traditional apolitical upper middle class lady who loses her son Brati Chatterjee in communist Naxalite movement. This novel describes the predicament of the mothers who are marginalized by the so called patriarchal society and also establish many aspects of gender subalternity practiced by the political and superstitious society.

### **Emancipation of Women Defined**

According to *Oxford Dictionary*, ‘Emancipation’ is derived from Latin word ‘emancipare’ means ‘free from slavery or free from legal, social or political restrictions. According to Mahasweta Devi “Female Emancipation as a means to a larger ends, the progress of society in general. So, while gender is not an isolated issue, it is the primary mode of oppression suffered by women even as it is the source of their potential emancipation”, “a responsible writer, standing at a turning point in history, has to take a stand in defense of the exploited”. She considers women as one group among the exploited and under subjugation. Her writings provide scope for viewing her work from the feminist angle. Sujata bearing the brunt of

social and political oppression, enduring all, and later offering resistance with indomitable will, dominate her writing.

### **Background: Naxalite Movement Uprising in 1960s**

The novel is about the background of late 1960s uprising of Naxalite Movement fueled by the incident of Naxalbari agitation. Having been caught in this political and social upheaval Brati, the radical young supporter of the Naxalite Movement in the play, loses his life which paves the way for Mahasweta Devi to portray a more developed and mature picture of the mother, Sujata Chatterjee.

### **Narrative Oppression and Self-liberation**

Emancipation, within which woman becomes an instrument of change and so works not just toward her own liberation but that of her race, religion, community and sisterhood. The 'healing,' strategically positioned half way between the 'narrative of oppression' and the 'self-liberation,' which helps a woman, ultimately, becomes a 'person' or an 'individual.' Constituting an important stage in the evolution of woman's consciousness, this narrative pre-supposes that much before a woman is able to raise the banner of revolt; she needs to recover from several inflictions of the 'oppression.' For this reason, the 'healing' is an intermediate form of narrative, which looks back to the 'oppression' and forward to the 'liberation.' Though it combines the elements of both, it is unable to acquire the character or function of either. Despite that, it often transcends the limitations of both as a writer and as a social activist.

In order to highlight Mahasweta Devi's spirited crusade against the social injustice comes out to the politically weak, territorially isolated, economically marginalized, culturally stigmatized and socially subalternised, concentrate on the issues of exploitation and marginalization as long continuing socio-historical process, embedded in social and cultural practices, a focus on the interlocking structures of oppression, the crises-cross of multiple hierarchies of class, caste and gender. Her works fill the gap within literature on what must be considered the most significant peasant movement in the India of the last third of the twentieth

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Century. This paper focuses in relation to female emancipation in Mahasweta Devi's *Mother of 1084*.

### **Focuses on the Psychological and Emotional Crisis of a Mother : Corpse Number 1084**

*Mother of 1084* focuses on the psychological and emotional crisis of a mother who awakens one morning to the heart-rending news that her dear son is lying dead in the police morgue and is demeaned to a mere numeral corpse No. 1084 this emancipation leads her to a journey of discovery and self-realization towards life's journey in the course of which, struggling to understand her Naxalite son's revolutionary commitment, she begins to recognize her own alienation. Mahasweta set an apolitical mother's quest to know her martyred Naxalite son, to know what he stood for; for she had not known true Brati ever, as long as he had been alive. Death brings him closer to her through her quest and leads the mother to a journey of self-discovery and then she realizes the cause of her son's rebellion.

### **Conclusion**

Mahasweta Devi's works focuses on the issues of Problems faced by female gender and marginalization as long continuing socio-historical process embedded in social and cultural practices, a focus on the theme of oppression, self-realization, lack of self-confidence, inequality the crises-cross of multiple divisions, caste and gender. Her works fill the gap within literature on the various themes that improving the lower class and tribe people. This paper focuses on the language of defiance in relation to female emancipation in Devi's *Mother of 1084*. Devi, the noted writer-activist from Bengal, uses her pen to raise awareness against social injustice, discrimination and poverty, especially against tribal and indigenous people in India.

Female emancipation in *Mother of 1084*, a novel from Indian woman writer Mahasweta Devi about the crisis faced by Sujata, a mother whose urban rebel son Brati died in line with his revolutionary commitment. It discusses the role of Indian society in the death of her Naxalite son. It relates how the death of Brati became a moment of self-discovery for Sujata. It is the story of an upper middle class woman whose world is forever changed when her son is killed for his Naxalite beliefs. Finally Devi conclude that "women not the weaker sex" women should come

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out of various difficulties in her life and try to achieve their ultimate Goals and Aims in Life She has been a long time champion for the political social and economic advancement of these communities whom she characterizes as suffering spectators of the India that is traveling towards the twenty first century. Through her life long struggle she has redefined the role of a writer in a society. Throughout her literary career, she has written passionately about the tribes, downtrodden and the underprivileged and tried to bring their unheard stories before the world to make the people sensitized about these people. Mahasweta Devi is a well-known Indian woman writer in the twentieth century. She is a committed social activist. Her writings portray the poverty, hunger, oppression and corruption in the society.

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**Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters***

**Dr. J. Bala Subramaniam**

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**Manju Kapur**

**Courtesy: [http://www.azquotes.com/author/53403-Manju\\_Kapur](http://www.azquotes.com/author/53403-Manju_Kapur)**

**Abstract**

In India ethnicity and heritage, individualism, quest for identity, protests and concepts of rebelliousness have often remained alien ideas, as far as women were concerned. Women were not supposed to raise their voices for their rights, protest against injustice or question the already existing social norms, beliefs, customs, rituals and superstitions. They have to merely exist, subjected to the patriarchal system. Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* stresses woman's need for self-fulfillment, self-sufficiency, self-realization, independence, individuality and self-actualization. A woman should be aware, self-controlled, strong-willed, self-reliant and rational, having faith in the inner strength of womanhood. A meaningful change can be brought about

only from within, by being free in the deeper intuitive sense. In *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur presented women's liberation and striving for some space in such a manner that we read not just with our eyes, but also with our heart. Kasturi holds patriarchal values as an ideal. As her daughter rebels against such values, she takes it to be a rebellion against her own self. By suppressing Virmati's desire for freedom, she becomes the voice of patriarchy.

**Key Words:** Manju Kapur, patriarchal pressure, silent suffering, *Difficult Daughters*, women's liberation,

## **Introduction**

Traditionally, the work of Indian Women Writers has been undervalued due to patriarchal assumptions about the superior worth of male experience. The factors contributing to this prejudice is the fact that most of these women writers have observed no domestic space. The Indian women's perceptions of their aspirations and expectations are within the framework of Indian social and moral commitments. The image of women in fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring, self-sacrificing women to conflicted female characters searching for identity, no longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. In contrast to earlier novels, female characters from the 1980s onwards assert themselves and defy marriage and motherhood. Recent writers depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman, rather than limiting the lives of women to one ideal. The novels emerging in the twenty-first century furnish examples of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of tradition, some offering an analysis of the family structure and the caste system as the key elements of patriarchal social organization.

## **Patriarchal Pressure**

Women under the patriarchal pressure and control were subjected to much more oppression and social ostracism. They were discriminated and were biased in lieu of their sex. The life women lived and struggled under the oppressive mechanism of a closed society were reflected in the novels of Manju Kapur. The impact of patriarchy on the Indian society varies

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from the one in the west. Manju Kapur has her own concerns, priorities as well as her own ways of dealing with the predicament of the women protagonists. This study is based on Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*. The women's question today is, therefore, no longer an issue confined to the position of women within the family or their rights to equality with men in different aspects of social life. It is part of the total, far broader question regarding the direction of change that our society is taking - economic, social, political, intellectual perception and an analysis of that process.

### **Traumatic Experience**

The finite dimension of the relationship between man and woman has been prescribed by man and not by woman. Her limits have been imposed on her by man who is ruled by the mastery motive. It is the male ego that has given the woman an inferior status through the ages. Since ages women is in negotiations with her male counterpart as well as our androcentric society. No society or country can ever progress without active participation of women in its overall development. Unfortunately, men have always looked down upon women as the weaker sex, as their property and object of pleasure. Man has relegated her to the level of a second-class citizen. But modern women prefer to exercise their choices and break away from their traumatic experiences. Some Indian women novelists like Githa Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy and Manju Kapur have tried with sincerity and honesty to deal with the physical, psychological and emotional stress syndrome of women.

### **Tribulations of Women Echoed in Indian Women Writers – Special Place for Manju Kapur**

The status of English as a global lingua franca has evoked attention from every corner of India. Indian writing in English has achieved a remarkable position through the works of writers like Amitav Ghosh, Khushwant Singh, Salman Rushdie, et al. However, Indian women writing in English is a relatively new phenomenon which is rapidly gaining relevance by the indelible imprints left by the works of writers such as Kamla Markandaya, Kiran Desai, Manju Kapur, Shashi Deshpande et al. All these writers deal with the tribulations that a woman has to undergo primarily in the male-dominated Indian society, but the works of Manju Kapur do not simply

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voice the restrictions imposed upon a woman. She deals with a wide range of issues like identity crisis, personal fulfillment, inter and intrapersonal relationships. Manju Kapur is a critically acclaimed Indian novelist who has five novels to her credit, *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *The Immigrant* and *Custody*. She grapples with the intermingling of traditional and modern ethos. All women novelists base their fiction around the experiences that they have had in their personal lives and thus consciously or unconsciously delve into the realm of feminist assertions of one or the other kind. (Lapis Lazuli)



### ***Difficult Daughters***

Manju Kapur is an emerging figure among the women writers of Indian English Fiction. She is a world acclaimed writer for reflecting the feministic vision in her novels. Her first novel *Difficult Daughters* received International acclaim and was awarded the Commonwealth prize

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for Eurasia Section. Her novels deal with the lives of middle class Indian women who fight to break the tradition of silence against male domination in Indian patriarchal society. A constant sufferer Virmati, protagonist in this novel, nurses a deep desire to become as independent, defiant and assertive as her cousin Shakuntala. Shakuntala sows the seeds of freedom in Virmati. She symbolizes modernity by not following the conventional norms which limit daughters to an early marriage and then home and family.

In *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur has presented various choices for Virmati, but has shown her as emotionally dependent upon and exploited by Harish. In her life, one can find the constant conflict between self and family. At the one end Virmati breaks all ties, but on the other end she enters into new ones. Manju Kapur has shown through Virmati that obsession with physicality and marriage has ruined her life.

Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* is a feminist discourse not because she is a woman writing about women, but because, as Jaidev puts it she has understood a woman both as a woman and as a person pressurized by all kinds of visible and invisible contexts. *Difficult Daughters* is a skillful, enticing first novel by an Indian writer who prefers reality to magic realism. Manju Kapur's sensuous pages re-create an intimate world where family groups sleep in the open air on the roof and wash themselves in the yard in the dewy cool of morning, where love-making is furtive and urgent because another wife may be listening, and women's lives move to a complex choreography of cooking, washing, weaving and mending, growing, picking, chopping and blending. This novel offers a completely imagined, aromatic, complex world, a rare thing in a first novel.

### **Silent Victim Portrait**

The portrayal of woman in Indian English fiction as the silent victim and up holder of the tradition and traditional values of family and society has undergone a tremendous change and is no longer presented as a passive character. However, Manju Kapur seems aware of the fact that the women of India have indeed achieved their success in sixty years of independence, but if there is to be a true female independence, much remains to be done. We see the emergence of

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new women in Manju Kapur's heroines, who do not want to be rubber dolls for others to move as they will. Defying patriarchal notions that enforce women towards domesticity, they assert their individuality and aspiring to achieve self-reliance through education. They nurture the desire to be independent and leading lives of their own. They want to shoulder responsibilities that go beyond a husband and children. They are not silent rebels but are bold, outspoken, determined and action-oriented. All the women protagonists know they cannot depend on others to sort out the domestic situation and proceed to tackle it on their own. In spite of getting education and freedom the women protagonists of Manju Kapur's novels do not blossom into new woman in the real sense. Though they dare to cross one patriarchal threshold, they are caught in another, where their free spirits are curbed and all they do is adjust, compromise and adapt. (Lapis Lazuli –An International Literary Journal)

### **Yearning for Autonomy and Separate Identity**

Manju Kapur presents the yearning for autonomy and separate identity in her women protagonists in this post-modern novel in a traditional thread. It is impossible for Virmati to accept a physical relationship. She is haunted by a deep sense of guilt. The formal marriage, a social and public statement, is a must for her. It is this which will establish her identity even if it is as the professor's second wife. Marriage thus for her means deliverance from the fear of being socially condemned, a possibility which will perhaps bring her back into the fold and relieve her from the sense of insecurity and uncertainty. The earlier generation, of which her mother is a representative, saw no reason to rebel. There was complete acceptance of life, even if it meant an oppressive, dreary, hapless one.

### **Male Characters**

The male characters of Kapur's novels affect the psychology of women, but they do not fit into the mold of a hero. On the other hand, the women characters qualify as heroes because they directly or indirectly surpass the societal restrictions thrust upon them by the agents of patriarchy. Kapur's women characters are scrupulously conscious of their position in family and society which leads to their quest for individuality and freedom. They are characters of flesh and blood who prefer to terminate loveless relationships with men and are ready to bear the weight of

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their ethical uncertainties and decisions. Men in her novels are represented as chauvinistic and uncompromising, who are eternally bewildered by the rebellious attitude of the women. The concern of the women protagonists of Kapur's novels is not to seek equality with men, but to reflect upon their situation essentially as women. Apart from man-woman relationships, the writer also focuses on mother daughter relationships, children parent relationships, relationships between women of the same family. Thus, different aspects of relationships are one of the central concerns of the novels of Manju Kapur.

## Conclusion

Manju Kapur's portrayal of her protagonists, who are being placed rightly in the extroverted continuum, has displayed the ripened comprehension of the female psyche and the inner subtlety and rigidity of a woman's mind. Virmati's level of extroversion is disclosed through her stern outspoken nature, whereas in the case of Astha, her well determined and action oriented-deeds throw her out as an extrovert. Both of them appear to be the embodiment of extroverted nature, and raise their voices against the stale customs and prejudices of the society. Apart from these external factors, they seek a balance of their inner conflicts caused by both abstract and concrete entities.

In *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur has presented a conventional family that gives importance to religion and rituals. Virmati's mother is cast in the traditional mold. Her father comes under the category of a benign patriarch. In this novel patriarchy operates in a different manner. The novelist has presented the conflict between traditional and modernity that creates fissures in the family. Virmati is a difficult daughter because unlike her mother who willingly surrenders to the preordained societal role, she is not ready to blindly submit herself to tradition. Kasturi holds patriarchal values as an ideal. As her daughter rebels against such values, she takes it to be a rebellion against her own self. By suppressing Virmati's desire for freedom she becomes the voice of patriarchy.

A close psychological study of the protagonists of Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* reveals the women's extroversion continuum, which has been a hidden agenda behind their

incessant protests against the obstructs of the male chauvinistic and oppressing society. (New Perspectives on Indian English Writings, 39 – 42)

To conclude, Kapur illustrates that in Indian patriarchal society where tradition is so strong a woman fails to get out of such bondage and pines for a separate identity of her own. Thus, Virmati ultimately compromises and finds her own way, knowing that they cannot have a future jointly. Therefore, she embodies the image of new woman who longs to have her own space in the traditional patriarchal society.

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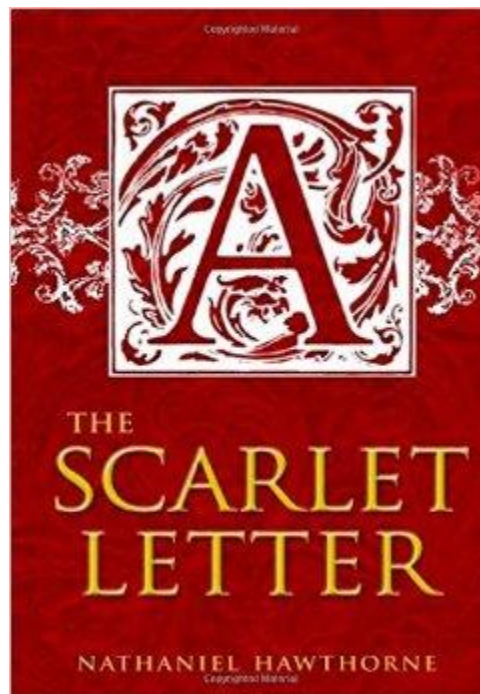
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**Isolation and Gender Conflicts in Nathaniel Hawthorne's  
*The Scarlet Letter***

**M. Cinduja Kohila Vani, M.A.**

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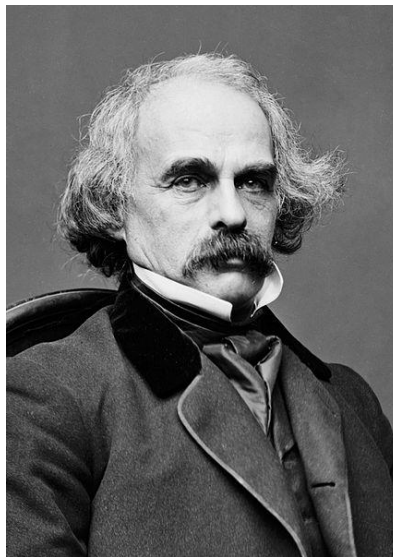


**Abstract**

Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* was considered by many as the controversial novel of its time, given its themes of pride, sin, isolation, gender conflicts and vengeance. Every novel must necessarily present a certain view of life and of some of the problems of life says William H. Hudson in his book *An Introduction to the Study of Literature*. A few authors like Hawthorne have presented it genuinely. In his book, *The Scarlet Letter*, we could see his theme lies not upon the surface of existence, but with passions and gender conflicts and they belong to the essential texture of life. The Puritan setting also becomes an important element to pave way for the gender conflict. This paper is a study of how Hawthorne has weaved his characters by

presenting us with a startling depiction of isolation and gender conflicts. The society that the protagonist Hester lived was unforgiving, and hypocritical in nature. We can see the height of alienation that Hester, Pearl, and Dimmesdale suffer and how it pains them, in Dimmesdale's case even eating away at his life. The Scarlet Letter casts society in a light that is at once both condemning and bitter.

**Key words:** Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, passions, gender conflicts, isolation, alienation.



Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)

Courtesy: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathaniel\\_Hawthorne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathaniel_Hawthorne)

## Introduction

Hawthorne Nathaniel was the only son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Clark Hawthorne (Manning). His father, a sea captain, died in 1808 of yellow fever while at sea. The family was left with meagre financial support and moved in with Elizabeth's wealthy brothers. A leg injury at an early age left Nathaniel immobile for a several months during which time he developed a voracious appetite for reading and set his sights on becoming a writer.

In his master piece *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne managed to bring gender-based inequality to light through the novel's male-dominated Puritan setting and by reversing the gender roles of characters, such as Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale.

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## Focus on Gender-Based Inequality

The story was also set in a time when very few were thinking about the equality of men and women, but Hawthorne managed to bring gender-based inequality to light through the novel's male-dominated Puritan setting and by reversing the gender roles of characters, such as Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale.

A.C. Ward says that the literature is not the mere statement of a problem, however important, nor simply the pleading of a cause however worthy. Literature is a creative art written by literary creative artists. A novel is concerned directly with life – the thoughts and feelings, passions and motives, joys and sorrows, struggles, successes and failures with the life of men and women.

Hawthorne was a great thinker about life as well as he was a keen observer, he portrayed how women had been the victim of the male dominating and oppression and how she was treated like a beast of burden and an object for pleasure. Man has always looked down upon her as the weaker sex, as his property; servile to him. She is groomed to be an object of sale right from her childhood.

## 17th Century America – Views on Adultery, Hester Prynne's Conflict

The action of the story of *The Scarlet Letter* took place almost in 17th century America. But even now the same trial is taking place all over the world. Like Hester – the protagonist of the novel is groomed to be an object of sale right from her childhood. She has not been understood from her feelings and emotions.

The sin is Adultery, the “Original sin, the breaking of the Ten Commandments of Christianity”, which is the source of Hester Prynne's conflict. But this sin has a partner too. But she is not ready to confess her lover's name. The irony here is the lover Arthur Dimmesdale himself is asking the name of the ‘lover’ with ‘trembling mouth’.

Prynne lacks energy and will. Dimmesdale is the pastor and Hester his spiritual ward. Yet he committed adultery with her. But the punishment goes to Hester alone. Dimmesdale's black cloak gives him benefits. He can wear mask and hide his real feelings in public.

### **A Strong Woman with a Badge of Shame**

But Hester Prynne is presented to us ambiguously. She is a strong woman. She also hides her real self behind her mask of the scarlet letter and her smiling face. She does it because she has to live for her daughter Pearl.

Scaffold is used in the beginning as a symbol of sin in the middle and the end of the story. In chapter II, Hester is made to walk through the crowd to the market place. Here she is made to climb the scaffold while people observe her. She has committed a sin. She is having an illegitimate child with her. She has to wear letter "A" on her bosom for the duration of her life. In this novel, we remember most of the character suffers from isolation. In Hester's case, her isolation is a mark of her social caste. Her, "badge of shame", the scarlet letter gain her distance from people, but it also assures her intellectual and moral growth. She "transcends her separation from society by good deeds and the companionship of miserable people".

### **Private Torture Felt by the Pastor**

In the minister's case, his sensitivity to his sin leads to suffering and private torture. His sin makes him conscious of his unworthiness, but it also makes him more acceptable to his admiring congregation. He feels suffocated in this atmosphere of repression.

Chillingworth's isolation is essentially the isolation of a man who has willfully cut his name off from the book of humanity, his willful defiance of God in violation of "the sanctity of the human heart" against advice causes his spiritual isolation and death.

Even Pearl is isolated from the society of the Puritan children by her mother's sin. She is a lonely child who plays with inanimate objects or with animals and brooks and flowers – a victim of the sin of her parents and the repressiveness of the Puritan society.

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But the society looks Hester as a sinner and Pearl as the product of the sin. Just because Hester is a woman, she has to undergo all the conflicts within her. Society is always and constantly against her. The community never makes her forget her sin.

### **A - Now Means Able, Angel**

In the beginning of the story, the letter 'A' means Adulteress, but as the story develops, it also begins to mean 'Able' and 'Angel'. But it took years to change. Until then, she was the sinner among the people. Even the Minister Dimmesdale is also a part of a sinner. But in the eyes of the society, he is the 'godly youth', the Young priest. He is a pastor, a protector, of his followers, yet he betrays himself and Hester by committing adultery. He wants to confess, but will not, and so will punish himself secretly. He is a sinner and yet the best priest in the village because of his very sin. Any how he was torn between his consciousness and his deeds. He secretly stands in the scaffold to confer his sin.

### **With a Burning Blush, and Yet a Haughty Smile**

But the conflict that Hester suffered is more than that of Dimmesdale. In the face of this scorn from society, Hester remained strong. Hawthorne says, 'She stood in front of the people' with a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile, and a glance that would not be abashed. Other women outside the prison door says, "This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die". (II The Market Place) pg 7-8. Her strong mind refuses to allow the people's comment to crush her. She bears this out in her actions, too, quietly making a living for herself with her fine needle work. She devotes herself to her work, to her child, and to serving the poor and helping the sick.

Hester accepts insults as well as her humble position in society, and though she externally remains as a beacon-light to would-be sinners, internally, she does achieve a harmony with her society with her dutiful behavior and good deeds. The Scarlet Letter as well as Pearl, the symbols of her sin, assists Hester to achieve redemption with her mission as the Sister of Charity. Hester triumphs over her circumstance (fate) with her goodness and resolve it. In this sense, she

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achieves a spiritual victory over her society, which acknowledges her changing status in her community.

### **Dimmesdale - a Hypocrite and a Coward**

Dimmesdale is a hypocrite and a coward, and a secret sinner in the early part of the book. Jean Calvin, the 16th century French Father of Puritanism, made the idea of the eternal sinfulness of man in Christian history is very popular for his disciples (the Puritans). According to the Calvinist position, all men are eternally guilty in the presence of God and salvation can only come to man at God's will.

But inwardly Dimmesdale suffers terrible agony. His tormented conscience forces him to derive ways and means to "play out" his "punishment" in private. He keeps vigil, fasts and whips (scourges) himself. His habit of holding a hand over his heart indicates his mute confession of guilt.

Dimmesdale's raw conscience chafes him into constant self-torment through self-laceration and mortification. He hurts himself physically for his sin, but he "punishes" himself in secret. We can clearly see this that Hester stands on the scaffold at mid-day in June, Dimmesdale at midnight in May. "Mr. Dimmesdale reached the spot, where, now so long since, Hester Prynne had lived through her first hour of public ignominy... The Minister went up the steps". (XII The Minister's Vigil)

In a flush of triumph, he acknowledges Hester as his fellow-sinner, and Pearl as his daughter, tells Hester to leave everything in the hands of God, and dies on the Election Day (to mean, possibly that he has been 'elected' by God to go to heaven). In this sense, whereas Hester's "regeneration" is more social, Dimmesdale's regeneration is actually a "salvation". Like King Arthur of the legends, he has overcome sin, temptation and evil to emerge triumphant in his public confession of sin and death. Yet, his spiritual salvation is, perhaps, more subjective than actual, as it should in a deeply ambiguous book like *The Scarlet Letter*.

## Gender Conflicts in *The Scarlet Letter*

The gender conflicts in *The Scarlet Letter* have become more and more intense as the novel progresses because of the gradual unfolding of the female's strength of mind becomes greater than that of the men's character. As a result, the male protagonist begins to lose their dominant position. Women might be the weaker gender, but, the way Hawthorne sees it, they have plenty of power. Even the social alienation and isolation breeds despair but no sense of redemption. Only society's uncorrupted acceptance can help its members rise from ignominy and find peace and virtue.

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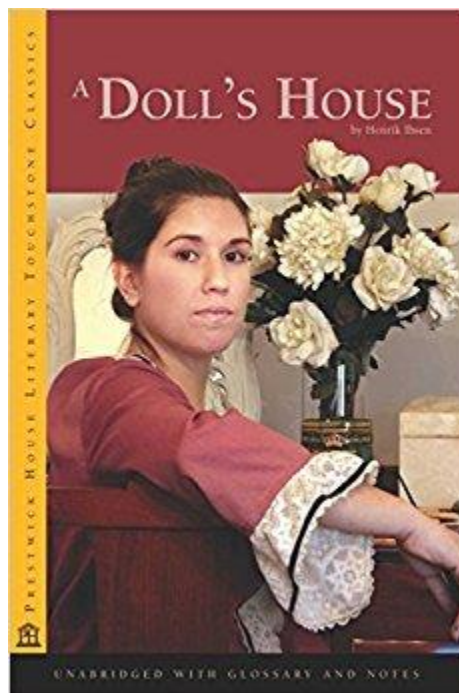
**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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**Dollish Existence of Nora Helmer in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House***

**S. Gomathy, M.A. (M.Phil.)**

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**Abstract**

A doll, a child's plaything, dances and tunes to the wishes of the player. It does not have originality. This paper tries to highlight the Dollish existence of Nora Helmer in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Nora, the protagonist of the play does not seem to mind her doll like existence in the beginning of the play. But exactly the opposite of what it happens in the climax of the play. She breaks down the societal norms and walks out of the house to assert her individuality and self-respect.

**Key Words:** Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, Doll, Forgery, Individuality, Societal Norms, Self-respect.

## Henrik Johan Ibsen

Henrik Johan Ibsen's career as a dramatist spans a period of fifty years. His creative period covers the second half of the nineteenth century. During this long period, he wrote twenty-five plays. His plays are characterized by various phases or stages of his artistic development. These changes are clearly reflected in his plays and it is roughly divided such as Nationalistic Plays, Poetic Plays, Modern, realistic, 'moralist' or problem plays, or 'the drama of ideas', Psychological or 'humanistic' plays, Metaphysical, spiritual, or 'visionary' plays.



Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)

Courtesy: [http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Henrik\\_Ibsen](http://www.wikiwand.com/en/Henrik_Ibsen)

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**Dr. R. Anuja, MBA, M.Phil., Ph.D., Editor: *Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature***

S. Gomathy, M.A. (M.Phil.)

Dollish Existence of Nora Helmer in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*

## ***A Doll's House***

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* belongs to social or realistic drama. It is the most famous and best-known among Ibsen's plays. He deals with contemporary social issues such as the place of women in this play. The heroine, Nora Helmer, is guilty of committing forgery, for which she is being black-mailed by the villain, Nils Krogstad. This she had done in order to save the life of her husband, but he, instead of appreciating her act, denounces her as a liar and criminal. However, she is ultimately saved by the intervention of her old friend, Mrs. Linde, who brings about a change in Krogstad's heart. But Nora does not stay with her husband; she leaves her home and children to learn the ways of the world.

### **Nora Helmer, the Protagonist**

Nora Helmer, the protagonist of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is one of the most complex characters of 19th century drama, prances about in the first act, behaves desperately in the second, and gains a complete sense of reality during the final act of the play.

At the beginning of the play, Nora seems completely happy. She responds affectionately to Torvald's teasing, speaks with excitement about the extra money his new job will provide, and takes pleasure in the company of her children and friends. She does not seem to mind her doll-like existence, in which she is pampered, and patronized.

As the play progresses, Nora reveals that she is not just a "silly girl," as Torvald calls her. To preserve Torvald's health she incurs to take out a loan without the knowledge of her hard-headed husband. This reflects her smartness and ability beyond mere wife hood. Nora's fierce determination and ambition is quite visible from the years of secret labor which undertakes to pay off her debt. That she was even willing to break the law in order to ensure Torvald's health shows her courage.

Krogstad's blackmail and the consequence that follows do not change Nora's nature. Even it has opened her eyes to her unfulfilled and underappreciated potential. At the end of the play in the climatic confrontation with Torvald, Nora says, "I have been performing tricks for

you, Torvald” (*A Doll’s House*, 75). She comes to realize that in addition to her literal dancing and singing tricks, she has been putting on a show throughout her marriage. She realizes the fact that she has pretended to be someone and she has not lived her life. She has led a life in order to fulfill the role that Torvald, her father, and society at large have expected of her.

### **Husband Torvald Helmer, Patronizing Nora**

Nora Helmer and her husband Torvald Helmer, two important characters in the play have considerable difference among them. They live their lives in such a way that they are oblivious to their true desires and needs in life. In the beginning of the play, Nora, the protagonist of the play, seems simple and unknowledgeable of the world outside her home. Though she appears happy she is subconsciously unhappy and not as innocent as she seems. In contrast, her husband Torvald is a hard-headed, serious-minded, so-called principled man who believes that a man's role in marriage is to protect his wife and guide her almost as a father would. The dissimilarities between their attitudes towards each other, which eventually leads to Nora separating from the household, a tragic event for her kids as well as to Torvald’s reputation.

Torvald treats Nora as a child by patronizing her and calling her like his “little squirrel”, his “little lark”, “a featherhead”. But Nora is much smarter than he perceives. She hides the macaroons from him and she lies and from this we sense that she is unhappy and defies Torvald in many ways. In reality, Nora possesses an intelligent, manipulative side that Torvald doesn't realize. By secretly saving money to pay off the loan, Nora reveals that she had to keep this secret from Torvald a long time and one day hoped that by doing this heroic act, he will still be faithful to her even as her attractiveness fades .

### **Childish**

In the beginning, Nora exhibits many childish qualities. It is evident from her extravagant Christmas shopping. She eats a few desserts which she has secretly purchased. When her supercilious husband Torvald Helmer, asks if she has been sneaking macaroons, she denies it whole-heartedly. With this minor act of deception, we learn that Nora is quite capable of lying. She is most child-like when she interacts with her husband. She behaves playfully yet obediently

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in his presence, always coaxing favors from him instead of communicating as equals. Torvald gently chides Nora throughout the play, and Nora good-naturedly responds to his criticism as though she were some loyal pet.

### **A Little Secret**

When Nora's old friend Mrs. Christine Linde arrives, she divulges a little secret. She's not just cheating off her husband, on the contrary, she saved his life. Without the knowledge of Torvald, Nora borrowed money so that they could afford a year-long trip to Italy and this trip was suggested by the doctor to recoup from his illness. Torvald and Christine accuse her of being spendthrift but she is actually quite thrifty indeed. She has been secretly working odd jobs and even skimming money from her allowance to pay back the debt. Later on we come to know that Nora was so determined to save her husband that she even committed forgery to get the loan. This action shows that Nora is both daring and tenacious. She values love over the law. When her secret is revealed we know that, besides the childish character she plays for her husband, there is a whole other Nora emerging out. When Nils Krogstad threatens to reveal the truth about her forgery, she realizes that she has brought down Torvald Helmer's good name. She begins to question her own self something she has never done before. Nora contemplates suicide in order to eliminate the dishonor she has wrought upon her family. She also hopes to prevent Torvald from sacrificing himself and going to prison in order to save her from persecution. During the climactic scene in Act Three, Nora seems to stall before running out into the night to end her life. Torvald stops her all too easily, perhaps because she knows that, deep down, she wants to be saved.

### **Nora's Epiphany**

Nora's epiphany (“a sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the reality or essential meaning of something, usually initiated by some simple, homely, or commonplace occurrence or experience.” [www.dictionary.com](http://www.dictionary.com)) occurs when the truth is finally revealed. As Torvald unleashes his disgust towards Nora and her crime of forgery, Nora realizes that her husband is a very different person than she once believed. Torvald has no intention of taking the blame for Nora's crime. She thought for certain that he would selflessly give up everything for her. When

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he fails to do this, she accepts the fact that their marriage has been an illusion. Their false devotion has been merely play acting. She has been his "child-wife" and his "doll." When Nora comes to the realization that her character was little more than a composite of societal and others' expectations, she recognizes that the strong, staunch, principled Torvald she thought she was married to was only a character formed out of her own expectations. Their marriage was a doll marriage: he a doll husband, she a "doll wife", and their children destined to be "doll children". In regard to the children, Nora realizes that if she continues the pattern of instilling societal norms on her children, they too will fall into the trap of doll hood.

### **Final Catalyst for Nora's Awakening**

Torvald's severe and selfish reaction after learning of Nora's deception and forgery is the final catalyst for Nora's awakening. But even in the first act, Nora shows that she is not totally unaware that her life is at odds with her true personality. She defies Torvald in small yet meaningful ways—by eating macaroons and then lying to him about it, for instance. She also swears, apparently just for the pleasure she derives from minor rebellion against societal standards. As the drama unfolds, and as Nora's awareness of the truth about her life grows, her need for rebellion escalates, culminating in her walking out on her husband and children to find independence. The anguish of Krogstad's blackmail starts the process, but the final blow is Torvald reaction when he finds out the truth. When the wonderful thing doesn't happen, when Torvald fails to attempt to sacrifice himself for her, Nora realizes that their relationship has been empty. The love she imagined never existed. There was never any chance of the wonderful thing she had hoped and feared. She tells her husband, "Our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child" (*A Doll's House*, 75). In the end, Nora has a sort of spiritual awakening. She walks out into the night alone but, for perhaps the first time in her life, she is on the path to becoming a fully realized, fully independent human being.

"I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you wanted it like that. You and father have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life. our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have

been your doll-wife, just as at home I was father's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played with me, just as they thought it great fun when I played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald.” (*A Doll's House*, 76)

In a seminal speech that explains the play's title (*A Doll's House*), Nora realizes the truth about her marriage, which has been not a meeting of minds and hearts, but a performance. She blames her husband and, before him, her father for treating her as a doll and a plaything for their own amusement. They wanted her to be ignorant and helpless, and thus far she has only tried to please them, missing out on any opportunity to educate or improve herself.

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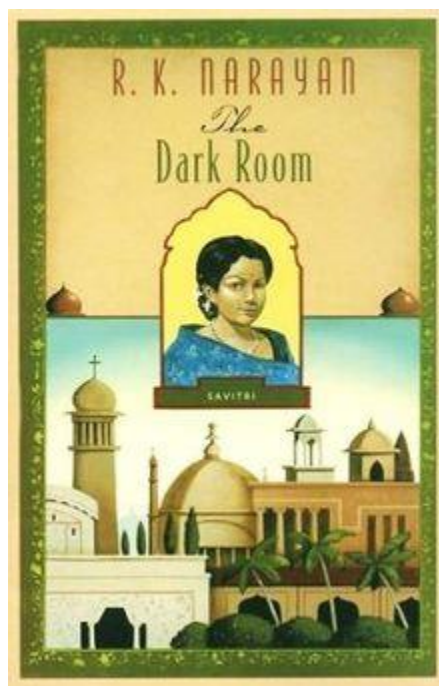
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## Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature

### Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Feminity in the Novels

#### *The Dark Room and Lamps in The Whirlpool*

M. Kavitha



#### Abstract

Hegemonic masculinity perpetuates the dominant social position of men, and emphasized femininity focuses on the subordinate social position of women. Throughout history, women have been treated as sub-ordinate to men. The word “Feminist” has caused a turmoil wherever it is uttered. The focus of this paper is to explore the subordination of feminine gender in the novels of R. K. Narayan’s *The Dark Room* (1938) and Rajam Krishnan’s *Lamps in the Whirlpool* (1997). The protagonists of the novels are seen as women struggling against all odds. These novels portray the picture of the sufferings of Savitri and Girija and explore the depression of woman who are always under their husband’s control at a deeper level.

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Hegemonic Masculinity and Emphasized Feminity in the Novels *The Dark Room* and *Lamps in The Whirlpool*

R. K. Narayan (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001), full name Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, was an Indian writer, who was known for his works set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. He was a leading author of early Indian literature in English. In a career that spanned over sixty years, Narayan received many awards and honours, including the AC Benson Medal from the Royal Society of Literature, the Padma Bhushan and the Padma Vibhushan, India's third and second highest civilian awards. He was also nominated to the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of India's Parliament.

Rajam Krishnan, born in 1925 in Musiri, Trichy District in Tamil Nadu is a major Tamil writer. Her works represent the lives of women in Tamil Nadu, India, particularly about the Brahmin women, well -expressed in a realistic style and language. Her novels and short stories have been translated into diverse Indian languages and English. She received the New York Herald Tribune International Award in 1950 for a short story; Sahitya Academy Award in 1973; Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1975. She has been privileged with a number of other awards such as Kalaimagal Award in 1953 and Thiru. Vi. Ka. Award in 1991. This paper will focus upon these two factors, Masculinity and Femininity in the two novels.

**Keywords:** Hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity, subordination of women, R. K. Narayan, Rajam Krishnan, *The Dark Room*, *Lamps in the whirlpool*

## Introduction

*The Dark room* is the third of R. K. Narayan's novels. It is the only novel where Narayan thought of a social problem, namely the place of women in society, and worked it out with reference to the socio-cultural matrix of India of the 1930s. *The Lamps in the Whirlpool* is translated from the Tamil novel *Suzhalil Mithakkum Deepangal*. The title of the novel *Lamps in the Whirlpool*, the 'lamps' symbolize the situation of women in the family as well as the 'whirlpool' indicates the inconvenience that are faced by women. Specifically, the author gives a description of feminism and the orthodox regulations of the Brahmin community in this novel.

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She portrays the emphasis in Brahmin families to '*madi* rules' and how Brahmin women have endured those '*madi*' rules.

### **Savitri as a Subordinate in R. K. Narayan's *The Dark Room***

The central character of this novel is Savitri, a submissive housewife, who is married to Ramani, an employee of the Engladia Insurance Company. They have three children, Kamala, Sumati and Babu. Savitri is a typical good Indian housewife of the India of those times, very much dominated and neglected by her husband who tries to shelter her two daughters and maintain their innocence, while never raising her voice or her hands against her husband. The girls and their mother are completely subjected to Ramani's whims and fancies, from what they will eat, to whether they will eat, to who they will invite as guests to their home.

Throughout all this, Savitri is placed on a pedestal as she silently endures the abuse and tries to keep her family together. She is beautiful, self-sacrificing, devoted and obedient - the ideal Indian wife. However much she hungers for Ramani's love, she never even gets a smile from him, and neither do his love-starved daughters. Ramani, bored by tormenting his placid wife, eventually starts having an affair with a beautiful woman at his office named Shanta Bai, and this insults her. Savitri convinces herself to bear quietly when her neighbor tells her about it, even though it eats away at her. She is too terrified of Ramani's rages to do anything, and the years of abuse have given her such low self-esteem that she blames herself for the affair. But when Ramani's treatment of her worsens, ignoring every desperate attempt by Savitri to save the marriage, she finally snaps. She throws her wedding necklace down (the wedding necklace is as significant in India as the wedding ring is in the west) and pours out years' worth of rage and grief to Ramani, lamenting that she has no rights in society even if she wanted to assert them, and that she is only a chattel till the day she dies. So the solution is to die.

Savitri runs from the house in tears to throw herself into the Sarayu River. She drowns herself but floats to the surface, and is seen by a local crook named Mari who is moved by pity and pulls her out of the water, pumping the water from her lungs. He asks her why she tried to kill herself and tells her that there is always hope in life, and always another path. The crook's

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wife, Ponni, cleans Savitri up and advises her to find solace in a life devoted to spiritual contemplation. And so Savitri starts to work in a temple, hoping to find peace as a Hindu nun. Instead, she finds herself molested and eyed by other men, and constantly at odds with the sexist priest who hates seeing a woman working in a temple - a place dominated by the male Brahmins of the Hindu clergy. Disillusioned and depressed, Savitri begins to miss her daughters and wonders if she was selfish and irresponsible to leave them, and wonders how badly they are being treated by Ramani. She realizes that all her attempts to escape were useless, because as a woman in this society, she has no place at all except where her family is, whether she likes it or not. And running away will not protect her daughters or bring her peace. Resigned, and oddly at peace with her lot in life, a quiet and contemplative Savitri returns to Malgudi and to her home. But nothing changes. Ramani is spitefully triumphant that his rebellious wife has at last learned her place, and continues to behave as he always did. Savitri revolts but returns defeated. This is one of Narayan's definitely darker novels and one of the few where he seriously examines the gender inequalities of traditional Indian society in the mid-twentieth century.



**Rajam Krishnan 1925-2014**

Courtesy: <http://solvanam.com/?p=37327>

### **Girija as a Subordinate in Rajam Krishnan's *Lamps in the Whirlpool***

The protagonist Girija, is a typical middle class Brahmin girl. She has completed her post-graduation and worked as a teacher in a village school. She is inspired by her students and Colleagues alike. Girija is married to Swaminathan only to perform the duties of a Hindu wife in

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a Brahmin family. They have three children Kavitha, Charu and Bharat. Swaminathan's mother is as much a central character as Girija because she treated her daughter-in-law as a slave to do her duties. Girija has to follow the 'madi' rules and 'acharam' as instructed by her mother-in-law. Her husband is not at all caring about his wife. After seventeen years of married life she used to do only household chores. Even she is not having time for relaxation. Rathna, her husband's niece visited her once. Girija was awakened by the talk of Rathna. One day, her husband throws the plate because the food is not palatable. Girija is irritated by his arrogant behaviour. She is not in the state of mind to please him. He insulted her very badly; she was treated like a slave in that house. For the first time she does not like to please him. Girija leaves from her home. She wants to spend some time on the banks of the river Ganga. She meets the pilgrims Gowriammal and her husband. Girija also meets a spiritual widow in Rishikeshi. She meets a spiritual widow in Haridwar who has dared to defy society after her husband's death. Girija explains her situation to the woman. She advises Girija to take life in her hands and act with clarity. She returns home with a sense of enlightenment, after four days.

She is not allowed to enter the house by her family members. Girija's husband and mother-in-law charge her with infidelity and order her to leave the house. Horrified Girija goes to Ratna, who is engaged in feminist research in Delhi University. Ratna and her friends give her refuge and take care of her as if she were a wounded bird. Girija seeks employment with a nun who runs a home for refugee children. Her concern now is to see that her daughters are not destroyed by the family regimen.

All along Girija had been a victim of the strict rules of orthodoxy. She painfully recollects how her children are denied the joys of being caressed and fondled by their mother from a tender age, as it would violate the "madi". She is torn between her worry for her daughters. She wants to keep in touch with her children. Then Girija transforms herself to a new empowered woman.

### **Hegemonic Masculinity**

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Male domination and female submission take place unconsciously, because the gender inequalities have evolved over one million years and get institutionalized. The psychological conflicts between the genders reinforce the inequalities. Ramani in *The Dark Room* is such a bossy chap, who expects every aspect of perfection in his household and failing to meet that will only reinforce his bad temper towards his wife Savitri. Similarly Swaminathan in *Lamps in the Whirlpool* is the embodiment of callousness. He is totally insensitive to the feelings of his wife. He married her just to do all the household chores and she was treated like a slave in that house.

The treatment of the husbands towards their wives compelled them to take a serious decision in their life which has brought a turning point in the novel. The contrary is that Savitri revolts but returns defeated whereas Girija revolts and transforms to a new empowered woman. The Indian women lose their identity after the marriage. Education does not give any rationale of their life. They become sacrificial goats in the ritual of running the family.

## Conclusion

In *The Dark Room*, Savitri, the protagonist, is on the lookout for her independent human identity, because she does not wish to remain content with her status as a mere slave to her husband. She cannot totally free herself from the dead weight of blind tradition and when she realizes that her search for independence and personal dignity does not lead her anywhere, she accepts her fate with calm resignation though an inexpressible despair seeps into her soul. Savitri's quest for her identity, at least of her independent individual entity, begins in a dark room of her husband's house. It is a way of protest against the tyrannical behaviour of her husband. At the end of the novel, she is equally powerless, as is obvious from her despairing questions to herself, "But what can I do? And what have I"? (179)

In *Lamps in the Whirlpool*, Girija, the protagonist, becomes a slave, following only the rituals after her marriage. Education has not given her any rationale for her life. She does not find any relaxation. She has lost her freedom, her self-respect. Girija is, in fact is afraid that the choice she has to make will lead to maybe giving up her children. In our Indian life "Motherhood is everything". It is an uncompromised one in any situation. At the end of all this work, Girija

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wants to keep in touch with the children. It is very important that Indian woman must learn to balance between the two extremes. Girija is well educated. But she lost her self-identity as empowered women because of the rigid rules of her family.

Though the country has attained tremendous progress, the role of Indian women remains the same. Gender discrimination is the universal phenomenon in the society. Due to the education and economic independence, the status of women has been raised. In order to overcome the discrimination in the society, they must know their rights. They must raise their voice against the brutalities and violence which is aimed at them by the society; they must stand up and rebuke the male dominating society which discourages self-reliance in women.

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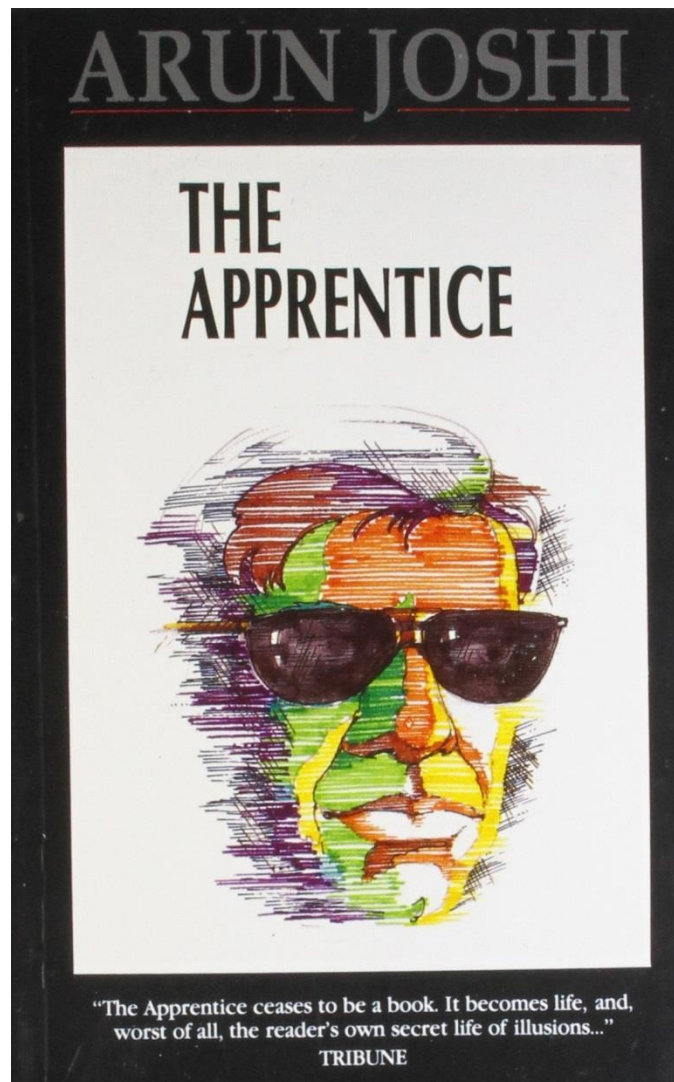
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**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

**Role of Women as Depicted in the Novels of Arun Joshi**

**C. Leena**



**Abstract**

Arun Joshi (1938-1993) novelist and author of short-stories was born in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Earning his M.S. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA and returned to

India to pursue a career in the corporate world and rose to become the Executive Director of Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relation and Human Resources in New Delhi. Arun Joshi won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1982 for *The Last Labyrinth*. Role of women in literature is often portrayed as secondary character and supporting role. In Joshi's novels much emphasis has been given to male characters, but his female characters need due recognition. Through this paper an attempt is made here to study women characters in Arun Joshi's novels, *The Foreigner*, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, *The Apprentice*, *The Last Labyrinth*, **and** *The City and The River*.

**Keywords:** Arun Joshi, women in Arun Joshi's novels, *The Foreigner*, *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, *The Apprentice*, *The City and The River*

### ***The Strange Case of Billy Biswas***

In Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas* a friend who understands Billy is Tuula Lindgren, the Swedish lady of thirty years, who has come to United State for advance training in a psychiatric course and has extraordinary intuition, understands the dilemma of Billy's life fully. She comes to know what goes on inside his "dark, inscrutable, unsmiling eyes". (p.15) As for herself she is strongly interested in "India especially in the tribal people, a subject about which Billy knew enough to keep her engaged not one but a hundred nights". (p.17-18) She is in search of finding "a psychiatric explanation of the concepts of ritual and taboo". (p.18) As she talks in one breath of yoga and Gandhi, she is also in search of finding a Freudian explanation of Gandhi's non-violence. Billy occasionally discusses his problems with Tuula and she would Freud-like tell him: "...in a very mild form such hallucinations occurred in every one – all art in a way flowed out of them," and gave her friendly advice that "I should not encourage them too much". (181)

It was she who had insight into Billy's mind. Tuula's assessment of Billy's character is very correct and it is what she terms in German urcraft which explode in Billy's life and he escapes in to the tribal world of civilization leaving the members of his family including his wife and son. Meena Chatterjee, wife of the protagonist Billy Biswas is a product of the modern civilization. She is "quite usually pretty in a western sort of way" (37), loquacious and hallow.

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They get married but Meena cannot hold his soul. She cannot satisfy his inner urge. His soul gets hurt and estranged. He does not touch Meena for many months. Billy and Meena cannot communicate and respond to each other. He confides to Romi that:

It might have been saved if Meena had possessed a rare degree of empathy or even a sufficient idea of human suffering. These, I am afraid, she did not have. Her upbringing, her ambitions, twenty years of contact with a phony society- all had ensured that she should not have it. So the more I tried to tell her what corroding me, bringing me to the edge of despair so to speak, the more resentful she became (133).

With the increasing gap between Meena and Billy, he turns towards Rima Kaul, a girl in Bombay. Billy finds Rima different from Meena. He gets down to Rima Kaul who has been in love with him since the day she meet him. His trips to Bombay bring him close to her. However, for him, Rima is not a sex symbol but an embodiment of that empathy which Meena lacks.

In *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*, Tuula is first person who can understand the dilemma of Billy's mind. After that this is Meena, Billy's wife. In spite of being Billy's wife she is unable to pacify his inner tension because of the superficiality of the modern phony society. After having an affair with Rima Kaul he comes on a conclusion that women body of this phony society cannot satisfy him. Bilasia, a primitive girl, also has a great influence on Billy. After possessed her Billy thought she is right women who can raise spirit of his soul. In this way all these women characters are the main source of inspiration to the protagonist Billy Biswas. They play a vital role in his life and made a great effect on his mind and heart.

### ***The Foreigner***

Joshi's first novel, *The Foreigner* is the story of a youth born of an English mother and an Indian father who died when he was only four, his uncle in Kenya brought him up. He had enamored relationships with Anna and Kathy. Sindi's futile association with both these women characters, Anna and Kathy, gives a distinct shape to his character and personality. Another

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female character in the novel is June who embodies human values. She feels entrapped by the materialistic entropy of the American society. She also attempts to provide inner peace and contentment to Sindi.

### ***The Last Labyrinth***

In *The Last Labyrinth*, Leela symbolises the scientific attitude and also showcases its inability to impart inner satisfaction to man. Bhaskar is attracted towards her fetish for analysis and explanation. Though he maintains sexual relationship with her for six months yet is still baffled with her. Leela reads and analyses, but she has little knowledge about “the roots of the world’s confusion” (80). Bhaskar tells her about his emptiness and the voices that he hears all the time. She feels concerned, analyses his problem but is unable to solve it. Bhaskar frankly remarks:

Leela Sabnis was a muddled creature. As muddled as me. Muddled by her ancestry, by marriage, by divorce, by too many books. When she made love-yes-when she made love, the confusion momentarily lifted. But immediately after, as she stood smoking looking down at me... The confusion descended in one roaring storm (77-78).

Som Bhaskar’s affair with Leela Sabnis fizzles out as it does not give him any sense of true belonging. Bhaskar’s mother’s reliance on faith and his father’s fetish for knowledge goad him to leave Leela. Geeta is the perfect wife anyone can ever dream for – she is intelligent, sophisticated, “aware of the pitfalls of the world”, sensible, loving and trusting (63). When Bhaskar meets Geeta, it is basically her trust in life that draws him towards her. “If discontent is my trademark, trust is Geeta’s ... Geeta trusts like birds fly, like fish swim” (63). Geeta, like Bhaskar’s mother and Anuradha, is a firm believer of religion and has great enthusiasm for temples, shrines, saints and astrologers. Bhaskar, though married her and possessed her physically, is unable to understand her. Anuradha is Bhaskar’s ‘shakti’ and it is through her only that he can find solution to his predicament. Joshi seems to have a strange fascination for this concept. In his interview with Piciucco, he remarks that ‘shakti’ is “the Indian worship of the Mother Goddess, of the Divine Mother, a thing which is also common in your parts...People have

experienced it quite similarly. That concept is not that the Queen or the female power is stronger than male, but rather she creates everything for the pleasure of man. How and why, do not know?"(1997:94).

Billy comes back to India and is appointed Professor of Anthropology at the Delhi University. His mother introduces him to Meena, a pretty young daughter of a retired civil servant. He hurriedly gets married to Meena. Meena represents the hollowness and superficiality of the modern phoney society and lacks that "rare degree of empathy" that could have enabled her to understand her husband's vexed mind (185). Her lack of empathy and "sufficient idea of human suffering" leads to a marital fiasco. Meena in reality is a hollow character, truly symbolic of her generation. Her incapacities are generic, rather than individual:

He feels terribly sick of the post- independence upper class Indian society lost in the superfluity of life. The 'kitch' culture of the affluent India which his wife Meena, the daughter of a civil servant and educated in the best missionary convent, represents, drives him out of the society (Mathur and Rai 1980:35)

## To Conclude

Joshi's novels are replete with association and interaction of protagonists with women characters who are the torch bearers to the ones caught in the labyrinth. Almost all his protagonists represent common man's disenchantment with materialistic aggrandisement. The novelist shows the hollowness of relationships and the absence of any ameliorating vision in a world order.

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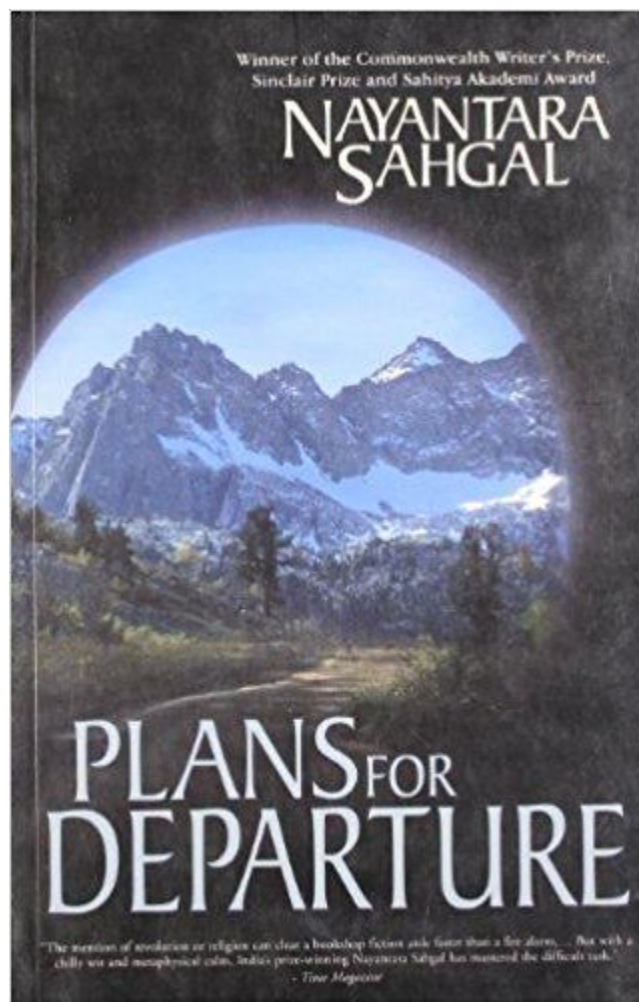
**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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**Oppression of Women as Depicted in Selected Novels of  
Nayantara Sahgal**

**Lt. Dr. N. Mythili**

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**Abstract**

Gender plays a vital role in the literary field. For centuries women have been exploited and victimized by male-dominated societies in India and all over the world. The continuing trend of exploitation of woman by man provokes her to revolt against the social system and aspire for

its reconstitution, under a more equitable dispensation. But with the spread of education and the influence of a few institutions and organizations which have urged for women's emancipation from the age-old shackles, some signs of awakening among women have become visible. The awareness of the need for liberation from the shackles of marital bondage has been felt by many an educated woman in the India of the post-independence era.

Self-identity and freedom to an individual in social, political and domestic milieu plays a prominent role in the life of every human being. When these rights are tested to be bestowed on an individual, there arises the necessity to fight for conquering those rights. The great Miltonic verse from *Paradise Lost* assures the value of "freedom", when Satan says, "Better to reign in hell than to serve in Heaven." Not a good quote for women's freedom, or for any freedom. Hell stands for unhappy joyless lives.

Highlighting the necessity of freedom to an individual, Nayantara Sahgal pictures the struggle for social and domestic rights through her female protagonists. In this paper I would like to explore the role of gender in literature through Sahgal's venture in fighting for the social and domestic rights of her women characters, who are the representatives of womanhood in the society.

The quest is done through Sahgal's selected female characters such as: Rashmi in *This Time of Morning*, Simrit in *The Day in Shadow*, Anna Hansen in *Plans for Departure*, Sonali in *Rich like us*. All her female protagonists express their quest at different phases of their lives. Sahgal's fictional world presents the experience of conflict, frustration and a long drawn period of stress, through which characters mature and eventually find a stable identity of their own. Different types of women are presented in Sahgal's novels.

**Keywords:** Nayantara Sahgal, exploitation of women, women's freedom, Nayantara Sahgal, marital bondage, self-expression

## Introduction

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

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

### **A Note on Nayantara Sahgal**

Born in British India on May 10, 1927 in Allahabad, Nayantara Sahgal is an Indian writer in English whose fiction has received worldwide recognition. She is the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru's sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. During the emergency imposed by her first cousin, Indira Gandhi, she stood up against the totalitarian government, giving evidence of her independence of thought. Throughout her life she has stood for freedom, religious tolerance and non-violence. Nayantara Sahgal graduated from Woodstock School in Landour in 1943 and from Wellesley College in 1947. Her most popular novel, *Rich Like Us* (1985) won her the Sinclair Prize; *Plans for Departure* (1985) won her the Commonwealth Writer's Prize. She received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1987. She lives in Dehradun, Uttaranchal.

### **Sahgal's Women - Thrust for Domestic Freedom**

There is something distinct in the women characters of Nayantara Sahgal - something in their social and emotional make up that express itself in their attitude to persons and events. In these women characters, there is a deep longing for self-fulfillment through self-expression. They analyze this through the metaphors that deal with the themes of suffering, dominance, and an urge for companionship. Her novels from *A Time to be Happy* to *Mistaken Identity* show her deep concern with the perilous state of women in the patriarchal society. Her women from her prototype Maya to the mother figure Renee in *Mistaken Identity* rise against the stultifying

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culture which impedes women's progress and rebel against all those years of oppression, marks the third and the most mature phase of Sahgal's career. The women belonging to this phase are strong-willed, emotionally independent women. They refuse to bow down before the strangle hold of men, right from the beginning. They are mistresses of indomitable spirit. And the credit goes to Anna Hansen, Sonali, Rose, and the Rani of Vijaygarh, Simrit, Saroj, and Sylla for holding the flag of the new woman.

Sahgal's women have only one passion: it is the longing to be free, freedom from all restraint in word and deed being their monomania. They want to be fully alive.

### **Rashmi in *This Time Of Morning***

The vivacious and outgoing Rashmi in this novel, the only daughter of Kailas and Mera comes back to her parents, having deserted her discontented husband Dalip, an I.A.S officer, contemplating divorce. Rashmi experiences all the pangs of a divided self, a vital segment of her being clamoring for separation and release from her husband, and the other part still cherishing the savoured moments of togetherness in the early years of her marriage. Finally Rashmi resolves to divorce, to work and live alone in Delhi. Eventually, an irresistible urge for communication in confidence she moves closely with Neil Berensen, a Norwegian Architect. Soon Rashmi breaks off her relationship with Neil too, as he fails to satisfy her inmost need for communication. At last she renews her childhood friendship with Rakesh. With a deep longing for communication within her, she asks Rakesh when the train is about to leave, "Rakesh ..... Will you write to me? There is much I'd like to share with you." Thus she accepts Rakesh as a true companion.

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

### **Anna Hansen in *The Plans For Departure***

Nayantara Sahgal's *Plans for Departure* is the story of Anna Hansen, a Danish girl. Anna is one of the three major female characters in the novel. She is also the protagonist, a person who

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wants to taste the essence of life in its magnificent as well as mundane aspects. It is her desire for self-realization that she postpones her marriage to an English diplomat, Nicholas. She wants to understand life and asserts her right to be the authentic self.

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

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

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

### **Sonali in *Rich Like Us***

Sonali in the novel *Rich Like Us*, symbolizes Sahgal's philosophy of active intervention in life. Sonali is a conscientious I.A.S. officer working as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of

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Industry in New Delhi. By creating a character like Sonali who is very critical towards established views concerning high caste (Kashmiri, Brahmin) Indian femininity, Sahgal is suggesting new patterns of feminine identity, more attuned to citizenship, professionalism and social responsibility. Sonali is quite different from the stereo type of women found in Indo-English fiction. Her problem is not marital disharmony or male domination. Her problem is how to cope with the hypocrisy, red-tape and corruption that have crept into the Indian Administrative Service? She is intelligent and intellectually independent, yet committed to communal good, uncompromisingly conscientious and idealistic.

In the wake of Emergency, as she refuses to interpret rules to the advantage of her political bosses, she is transferred without warning, demoted and punished. A revolt against the authoritarianism of the ruling government which has already been firing itself into a rage inside her, now becomes an uncontrollable fury and she decides that she can no longer be a party to the widespread conspiracy of silence that is Civil Service. Sonali sustains moral courage and strength to face up the situation. After her resignation, the thirty eight year old Sonali becomes a central force to articulate and share the novelist's humanistic vision as only a woman can. We look through the unimaginable miseries and terror, let loose on her class by the men that become manifest first through her closeness with Rose. She feels concerned with Rose's predicament in so unpleasant a situation with her husband lying in coma and the stepson Dev denying her allowance of , to render her life a miserable experience.

### **Simrit, the Rebellious in *Rich Like Us***

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

It is Simrit's rebelliousness, her willingness to change helps her in releasing her from the hold of the past; the old world where she had watched injustice prevail on the basis of gender and class makes way for a new one, where the possibilities of equality and opportunity are promised to all, irrespective of class, caste or gender. Therefore, she accepts divorce to get free from her wealthy

business husband and walks out on her husband to carve out her own destiny. She could not compromise her self-respect. She leaves Som and moves elsewhere with her children, learning to cope with things on her own.

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

### **Simrit in *The day in Shadow***

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

### **Conclusion**

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

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

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

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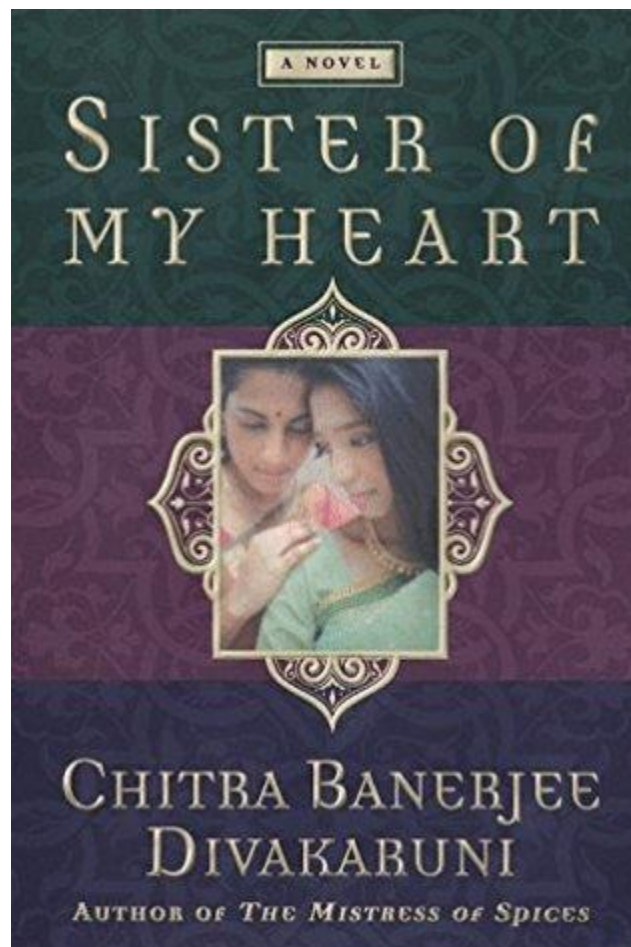
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**Inner Conflict Vs Inner Strength: A Study on Women in the Novel  
*Sister of My Heart* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni**

U. Nithyakumari, M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D. Research Scholar

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**Abstract**

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, a prolific writer who proclaim the significance of women in the family and society through her novels. *Sister of My Heart* is one of the beautiful novels where Banerjee not only focus on the two protagonists Anju and Sudha to tell the reader about

the love, caring and affection of the cousins. But more than that she tells us how all the women characters in the novel help each other; the women in the novel can be divided into two categories, one being the women who belong to the traditional past and the two young women Anju and Sudha who represent the present age.

Anju and Sudha were brought up by their aunt and mothers. Both had their own ups and downs in their life. But these sisters are strong enough to fight against their challenges and misfortune through their will power and determination. This essential strength is given to them through their aunt and mothers who stood for them as back bone to take bold decisions in their intolerable level of hardship. This paper focuses on how the women help each other to attain their individual success.

**Keywords:** Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Women's challenges, oppression of women, traditional women, male-dominated society,

### ***Sister of My Heart***

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, an eminent Indian Novelist has her major themes on women and their lives. *Sister of My Heart* is one of the remarkable novels of Banerjee in which she brings forth the power and strength of women throughout. The women in the novel not only played their role strongly in the male-dominated society, but in the old tradition and culture, Banerjee portrays the women as weapons not victims. Each one cares for the other in all walks of their lives. Banerjee like Alice Walker brought life of women in a peculiar way.

The women in *Sister of my Heart* remind us of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. In the words of Bhasker A Shukla "The novel charts Celie's resistance to the oppression surrounding her, and the liberation of her existence through positive and supportive relations with other women". (203) The mothers especially Pishi Gauri Ma and Nalini Ma are the embodiment of sacrifice and silent suffering. But their lives stand as living testimony for their daughters Anju and Sudha to become strong women.

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Inner Conflict Vs Inner Strength: A Study on Women in the Novel *Sister of My Heart*

by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

## **Pishi**

Pishi a widow lost her husband at a very young age. She is a sister to Bijoy, who takes care of Anju and Sudha. The former is born to Bijoy and Gauri Ma, the latter to Gopal and Nalini Ma. Unfortunately fate takes the lives of both their fathers Bijoy and Gopal in their adventure in search of Rubies. But Pishi and Gauri Ma never hate Nalini and her daughter knowing that Gopal was the reason for the adventure and the death of Bijoy. Even Pishi conceals the secret that her brother Bijoy was murdered by Gopal, whereas later she comes to know that Gopal is innocent.

Pishi, even though a widow, doesn't sit in the corner of the house like other widows in Calcutta. But she becomes a back bone for the family and the women in the house. Pishi throughout the novel supports and encourages Sudha in all her ups and downs. She even welcomes her decision to come home with a daughter in the womb, for which reason the mother-in-law and her husband wanted to abort the child. Pishi says,

“Why should she care anymore what people say? What good has it done her? What good has it done any of us, a whole life time of being afraid of what society might think? I spit on this society which says it's fine to kill a baby girl in her mother's womb, but wrong for the mother to run away to save her child”. (268)

In spite of what the society says about Sudha and her daughter, Pishi decides to sell the ancestral house for the future of Sudha. She encourages her to accept the offer of Ashok for the second marriage which proves her to be a Modern woman.

## **Nalini Ma and Gauri Ma**

Nalini Ma and Gauri Ma are also other fascinating characters setting examples for Anju and Sudha. Nalini Ma even though she is not very patient like Gauri Ma, is able to stand up for her daughter Sudha, strengthening herself for the sake of Sudha in all decision making, and accepting the daughter who left her husband and in-laws. And she also supports her to go America.

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Gauri Ma is another mother for Sudha. She is very generous to sacrifice everything for both Anju and Sudha. Like Pishi, Gauri Ma consoles Sudha when she decides to return home permanently. Gauri Ma's sacrifice can be seen even in her postponing her heart operation for the sake of the daughters, during their marriages, in selling the ancestral house and the book shop. Towards the end of the novel Gauri Ma presents Sudha the rubies which are considered to be more valuable not for their material value, but as the only memorabilia of their fathers.

These Mothers remind us of Toni Morrison's mothers in *Sula* who brought up their children as single mothers. Likewise in the novel, the mothers help each other in building their daughters without any male companion. The mothers however do not teach the daughters how to fight against the world of superstitious tradition and old culture. But set themselves as example through their lives, showing them how to care and help each other. Sudha substantiates this fact with the statement below:

“Role of a mother is another vital gender role performed by women in all societies irrespective of the levels of economic development and modernization. Like other roles, the role of a mother has its own duties and responsibilities towards her children which primarily include feeding, socializing, giving them company, helping them in studies and teaching them good habits” (156).

## **Anju**

The present age is reflected through two young protagonists Anju and Sudha. Anju along with Sudha is brought up together in the same house. Anju's love and care for her cousin can be seen throughout in the novel. Both share all their secrets. Anju remind faithful to Sudha even in concealing the secret love affair with Ashok before her marriage. The marriage might be separate the sister in different corner of the world but they could not be separated by heart and soul. Anju married an NRI Sunil and settled in America. Sudha married Ramesh and settled in Calcutta. The conversation between the sisters bind them more than face to face interaction.

Anju being a bold girl encourages Sudha in her mother-in-law's house during her childless times and threatened by in-laws to abort the baby in the womb knowing it is a girl baby. "Well then, that solves our immediate problem. Take the next train to Howrah station, and then take a cab home. The mothers will take care of you". (261) She also goes to the extent of buying air tickets for Sudha when she is left abandoned by her husband. This however ends in catastrophe since the baby Anju conceived died after her restless work in the library to earn money for Sudha's air tickets. But at the end Anju receives Sudha and her daughter in America, hoping Sudha would get a better future in the new land.

### **Sudha**

Sudha, "The queen of the Sword" (270), battles in her life like The Rani of Jhansi in all aspects. Sudha is also brought like Anju but fate however, makes a difference between the cousins. Unlike Anju, Sudha has played her role differently even from her childhood days. The guilt she had that her father was the murderer of Anju's father haunts her all her life. She conceals this guilt within herself till she learns at the end of the novel that he is innocent. This earlier guilty conscience allow her to show more affection and love for Anju and at same time she fears what would happen if the truth came to light. It was a question whether she would be so loved by Anju as before. Apart from this inner conflict Sudha loves Anju dearly.

### **Marriage**

Both are about to complete their school studies. Now the mothers have decided to arrange marriages for their daughters. But Sudha shows no interest, the reason being she loves a boy named Ashok from a rich background and he promises her that they would elope. But Sudha does not allow herself to go and sacrifices her love for the sake of Anju whose marriage is arranged to Sunil a NRI. This sacrifice is not only the love she has for Anju, but she is very cautious that she should not spoil the name of the family which was already spoiled by her father.

Sudha marries Ramesh. Both cousins they start the next phase of their lives. The marriage begins smoothly until the mother-in-law urges them to have a child. After some treatment she conceives and becomes pregnant with a girl child. As soon as the mother-in-law hears this, she

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by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

wants the child to be aborted. The reason she gives: “my mother –in-law said the eldest child of the Sanyal family has to male – that is how it’s been for the last five generations. She said it’s not fitting, it will bring the family shame and ill luck”. (259)

Sudha makes a bold decision to step out of the family and reaches her mother’s home. Thus C. Bharathi and Dr. S. Kalamani observe:

In traditional relationships women are not expected to have the power to leave home, in fact, to have such ideas is to transgress beyond normative feminine behavior. But now Sudha decides that she should do something to protect her baby. (Internet sources)

Ashok’s re-entering her life again seems to give her some hope after his parents accept Sudha. But the joy never lasts for many minutes when she learns from him that the daughter must be given to her parents. “The mothers will be happy to keep our daughter and make sure she never lacks for love. I promise I will give her every opportunity that money can bring. You can visit her whenever you want”. (285) This is a total disappointment for her. Sudha in the hope of seeing a better future acknowledges her desire saying:

“I am going for Anju, yes, and for Dayita, but most of all I am going for me. I am going with a knowledge that this will not be a fairy tale journey, my winged steed leaping over all obstacles with unfailing ease, but I am going any way. Do I want to return? And if I do return, will I be happy tying my life to a man’s whims again, even if he is a good man? I do not know.....It is so different in its nature from the craving pull, gut and sinew and womb, that I feel for my sister and my daughter”. (316)

Sudha finally goes to America and unites with her cousin. Her hope in a new land gives a new life. This is made possible only through the women around her who help her to continue to live and see life beyond the present situation.

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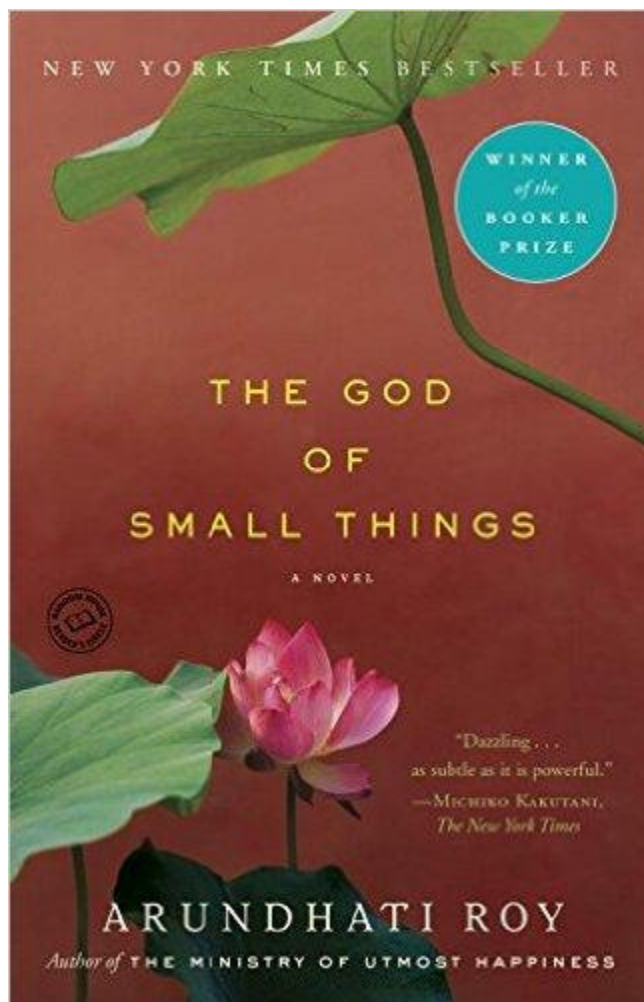
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**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

**A Comparative Study of the Subjugation of Women Characters in  
Arundhati Roy's and Nathaniel Hawthorne's Novels**

**Dr. Padmini Fenn**



**Abstract**

This paper is an attempt to portray the exploitation and discrimination of women in the social systems of South Indian society and the American society as portrayed in the novel *God of*

*Small Things* by Arundhati Roy and *The Scarlett Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The women characters sketched in these two novels share almost the same kind of discrimination, plight and sufferings though they belong to different countries and ages. Arundhati Roy's novel is the portrayal of the Syrian Christian society in Kerala and Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel displays the discrimination in the Puritanical society in eighteenth century America. The women are treated just as objects and subjected to extreme oppression. Some kind of opposition is put up by them but they are thwarted in their endeavour. Though the characters in the novels belong to entirely different countries it is evident that the subjugation of women is the same in all the countries and in all ages.

**Key words:**

**Subjugation of Women Everywhere!**

Subjugation of women is a global phenomenon as the treatment of women is the same in almost all the countries. The term subaltern derived from, a Latin word *sub* (below, under) plus *alter* (other) or *alternans* (alternate) which result in *subaltern* (subordinate). It means a lower ranking or an inferior individual. This word has gained prominence in social, political, religious and economic hierarchies of the twentieth centuries. The synonym of subaltern is subordination or subjugation.

This paper presents a study of the female characters that share the common bond of subjugation and miserably struggle for their survival. They belong to different countries but the same religion. The women characters in Arundhati Roy's *God of Small Things* belong to the Syrian Christian Society from Kerala while "Scarlet Letter" portrays the Puritans in 18th century America. In order to understand the gender dynamics and the manners of a country, we need to study the historical and socio-economic factors of the respective country.

"Syrian Christian, [who] believed that they were descendants of the one hundred Brahmins whom St. Thomas the Apostle converted to Christianity when he traveled east after the Resurrection" (Roy p. 66). The Puritans were a group of English Reformed of 16th and 17th

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centuries who sought to "purify" the Church of England from all Roman Catholic practices, maintaining that the Church of England was only partially reformed.

### **Women in *The God of Small Things***

Roy in *The God of Small Things* gives us a view of the Syrian Christian in Kerala. Gender oppression may be analyzed through the examination of marital and inter-gender relations of Ammu, Mammachi, Baby Kochama and Rahel. These female characters are resourceful, smart and they belong to the affluent class but they are deprived of realising their capabilities. They are not strong enough to openly defy the social order. These women are torn between traditional norms and modern attitudes. They try to challenge the moral and social attitudes in society but are overwhelmed and this leads to their destruction.

### **Ammu Ipe**

Ammu Ipe, a middle class woman marries a plantation owner in Bengal to escape the suffocating conditions at home. She thus tries to break free of the caste, clan and gender inequalities. "Thanks to a male chauvinistic society", as Ammu says, her life has ended in destruction. Compared to her, her brother Chacko Ammu is more intelligent and articulate. But her family denies her all the rights. She falls victim of a marriage that did not work well as she expected. Her husband turns out to be a chronic drunkard who inflicted beastly treatment on her. He behaved as her Boss and Ammu felt very humiliated. When she no longer could put up with his ways she returned home to Ayemenem with her twin children Rahel and Estha. On the train ride back to Ayemenem she says "He's dead ----- I've killed him". She seeks refuge in her father's house and it turns out to be a disaster. She is subjected to humiliation, insults and mental blows by her own family members.

Ammu was discriminated against her brother Chacko who was Oxford educated and had returned home after divorcing his English wife. Ammu who was also in the same situation was ignored by her family. A man can do anything whereas a woman has to retain her chastity and has no right to leave her husband. Chacko always marginalised Ammu and her children. He thought that they were millstones around his neck. Ammu silently suffered the cruelty meted out

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to her. She did everything to avoid quarrels and confrontation. A single woman, with two children to look after and no means of livelihood, saw in Velutha, a “low caste” carpenter the refuge she was seeking. She developed a clandestine relationship with him and this was against the traditional norms of the Syrian Christian society. Because of her moral transgression the church refused to bury her. She was disowned by her people and society.

### **Mammachi**

Mammachi, who belongs to the older generation, possesses sharp business acumen and starts a pickle factory all by herself. Her husband Pappachi did not do anything to help her. But she has no right over her factory. After her husband's death her son Chacko took over the factory and she was made just a sleeping partner. Mammachi does not resist her son and silently acquiesces. Chacko flirts with the pretty women in the factory and she justifies his action by saying that he is a man and they can do anything. Mammachi has talent for music, but he stopped her learning music because he felt that she may surpass him. But like Ammu, who is the daughter of Mammachi, Mammachi never questions her situation and accepts whatever comes to her. She passively accepts the reality passively like most women of her age.

### **Baby Kochamma**

Baby Kochamma is another character who is maltreated by all. She is shocked when her dream of marrying Father Mulligan is shattered. She conspires with the inspector to murder Velutha. She is a failure and starts living in isolation in the Ayemenem house. She felt that she had the "fate of the wretched man-less woman." She, like Mammachi, submits to the patriarchal social norms without any hesitation.

### **Rahel**

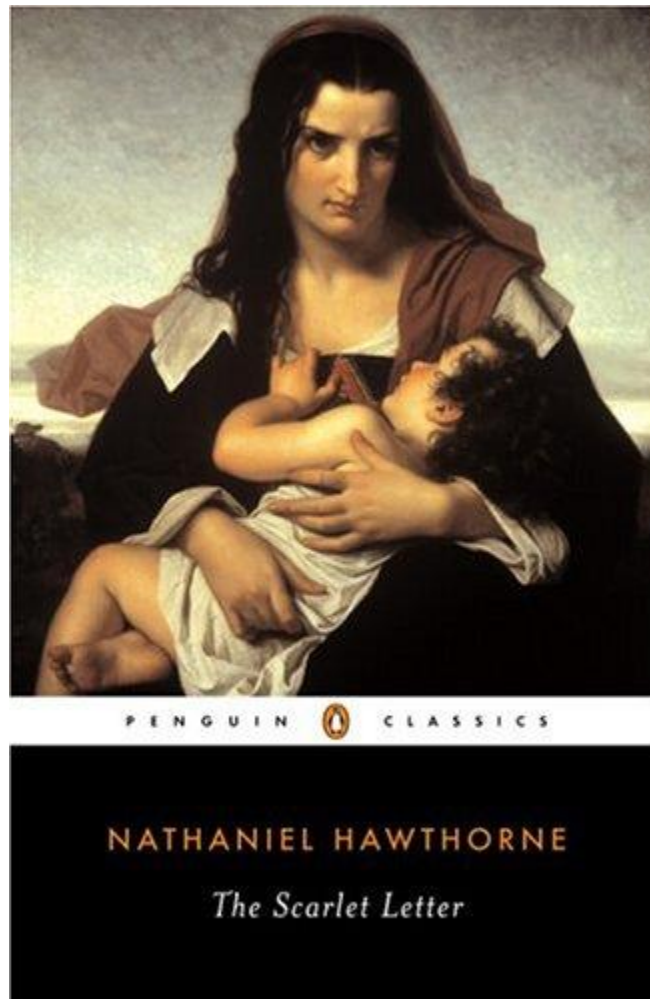
Rahel is a girl who is deprived of parental love. She is the offspring of a Bengali Hindu father and a Kerala Syrian Christian mother. She was expelled from school three times and was not co-opted by the school. She is disliked by her relatives, especially the ladies. She considered Velutha as her father but on discovering the illegal liaison between her mother and Velutha she becomes upset. When the police arrests Velutha she goes to the police station to identify him as a

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criminal. She fails to connect with the people around her and lack self-confidence. She goes to Delhi to learn and there meets Larry McCasline, a researcher, marries him and goes to U.S.A. but she is soon divorced and returns to Ayemenem. The only compatibility she has is with her twin brother Estha. She is just a dreamer and imagines things. Rahel indulges in a sexual relationship with her own brother. Both Ammu and Rahel transgress the social norms of the society and show some kind of defiance.

### **Hawthorne's *Scarlett Letter***



In Puritan era, women were expected to be subordinate to their male counterparts. Life as a Puritan woman was very regimented with societal dictates for clothing, speech, family structure and religion. Varying from those expectations often resulted in social and physical

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punishment. Nathaniel Hawthorne has depicted the social ostracisation undergone by a woman in the face of all odds.

### **Hester Prynne**

Hester Prynne the protagonist of Hawthorne's *Scarlett Letter* was a strong-willed and impetuous young woman — she remembers her parents as loving guides who frequently had to restrain her incautious behavior. The fact that she has an affair also suggests that she once had a passionate nature. As a young woman, Hester marries an elderly scholar, Roger Chillingworth, who sent her ahead to America to live, but never followed. She has a clandestine affair with a minister named Arthur Dimmesdale following which she gives birth to a girl child who she names as Pearl. She is shamed and alienated and the Scarlett letter A is stitched on her fabric. Dimmesdale stands by a mute witness to the shame that Hester was put to. She was willing to take on her own the shame and humiliation while protecting the man she loves. Her alienation and shaming makes her into a matured woman. She is publicly abused but she refuses to name the father of her child. Her husband comes to America and was there when she was publicly accused of adultery. He tries to find out the father of the child, Hester remains a stoic and freethinker. She refuses to reveal the name of her lover. She tries to protect him as much as he could. This shows the strength of her character. Pearl her daughter was the only hope for her, so she tempers her behaviour and subsequently becomes a sort of mother figure to the women around her trying to help them out of their difficulties. Hester also becomes a kind of compassionate maternal figure as a result of her experiences.

### **Pearl**

Pearl who is Hester's daughter is a symbol of purity. She is a reminder of Hester's sin. She was quite young when all the incidents mentioned in the novel happened. She provokes the adult characters and asks pertinent questions. She was attracted to the letter A on her mother's fabric. She enquires about the relationship about her mother and Arthur Dimmesdale. Pearl is more than a punishment to her mother. She is also a blessing. Her existence gives Hester a reason to live, boosting her up when she is tempted to give up.

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## Authors Compared

When we study the worlds of Hawthorne and Roy, we observe that the female characters, though they hail from separate countries and separate religion are still intertwined by common link: and that is the bond of suffering and subjugation. The difference lies only in the degree of their suffering. Hawthorne makes no attempt to conceal the ordeal that his female character Hester has to undergo. The characters of Arundhati Roy also fight against the hegemonic forces in society. They endure all the sufferings in the male dominated society. In Roy's *God of Small Things*, Mammachi and Baby Kochamma are of older generation, who silently endure all the discriminations in their lives. Ammu and Rahel are second generation women who show some kind of resistance in society. Hester Prynne the female protagonist of Nathaniel Hawthorne undergoes all the shame heaped on her by the society and she very stoically bears all the humiliation.

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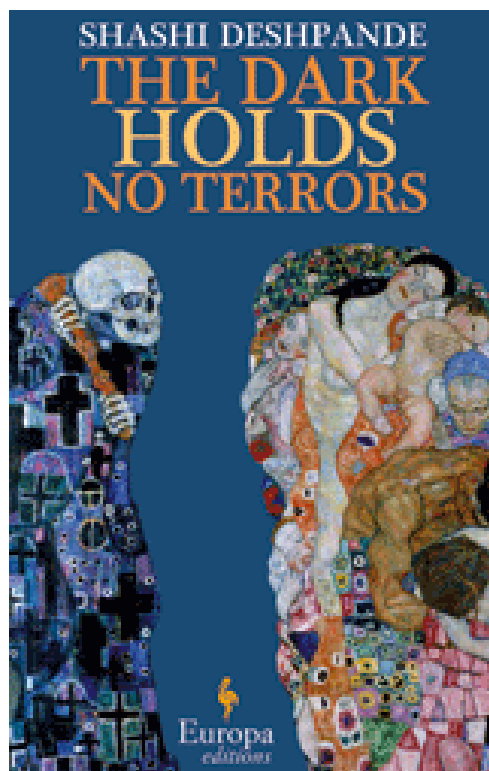
Sarita—

**Master of Her own Survival in Shashi Deshpande's  
*The Dark Holds No Terror***

P. Pavithra, M.A.

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**Abstract**

The *Dark Holds No Terrors* is an absolutely magnificent and unique story. It deals about the journey of women, consisting of all the phases in her life: childhood, youth and adulthood, which the protagonist embraces with high spirit. *The Dark Holds No Terror* presents the story of a woman who defies the dark side of her religion and castes of the wrong belief, creates a new world of her own where she is not subdued to any patriarchal rule.

When she discards the believable customs of her religion, she adopts only those in which she thinks there is no discrimination. She is typical, submissive and stereotype domesticated Indian women who bound to their submissive fate. She turns the tide in the way of thinking of the society where woman is no longer objectified. Now she not belongs to her father or her husband. She becomes her own master. This book is an inspiration to young women who could now seek rights to ask and question.

**Key Words:** Shashi Deshpande, *The Dark Holds No Terror*, women's struggle, educated, opposition, relationship, successful, terrified women.

## Introduction

*The Dark Holds No Terror*, a novel of Shashi Deshpande, was published in 1980. This novel has been translated into German and Russian. It was Shashi Deshpande's favorite work as she told an interviewer: "It was a simple theme and fewer characters. It gripped me so much that I whipped through the writing the wife had a better job and there was a very obvious tension between them. He was aggressive and surly. That set it off" (1).

And again when an interviewer asked her about the 'Dark' she said: "As I told you, it started with this unequal couple that I saw. And then I wrote the short story 'The Liberated Woman' I was very ill at the time and I re-wrote the story about 17 times. Somehow I have that figure still in my mind. And I still know that I hadn't got it right. It went on to get a prize but I still wasn't happy with it at all. I knew it had to be a novel. But I didn't have the confidence to do it. So I waited a long time. I wrote a number of short stories, longer short stories, serials and *Roots and Shadows*. But once I began on it I wrote it from beginning to end. I am not saying that every single word came that way, but there was no time when I was actually stuck. Whereas there were points both with *silence* and the new book when I was stuck badly, when it seemed all wrong. But when I finished *The Dark*, I knew it was a good novel. I was never sure in that way about the other novels. But about *The Dark* I never had any doubts" (2).

## Sarita

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Sarita is the central figure in the novel. The story starts with Sarita's returning to her father's house after fifteen years. She heard from someone about her mother's death, so she decided to see her father. But her father start avoid her, perhaps he was loyal to the dead woman. She found no changes there. Seven sets of large stone were leading to the front door. The traditional and religious plant *tulsi* had been only the spot of green. The plant has a great significance in Hindu culture. The belief of Indian woman who worships *tulsi* before her husband woke up early in the morning. And here of course, it served the purpose. Sarita's mother died before her father. When Sarita did not find any changes when she entered in her house. But she found changes in the behaviour of her father as she says : `` And yet there were alterations. An ashtray full of stubs. (since when had he started smoking). It was as if he had become an apostate revolting against the pattern of living in which to leave a cup unwashed even for a minute had been a crime``(3). Her father's welcomes her like unwilling host entertaining an unwelcome guest. When Sarita left her father's house she was unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband. So she came back to her father's house.

### **Representing a Large Part of the Indian Society**

Shashi Deshpande represents a larger part of the contemporary Indian society. Through her novels she has presented the problems and conflicts of educated middle class women who to prove their individual identity in the society. Shashi Deshpande, realizes the values of the Indian culture, tradition and society, does not deny the necessity of the existence of man in woman's life, but she does not accept the total subjugation of woman before man. In her novels practical woman and they do not believe in traditional. In traditional countries like India marriage is not based on love. So a loveless married life causes the wife. Now a day's educated women and professional women are compromise their career for their family in order to save their marriage. Individualistic women are suffering today by broken relationship. Nevertheless, there is no dearth of progressive women who are striving to achieve fulfilment against the defiance of male chauvinism.``(4)

### **A New Woman**

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Shashi Deshpande creates a new woman in this novel. The new woman's role in the story proves that she can survive in all kinds of situation. In *The Dark Holds No Terror* Sarita is the new woman who is confined to the family tradition, but she asserts her identity, struggles for her rights and ultimately reaches her goals. She proves herself as a role model for middle class educated Indian woman. Every girl has the right to live their life, to develop their qualities, to take their own decision, to be independent in their freedom and to take charge of their own destiny'' (6).

*The Dark Holds No Terror* is a story of Sarita, who is a successful medical doctor but is unsuccessful in life. Sarita in the hands of her husband felt extreme fear. She came back to her father's house and stayed there.

### **Inspiration in Life, Decisive – Breaking Bondage**

Once there came a lady at Sarita's place. She was looking nice and superior to all other women. Sarita was much impressed by her personality and later on she came to know that she was a doctor and so she was different. Impressed by the personality of that lady, Sarita decided that she could be a doctor and that would be the key which would unlock the door out of this life. She was an intelligent girl. She worked hard and got first class in intermediate and that was the passport to medical college. When her father asked her what subject she wanted to take up for her B.Sc., she boldly said that she wanted to do medicine. Her mother raised several questions to her about Sarita's life. She said: 'I am not talking to you. I'm not asking you for anything. I know what your answer will be. No forever a 'no' to anything I want. You don't want me to have anything. You don't ever want me to live.' (8) Sarita's mother was a rival to her. Her mother considered her daughter someone who had to fulfil certain family responsibilities, having no choice of her own and supposed to follow the tradition and rule which had been already prepared for her by her mother. Her mother starts hating Sarita. Her mother forced her to stay inside the room. Her mother held her responsible for Dhruva's death and refused to be reconciled with her till her death. Sarita hated her mother. She wanted to hurt her, wound her and make her suffer.

## **Females against Female Aspirations**

In fact, in our society structures females are in such a way that they work against even those of their own gender. Sarita is always tormented by her mother. Her mother disliked her and was always against her. One day Sarita recalled her mother words how strongly she opposed during her admission to medical college. Contrary to her expectations, it was her father who supported her. Sarita wanted to be friendly with her children, otherwise there was a fear to lose them. She desired to be a good wife and a good mother although she had failed as a good daughter.

According to tradition and culture girls cannot live with their parents after a certain age. Parents regard them as something or someone to be handed over to the rightful owner through marriage. Girls are not allowed to choose their own way; they are compelled to depend on others.

After she got admission in medical college Sarita enjoyed her college life and so soon she fell in love with Manohar. He was academically good and was a creative student. Manohar was the dream person for Sarita who met him in real life. He became the only dream for Sarita. But that was not the real part of her life. She did not enter in college for love and dreams. She had to study and to be a successful doctor. That was the reality of her life – to achieve a destination.

## **Family's Opposition**

Sarita decided upon her own life partner by her own choice. But her family was against her decision. Manohar was her ideal romantic hero who had come to rescue her from the insecure and loveless existence. She was hungry for love, as she said: "I was insatiable, not for sex, but for love. Each act of sex was a triumphant assertion of our love. Of my being loved, of my being wanted. If I ever had any doubts, I had only to turn to him and ask him to prove his love for me."

## **Famous Doctor Now – Crumbling Marriage**

Sarita became popular as a doctor in her locality. Now Sarita started to long for her parents advice and she longed to listen to their advice. But neither Sarita noticed it nor Manu

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revealed it but Manu took a very serious concern of it. She was always busy in her work and she ignored the physical and mental desires of Manu. So he became abrupt and rough to her. Sarita succeeded in her life and became well-known, reputed doctor but at the same time, her marriage began to crumble. The situation started changing, as Sarita says: And so the esteem with which I was surrounded made me inches taller but perhaps, the same thing that made me inches taller, made him inches shorter. Manu's character is rude with Sarita. Thus bed was the only place where he could assert his animal power over her. He became a mean and loathsome person when he enjoyed in her glory at day and ill-treated her at night. So Sarita became two-in-one woman, in day time she was a successful doctor and during night a terrified trapped animal in the hands of her husband. Sarita became too depressed and she decided to resign her job, but Manu's thought was against it for fear of becoming a middle class family. Sarita's attitude gradually changed towards Manu and marriage. Now Sarita's life became like an empty vessel, all relationship and neighbours started to blame her father. After a few years she came to her home and she felt sorry for what all happened in her life and she thought about what all mistaken she had done. The relationship gave encouragement and shows the courage to face reality happening in day to day life in the society. She realised that the dark no longer holds any Terrors to her. At last, Sarita learn to compromise with all her situations in her life. She received a letter from Manu of his arrival. The bitter emotions strengthened the future.

## Conclusion

Shashi Deshpande's women characters revolt against social taboos and old traditions. They struggle for their freedom, completeness and their identity. They fight against the existing system and tradition of society and express their feelings, their anger, and their resentment against the social taboos. But these do not bring them any satisfaction. Shashi Deshpande reflects upon the grass root reality and woman's plight in India. Her focus is on the domestic affairs rather than on the political affairs of modern life. She successfully portrays a complex vision of compromised happiness and withered dreams of middle class women's life.

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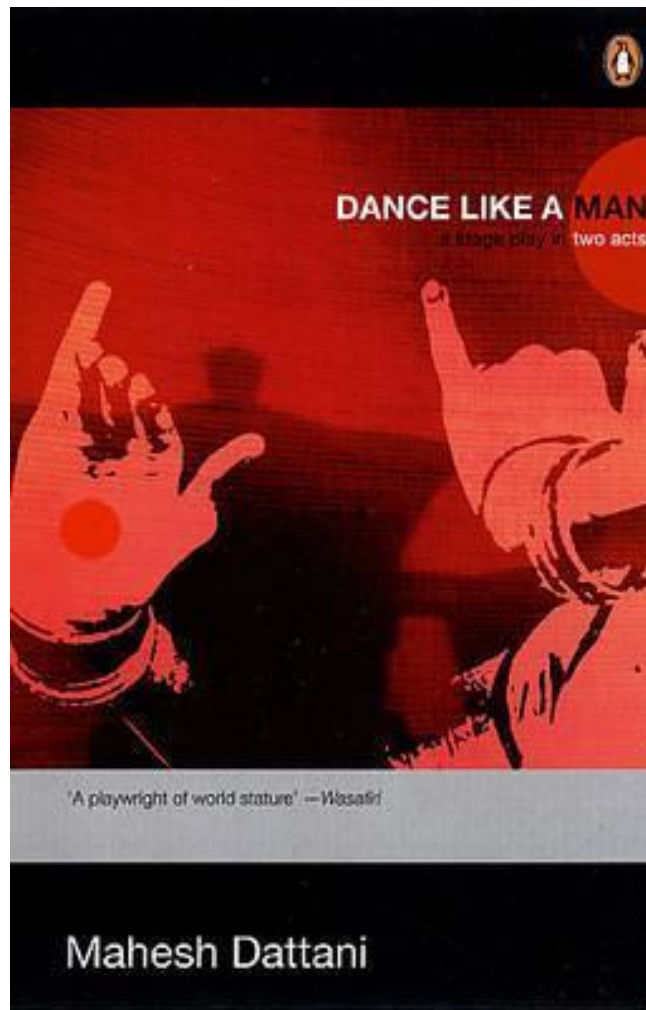
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## Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature

### Social Issues in Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like a Man*

R. Poornima, M.A., M.Phil.



#### Abstract

This paper highlights the notion of social issues like Gender inequalities, society versus tradition, Religious intolerance, social construct, sufferings and depression faced by both men and women with reference to the play *Dance Like a Man* (1989) written by the Indian playwright Mahesh Dattani. Hailed as one of the “Most serious Contemporary playwright” by Alyque

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Padamsee, Mahesh Dattani bares life to the bone. Pre-Occupied as it were with gender issues, Dattani is a spokesman for all the marginalised people. The three generations of conflict has been clearly revealed in this play with a comparison of ancient history of India.

**Key words:** Mahesh Dattani, *Dance Like a Man*, Gender Inequality, Social Conflict, Gender Discrimination.

## **Introduction**

**Gender Inequalities** refer to treating an individual or a particular group uniquely on the basis of some social and cultural bias. *The Oxford Dictionary* defines discrimination as “the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex”. Gender based inequality has been the ancient practice in India and also across the world. Gender inequality has been in the roots of our society since the birth of civilization. It is a practice which shows that mankind is still in the hands of discrimination which is particularly leading to the fragmentation of the society in spite of the technological Improvement. As the branch of human civilization aroused which was once a delight giving cause as it brought certain rules in the life of humankind it unfortunately also contains the evil seeds of inequalities on the basis of sex, colour and cause, etc. Men and women are compelled to face the darkness of inequalities which often results in the suppression of their desires and certainly the progress in life. The artist explains the dark side of life also so that to create awareness among people and also to bring differentiation in the thoughts of the people.

## **An Invisible Coat over the Society**

Gender inequality is a form of discrimination which is especially found in Indian culture and also in certain other cultures. Gender is often called as the ‘social construct’ which means that the inequality between man and woman on the floor of gender is the result of the social authoritative principle set in from the ancient period while Sex is a considered to be called as the ‘biological construct’. The voice and protest against the rights of a woman have become powerful in the present period but unfortunately the man has been given priority in this aspect and is always considered as ‘a citizen of a privileged class’. In India, it is an assumption that only

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women have been suppressed of their desires, dominated by the power of others and are the victims of the gender discrimination but that is not the fact, as men also have to face the bigotry. Men like women are also the suffers of the society as men are judged on masculinity floor and gallant qualities.

### **Plays of Dattani**

There are clear undercurrents in the plays of Dattani which relate to the greatest traditions of the native country: his incorporation of traditional dance forms in *Dance Like a Man* brings together the historic India and the property-minded, money-oriented society of the 1990s, with a drama moving between generations and across time in the ways which are technically astonishing. Indian men's desires and wishes are ignored if it 'sounds feminine' or are related to the fields where women have upper quality. The man has to be strong, stout, dominating and hard in nature while the woman has to be obedient, silent and submissive. It is a social framework designed by the very people of the society and it has become the basis of gender discrimination which acts like a black cover on the psyche of Indian people.

### ***Dance Like a Man***

Mahesh Dattani in *Dance Like a Man* has generously expressed the social issues of contemporary Indian society. The theme of the play is dealt with tradition, relationship, career, and society. The plot revolves around Jairaj and Ratha and their daughter Lata and her fiancé Viswas. A fine metre traces the past of Jairaj, Ratna and Amritlal Parekh, Jairaj's father through the technique of flashback concept. Jairaj and Ratna are exposed to the wrath of Amritlal Parekh who fails to understand their passion and their devotion towards dance and particularly of Jairaj.

Mahesh Dattani indicates the typical Indian views about dance through Amritlal Parekh who assigns that dance is made only for females. He sums up that a man with self-respect will never take up the dance as a profession, especially a man. The Dramatist has sketched the discrimination based on gender faced by Indian man and woman and its consequences.

### **Patriarchy**

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Dattani, in *Dance Like a Man* has highlighted that patriarchy is an element of Indian society. Men hold primary power and predominate in the culture of the family. Men ignite to hold the reins of authority over women, children and other members of the family. Gender inequality has been present in society since the birth of civilization and up to date humanity is in its shackles. The Dramatist says “gender is constituted by some acts which when repeated come to form and give shape to a “coherent” gender identity” (2009, 36).

### **Amritlal Parekh, Head of the Family**

Dattani portrays an Indian family in which Amritlal Parekh possessed unquestionable power over Jairaj and Ratha. Parekh being the head of the family, he declared himself to be responsible head for taking important decision of all their life. He is a reformist and freedom fighter yet a prudish and conservative. He was supporting India to get free from the Britishers. Ironically he controlled and framed strict regulations over his own son’s wishes. He rejects the freedom of his son who wanted to become a Bharatnatyam dancer- “Do you know where a man’s happiness lies? In being a Man...” (425, Act II). Father implements his wish on his son and wants him not to take up dance as his career because it is not a ‘male oriented’ profession. Man is declared to be the bread earner and he is expected to be in such a profession in which self-esteem is concerned with it, in Indian society. In the other term, man did not get freedom to undergo art form like Bharatnatyam. Jairaj’s father equates the art of dance with prostitution. “The craft of a prostitution to show off her wares- what business does a man have to learn from such a craft? No use when compared with dance” (406, Act I).

Dramatist has clearly indicated that Amritlal Parekh felt really bad and ashamed of Jairaj because he being a ‘real man’ is in the profession of lower quality. He considered Jairaj a cause for the shame for the family, because he judged Jairaj on the floor of masculinity in which he didn’t allow himself to fit in. He says,

“Well, most boys are interested in cricket, my son is interested in dance, I thought. I didn’t realize this interest of yours would turn into an obsession”. (415, Act I)

### **Adverse Judgement and Inclination**

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Dattani introduces ironic element but still an adverse judgement and inclination are always visualized under the surface. When Amritlal Parekh compares dance with womanly mannerism, it evokes comical work yet underlined with satirical work. He expresses his doubts towards “guru ji” who teaches dance in an effeminate ground which disgusts and irritates Jairaj - “I have never seen a normal man with long hair. I have also noticed the way he walks” (417, Act I).

### **Men Growing Long Hair**

Amritlal brings out the fact to the light that all those men who believe that a man with long hair is not a man in true color and sense. He got angry, almost lost his temper when Ratna informed him of Jairaj’s desire of growing his hair long to “Improve his abhinaya”. Amritlal says that if Jairaj grew his hair even to one inch longer, he will shave his head and throw him on the road.

### **A Tale of Woe**

Dattani has traced an outline of the tale of woe in which men and women act as the powerful tool of Amritlal’s authority, which covers not only Jairaj but also Ratna. The poor woman is ‘instructed’ and ‘ordered’ by her father in law that she must stop visiting the aged woman, who is so-called as “devdasi”, for practicing and learning dance since visiting an ‘old withered’ prostitute would bring bad reputation to his family. Amritlal, in a grim manner, orders Ratna saying “You will not. That is all. I need not give you any reason for it” (421, Act I).

### **Dance Separating Men and Women**

Dattani has pointed out the irony that on one hand Amritlal Parekh brings the equivalence of the dance with prostitution and withholds Jairaj from dancing and on the other hand he accepts and permits Ratna to dance. This concept indirectly suggests that men and women are not given equal power and position in Indian society. The skill of dance is considered to be of least and inferior thing in India and hence it is said to be meant only for woman. Amritlal very smartly makes Ratna feel that Jairaj can never be as good as she at dancing and demands the grace and beauty to be only as the quality of womanly identification. He says, “A woman in the man’s

world may be considered as being progressive. But a man in a woman's world is pathetic, yet being progressive is ... sick" (427, Act II).

### **Lata and Viswas – Conflict Resolution?**

The society versus tradition's conflict has also been highlighted through the growing relationship of Lata and Viswas. Lata had to look for Viswas's permission whether he would allow her to dance after marriage or not. She asks, "Viswas, when we are married, you will let me come here to practice, won't you?" (389, Act I).

### **Embodiment of Household Chores**

Indian society and culture expect women to be an embodiment of household chores. In the words of Multani, "Women in Indian society work in office as well as in the kitchen at their home but women working in kitchen is meant to be the real women. For men, its vice versa" (2009, 32). Mahesh Dattani has highlighted this in his play *Dance Like a Man* as Viswas says to Lata "Accepting a daughter in law who does not make tea is asking too much of him" (391, Act I).

### **Consequences and Repercussions of Gender Conflict**

Mahesh Dattani towards the end expresses the sad and very painful reality; the consequences and repercussions of gender conflict which overwhelmed Jairaj. Innocent Jairaj has been lowered to empty space and loneliness "spineless boy" as his obstinate father and the society made him realize that he is worthless and fit for nothing, not even for the dance, at last. He blames Ratna for taking away his self-possession, self-esteem, respect and confidence which once again adverts towards gender inequality as a husband without a single thought blames his wife for his decline.

"You took it away bit by bit. You took it away when you made me dance my weakest items. You took it away when you arranged the lightening so that I danced in your shadow" (443, Act II).

### **Conclusion**

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The play *Dance Like a Man* brings to light the painful and hurting reality about men and women who are meant to be the victims of gender conflict. An individual's quality, their desires, capability and success are based on the yardstick of gender, particularly in the Indian society. The man with the passion and love to dance is considered to be lower and inferior in quality and status whereas woman has no rights and voice in the family. Gender inequality is the social evil which has overwhelmed the Indian society and it can be erased only when the people change their support to gender inequality. We should understand that gender inequality is a 'mere social construct'. A person should be judged based on his or her quality and capability, but not on the basis of gender only. Then the society will improve in true sense. Every individual has got their own purpose and rights and hence they deserve equal respect on earth.

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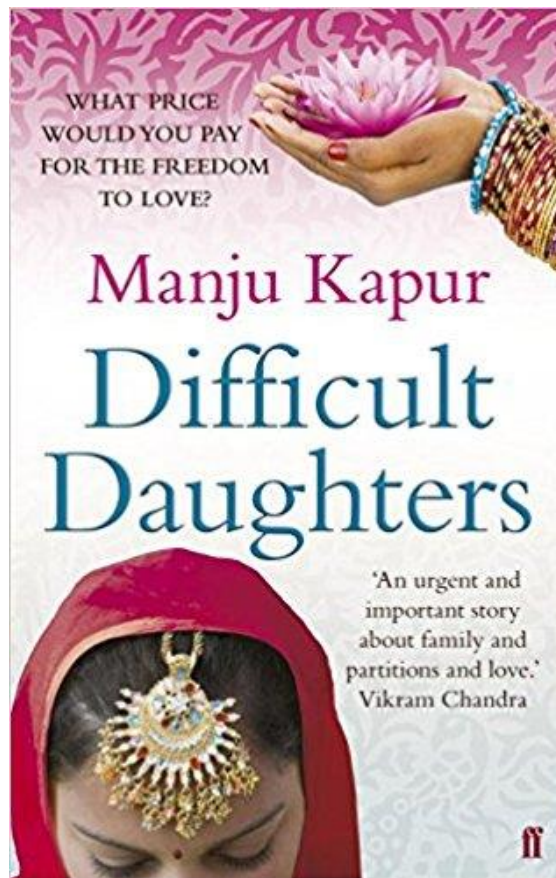
**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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**Subordination of Feminine Gender in Indian English Literature –  
A Case Study of *Difficult Daughters***

P. Suganya, M.A., M.Phil., (Ph.D.)

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**Abstract**

The topic dealt with in this paper is about the Subordination of feminine gender in Indian English Literature which is highly focused in the fiction *Difficult Daughters* by Manju Kapur. Manju Kapur is one of the best known writers of Indian English Literature, who presents the sociological and psychological problems in her novels. She is the author of four Novels and her

first novel *Difficult Daughters*, won the commonwealth prize it is also a bestseller in India. *Difficult Daughters* is the story of woman torn between family duty, the desire for education, and illicit love. It is a story of three generations of women: Ida, the narrator, who is a divorcee. Virmati, her mother, who marries an already married professor for love, and Kasthuri, her grandmother, who come to terms with a difficult daughter, Virmati. It is the story which also tells about the subordination of feminine gender and the difficulties, problems faced by women in the various situations.

**Key words:** subordination, feminine gender, Manju Kapur, *Difficult Daughters*

### **Women Writers in Indian English Literature**

Women writers in Indian English Literature have played an important role in feminism and portraying subordination. Some of the writers in Indian English Literature opposed subordination and they have given boldness to their female characters. They have also focused on how the women characters are subordinated and how they overcome it through their boldness. They have given new pathways to the Indian Literature. The female writers like Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee and Manju Kapur all focus on feminism, complexities between a man and woman relationship, psychological aspect of the protagonist, emotional sufferings of women, etc. So, by writing about these problems in their novels they try to create awareness across the society.

### **Manju Kapur and Her Novels**

In the last decade of the twentieth century in Indian English Literature, some women writers published valuable works. Among them a notable writer is Manju Kapur. Manju Kapur is a professor of English at Miranda House in Delhi where she did her graduation. She completed her M.A. in English at Dalhousie University, Canada and M.Phil. in Delhi University. Her novels are acclaimed for their feministic vision. Her first novel *Difficult Daughters* won the Commonwealth Award and it was marked as a bestseller of the year. It is a beautifully written novel with family concepts.

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## ***Difficult Daughters***

This novel is about educating daughters and through education they come to know the basic values of society and they start raising questions related to the values. It's a conflict between the life style of the present and the old days or traditional and modern societies. Kapur also brings out the problems of the Indian women in joint families in a male-dominated society and also highlights a new vision of Indian women in her fiction.

The novel *Difficult Daughters* tells us the story of three generations: daughter, mother and grandmother and it is mainly focused on the women characters' problems and their boldness. It is focused on the main characters or protagonist Virmati and her transition from the status of a traditional girl into new woman. It tells us about the needs for women's self-fulfillment, self-sufficiency, self-realisation, independence and personal identity. Manju Kapur stated that,

“I am interested.....In the lives of women, whether in the political arena or in domestic spaces. One of the main pre occupations in all my books is how women manage to negotiate both inner and outer spaces in their lives-what sacrifices do they have to make in order to keep the home fires burning and at what cost to their personal lives do they find some kind of fulfillment outside the home.”

(Kapur)

## **Virmati**

Virmati was born in Amritsar and she is the elder daughter of her mother Kasturi. Since she is an elder daughter of the family, she is fully engaged in household works. She has the desire for education and wants love. She runs towards education but her mother doesn't give importance for her education. Her grandfather thinks that education is important for girls to lead their life successfully. But he too opposes higher education for girls. But she argues with both to go for higher education, “My mother, my masi, all studied. It is the ‘rivaz’ in our family,” said Virmati proudly. ‘Even now my father keeps getting my mother books and magazines to read.’” (DD 39). This proves that Kapur has given boldness to her female characters to argue with their family members to come out from subordination.

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Virmati argued and struggled throughout her life for all her desires not only for education but also for her marriage. She falls in love with a married professor Harish who is their tenant. He pulls her by showing deep love towards her. At the beginning she hesitates to love him and she tries to commit suicide but she is rescued by the servant. Then he makes her to love him by pretending like giving liberty to the ladies. Here it proves the male chauvinism and subordination of feminine gender. Then she becomes pregnant before the marriage. With the help of her roommate Swarnalata, she aborted the baby. This shows her situation and sufferings to make her life meaningful and to achieve in her life, so that she decided to abort the baby. She fights for her rights at every stage in her life and she successfully manages all the unstable situation of extreme danger and difficulties. Then she marries Harish and they were accepted by both the families but she was ill treated by Harish's first wife Ganga and his mother Kishori Devi. Then later on she realizes that "I should never have married you... and it's too late now. I've never seen it so clearly. It's not fair ... She wondered dreadingly whether this isolation would continue till the end of her life." (212). It shows the bitterness of her marriage life. She becomes pregnant after her marriage and she is under the care of her mother-in-law but her fetus aborted. Later on her husband makes her to join M.A. so that she will come out from the depression. Again it proves the male domination, while she was really interested to study or to do higher education there was no way for her but now without her consult she made to do that. Once again she becomes pregnant and she blessed with a girl baby. In that case she has an opinion to name the baby as Bharati but with the compulsion of her husband she named as Ida. In this also women doesn't have freedom, only male domination stands over there, where women should always be quite and they have to take care of all the works. At last Ida, daughter of Virmati also suffers a lot after her marriage like her mother and it turns out to divorce because of her husband's male domination.

### **A Narrative of the Sufferings and Problems Faced by Women**

This novel tells us about the sufferings and problems faced by women. It is also clearly brought out that the women are always subordinate to the male dominant people. Indian English writer Manju Kapur clearly shows how Virmati suffers for all the desires she has in her life from education till her marriage and after the marriage also, she acts like a puppet in her husband's

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hand. It also continues in the life of her daughter Ida but she tries to overcome it through proposing divorce from her husband. Through this novel *Difficult Daughters* we can come to know that, Women have been subdued by men and facing various types of mental and physical tortures throughout their life. We can also proudly say, the contemporary Indian English writers are redefining the role of women characters and bring out the modern thoughts and ideas in their novels. They tell that the inferior position accorded to them is not determined beforehand and trying to emancipate them from subordination. Women redefine themselves from the entire situation like questioning the sexual politics, through re-examination in the marriage and man-woman understanding for better relationship to lead their life without any obstacles.

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**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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**Women and Multi-Tasking**

Mrs. Susila Victor, B.Sc., M.A., M.Phil., M.A., M.Ed.

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**Abstract**

It is not a myth – ‘Women really are better than men at multi-tasking, at least in certain cases’ Says a study. Since the 1960s, Psychologists have conducted experiments on the nature and limits of human multi-tasking. Psychiatrist Edward M. Hallowell describes multi-tasking as a mythical activity in which people believe they can perform two or more tasks at the same time as effectively as possible. The word ‘Multi Task’ was first coined or published in an IBM paper explaining the possibilities of the IBM system 360 in 1965. When the women folk are compelled at two places like at home and at work place, they try their multitasking as per their need. If the findings of U.K Psychologists that men were slower and less organized than women when switching, rapidly between tasks in test is true, then it is to be studied, analysed and should be proved. The recent study on New Brain Connectivity to show that there are remarkable differences in men and women’s neural wiring, which made the researcher conclude that sex plays a vital role in multitasking skills. As primary source the multitasking ability of Ruth and Naomi from the Old Testament is explained. It can be assumed that women do multitasking.

**Keywords:** Brain connectivity, IBM Paper, Multitasking, Old Testament and Psychologists.

**Introduction**

It is not a myth, women really are better than men at multitasking, at least in certain cases. It is the Statement given by a study done, A mother who is very busy at the kitchen, answering the calls of her son who is getting ready to go to school and at the same time attending her husband’s coffee need is a women so to say engaged in multi-tasking. From time

immemorial, animals and humans engage themselves in multitasking. Then what is multitasking? Multitasking is a clearly shown skill that makes one to do more than one job or an activity or a task at a given short span of time.

A driver driving his vehicle and at the same time answering his phone call, A mother washing clothes but help her child in studies, an office Manager,conducting a meeting, at the same time, sending an email, students listening to music but doing his homework are all multitasking.

The word ‘multitask’ was first coined or published in an IBM paper explaining the possibilities of the (IBM system/360, 1 in 1965), Here it meant the ability of a computer to do many jobs, or number of tasks. Automatically the term is used and applied to human jobs too.

In our day today life itself it is noticed that women are able to manage many jobs at the same time. They seem to calculate mentally and be prepared to take up many works at the given time period. Especially working women who need to complete and satisfy the homely needs and prepare to go to the work place are compelled to practise their multitasking. When we look at the working condition of men and women, we mostly find women multitask whereas men when pressed for more tasks at the same time get irritated, shrink their faces and find faults with the family members. If the findings of U.K. psychologists that men were slower and less organised than women when switching rapidly between tasks in tests is true, then it is to be studied, analysed and should be proved.

### **Ruth from the Old Testament**

As a primary source for my chosen topic ‘women and multitasking’, I would like to quote, The Book of Ruth from the Old Testament. Ruth happened to be the second daughter-in-law of Naomi, Naomi her husband and her two sons left Bethlehem and went to the country of Moabites. When there was a great famine in Bethlehem, she settled there and got her sons married to Moabite girls Orpah and Ruth. Unfortunately, her husband and her two sons died, and

the three ladies left there helpless. Naomi asked her daughters-in-law to go to their parent's place. In the beginning both of them refused to go but after considerable counseling, Orpah left her mother-in-law but not Ruth. (Book of Ruth- Bible, King James Version, Chapter I, II) Decided to take with her, Naomi, left the country of Moah and came to Bethlehem as bankrupts.

In Bethlehem both the ladies were multitasking, Ruth told her mother-in-law that she would go to the fields of harvest to collect the grains which were being shed, while she was doing that, she was also caring her mother –in-law in providing for her. She was storing food grains for the future too. She was careful in carrying out the plans of her mother-in-law to get a husband for herself to settle down. She was successful in doing these multitasks and turned out to be a woman of success to bring out the dynasty of King David. In the same way, Naomi too was a multitasker to calculate mentally the possibilities in getting her daughter-in-law settled, emerge an offspring to inherit the names of her bereaved husband and sons and to take care of their lives, and all necessities. Both the women were successful in their endeavours with their multitasking capabilities.

### **Some Recent Studies**

Keith Laws, a Psychologist made a study and the facts, that was found out were reported and they have provided a first evidence to prove that the female multitasking has a superior altitude. Another analyst has confined that the females performed better than males in coordinating primary and secondary tests by which it is proved that women are better in multitasking.

A recent study on New Brain connectivity taken up by Penn Medicine funded partly by National Academy of Science showed a marvellous result that there are remarkable difference in men and women neural wiring which made the researchers conclude that Sex plays a vital role in multitasking skills. It is arrived at a point to prove that men are better at learning and performing a single task at a time like riding cycle, navigating directions and so on. But women proved to have greater memory power and cognition skill about society that make them more equipped for

multitasking and finding solutions while working as a team, Szalai, et al. have done a study where they have computed anatomical connectomes of 96 subjects of the data that was funded by NIH.

The structural connectome of women are significantly better connected than that of male, because the connectome of women are provided with more edges, higher minimum bipartition width larger Eigen gap greater minimum vertex cover than that of men. The minimum bipartition width is a measure of quality of computer multiple stage interconnection networks. The greater Eigen gap exhibits the quality of woman connectome as better one than the male connectome. The better expanding quality the higher minimum bipartition width and the greater minimum vertex cover propose much advantage in network connectivity in female brain graph. Silverman and Eals raised a theory from the hypothesis of Hunter-Gatherer and they come to say that natural selection helped hunting related skills that bring difference in job performance for genders. Men focused on one task of hunting whereas women took care of children at home. So over a period of time, women were selected for multitasking. The Natural selection in the primitive society of earlier times might have laid way for the modern women to be superior multitaskers.

### **Some Kinds of Multi-tasking**

According to the author Steven Berlin Johnson, the kind of multitasking is skimming the surface of the data provided, picking up the relevant information and then proceed further. This involves a partial multitasking. This kind of multitasking was named as continuous partial attention where an in-depth study was not done.

### **Dr. Stoet's and Other Experiments**

A Chinese experiment proved that women out performed their male counterparts but a Sweden research says that men may actually be better than women where spatial tasks are concerned, regarding this Dr. Stoet, and his counterpart compared men and women in a certain type of multitasking. It was proved that men and women were equal when task were equal when task were done one at a time but when jobs are mixed up, there was an apparent difference

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Women and Multi-Tasking

between them. Both slowed down and committed mistakes when the switching over was quick. Even then, men were clearly slower by 77% longer to answer, against women took 69% longer, According to DrStoet, he says that it might look a smaller difference but calculating the same for a working day or week, it would be amounted great.

Once, a group of men and women is allotted a series of tasks to be completed within eight minutes.

The tasks were locating restaurants on a map, solving simple mathematical problems, attending and answering the calls over the phone, taking decision to search for the key in field and so on. It was not possible to finish all the above tasks within eight minutes hence those men and women had to analyse and organize their time, arrange the tasks in priority and keep themselves calm under such pressurized conditions. In those cases too, women showed an organized pattern of performance when it was compared to their male counterparts and it was proved by Professor Keith Laws of University of Hertfordshire. Even in the search of lost keys in the field, the women followed a search pattern like going round the field in a concentric rectangle which was highly productive and methodical strategy. But some of the men did not even search the whole field using a pattern of search.

Research taken up in child development by Monica Luciana, Associate Professor of Psychology proved that the human brain can be trained to multitask. The individuals multitask poorly in the beginning and with a training ,were able to perform the tasks simultaneously.

A French MRI study published in 2010 gave a slight hope for the hypothesis that the brain can pursue at the most two task simultaneously one for each frontal lobe because they have the goal oriented area. In the present day, there is visible change over to new equipment such as computers, the Internet and videogame. 16% of time was spent on media among the youth in the past, now it is upto 82% between the years 1999-2005 especially among the American youth.

## **Conclusion**

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A person or a women who is multitasking is an exciting fact, yet, how well and how good the multitasking is to the self and to the society is a question. People using phone while driving are liable to face accidents. Even experienced drivers during number of tasks, were late in applying brake lights and stop signs because of multitasking. A house wife having three tasks at a time liable to fail in all task . As the age proceeds, a person become more tensed, more irritated and his/her health may be a question too. A small percent of the population appeared to be much better at multitasking than others and they are named as *supertaskers*. In the present scenario almost everyone multitasks, especially women multitask and they must take care not to lose their mental health. It is a solace that scientific researches try to prove that they are capable of multitasking.

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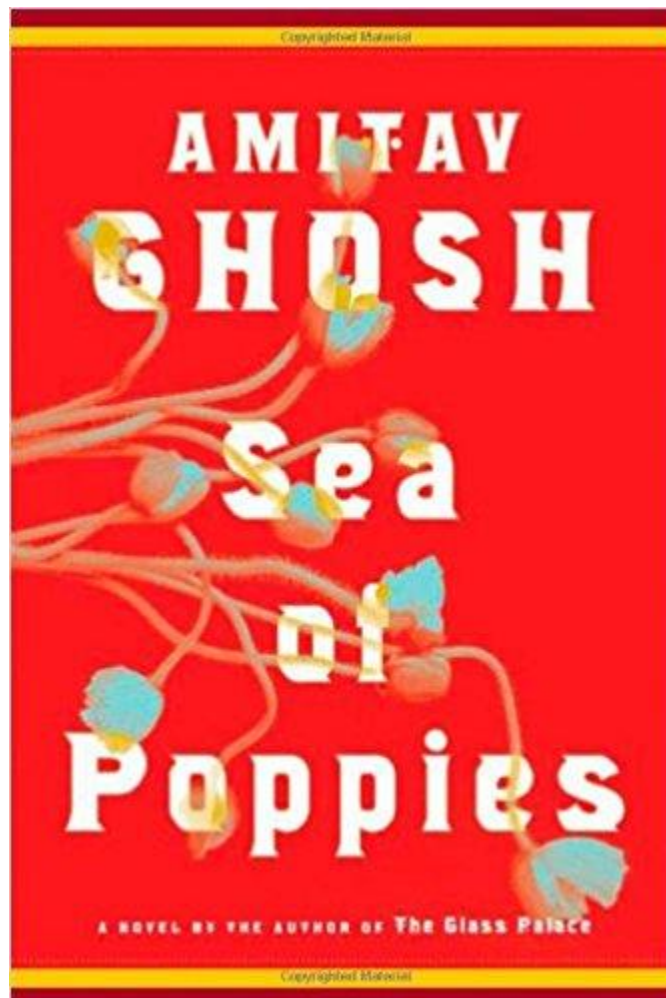
**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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**Subordination of Feminine Gender in Indian English Literature**  
**A Case Study of *Sea of Poppies***

C. Swathi

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**Abstract**

This paper deals with the central women characters in the contemporary author Amitav Ghosh's novel *Sea of Poppies*. The novel focuses on the colonial rule and the happenings in the novel were during the nineteenth century. This paper discusses the subordination of feminine

gender in Indian English Literature. All the women characters in the novel are discussed briefly but the core importance will be on the character named Deeti. Next priority is given to the character Paulette who is the daughter of a French botanist, and she lives in Calcutta. Importance is given to Deeti and Paulette since these two characters play the major role throughout the fiction.

This paper discusses also the other minor woman characters like Heeru, Sarju, Munniah and also others who travel on board as indentured labourers on Ibis, a vast ship which moves from Calcutta to Mauritius Islands. The story presents a broad depiction of the suffering of woman and their suppression in different angle and the complete hardship. This fiction can be considered as a terrific one since it unfolds the details about the Opium war. The major and minor women characters have added fragrance and radiance to this great work.

**Key words:** Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*, subordination, feminine gender, colonial rule

### **Womanhood**

In Indian literature, women's voice shows concern about the behavior of man towards a woman and the position of that woman in the family and the society. According to Indian mythology, Sita in Ramayana is a legendary female figure but at the same time the character shows how a woman should struggle for her identity and to gain honor. On the whole womanhood is considered as the supreme model of purity, peace, love, and compassion.

In this current world Indian women face numerous problems of suppression along with inequalities which are to be dealt with immediate effect. Women in Indian culture faced so many discrepancies like child brides, illiteracy, dowry, murder, sexual harassment, and even they face difficulties with some religious and social practices that prevail in the society. Indian woman have a very little influence on their own destiny, a noteworthy change to their state will be there if only an activism arises through various movements so that it will play a considerable role in the women empowerment.

## ***Sea of Poppies***

The novel *Sea of Poppies* takes place in north India and Bay of Bengal, during the year 1838 there was a British hit on the Chinese ports which was well known as the Opium war. Ghosh begins his fiction in the village of eastern Bihar with various characters like Deeti, her opium addict husband who works at the British opium factory at Ghazipur; Kalua a so-called low-caste carter, and further we have Raja Neel Rattan, a bankrupt landowner, Zachary Reid an American sailor, Paulette a young Frenchwoman, her Bengali foster-brother Jodu, Benjamin Burnham a British merchant, his Bengali agent Baboo Nob Kissin.

### **Deeti**

Deeti is a straightforward, religious lady, gentle in character and she is also a competent housewife, she is married to Hukam Singh who is a crippled worker in the Ghazipur Opium Factory. The very first day of her marriage was a tragedy; her impotent husband drugged her with opium, so that her brother-in-law could consummate the marriage in her husband's place. It takes place as it was planned by her mother-in-law.

Throughout her life Deeti is filled by unhappiness and disharmony. Deeti's husband dies and her brother-in-law is the real father of Deeti's daughter Kabutri. Deeti decides to choose the custom of Sati, through that she can have an honorable death instead of an immoral life. "It was myself I saved today, he said in a whisper. Because if you had died, I couldn't have lived; jinda na rah sakela ...", says Kalua (*Sea of Poppies*, 179).

### **Kalua**

When Kalua, who is the ox man expresses his true feeling for Deeti, she feels a relief, before which she was ready to die to safeguard herself from the cruel brother-in-law, but when Kalua, from the neighboring village comes for her rescue from the burning pyre of her husband she feels that she will have a good companion throughout her life and her life is secured.

The couple leaves the place and unites, they love each other and they respect each other too. Deeti needs a man in her life to lead a safe and secured life, it is impossible for her to meet

the perils which arise in her life as a single women, the village to which they belong to, was not ready to accept their relationship and to escape from the problems they become indentured servants on the *Ibis*, a vast ship. They expect their life to be fresh and happy.

### **Zachery Reid**

At the ship Zachery Reid, an American sailor receives a lot of attention, he lives from his childhood in the same ship and he is ready to die in the same ship, because it is very close to his heart.

“Plucking a few long hairs from her head, she strung the flowers together to make two garlands: one she gave to him, and the other she took herself, lifting it up above his head and slipping it around his neck. Now he too knew what to do and when the exchange of garlands had bound them together, they sat for a while, awed by the enormity of what they had done. Then she crept into his arms again and was swept into the embracing warmth of his body, as wide and sheltering as the dark earth.”(122)

### **New Life for Deeti**

When Kalua saved Deeti, she feels that she is reborn, she gets self-confidence and she feels that she can take decisions independently and her marriage with Kalua would become a fresh restart to her ruined life. He is ready to protect her from every danger which arises. Instead of being a widow she enters in to the life in *Ibis* as a new bride.

### **Paulette**

The novel also deals with another important character Paulette, who is a French orphan and she has grown up in India, her father was a botanist, her mother died in childbirth, she was brought up by Jodu’s mother and her father. Mr. and Mrs. Burnham take Paulette into their home after her father’s demise. Paulette decides to run away because Mr. Burnham tries to get her married to his friend who is a stern elderly justice named Kendalbushe.

Once at a dinner at the Burnham's, Paulette meets Zachary Reid, the American sailor, she was instantaneously drawn to him and he was also drawn to her, Paulette learns Bengali, her attitude and identity is a mixture of French and Indian culture, she gives equal respect to both the cultures, because of her behavior and disguise nobody in the ship can identify her till she reveals her originality to everyone.

### **Munniah**

Munniah is the girl who gets pregnant because of the illicit relationship with a man working in opium factory, but her parents support her. She became lonely because all the other family members died in a fire accident. Then she had an affair with Jodu and again she gets into trouble because the boy is beaten to the core and she is locked in a room. Deeti comes to rescue them.

### **Heeru**

Even though the people who travelled in *Ibis* did not know about their future in the foreign land to which they were going in the ship, even then they faced problems due to the vengeance between people. Heeru is the best example of the women who are left alone by their husbands because of silly reasons. Here Heeru is projected with a disease of forgetfulness. Ratna and Champa are with their husbands but they travel in Ibis because their land has been confiscated by some people.

### **Malti**

Neel's wife Malti suffers under patriarchal laws. She works for her family in different roles. She suffers in her life because of the mistake done by her husband but she is quiet till the end, and she is not complaining about her husband.

### **Different Kinds of Sufferings of Indian Women**

Throughout the whole novel, Ghosh tries to describe different kinds of sufferings that Indian women undergo in different situations, sati, rape, suppression, betrayals and so many. Each and every woman needs someone to support them instead of blocking them in the name of

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culture. They will achieve a lot like the character Deeti in the fiction. Even after many destructive events in her life, only because of the positive support of Kalua Deeti was able to achieve things.

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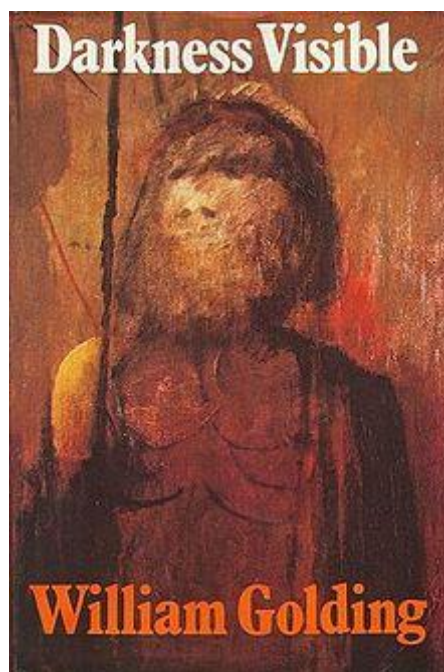
**Aspects of Gender Conflict in English Literature**

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**Spiritual Journey of Matty in William Golding's *Darkness Visible***

**S. Vijayalakshmi, M.A., M.Phil.**

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Courtesy: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darkness\\_Visible\\_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darkness_Visible_(novel))

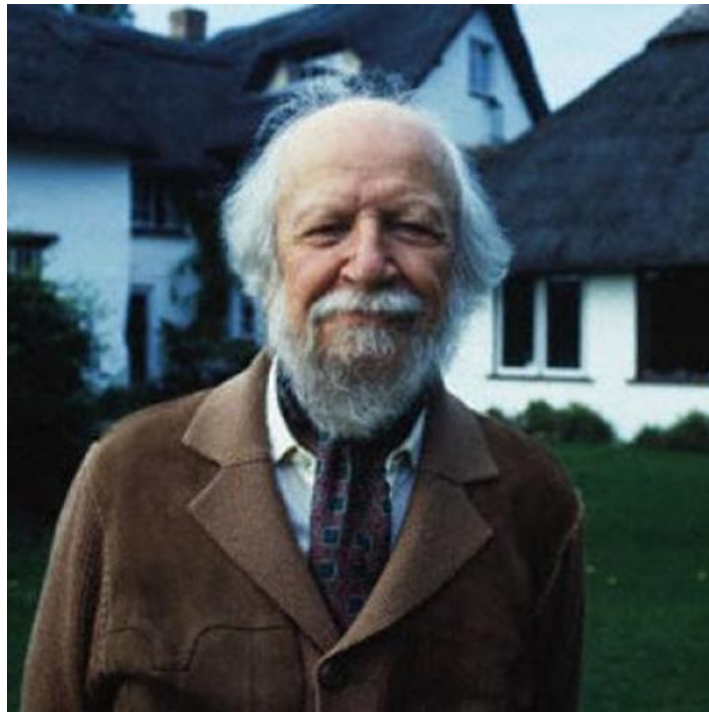
**Abstract**

Sir William Gerald Golding (1911-1993) is recognized as a great author of the twentieth century. He never stays from exploring the darker sides of humanity in his novels, which concerns with human guilt and sin. His fiction focuses on the significant aspect of man's quest for order on various levels and encountering in the process chaos within and without. *Darkness Visible* is a novel that deals with the religious theme, a conflict between good and evil where the evil is destroyed and the good achieves victory. The author brings out such situation between Matty, a moralist and Sophy, an immoral girl. Golding has clearly divided the novel into three parts. The first part concentrates on Matty, his original sin, his sense of guilt and his journal and

second part on Sophy, her evil deeds and in the third part 'One and One' the two good and evil power converge which ends with the destruction of evil and triumph of good.

**Key Words:** William Gerald Holding, Darker sides, *Darkness Visible*, Destruction, Evil deeds, Immoral, Man's quest.

## Introduction



Sir William Gerald Golding (1911-1993)

Courtesy: <https://newrepublic.com/article/76959/william-golding-lord-of-the-flies>

Sir William Gerald Golding (1911-1993) was a significant twentieth century English novelist who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1983. He was a philosophical novelist. William Golding drew upon a variety of influences for his fiction.

([http:// www.biblio.com/author\\_biographies/william\\_golding.html/](http://www.biblio.com/author_biographies/william_golding.html/)) "The most profound inspiration was his own life experiences as a witness to and participant in war. The pessimism about the nature of humanity that forms the core of his work resulted from these experiences" (An Introduction to English Literature, 27). Religion was also a significant influence on his

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work. His ideas about the dual nature of humanity are partly drawn from Christian notions of the battle between good and evil. His works are full of vitality, seriousness and originality. He is not a prolific writer but he displays rare techniques and has exhibited his imaginative power. Golding's works present the subject in a startlingly new light, giving it yet another dimension.

### **Golding's Themes**

Golding's themes are based on man's alienation, free will, guilt, primacy and universality of evil. *Darkness Visible* (1979) is dark and complex novel. It has won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. In this novel, Golding has brought out the struggle between good and evil using naivety, sexuality and spiritual thought. The author has explored the darkness of man's heart, which he makes visible. It communicates an apocalyptic vision. It is concerned with the ambiguity of moral issues, the difficulty of judgment, and breaking down the partitions that isolate men and prevent them from feeling a sense of community.

<<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/wgolding.html>>

### **Matty's Journey Towards Salvation**

*Darkness Visible* focuses on a trio of diverse characters. One is Matty, Christ-like figure, who as a boy miraculously emerges from the bombing of London hideously scarred but mentally changed. The others are a beautiful pair of twin girls, Toni and Sophy left mentally scarred by their father's neglect. Golding has taken these three characters and has woven their stories together, contrasting Matty's intense empathy for others and exploration of himself with Toni and Sophy's lives of sadism, political violence, sexual perversity even though they are numb to the world. All three characters are searching for meaning in their lives, highlighting ideas of divine moralism versus selfishness.

### **Fall Motif**

*Darkness Visible* (1979) by William Gerald Golding is a contemporary novel about England in the 1970s and deals with characters and events that are in the real world. The initial letters of the novel's title are D.V: an abbreviation from the Latin "Deo Volente" or "God willing". The title *Darkness Visible* is taken from *Paradise Lost*, Book 1 by Milton.

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Golding focuses on fall motif, the prevailing image of darkness, and the concern about the nature of evil. Though he explores the nature of evil, his focus remains in the real world. Milton and the Bible form the literary backdrop for *Darkness Visible*. Golding undertakes the exploration of the darkness of man's heart and makes it visible. His fiction falls into several categories: comprehensive studies, religious and theological approaches, perspectives of fable and myth, structural or post structural readings. He shifts settings and creative techniques in each novel but his themes are always a conflict between good and evil. In *Darkness Visible*, Matty represents the spiritual goodness and Sophy represents the power of evil.

### **Two Extremes**

The characterization of Matty and Sophy are in two extremes. Matty is the centre of Golding's mystic vision. The fire disfigures his face. He is named as Mathew Septimus Windrove. His last name keeps changing which adds a kind of universality to his character. He is sent to a school for foundlings in Greenfield where his deformities and difficulties in speaking make him the butt of most of the boys. He is isolated from other children because of his disfigured face. He is very silent.

### **Matty**

Bible is his only companion throughout his life. He is able to endure the sorrows of existence with the help of the Bible. Matty reveals a capacity for visionary gleams. His spiritual quest actually begins when he goes to Australia, the land of mystics and seers. He reads the Bible to quench the sexual desires. Throughout the novel, he faces profound questions: Who am I? What am I for? The spirit who assures him that "he is near the centre of things" gives the answer for his question (*Darkness Visible*, 91). Matty moves from the spiritual world to the world of weird. He serves to foil Sophy's most diabolical plans of kidnapping a child. Matty gives his own life to save that boy. Matty realizes that the reason of his existence is to save the child. He becomes a spiritual soul.

### **Sophy as the Power of Evil**

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The ignorant and immoral girl, Sophy is the power of evil. Sophy's spiritual powers are evident in her throwing the stone that kills a dabchick. It is an act of will operating spiritually or magically, an act of wantonness for which she feels no sense of guilt. It seems some force in the nature of things is helping her when she finds the stone that fits her hand. She learns through this act the inevitable and unalterable law of "of course" (Darkness Visible, 108). Her advance toward evil is closely connected with her pursuit of weirdness.

### **Matty and Sophy**

Matty ends where Sophy begins. Fire of blitz where Matty emerges is linked with fire at school which leads to the death of Henderson. Matty's uncertainty seen in question who am I? With Sophy's certainty seen in decision to kidnap child, Matty rejects daughters of men with Sophy finds sexual partner in Gerry. He goes to Australia with Sophy works at runways travel, Matty's baptism with Sophy and Toni struck by tidal wave, spirits tell Matty what he is supposed to do while Sophy discovers of course way of thing. Matty sees the twins going into shop while Sophy and Toni go into shop.

The gold grew fierce and burned. Sebastian watched in terror as the man before him was consumed, melted, vanished like a guy in a bonfire; and the face was no longer two-tone but gold as the fire... (Darkness Visible, 265)

Matty comes from darkness and become spiritual whole but Sophy who has everything in life become nothing at the end because of her sin. In this novel, Golding establishes a Biblical context and a spiritual dimension. Matty endures the sorrows of existence though his resolution is not easily made. His spiritual quest actually begins when he goes to Australia, the land of his penance. In Australia, too he faces the same old temptations. Therefore, he leaves that place and decides on starving the evil in him. He experiences crucifixion in an encounter with an Abo.

Matty and Sophy live in a private world of their own. The two worlds of Matty and Sophy, which develop along parallel lines, meet at the last part "One Is One". The school in which Matty is working is set on fire by a bomb thrown by Sophy and her terrorist friend's in

order to kidnap a child, a prince, from the school. Matty that is who caught in the flames sees a strange man carrying a child out of the school wrapped in a blanket. Matty rushes to the man. At the sight of the fire monster the stranger drops the bundle and lets the child go. Thus, Matty loses his life but not before he has saved the child.

### **Matty Fulfils His Destiny**

When Matty saves the child even after his body is caught by fire, his two toned face becomes gold. Matty fulfils his destiny. Now he realizes the purpose of his existence. He gets the answer for whom he is for? The purpose of his existence is to save the child.

He is also aware of the beautiful aspects of the universe. Matty is the messenger of light in a world of gloom and darkness. “He practices the mortification of the flesh somewhat in the manner of the Buddhist Nirvana and dies a martyr’s death” (William Golding: A Study, 25)

Matty becomes spiritually whole after he gives his life as a burnt offering in rescuing a child. His story is the story of man facing the question of moral guilt and responsibility for the deeds of his fellowmen.

### **Conclusion**

Darkness visible is a parable, which ends with a triumph of goodness and the failure of evil. Golding presents two major characters Matty and Sophy to give a moral lesson. Matty is good and spiritual but Sophy is a power of evil. There is conflict between both good and evil in the novel, where Matty sacrifices his own life to rescue the child and become spiritually whole. His body is called spirit but Sophy’s body is just a dead body. She attains nothing. This gives a good moral lesson to the world.

Matty is horribly disfigured for no particular sin of his, but the author points out that man is already guilty through original sin. According to William Golding, Man inherits guilt even before he incurs it as an individual. Matty bears the guilt of human existence, in a wider sense and as individual, in the narrow sense of responsibility for a particular action, he incurs guilt.

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Through *Matty* Golding also shows how one can order one's life and work out one's salvation. Golding represents the power of evil through *Matty* and *Sophy*, Golding presents a moral lesson. *Sophy's* evil mind is revealed through her actions. Her killing of *dabchick*, her boy friend *Roland* and to the extreme she plans to kidnap child shows her evil nature. The good and evil converge at the end of the novel where the good *Matty* becomes spiritually whole and evil *Sophy* dies for nothingness.

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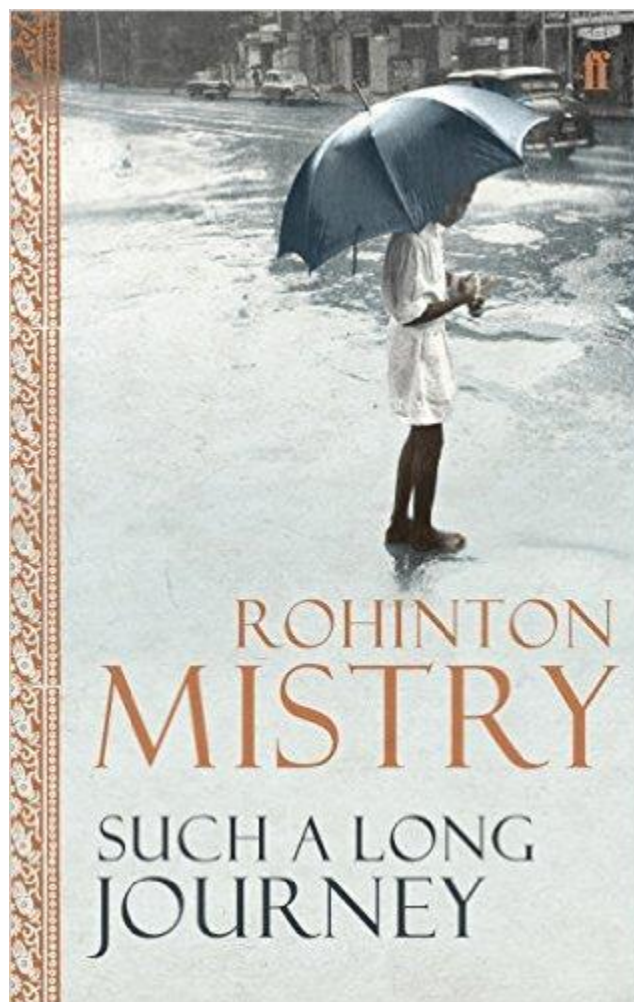
**Exploration of Bombay Life in Rohinton Mistry's Novel**

*Such a Long Journey*

S. Vijayalakshmi, M.A., M.Phil.

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**Abstract**

Rohinton Mistry, a noted post- independence Parsi writer in English was born in Bombay, India in 1952. Mistry's fiction is rooted in the streets of Bombay, the city he left behind for Canada at the age of twenty-three. In his debut novel *Such a Long Journey*, he presents the

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Exploration of Bombay Life in Rohinton Mistry's Novel *Such a Long Journey*

Bombay life during the year 1971 with the combination of reality and his imaginative powers. Mistry portrayed the city of Bombay and the Bombay life very realistically in different aspects. He brings out both dirty, corruption, poverty, ugliness of Bombay life on one hand and the fragrance, happiness on the other hand. He has depicted Bombay life in an impressive way. This novel is truly a journey of Gustad and Mistry takes the reader into the unfamiliar cultural landscape of India along with Gustad and his family as they struggle with all the assaults of being human.

**Key Words:** Corruption, Ugliness, Unfamiliar landscape, Fragrance, Happiness.



Rohinton Mistry

Courtesy: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/rohinton-mistry/>

## Introduction

Rohinton Mistry was born in Bombay in 1952 and after few years, he migrated to Canada. Many critics compared his portrayal of the city of Bombay to Charles Dicken's portrayal of the city of London. Mistry's novels are clearly set in Bombay. Rohinton Mistry's first novel *Such a Long Journey* (1991) was short listed for the Booker prize in 1991. The novel *Such a Long Journey* is Mistry's debut novel. It is about a middle class Parsi family in Bombay, India in the early 1970s from the perspective of Gustad Noble, of ordinary life in Bombay, at a

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time of economic difficulties due to rationing, corrupt leadership, and instability spurred by the war between West and East Pakistan. Mistry had presented various aspects of the city in this novel. He gave a beautiful description of the places of Bombay like Crawford Market, Chor Bazaar, Khodadad Building, and Dr. Paymaster's dispensary, House of Cages, Tower of Silence and Mount Mary. <https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/rohinton-mistry>

### **Crawford Market**

The Crawford Market was described as dirty, smelly and overcrowded place, where the protagonist of this novel buys live chicken for his daughter's birthday party. The place was always noisy; the appearance of the butchers in the Crawford Market was so disgusting with their sweat streaming down their faces and their blood-stained vests. Mistry pictures the Crawford Market through Gustad. According to Gustad, "Crawford Market held no charms" (*Such a Long Journey*, 21)

### **Parsi Enclave**

In the opening chapter, the author gave the description of the Parsi enclave called Khodadad building where the protagonist of this novel resides, which lies in the north of Bombay. Khodadad Building is three stories high. Each floor holds ten apartments. Tehmul was an orphan idiot who lived with his brother in the Khodadad Building. His brother had to go out of station for his work and Tehmul remained alone most of the time. He was lame as his hip was fractured in an accident. In his middle thirties, he still preferred the company of children to adults, except Gustad. Mr. Rabadi, an inspector and the rival of Gustad and Bamji, were the Parsi people residing inside the Khodadad Building. Mistry presented the city of Bombay especially where the minority community Parsi resides.

### **The Story of Two Types of Bombay**

*Such a Long Journey* tells the story of two types of Bombay. Although the book is full of realistic descriptions of different parts and neighbourhoods of the city that convey an impression of completeness, and the author was describing two different cities: vital old Bombay and unstable modern Bombay. In fact, the segregation of the postcolonial city that seems to have

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disintegrated into mutually exclusive fragments is central to the novel. He also conveyed dualistic character of the city with the help of his protagonist, the inclusion of his view from within is a major accomplishment in the novel.

As various flashbacks illustrate, Gustad grew up in the days of old Bombay when the island was still secular, cosmopolitan city and the Noble family had not lost their fortune yet. Mistry focused on the Parsi community which was the minority group in Bombay. The Parsi played an important role in colonial Bombay as they strongly contributed to the construction of the city. Like Mistry, Gustad is by ethnicity as Parsi that is a member of a small minority group in Bombay. The sufferings of Parsi community in Bombay are depicted in *Such a Long Journey*. The city Bombay was under transition which was portrayed through the flash backs of the protagonist. Gustad recalled the past days.

“when the water supply was generous and the milk from Parsi Dairy farm was both creamy and affordable, there had been a surge of construction activity everywhere in the city” (*Such a Long Journey*, 82).

### **New Structures and Consequent Life Style Changes**

After the tall structures around the Khodadad building rose up, six feet high, around the building was the role provider of privacy particularly for those who do Kusti prayer in the early morning. But the wall turned to be an open -air toilet, due to increase in population and became hellish for the residents of the building.

Gustad’s wife bought milk from the milkman who sold adulterated milk, as the Nobles could not collect much coveted milk ration card from the government office even after a long waiting. She remembered the days when ration cards were only for the poor and the servants, and that time the Nobles could afford to buy the fine creamy product of Parsi Dairy Farm. The minority complex started brewing up in the minds of a Parsi house wives in the city of Bombay. As a Parsi, Mistry examines the city of Bombay from the view point of an insecure minority. In fact, not only Gustad, but all the main characters in *Such a Long Journey* are members of the

Bombay Parsi Community. The Parsis left Iran in the eighth century and settled in India. They had to adjust themselves to the new surroundings; they adopted Gujarati Language, their women began to put on saris and their men surrendered their weapons (*Such a Long Journey: A Critical Study*, 26)

Dilnavaz was also trying to reach the same unattainable goal, namely to live in peace and harmony with her environment. However, her small world was represented mainly by Khodadad Building and its immediate security outside the wall. Infuriated by the excrement and wire that are deposited nightly at its base and leave an unpleasant smell in the morning Gustad hired a pavement artist to draw the pictures of gods, prophets, saints and mosques of all the world's religions on the wall. The artist's job had an enormous effect. As he filled up the wall with holy pictures, the mosquitoes and the flies disappeared.

The pavement artist gradually turns the dirty wall into a sacred wall of miracles. He likes to mix the gods, saints and prophets of all religions because it makes him feel that he is doing something to promote tolerance and understanding in the world. His message sounds like an echo of Rushdie's Vision of Bombay as a model for a secular, democratic society. Unfortunately, in the cynical, increasingly intolerant city of Bombay, the wall is not meant to last. The secular monument is demolished as part of a road-widening scheme of the Municipal Corporation. Dr. Paymaster's neighborhood has changed quite significantly in recent years, turning from a place of dusty to overcrowded and commercial place. Here is the reality of modern Bombay, where transistors, toasters, tires, auto parts, and plastic crockery are offered for sale.

Many buildings in the neighborhood had been changed in recent years. Earlier, the locality had a poor look with its abundance of dust; it was still dusty but was changed into an overcrowded, bustling city. Gleaming new signboards featuring everything that is needed in household and in factories changed the appearance of the locality altogether. The enterprising individuals who are ready for servicing motor cars, repairing refrigerators, fans changed the activity of the place which no longer retained its previous look. The first two were the cinema houses, located at the crossroads not far from the beach.

The arrival of the new film it roused the neighborhood; the black-marketers and scalpers began buzzing around the halls, like the mosquitoes in the Khodadad building. Price ratios could keep soaring, depending on the stars and number of songs on the sound track. The black-market usually slowed after the first mad rush. The third establishment in the locality, a brother house called House of Cages, did not change and continued its basic business. The author takes a long diversion this time, taking the readers through Gustad's memory, describing the grotesque stories which Gustad had once heard from Peerbhoy Paanwalla who had his stall outside the House of Cages.

### **The House of Cages**

The House of Cages was a meeting point for Gustad and Ghulam, where Gustad saw so many girls standing in front of each room in order to attract the customers. When Gustad entered the building hesitantly to meet Ghulam the place was filled up with cheap perfume smells.

Discarding the romantic descriptions, Mistry presents the harsh reality of the profession. It is the poverty that leads so many women towards this profession. A radio or record player somewhere was playing an old film song. The women were waiting for customers. Gustad glanced quickly at them while passing. The rooms that came in his view were sordid. The luxuries that are found in the stories about such places were missing. It was the intermediary location for Gustad and Ghulam and the rallying point for a march on the municipality to demand improvement to the sewer system. (Such a Long Journey: A Critical Study, 54)

### **The Dispensary**

The dispensary was the fourth establishments in the locality that had never altered its function. Dr. Paymaster had well-adjusted himself to his locality. The patients and their ailment fall into four distinct groups. The House of Cages provided group of patients who needed periodic check-ups as required by the municipal licensing authorities and another group was made up of families like the Nobles.

Dr. Paymaster purchased a closed down dispensary when he started practice, but he did not bother to change the board outside that read the name of one Dr. R.C. Lord. He did not mind if the patients referred to him a Dr. Lord. As his practice grew and he made some money he changed the board outside, displaying his own name. This change proved to be a blunder, as the patients did not like to be treated by some unknown Paymaster and insisted on the return of the good old Dr. Lord. They refused to any explanation or be examined b the new doctor. And a few patients, who were treated by Dr. Paymaster, claimed that the medicine did not cure as before. Dr. Paymaster sorrowfully realized something which he was not taught in medical college. The doctor's name was more important than his skills. So he did not change the name board. Yet the politics of naming has also played an important role in the city of Bombay.

### **Life during War Times**

Mistry tells many upheavals afflicting Bombay and all of India in the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in violence and war: riots, social unrest, the Indo-Chinese war and the reign of terror in East Pakistan that ended in the proclamation of the Republic of Bangladesh. During war time people were asked to paste windows with blackout. Gustad's personal life is interlocked with the outer world of politics and the role of the government. Gustad always wished that his children's lives would be filled with peace and tranquility. He hummed the wartime song which he had adapted to sing the children to sleep when they were little.

The wartime song along with the blackout paper taped over the glass panes of the windows and the ventilators reminded Gustad of the war with China. The year 1962- the year of India's war with China-was also a dreadful year for the Nobles, Gustad re-called. The discrimination between the rich and the poor is revealed though the crazy remarks of Cavasji, an old resident of Khodadad Building. Mistry reflected economic, political, cultural and ideological struggle in the city of Bombay in the novel *Such a Long Journey*. The economic struggle in Bombay is portrayed through Gustad, who sell his camera to provide the treatment for his daughter Roshan and through the wanton in the House of Cages, who took up that profession due to poverty.

## **The Tower of Silence**

The Tower of Silence was the place in Bombay where the dead bodies of the Parsi community would be taken over there and after the prayer, the dead bodies would be left inside the wall, where vultures would come and devour it. Dinshawji's dead body was carried to the Tower of Silence. Only men were allowed to the well of vultures. The four men carried the bier again and climbed the stone steps to the door leading inside the Tower. They entered and pulled it shut behind them. The mourners could see no more, but they knew that the four men would now place the body on a 'Pavi', and without touching his flesh they would tear off the white cloth using their special hooked rods so that he could be exposed to the creatures of the air. The chief of the carriers clapped three times as a signal to start the prayer of Dinshawji's ascending soul. While they prayed, the vultures came in great numbers. The high stone wall was lined with them. The ritual came to its end when the mourners made their Last stop for washing their hands and faces and performed 'Kusti' prayer.

## **Mount Mary**

Gustad and Malcolm visit Mount Mary. On the way to Mount Mary, there were many shops and the shopkeepers were engaged in pushing sale. Gustad was surprised to see the wax products-fingers, hands, elbows, arms, legs and other parts of two sizes, child and adult, along with complete male and female figures, which were displayed in neat rows for sale. Malcolm explained that the suffering people would offer up those parts of the body, which troubled them and Mount Mary would heal the people's suffering.

## **Bombay: A Religious Place**

It showed that the Bombay city was also known for religious place. Malcolm picked out a female child's wax product and gave it to Gustad for Roshan; for Dinshawji he selected the full male body of wax, in case the cancer had spread all over the body. A male head was also taken for Sohrab. And Malcolm insisted the offerings would not work. They also purchased four candles and went inside the hot crowded church. The candles were lit and Gustad sincerely prayed for all except himself. Gustad realized the peaceful Bombay when he sat on the rock near

the sea. He stayed there for a while, gazing at the horizon. He amazed at the beauty of the nature and felt peace inwardly.

## Conclusion

Rohinton Mistry has portrayed the city of Bombay and the life style of the people in the city especially the Parsi community. Mistry led the readers into the streets of Bombay, the houses of the Parsi community and their rituals. He had presented the unfamiliar landscape of Bombay like Tower of Silence, House of Cages, and Mount Mary and gave excellent descriptions. Mistry described the city of Bombay and Bombay life in the year 1970 presenting the facts with his imaginary fiction which makes this novel as an impressive and interesting one. He used simple language to communicate his views.

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