

A Study on the Writing Style of Arundhati Roy

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Abstract – *In Mistress, Arundhati Roy focuses on the issue of domestic sexual violence. Arundhati Roy's works reflect a wide range of interests making her a multifaceted writer of the present generation. Mistress is an intensive novel full of deep, mysterious, complex emotions that are very true to life. The story of each character unravels slowly and in the end culminates in a passionate story of life. All of the characters in the novel have a passion in life and in some way or other it decides the course of their lives, and it becomes a demanding mistress. In Mistress, she makes the closed realms of Kathakali performers come alive; she paints a poignant picture of the segregated, cloistered Muslim village.*

These two novels, Arundhati Roy's Ladies Coupé and Mistress bring into focus the issue of self-realization. In addition, Mistress focuses on domestic sexual violence. Though Arundhati Roy is not a feminist, her stories delve deep into the expectations of married Indian women and the choices they make within the relationships. They are entangled in their suffering and rebellion born of that pain, and convey a message of hope, through the change that is out there and can become possible through one's courage and initiative.

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INTRODUCTION

The Feminism advocacy of women's right on the ground of the equality of the sexes. Many feminist women writers who have contributed literature to the society wrote chivalric novels. Most of their novels had women protagonist and were based on the glory of women in the world. Feminist women writers still strive to uphold the rights of women through their works like poems and novels. Arundhati Roy is an Indian bestselling author of fiction and poetry. She always had an affinity towards writing and the courage to pursue it under all the situations. Roy relates to the many roles women play in their lives and it is reflected in her work too. She writes with great energy and creates amazing works at ease.

Modern female novelist's works are the novels of protest and an outburst of reservations and contaminations. They look for some 'Indian-ness' for conveying the messages of feminism in an Indian way. Woman writers of Indian writing in English are good in analyzing complex issues like complexities of human relationships, manwoman relationship, woman's psyche and her potential. Many Indian women writers in English with their newly acquired feminist consciousness have given their writings a new dimension in the portrayal of the new woman writers like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, ManjuKapur,

Arundhati Roy etc., have probed deep into the female psyche and have created an awareness of different kinds and forms of female experience. Their protagonists are mostly upper-class and middle-class women, educated and intelligent yet dislocated individuals who go through a crisis in life as a result of repression within the family, their constrained relationship with their husbands, their disillusionment in marriage, and their own lack of assertion & realization of self. Poverty also has reduced women powerless.

Akhila is a forty five years old spinster who takes various roles of a daughter, sister aunt and the provider of the family, an income tax clerk, one day she sets out to seek certain answers for herself, she buys a ticket to a kanyakumariand placed in "Ladies Coupe" along with five other woman giving her company for the overnight journey. These women share their life experiences with her, thus helping her to gain her full potential as a woman and grapple with the answers to the questions. She has been asking so long, Roy portrays the protagonist as by fulfilling the expectations of her family Akhila has forgotten to live for herself. The ties of tradition have always pulled her back, checked her in mid-stride whenever she has tried to make her way towards freedom.

Basically Akhila had spent all her life for others. She was forced to take care of others since her father had an untimely demise and there was really no-one else to be the family's bread winner. Yet, at the age of 40 Akhila realizes that she has allowed life to pass her by and she needs to find some pleasure for herself. Her assertion comes in the form of a journey. She buys a ticket to the Deep South, to Kanyakumari the southern tip of India. This is the turning point in her life. This innocent, cloistered woman is out for an adventure, but the real adventure is taking place within her for she is discovering herself. Her quest for a man then throws up the question whether a woman must have man to be really happy in her life.

Akhila and her fellow travellers argue that marriage is not imperative. Their independence helps them to get over a dominated existence in the hands of men in society, because each of them has a spinster older sister, once the breadwinner and the cash-cow to the family. The first partner is Janaki, a pampered wife and confused mother who got married at the age of eighteen and had led forty years of comfortable married life. When Akhila sees Janaki and her husband she gets the idea, "A woman can't live alone. A woman can't cope alone". (LC 39) She reverses to the victim position two and is tormented by the question "Whither goest thou?" (LC 39) Akhila is very perplexed about whether she is going in the right direction.

With Janaki's revelation, Akhila begins to make a search of her own 'self' and her memories take her to her childhood experiences to reconstruct the life of her mother. Akhila's second companion is Margaret. Margaret Shanthi is a chemistry teacher. She compares people to chemicals. She is married to the principal of the school she teaches in. Hers is a love marriage. When Margaret gets pregnant, her husband coaxes her into aborting the child, thus triggering the friction in their relationship. She has gained control over her husband by making him lose shape. Her suppression turns into rebellion and it subsequently gives birth to revenge. She begins to question her feelings for Ebenezer Paulraj who appears to be a "bully" and "tyrant".

WRITING STYLE OF ARUNDHATI ROY

In India nationality assumes an imperative part in the development of ladies' personality separated from sex and gender. Indian customary values entirely put ladies in the socially inferior position to men or as subordinate to men. Ladies are confined to their gender parts as moms, spouses, little girl and girl in-laws as opposed to as individual subjects like men. Their social parts outweigh their individual subject position. As broadly developed subjects ladies go about as the repository of the social values through their social gender parts like spouse, mother, little girl and little girl in-law.

In this development of ladies, individual qualities and freedom come in conflict with group qualities and ladies need to make trade off by sacrificing their individual values in lieu of group welfare. Again in this development of character of ladies, the female body turns into the terrain on which mapping and remapping of the personality is arranged in light of the fact that female body is viewed as instrumental in giving birth to kids, to safeguard the holiness and virtue of race, class and position. In this manner in safeguarding of social personality of both men and ladies, body turns into a critical thought. This is all the more so in diaspora as relocation to an outside area requests a protection of culture for the development of way of life as well as for the continuation of it in the consequent era.

This circumstance makes greater duty and overburden ladies in remote land. Ladies come in conflict with the old estimations of their local land which are prohibitive and new estimations of the gained arrive which are more liberal. Movement opens up new roads to build up their subjectivity not the same as their customary upbringing. Subsequently in questioning the national social character ladies come in conflict with patriarchy since the national development of ladies' personality is basically patriarchal in nature. Indian ladies' encounter with patriarchal values in diaspora frequently prompt to the imperviousness to patriarchy and result in development of selfhood which shape the real subject in Divakaruni's fiction as in diasporic ladies writing. This angle consequently is managed in detail in this area.

These qualities are identified with marriage, parenthood, social upbringing, social stun and such comparable things. From the conflict ladies perceive their distinguishing proof in the diasporic group. In her commended first short story gathering Arranged Marriage Divakaruni manages upper and white collar class, high station Hindu urban Indian ladies' broadly built identity in conflict with the new personality in diaspora. This conflict with hegemonic patriarchal thoughts of gender leads her female characters towards freedom and in addition development of selfhood. Be that as it may take note of that these depictions have a place with the early period of diaspora from 2010s to 2010s when social changes in India for ladies were initiated. Henceforth the original foreigners that she depicts in Arranged Marriage found the space in diaspora more helpful for freedom and social change.

One of the distinguishing markers of national ethnic personality is garments. The story "Garments" typically speaks to the hegemonic weight on ladies regarding this weight of preserving their way of life and ethnicity in a remote land. Saree, the most well-known clothing for ladies in many parts of Indian continent, raises the issue of ladies' opportunity and individual decision in America. Sumita, the hero of

"Garments" takes after Somesh her significant other to America as another lady of the hour.

In America Somesh endowments her some western garments. Yet, Sumita can't wear them out in the open or level out of the protection of her room since her old in-laws is staying with them. It is her obligation to save the way of life of her nation of origin as a little girl in law. Keeping in mind them she wears her western garments and appreciates them subtly between the four dividers of her room. Be that as it may, when her significant other bites the dust she comes in encounter with the Indian social practices of widowhood which was cruel on ladies, particularly the upper standing ladies. As against the desires of her in-laws Sumita chooses to remain in America and continue her instruction with the goal that she can satisfy the desire of her significant other and in addition find her living in America, a choice she takes independently first time in her life.

The adjustment in her garments in the identical representation symbolizes the adjustment in the development of character in a remote area with new alliance to culture since it denotes her flexibility of decision. An innocent and guileless lady sets herself up strongly to confront the savagery of life and its unforeseen wanders aimlessly with certainty and intensity by constructing her selfhood by overthrowing patriarchal severe existence of reliance since she is not an informed lady, a wander not effortlessly feasible for some in her local land. Her determination is typically highlighted and compared with the western outfit that she wears.

DISCUSSION

Ladies are additionally given the good examples from the Indian sagas. Men appreciate the twofold standard profound quality and traitorousness on their part is exculpated by the general public. These suppositions of Indian marriage, part of wifehood, pre and additional conjugal relations are altogether tested by Divakaruni's ladies both in diaspora and home. They raise their voice against aggressive behavior at home as well and in this way strikingly settle on new life by method for development of selfhood through instruction, profession and strong choices like walking out of undesirable marriage bonds.

Abha in the story "Undertaking" is raised in a customary Indian family with strict perspectives about marriage. When she finds out about the additional conjugal undertaking of her dear companion Meena she gets stunned. Abha likewise misjudges that this issue is with her better half, so it is more loathsome to her.

In any case, when she takes in reality from Meena that her undertaking is not with Abha's significant other but rather more surprisingly with moderately aged American, Abha takes in the genuine desires of a female heart out of a marriage security. This makes

her to think about the judiciousness of Indian marriage in light of the fact that the expressions of Meena. "he comprehends me, every last bit of me, even the terrible parts. With him I can act naturally, similar to I never could this" (AM 269), go about as an eye opener. This makes Abha to reevaluate her own perspectives about marriage, sex and ethical quality. She understands that her own life is additionally dry and dull like Meena's with Shrikant. Her association with Ashok is not in view of any adoration and understanding thus she reaches the conclusion that, "the old standards aren't generally right. Not here, not even in India" (AM270).

Margaret's story makes Akhila think about her own relationship with Hari whom she had met on the daily train to work. She broke off her relationship with him because he was younger to her. Akhila realizes that she lost Hari and his companionship only out of the panic of social sanctity. In the process of the reconstruction of female identity, the rational and conventional vision is essential. Modern women admit healthy sexual needs and seek a suitable outlet for them. In feminine psyche, the sexual desire and intense desire for love are two distinctive variables and they should not be treated as identical. Man-woman relationship should not be hampered. It is part of the evolution in Nature. Akhila views marriage as an oppressive structure which takes away her self-identity and what she longs for is self-generative identity.

The struggle of Akhila, Karpagam and her daughter is from the periphery moving towards the centre. They crave for identity for which they need not depend on any entity or factor other than their own being. This they cherish because it makes them happy. At the periphery they have no identity. Akhila's next companion is Prabha Devi. She has led her life in comfort and luxury as a daughter and daughter-in-law. Her visit to New York makes her conscious of her own beauty, her own dreams and her freedom. Akhila is impressed by the confidence and renewed interest of Prabha Devi to construct her own life. Akhila gets a better perception of life from Prabha Devi's confession. She learns that one's freedom is in one's own hands and not in the hands of others.

Sheela is a fourteen year old girl who is of a different generation to Janaki's, but she possesses a mental maturity that quite surpasses her age. She describes the death of her maternal grandmother due to cancer. The matriarch turns mad, eats all the food left in the house and speaks her mind. She accepts her grandmother's death with an air of a person who has seen it all and done it all. Marikolunthu is subjugated to the pinnacle of victimization. She is raped and becomes the mother of an illegal son. She represents the lower class of Indian society and is thwarted by a series of disappointments. Her life is very pathetic and miserable. She transforms into a mature lady by accepting her son, Muthu.

Marikolunthu is the most pathetic woman among the six. She is the realistic picture of the humble and miserable peasant woman upon whom male oppression is continually forced and allowed to go on, unquestioned by all.

Increasingly Radha is aware that her husband's love is only a sham and her marriage is meaningless. A young travel writer from the west, Christopher Stewart, arrives with a cello and a tape recorder to include Koman's life in his book. He spends a lot of time with Koman and his beautiful unhappy niece, Radha. Radha is compulsively drawn by the personality of Chris. Shyam becomes a helpless observer as Radha embraces Chris in a passion he cannot comprehend.

Radha is drawn into a sexual relationship with Chris. It is a form of protest against cultural norms that deny a woman any expression of her sexuality. It voices feminists' continuing concern with giving women control over their bodies, providing them with the power and the knowledge to enjoy their sexuality and to have children if and when they wish, in short, the power to be able to say, "Our bodies are our own". So he forces himself upon her, claiming it as his right and unmindful of her right to refuse, while Radha's mind condemns it as rape. From this instance Roy discusses the act of marital rape through the character of Shyam, in the context of sexual violence within marriage.

Feminists link rape to male aggression, patriarchy and the construction of masculinity in our societies. It is not about biology or a momentary loss of control, but is a tool of dominance and submission. In the case of Radha and Shyam, the institution of marriage becomes the platform upon which the game of sexuality and power are played out. Radha's resistance is not without tension or fear. She 'masquerades' for a while as the dutiful wife in order to give herself time for hard decisions: "Fear makes one do things one would never do otherwise. Fear lets you compromise. Fear will even let you seduce your husband so that he thinks he imagined your transgressions, your betrayal, and that you still are his". (Mistress 253)

Finally she rejects both Shyam and Chris and in doing so, releases herself from the roles of wife and mistress. In her decision to break away from both men in her life, but keep her urban baby, she gives her baby a maternal identity through the maternal care only, by rendering it "fatherless". Radha, who had been mistress to two men (Chris and Shyam) and wife to one, moves towards becoming "mistress" of her own self.

Akhila has taken over the responsibility of looking after her family for a long time. She has been successful in what is an essentially male-dominated environment. She is strong and assertive on most occasions. Yet she is looking for a man now to complete her life. Does she really need one? When Arundhati Roy was

questioned about the issues of gender in her novels, she replied. I don't set out to write anything that's gender related. In the process, if anything comes up, then I milk it. Because I am not a great person; I had a story to tell. I was exploring certain issues that were important to me.

She defines her as an independent woman. Through she does not have anything she does not relinquish her hope. Thus finally she empowers herself and proves to the world that she can lead a good life. Thus listening to the lives of various women in the Coupe, Akhila gets down at Kanyakumari as an empowered woman to rediscover her "self". She decides that she has to live for her not for other ultimately; she breaks the chain of male Chauvinism which has haunted her for nearly a decade. She empowers herself and makes a call to Hari, her past lover to make a new life with him, thus the novel comes to an end. In Ladies Coupe, "Arundhati Roy has dealt with the themes of self-identity, search for strength and independence though her characters have suffered from male egoism, at the end they all empowered by them and successfully redeems them from a web called male chauvinism. To conclude, thus Arundhati Roy traces a woman's journey from self-sacrifice to self-realization self-denial to self-assertion. The feminist voice is beautifully picturized by Arundhati Roy.

I fix my shoulders and stand taller, take a full breath. Air fills me, a similar air that went through Somesh's lungs a short time back. The musing resembles a sudden, intimate blessing. I tilt my chin, readying myself for the contentions of the coming weeks, the denunciations. In the mirror a lady maintains eye contact with me, her eyes worried yet relentless. She wears a shirt and skirt the shade of almonds (AM 33). An assumption regarding garments as social marker of personality is likewise found in the spouse's desire in the story "Vanishing" at whatever point the hero of the story communicates a yearning to wear the western garments the husband opposes her desire by saying that, "you look such a great amount of prettier in your Indian garments. So much feminine" (AM 172). Additionally Tilo in The Mistress of Spices wears the western outfit to meet Geeta and furthermore being given an outfit by Raven her significant other. She turns into the butt of criticism by young ladies on the shoreline when they see an old Indian lady wearing a pretty outfit. However these outfits viewed as markers of ethnic personality change Tilo's character later. In this manner for Divakaruni western garments, symbolize first class westernization and her ladies characters demonstrate the change of their social personality by adopting these progressions, in their lives.

CONCLUSION

The thoughts regarding Indian gender part of wifehood and values in marriage experience an adjustment in Roy's works fiction which catches the changing desires of ladies. Ladies address

patriarchal values in marriage and defy certain injustices allotted to ladies for the sake of culture and in this way clear path for change and re-obsession of character and development of self. For an Indian lady marriage is a holy bond amongst a couple. Not at all like western relational unions it is considered as an unavoidable social relationship and ladies need to convey the weight of keeping it alive independent of any obstacles in the relationship.

The newly discovered path for opportunity with her culinary abilities Abha chooses to escape her meaningless marriage without the dread of the general public. America gives her the opportunity and confidence, a feeling of good and bad to make her very own subjectivity.

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