

PSYCHO-DYNAMICS OF WOMEN IN MANJU KAPUR'S 'DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS' AND SALLY MORGAN'S 'MY PLACE'

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ABSTRACT

The literature, which arose as a series of styles and idea in the post World War II period, which reacted against the perceived means of modernist literature, has been termed postmodern literature. The 1941 death of Irish novelist James Joyce, one of modernism's last and biggest giants, is sometimes used as a rough boundary for the beginning of postmodernism. In literature of this era one finds a shift in the role of the 'inner narrative of the self, from the self at war with itself to the self as arbiter, painting to the phenomenological roots of postmodern thought. Post modernism offers' multiple possibilities for a fresh appraisal of what had been taken always for granted and the present paper is a modest attempt to bring out the Psycho- Dynamics of Women in Manju Kapur's 'Difficult Daughter's and Sally Morgan's 'My Place'(1987).' In the present paper I would also like to reflect on the multilayered Indian experiences in Colonial and post colonial times upon the holocaust of partition and the problems of women in particular.

KEYWORDS: Psycho- Dynamics, Difficult Daughter's, My Place

INTRODUCTION

The literature, which arose as a series of styles and idea in the post World War II period, which reacted against the perceived means of modernist literature, has been termed postmodern literature. Like all stylistic eras, no definite dates exist for the rise and fall of postmodernism. The 1941 death of Irish novelist James Joyce, one of modernism's last and biggest giants, is sometimes used as a rough boundary for the beginning of postmodernism. It also coincides with the beginning of the Cold War, the American Civil Rights movement (1955-1968) and the beginning of movements which worked towards: a) the end of Colonialism b) the partition of India c) the 1947 UN Partition Plan and d) the development of post colonial literature.

Literature of this era does not set itself against modern literature as much as it develops and extends the style, making it self-conscious and ironic. In such literature, one finds a shift in the role of the 'inner narrative of the self, from the self at war with itself to the self as arbiter, painting to the phenomenological roots of postmodern thought.

Post modernist texts pose questions about the nature of reality. The techniques of postmodernism are subversive of established literary practices and these are often combined with 'Outrageous" subject matter. Obviously postmodernism chooses consciously to dabble in experiences and ways of living which deviate in perceptible ways from the mainstream, are marginalized, placed on the cultural, social and moral periphery irrespective of the moral judgment that may emanate from such a choice.

Post modernism offers' multiple possibilities for a fresh appraisal of what had been taken always for granted and the present paper is a modest attempt to bring out the Psycho- Dynamics of Women in Manju Kapur's 'Difficult Daughter's

and Sally Morgan's 'My Place'(1987).'

Difficult Daughter's (1998) located against the backdrop of India of 1940's presents the problem of an upper middle class Urban Arya Samaj Punjabi Family in Amritsar. Awareness of a new generation, radically different in thought and attitudes from that of the preceding one may be called as the hallmark of this novel. Difficult Daughter's characteristically opens with the frank declaration of the narrator daughter, "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother". It is a story of three daughters belonging to three generations- the grandmother Kasturi, her daughter Virmati and Virmati's daughter, Ida, the narrator. Kapur speaks with great narrative eloquence on the idea of independence and deals with issues like women education and feminine freedom. In the present paper I would like to reflect on the multilayered Indian experiences in Colonial and post colonial times upon the holocaust of partition and the problems of women in particular.

It is only Virmati who is the difficult daughter in the prosperous merchant family of Lala Diwan Chand. While in the generation of Kasturi, women's role was confirmed to child- bearing and kitchen work, the generation of Virmati took some bold and radical steps in joining the political movement for India's freedom, asserted the need for women's education and independence. As a non-chalant representative of the middle generation, Virmati breaks away from the tradition bounds limit of Indian women. After forcing Harish to marry her, she finds her status as a second wife problematic owing to the antagonism of family members. She remains a social misfit as contemporary social ethos does not yet approve of such all alliance. Virmati is the emblem of the new women of the forties who wanted to walk hand and hand with men. She rejects the kind of life led by her mother, fights for women's independence and a respectable social status.

Virmati creates lines of partition in her parental family as well as in the family of her husband. She painfully realizes that independence and partition are mutually generative. Kasturi bursts out at her, "You've destroyed our family, you badmash, you randi". She remains an outsider, an untouchable. The novelist very well combines the story of India's partition and the family partition. The narrator tries to be free from the haunting figure of her mother, "Do not haunt me any more".

Manju kapur has given us an unforgettable picture of the evolution of the Indian psyche overtime, starting from the pre-Independence period through the independence era upto the time of the post-independence. We see feminist leanings at the outset in the portrayal of Shakuntala and Virmati who make their own choices of life. The later developments seem to spell out that women who go against tradition are sure to be singled out and oppressed by society, rejected even by their own mothers.

Sally Morgan's My Palace asks two basic question: the family specific 'What people are we?' and the cultural, 'what did it really mean to be aboriginal?' The starting point for Morgan's quest for identity is her grandmother Daisy's silence, as she says "there are some things I just can't talk about" Sally does not accept Daisy's silence and shouts at her bedroom ceiling. I'm not giving up God. Not in million years..... I expect you to help'. Daisy's fear of the white authority and her sense of shame over her aboriginal background reflect the aboriginal culture of silence.

While Sally tries to write the history of her family her Nan is quite sure that one cannot pull all truths in a book, therefore Daisy took forward to retrieving her lost self in the next world and she is optimistic when the special bird calls out. She says, "I'm going home soon. Home to my own land and my own people I got a good spot over there, they all waiting for me". But Sally is desperate to trace her lost self in contemporary history and would agree with Arthur when she

says, "We are talking history". In the twenty - second chapter of the novel, Sally confesses to a need when she says "I desperately wanted to do something to identify with my new found heritage and that was the only thing that I could think of '.

The aborigines were expected to give up their 'punitive' aboriginality and get identified with settler society by adopting the appearance, the identities and the values of the colonizers. Only in this manner could they become subjects of history. But Sally Morgan takes the help of family photography to register the semiotics of identify formation and deformation, producing representations of unassimilated and assimilated the primitive and the modern, The "little white lie" told by her mother becomes the basis for Sally Morgan's narrative of aboriginal identify, recovered and re-valuated.

Sally reconstructs the experience of her childhood and adolescence in suppressed history which functioned both as an enforceable silence and uncanny presence. Her writing it down completes her quest for selfhood as she says- 'I get very angry at injustice, and I thought somebody should put this down, people should know about these things'. Sally Morgan's quest for identity through photographs becomes more poignant as one realizes from the narrative that there are many things which the photography conceals. And get the silence in them helps Sally to reconstruct her aboriginal self and inherit her 'otherness' which she was in search of.

Manju Kapur's 'Difficult Daughter's and Sally Morgan's 'My Place' are feminist discourse not because both the writers are women writing about woman's issues, but they both probe into the Psyche of women for the quest of selfhood, Identity and independence and thus gave their work a universal glimpse.

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