



A Study of Feminist Approach : The Case of Post-Colonial Literature

Sompal Singh

Research Scholar

Dept. of English

Gurukul Kangri Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar

Abstract

Feminism has generally focused on the history of male dominance and oppression, observable in every aspect of society, particularly in literature and Language. Feminism has become fractured, divided, and contradictory. Feminism discourse began to address literary text in the 1970s, new question arose about the nature of the woman writer and how she differed from her male counterpart. Simone De Beauvoir, Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy are the novelist whose major concern is to present the feminist approach in their works. The present paper is such as an attempt that explores the new feminist approach.

Key-Words : Feminism, Women's Oppression, New Feminist Approach.

The feminist literary criticism of today is the direct product of the 'women's movement of the 1960s. This movement was important in ways in the sense that it realized the significance of the images of women promulgated by literature. In this sense the women's movement has always been chiefly concerned with books and literature so that feminist criticism should not be seen as an off-shoot or a spin-off from feminism which is remote from the ultimate aims of the movement, but was one the most practical ways of influencing everyday conduct and attitudes (p. 116). Post-colonial literary scholars study both sides of the imperial equation. Some concern themselves with the discourses that justified or obliquely registered the existence of empire in the metropolitan or imperial center. Most of us grew up reading *Jane Eyre* as a tale of Victorian womanhood, but post colonial critics taught us to see it as a story of empire. The second Mrs. Rochester was immolated and symbolically removed from the narrative. (Rayan,-195).

Feminist literary scholarship in 1970s and early 1980s was a rich, sometime vexed, sometimes convivial, world in which words like 'sisterhood' had a certain currency. This early period is sometimes described as two stages, one concerned with the critique of misogynist stereotype in male literature, the other devoted to the recovery of a lost tradition and to the long labour of historical reconstruction. Women writers

had found refuge in literary forms despised by men, in diaries and letters and in sentimental fiction. Women, as argued, are innately capable of offering a different ethics from men, one more attuned to preserving the earth from destruction by weapons devised by men. Men must abstract themselves from the material world as they separate from mothers in order to acquire a license to enter the participate and they consequently adopt a violent and suggestive posture toward the world left behind, which is now construed as an object. Feminist literary criticism moves with time from the criticism of writing by men and the exploration of writing by women of a questioning. It means at all to engage with or in language. (P. 528-531)

Feminism in the Indian context is a product of the western liberalism in general and feminist thought in particular. The indigenous contributing factor have been the legacy of equality of sexes inherited from the freedom struggle constitutional rights of women, spread of education and the consequent new awareness among women. (P. 1).

The Indian women caught in the flux of tradition and modernity saddled with the burden of the past. Feminist English literature is a spectrum of colours and shades soft, prominent and strident. The feminist perspective on Literature, creative or critical whether in a Third World country or elsewhere, has had to confront issues of similar nature, biased psychological and even physical exploitation, but also the female sections of society, the utter disregard from the female's psychological, cultural;, familial and spiritual quests.

The Second Sex was notorious for its frank and sweeping account of woman's oppression, especially coming at a time when abortion and contraception were still illegal or inaccessible in most countries. De Beauvoir constructed an epical account of gender division throughout history, psychological, historical, and cultural explanations for the reduction of woman to a second and lesser sex. It attempts to deliver a coherent narrative of female history that has led to accusations of misplaced universalism from later, more-class and race-conscious feminists.

Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy are some of the few post-colonial feminist writers. Shashi Deshpande is one of the most prominent post-colonial feminist Indian writers. In *That Long Silence*, she depicts the life of Jaya at the level of the silent and the unconscious and her husband Mohan Deshpande reveals the unconsciousness of Jaya through an exposition of her mind in the process of thinking, feeling and reacting to the stimuli of the moment and situation. She does not revolts and remains in silence. Silence was her natural condition. Towards the end of the novel Jaya consciously acknowledged her writing as a kind of fiction and quotes Defoes description of fiction as a kind of lying” which may make a great hope in the heart. (P. 64). In this way, In ‘*Roots and Shadows*’ Deshpande depicts the sorrowful state of about Indu who symbolizes the new women who are educated and who live in close association with society, brushing aside all narrow social conventions. Through the character of Indu, Deshpande is portraying the inner struggle of an artist to express herself, to discover her real self through her inner and instinctive potentiality, i.e. creative writing (P. 50).

In ‘*The God of Small Things*’ Arundhati Roys depicts the pain and misery of a lonesome mother in an indifferent world as perceived through the eyes of her seven-years old children. A world where the age-old subjugation of women and the indescribable humiliation of the under-class still persist. Despite the various forms focusing on the women’s physical, financial and emotional exploitation together with their mental anguish, traces of oppression seem to have stayed. The disparity between man and woman is a result of the complex operation of economic, political, social and other factors. In spite of the significant change in women’s position in society in the post independence era, Roy has depicted a routine going on in an upper class Syrian Christian family situated in the lush green area of Kerala abounding in natural beauty with the mysterious meenachal cruising along its periphery. In this novel there are three protagonists characters as Ammu, Estha and Rahel. When they began to spill over to the year old twins, Ammu thought it time to pack up and go. Ammu returned to reluctantly, to her parents home. Here she was more of an intruder and less of a member of the house. Both Ammu and Chacko are in a similar position as far as their marital status is concerned. Ammu had been victim of battering while Chacko had been discarded by his wife for his lethargic, unproductive ways. Thus, Arundhati Roy has revealed how perceptive those seven year old are at that the tender age to their immediate surroundings here to their mother's pain and misery and how they make adjustments and compromises in order to alleviate her suffering.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis proves that the new feminist approach has succeeded in raising the status of many female authors literate more or less scanted by scholar and critics. Shashi Deshpande and Arundhati Roy are some of the few post-colonial writers, who aptly fit in this framework. In *That Long Silence* Shashi Deshpande describe the pain and misery about the main character Jaya In this way in *The god of small thing*. Arundhati Roys depicts the sorrow about the female condition in this world.

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