

BREAKING OF SHACKLES IN SARAH JOSEPH'S INSIDE EVERY WOMAN WRITER

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Abstract: Indian society is a patriarchal one where man is the central figure in both the family and society. Ideologically we gave women the status of God - the first to be honoured, adored, respected and worshiped; but ironically they are the most mistreated ones. In such a society women find it hard to pursue their dreams. They are in shackles because of their domestic commitments and imposed limitations. Sarah Joseph, the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award winner, well-known writer, feminist, and activist in her 'Inside Every Women Writer' reflects on how the woman writer breaks the shackles of family ties and pursues a new horizon of literary career.

Key words: patriarchal, shackles, feminist

Sarah Joseph is the harbinger of feminist movement in Kerala. She is ranked next to Kamala Das. She portrays woman in her discriminative and self-conscious phrases. In her Preface to Papathara she has openly declared that she is proud of the fact that she was born a woman and she enjoys being a writer especially a woman writer. She fearlessly speaks about the experiences of women- their anguish, pain and turmoils. The phallogocentric society demands women to be confined within a domestic space. She has to play the role of a good daughter, good wife, good daughter-in-law and a good mother. Her role is confined only within the four walls of her house. Inside Every Woman Writer is originally written in Malayalam (Ooro Ezhuthukaariyute Ullilum) and was translated by Dr. V.C. Harris.

The story Inside Every Woman Writer is multidimensional on one side, it articulates the problems and prospects of a woman writer and on the other it takes up the issue of dreams and fears, especially of women, in the contemporary scenario. She has aptly chosen the protagonist a collective noun- a woman writer; she is a representative of any women who aspires to be a writer.

The first line of the story reveals the main plot 'after a series of verbal duels I decide to leave' she has taken this decision to leave her home to pursue her literary career,(115). She knows that her writing career will not prosper under Purushothaman, her husband. She feels his uncontrollable anger is an emotional tactic to prevent her from leaving home. He wants her to continue with her old way of writing - love, Radha-Krishna love. He doesn't want her to try anything new. He wants her to follow the old conventional and convenient way of writing. She has developed a brilliant chemistry which can make one feel that illusion is reality. But her works were rejected by the male writers screaming that when the world was hungry, love was an extra expenditure(117) its then she says that my realities require a revelation.

Sara Joseph has aptly chosen the woman writer's husband's name as Purushothaman - literal meaning an ideal man- God Vishnu. A best model for the entire world. Here it is he who gives orders and draws boundaries

to her creativity. "Purushothaman would order that I need not write anything different; that I continue writing the same old stuff." (117) The writer in her is choked by the conventions and restrictions. Even her home doesn't provide a positive environment. "The walls of the corridor shook and moved. Before I could even start worrying, the walls crept towards me and crushed me. Air and light were shut out of the corridor. Unable to breathe, I beat my limbs in vain against the walls which looked possessed and were crushing me" (116). These lines reflect the suffocating atmosphere in her house. A house which should be a place of love, caring, sharing and compassion is portrayed as a choking one. Creativity and imagination seldom blooms in such an environment. A writer first needs peace of mind to contemplate on her thoughts. The woman writer says "If I can curl up in the primordial darkness and silence of my mother's womb, I can bring out my words in great secrecy. What I need is a labour room. A labour room which has nothing to do with the outside world" (116)

The woman writer loves to be in Aunt Mable's house to foster her writing because there no one puts a grinding stone on the ideas that take shape in my mind'. (116). Sara Joseph uses the allusion of Virginia Woolf's 'A Room of One's Own' where she argues that a woman writer should have money and a room of one's own to write fiction (90). Here the woman writer says 'there I have a room of my own – where I can read and write', which she lacks in her own house. She says 'Aunt Mable never spreads dirty linen over my thoughts'. She strongly feels that she needs time, space and peace of mind to focus on her writing.

She also quotes the intense of male writers being invited to her house, where they talk, eat and vanish. She is not getting an opportunity to talk, or discuss with them.

" When I invited them home, they came and sat in the veranda and talked to Purushothaman while I spend all the time in the kitchen preparing food and tea for them. By the time I removed the dishes after food, tidied up the room and came out, arranged in my mind whatever I wanted to tell them, they had done with the evening. They yawned, thanked me for the good food and flew away, beating their coloured wings". (119). In Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex*, she openly speaks about the domestic restrictions imposed upon a woman. "Few tasks are more like the torture of Sisyphus than housework, with its endless repetition: the clean becomes soiled, the soiled is made clean, over and over, day after day." (470) "Woman is shut up in a kitchen or in a boudoir, and astonishment is expressed that her horizon is limited. Her wings are clipped, and it is found deplorable that she cannot fly. Let but the future be opened to her, and she will no longer be compelled to linger in the present." (731)

Even she could bare the separation from her children in order to recreate herself. As Helene Cixous opined " Women must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies - for the same reason, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Women must put herself into this text - as into the world and into history by her own movement." (The Laugh of the Medusa, 256)

The author also introduces another male character named Jayadevan, about whom she says "Our thoughts and feelings were complementary in nature. And they attended perfection through the discussion we had after reading or writing something together" (120). She could discuss her thoughts, ideas and feelings with him. He also encourages her to write something new. She also says that her relationship with him is not love. I didn't consider it necessary to fall in love with Jayadevan. He too said one shouldn't insist on every relationship to end up in love. (120) The writer also presents the metaphor of a panchaloha ring which is given to her by her mother which symbolises carrying over of tradition- subjugation of women.

Like Nora in Ibsen's *Dolls House* the woman writer also leaves her home for fulfilling her dream, for recognising her individuality. 'Now I walk with an absolutely free movement of my limbs. My hands touch the horizon and come back. A winged wind stirs free the strands of my hair and the folds of my clothes. My hair unlooses itself, soars and touches the sky, and my skirt whirls round in a wide, wide circle and covers the earth.(121) The act of leaving her house is an open declaration of her freedom, her individuality. The woman writer now starts unwinding her dreams. She breaks the year old submissions that were folding her and she resists against the patriarchal norms which creates obstacle in fulfilling her dreams.

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