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Representation of Liberated Women in Amrita Pritam's *The Skeleton*

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the radical feministic contours in her liberated women in Amrita Pritam's *The Skeleton*. It also distinguishes radical thought and self-awareness by preserving its feminine integrity. The study examines a few of Amrita's works in order to develop a new feminine integrity and to conduct a critical examination of Indian women's self-concept as derived from socio-religious, political, and cultural traditions and beliefs throughout history. The research focuses on feminism and feminist critique, with the goal of tracing the origins of gender-based oppression and establishing radical feministic ideas in many genres. The study tries to show that a woman's self-concept can help her attain self-actualization and that it can help bring about positive changes in both the person and the larger society.

Keywords: Liberation, Women, Society, Feminine, Self-Concept, Individual.

INTRODUCTION

Amrita Pritam's writing expresses her need for interpersonal connection as an artist. She is a writer who can pique the interest of traditionalists and conservative reviewers. She deals with life's various dimensions. Her stories show a keen psychoanalytical assessment of persons'

categorised lives. In contrast to her sensitivity, the novel depicts socio-cultural, ethnic, familial, and religious difficulties. Flat or round, classical or modern, the characters she depicted are indistinguishable. They are people who are open about their life experiences. Amrita represents the general mentality and outlook of women.

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In her novel, Amrita reverberates the painful distress of women. She digs deep into the hearts of women, detects and understands them, and records their experiences. She expresses the emotional experiences, the catastrophes in women's lives. Her female integrity is submerged in her fictitious output. In her writings, she shows women as strugglers and evolving champions. As a novelist, Amrita wrote books that explore a wide range of social, cultural, and psychological issues. In her fiction, she addresses a variety of issues relating to feminine integrity, including marriage, divorce, social taboos and self-consciousness, harshness and brutality toward female sex, and moral catastrophe. Amrita's works are deeply analysed from the standpoint of feminine integrity, where all concerns are linked to the question of moral and ethical dilemma. She has the ability to delve deeply into the minds of her female characters and empathise with them.

Amrita's works highlight a woman's sorrow and plight in a male-chauvinistic society. Her writings have a recurring theme of confronting life with all of one's strength. Her writings are brimming with compassion for all of humanity. Her writing is notable for its sensitivity and skill, as well as a refinement and susceptibility that are distinctly feminine. Amrita has captured the attitude of man and society, who are responsible for all of woman's afflictions, in her stories and books. She reveals in her writing that women themselves, more than anybody else, obstruct women's freedom and advancement.

Amrita's *The Skeleton* (1950) portrays the catastrophic story of Pooro, a naive and gorgeous girl affianced to a generous, intellectual and handsome youth named Ram Chand. The story has been depicted in the milieu of the partition unrest between the Hindus and Muslims and the ensuing mass murder and massacre. The *Skeleton* is a tremendous inventive piece of fiction that

displays Amrita's faculty of corresponding everything in a limited number of pages. The fiction portrays a world of social realism. It endeavors at a subterranean probing into the human consciousness during a catastrophe, especially a woman's mind. The protagonist, Pooro is an icon of anguish and survivalism. Her absolute and definite verdict to stay with Rashida provides her character an unusual aspect. The existential viewpoint that human being is an inimitable and secluded individual in an insistent and antagonistic society, accountable for his own trials and free to prefer his destiny is epitomized in the character of Pooro. According to Digole (2010) "Amrita as a highly sensitive poetess, had captured the pains and traumas of partition most compellingly and voiced the agonizing experiences of women through the archetypal story of protagonist, Pooro" (139). She has explained all these appearances of violence against women in the novel in detailed aspect.

The novel is set in the Gujarat district, in the small rural town of Chhatoani and its neighbouring districts of Rattoval and Sakkar. The novel spans approximately thirteen years in length (1935 to 1948). It begins on a happy note, with the preparations for two weddings - Pooro and Ram Chand and Lajo and Trilok - in full swing. Pooro is a descendent of a Hindu moneylender's family from Chhatoani village, while Ramchand is a descendant of another wealthy Rattoval moneylender's family. Pooro was simply a victim of the Hindu-Muslim revenge. This shows how parents see it as a huge relief to marry off a daughter and have the load lifted off their shoulders. This discrimination exists even now, when parents look forward to sluicing their hands from the lumber of a daughter's accountability. Pooro was kidnapped by a Muslim lad named Rashida just before her wedding. Pooro manages to break free from his captivity after a few days and travels to her parents' home, but they refuse to

let her into the family. Finally, Pooro approaches Rashida, who is completely distraught and upset, and tries to make amends with her. She lives a peaceful life as Hamida, a Muslim convert. Partition left an indelible mark on the psyches of the people of the Indian subcontinent who lived through this terrible ordeal. Several works paint a colourful picture of the strange array of people who succumbed to the stress of partition.

The tale depicts the oppression of women caught up in collective anxiety. During the preceding insurgency, they faced antagonism, displacement, vulnerability, mistreatment, and abuse, which Amrita has depicted in an extremely realistic manner in the story. She tries to look into human sentiment in interpersonal relationships in light of the current conditions that have harmed public consensus. At some point during the partition, Amrita's work explores the existential dilemma of women. She conveys the reality of kidnapped women's maltreatment and exploitation, which includes the extermination of their thoughts, emotions, sensations, and resolve with the abductors. In her changeable temperament, the narrative highlights Pooro's feminine integrity and radical image. Her earlier quixotic state of mind, her aggravation and vulnerability following abduction, her feeling of being an insensible skeleton, her apprehension for Rashida and the child forcibly implanted in her womb, and then the steady but optimistic transformation in her attitude toward her once intolerably detested husband and her ultimate resolution with the distorted situation in bearing in mind 'Pakistan' as her habitat, like a traditional Indian wife, has been depicted. Pooro has a youthful passion, and a deep flush develops on her cheeks whenever she thinks about her fiancée Ram Chand's face. She occasionally leaves her father's domain and travels down the walkway connecting Rattoval and Chhattoani to catch a glimpse of Ram Chand. Her heart's yearning to

satisfy her youth's ambition would be realised just by thinking about it. Her night would then be spent in hallucination of her husband. All of this came to an end when Pooro was kidnapped, which completely transformed her life. Abduction completely changes a girl's life. Her throbbing and agony are never understood. Pooro is completely oblivious to the purpose for her kidnapping. She comes to the realisation that the door to her own fate is sealed. Her wailing or snuffling did not provide her any relief.

Amrita brings forth Pooro's brave spirit as a radical feminist. Pooro masters all valour and strikes onto the path to emancipation, even in such perilous conditions. Pooro implores Rashida to show mercy and return her to her people, but to no avail. Pooro deduces from Rashida that he kidnapped her to settle an ancient score with their respective families, the Sahukars and Shaikhs. Women are the victims of societal events such as war and disaster. Pooro is powerless to revolt against the circumstance and must accept it and live with it. "If my uncle abducted your aunt, what fault was mine?" Pooro asks Rashida, despite her powerlessness. You have turned me into a homeless squatter" (17).

Pooro must conceal her ingenuity and accept an enslaved life as a result of her grandfather's and brothers' misdeeds. Her sensitivity as a "homeless vagrant" reflects the specificity of her situation and illness. In a traditional culture, a woman who has been evicted from her home and has left no trace would undoubtedly become homeless. Amrita demonstrates that women pay a high price for intercommunal violence. Pooro is thus a "perpetual victim" of Shaikh and Sahukar families. Amrita has highlighted that ladies had to suffer for no fault of their own through Pooro's awful experiences. The patriarchal society's 'social stigma' irritates women's constant surrender of innocence and forfeiture. Amrita slams the

exploitative religious and social traditions that harm women. Pooro begs Rashida to allow her to pay a visit to her mother. He denies stating, "You have no place in that family anymore! If they let you in even once, not one of their Hindu friends or relatives will take a drop of water in their house. And you have been with me full fifteen days" (18).

The wedding rites of the young girl had traumatised all of her desires and dreams. He has taken away her birthright, and she fears he has taken away her future. Pooro's situation exemplifies a woman's fragility when she has no control over her situation. Pooro eventually escapes Rashida's incarceration and returns to her parents' house in Chhattoani, but they refuse to take her back into the family since she is a 'defiled lady.' She uses all of her strength to pound the door open, confident that 'a lost daughter' will be welcomed. Her mother takes Pooro in her arms and clasps her to her chest. However, the mother and daughter are not allowed to cry since the father claims there would be neighbours and a crowd. Pooro had no choice but to depart despite her dire circumstances. Because of the society's fear, a daughter is denied and not accepted back.

When women in India identify their universe with their husband and children, they find a brighter side to life. Pooro is more likely to accept the current condition than to lament the spilled milk. The only force that has had a significant impact on Pooro's world is love. She takes what life has given her without any demands or claims. Rashida, the benefactor, adores his kid and Pooro at home. Pooro takes a unique perspective on life. She begins to live with the child's laughing filling the entire house. She also compares her circumstances to that of the other ladies in the novel and feels satisfied; she also compares Ramchand's and Rashida's affection. As a result, she finally regards Rashida in high regard.

Amrita encourages women to work together to build a true women's freedom that is based on understanding, association, love, and contemplation rather than aggravation and abhorrence. The woman must rise beyond her emotions and surround herself with beauty and splendour. Their gatherings should be friendly, with a better understanding that nothing in life is eternal. Then their love will have incredible depth and joy, and there will be no contract or law. Then they will carry with them all lovely memories and be gratifying forever. They will not obstruct each other's freedom, which has previously resulted in further slavery.

Amrita, a radical feminist, believes that a new women's liberation movement may enlist the support of millions of intelligent and caring women, and that such a movement will receive full support from men because women are not fighting against a past in which they have suffered. The rebellions will then provide happiness, grace, and thankfulness to the people. Every woman has the potential to become a projectile toward godliness, and fidelity can point the way to higher spheres of being and consciousness. A woman is capable of not only giving birth to children, but also of giving birth to truth seekers. Amrita analytically analyses feminist techniques in social and cultural contexts to delineate and investigate feminine integrity in human interactions, marriage, and motherhood.

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