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TRACING FEMINISM IN THE SELECT POEMS OF RAJATHI SALMA

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Abstract

In general women hold a short tenure in the happiness of the family, though they are the sole performers for the happiness of the family in the backdrop. Men always dominate and suppress women under the prejudice that women are the weaker sex. This paper focus on the outcome and outbursts of this suppression by the males in the selected poems of Rajathi Salma. The translated poems Perspective, Evil and The Midnight Tale highlight the existence of such hard realities, which exist even in the 21st century. Besides, the world has developed in all dimensions; still the social evil of female suppression or subordination continues to exist in some parts of the world.

INTRODUCTION

Among all the atrocities against women in India, the common ill-treatment rendered to women is fuelled mainly by the consideration of women as an object of pleasure and not as a human counterpart. Right from the birth, all the stereotypical 'feministic' characteristics are imbibed in the minds of the children. In India there is a saying, 'Male child should never cry'. This makes the unmolded mind of the male children to shape it against the female nature beyond the fragility and tenderness of the girl children.

It moves the male society, as the children grow up to adults, with roots remaining strong in a society, to become violent against women. The thinking that women are the weaker sex is a part and parcel of the colloquial teaching in India. The ultimate result of this misguidance is that all the violent atrocities such as rape and inequalities become virtual threats to the women folk. The funniest part is that the notion that women are fragile and tender is also an ideology portrayed in the works created earlier works mostly by male writers,

especially in Tamil Literature, as women's writings never flourished then. In line with the Tamil poets and also the current scenario of women in society, Rajathi Salma, a Tamil writer has highlighted the social evils in her poems. Being known for her boldness as depicted in her poems, Perspective, Evil and The Midnight Tale, she has come out with the hard reality in a very frank and authentic interpretation.

This poem portrays the condition of a woman who has given birth to her baby recently. Her husband begins to dislike her naked body because of the mark that occurs after pregnancy. She says that once he praised her beauty but now as it has marks in the belly and as her body has become thickened because of pregnancy, the man chooses to avoid her when she approaches him. The behaviour of the man forces her to fall into deep gloom and sorrow. In agony, the woman compares her body with that of the man. She says that both the bodies are not the same. Man's body remains the same throughout his life, unless something serious happens to him.

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Before this too,
Your children, perhaps, were born
In many places, to many others;
You may be proud

You bear no traces of their birth. (A Midnight Tale, 22-26)

The woman sarcastically passes a comment that her husband might have had relationship with other women and might have given them children with his body without manifesting the truth. On the other hand, the woman feels proud and filled with sadness in acknowledging that she had relationship only with him and her body stands as a proof for that. She is sad upon the nature of her body as it has betrayed her by deserting her in the time of crisis against her own husband.

The woman expresses that the birth marks cannot be erased or it will not disappear. In a depressed condition she mourns with anger that she is not a paper which can take any forms in relation to one's wish. In the past she spent happy nights with her husband, but at present she is away from him. Along with him, all the memories of togetherness, love and the happy moments have disappeared and got erased from her mind willingly. With these feelings she stares at the tiger in the picture which remained silent all these days. But now the picture appears to her rather in a ferocious mood. This symbolically depicts that the women are not like those in the past who would always remain silent and be subordinate to men. The scenario has changed where women too have come out to stand and fight equally against the suppression that is imposed upon them by men. So she compares herself with a ferocious tiger waiting to catch its prey by neck, the prey being the dominant males.

The control of men towards women is discussed in "Perspective". In this poem the woman says that she is not allowed to comb her hair as she wishes and they even teach them how to cook. All her actions are subject to the will and pleasure of the man. The woman feels very sad because the man even teaches the woman how to feed the child and the position in which the child is to be carried while feeding the child. Women are not allowed to do things as they wish even in selecting a book to read for pleasure. The pleasure of women too depends upon the wish and will of the male

chauvinistic society. All the atrocities against women make them think that they are lower than the animals that are free to do things as they like.

Terrified, stunned, and staring at me,

A bat,

Hanging ripe on the tree in the garden.

(Perspective 11-13)

Animals that have five or less senses are treated with much more care than the women, but the humans are blessed with six senses. Even a bat hangs upside down on its own wish, whereas the women are forced to sit upside down while feeding their babies, if the poetry lines are taken in the literal sense.

Woman has to face problem both inside and outside the home. The societal evils that are vigilant in the broad day light are concentrated in this poem. The streets of the city are busy and the bus overflows with the crowd. There is no air inside the bus and the people in the bus start to sweat and heat flows everywhere. Even in such a disgusting open situation women are assaulted for pleasure. A penis probes her driven by lust, proving that women are treated only as sexual objects. The extreme of such irrational feelings is analyzed in this discourse. The world is so evil-minded that it refuses to give women the due respect they deserve.

CONCLUSION

Salma is a writer, who never cares about the stereotypes of the present-day society. All her poems clearly indicate the manifestation of her boldness. It would be treachery if her poems are just read for the sake of sadistic pleasure that might be indulged in by the forces opposed to women's interests. The boldness displayed in her poems should be reflected in the behavior and attitude of present-day males which alone would stop the social evils that still remain in the society.

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