

Narrative Techniques In Portraying Persecuted Women: A Comparative Analysis Of Mahasweta Devi And Toni Morrison

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ABSTRACT

Inequality between the sexes is a global problem that "women" of all socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicities have had to contend with. The general public does not care much about "women" as they are seen as subservient to males in society. Internally and internationally, this disparity has harmed "women," making them susceptible to exploitation and oppression in both their homes and communities. Examining how 'women' have shown strength and power in the face of these constraints is the primary goal of this research. This study demonstrates how "women" challenge patriarchal society's long-held prejudices and assumptions by actively working to dismantle obstacles and prove the male-dominated perspective incorrect. Feminism and the lives of Mahasweta Devi and Toni Morrison will be the focus of this research. We will also look at how myths and other seemingly "neutral" systems have helped perpetuate patriarchies around the world and how fiction can reimagine old stories to give women the power they have always lacked.

Keywords- Stereotypes; limitations and boundaries; step ahead; patriarchal society; freedom.

I. INTRODUCTION

Traditional gender roles are being challenged by feminism. In the context of mainly gendered pretending, it seeks to examine and explain a newly found societal need to identify pertinent approaches to the actual problems. The image of the woman as an inferior, auxiliary being has persisted throughout history. This bias against women is evident right from the first day of creation. The story goes something like this: "God is male," and after creating man, he took a man's rib and fashioned a woman.

In the same way that Adam, the most prominent man on Earth, remarks on Eve. "... .. This is present, bone of my bones and substance of my tissue; she will be called lady since she has removed from man". It implies that women are subservient to men! A financial development, feminism seeks women's legal and political rights.

Feminist theory may be better understood by integrating different branches of study since women's lived experiences vary according to a wide range of demographic characteristics, including but not limited to color, ethnicity, class, age, sexual orientation, and disability. It is necessary to distinguish between "black feminism," "white feminism," "post-colonial feminism," etc., because of the inherent interconnectedness of gender and race. Furthermore, women are inherently excluded whenever racial and gender dynamics intertwine within the complex hierarchical framework of society. The racial and gender inequality that affects women is a global problem, not exclusive to India or the United States.

Toni Morrison, who lived in the United States throughout the second part of the twentieth century, is widely regarded as one of the most illustrious writers of her time. Her works portray the current human experience as a network of interconnectedness. In particular, she elucidates the racial awareness of African Americans, a group that has endured physical, psychological, and emotional assaults. Morrison is a writer whose stories include many elements of literature, art, ethics, society, psychology, and spirituality. She recounts the events she has experienced in the United States as a citizen and a member of her ethnic group. Morrison demonstrated her love, talent, and devotion to her work and her people by becoming the first Black woman to earn the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. She saw and saw the hardships, tragedies, grief, and sorrow firsthand as a child growing up in a Black neighborhood. Morrison hopes that by immersing herself in her fictitious universe, readers will confront the harsh realities of women's oppression. Morrison identifies strongly with her heritage and joyfully embraces it in her literary work; she developed this connection via listening to the different stories of her Afro-American forebears. She rejoices in the hopes and aspirations of her people, which gave them the will to resist Jim Crow America, even if some of those hopes and dreams were never realized. She gives her characters and the world they inhabit an air of realism by mixing the idealized aspects of her race with everyday reality. Morrison saw the consequences of prejudice from a young age, even though her school was

integrated and she was the top student in her class. She writes about her own experiences as a victim of racism, marginalization, and patriarchal familial dynamics in her work *The Bluest Eye*. Among modern Bengali literary artists, Mahasweta Devi stands out as a social activist who used her pen to shed light on the democratic system's flaws and to speak for oppressed women going through unspeakable traumas both within and outside of their communities. Women from disadvantaged minority groups are often the targets of sociopolitical and economic exploitation, and Mahasweta Devi aims to expose these root reasons in her works. The author sheds light on the invisible slave trade that thrives in India's ostentatiously democratic society, highlighting the terrible situation of women who are often marginalized, have no hope for the future, and have few allies in their fight for equality. In her discussion of "Feracianalisation," she includes the caste system and India's social hierarchy.

Firstly, the fact that Afro-American minorities in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* are not white, slim, masculine, young, Christian, and well-off reflects how society treats them. In her words,

‘They lived there because they were poor
and black, and they

stayed there because they believed they
were ugly. Although

their poverty was traditional and
stultifying, it was not unique.

But their ugliness was unique.’ (TBE, 36)

To survive in a white racist society, Black women, according to Toni Morrison, must prioritize loving themselves, their race, and culture over consuming white culture and white beauty standards. Afro-Americans were victims of racism and social marginalization in the United States, and these phrases express that plainly. As a response to this oppression, Black Feminism was born. *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison is an effort to mirror the helplessness, inhumanity, and suffering that women of color endured, according to Black Feminist interpretations of the work. To sum up, *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison is a narrative that revolves around racism, sexism, and marginalization.

Meanwhile, *Rudali*, narrated by Mahasweta Devi, is a story about the underprivileged and the denial-filled world they

inhabit. The oppressed class struggle and their plight are symbolized by death in *Rudali* by Mahasweta Devi. In her article titled "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak raises an important point: "The subaltern female is even more deeply in shadow than subaltern men." All three forms of religious, social, and economic oppression that Dalit women endure are detailed in Mahasweta Devi's book. The text of *Rudali* celebrates the demise of feudal lords as a means of establishing their caste dominance; it also identifies poverty, sexual abuse, prostitution, old age, marginalization, and sexism as grave obstacles to women's freedom. As a result, feminism, racism, and marginalization are central themes throughout *Rudali*, all of which are relevant to modern India. As a political position and theoretical framework that employs gender as a lens through which to examine cultural behaviors and a rallying cry for more justice, equality, and autonomy, feminism is one of the fundamental ideas discussed in this article. *The Bluest Eye*, by Toni Morrison, is mostly concerned with black feminism. "The Black woman's oppression was the result of a double bind of being woman and being Black," the author argued persuasively, and this statement came to define black feminism. Patriarchy and white feminism were two sides of the same coin that black feminism opposed. In Toni Morrison's first work, "The Bluest Eyes," eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove's "internalized self-hatred"—her dislike of her black complexion and her desire for white skin and blue eyes—is narrated by Toni Morrison, according to Lisa William. White people, in her mind, would be the key to unlocking all the doors that have been closed to her. Pecola, whose family and society reject her due to her race, turns to Morrison as her voice because she thinks that if she has blue eyes, everyone will like her,

"It had occurred to Pecola some time ago
that if her eyes, those

Eyes that held the pictures and knew the
sights—if those eyes of

Her were different, that is to say beautiful;
she would be

Different." (TBE, 46)

'The beauty sought for in the book is not merely the presence of blue eyes, but the harmony that they signify,' Barbara Christian said in reference to this. Pecola and her brother reside in the same room in *The Bluest Eye*, while their mother is disabled and their father has alcoholism. She falls pregnant

after her father rapes her. After Pecola's father, an alcoholic, rapes her, it represents the most common kind of sexual assault on Black women at the hands of Black men. Pecola then goes insane trying to conform to white beauty standards, leaving her with an identity problem since she feels abused by both her white and black identities. When Sanichari recognized that she had always put other people's needs above her own, she, too, had an identity crisis. First, meeting the needs of one's father; second, meeting those of one's spouse; and third, providing for one's kid following the father's death. She lost her youth and her childhood in the process, and now she's in her mid-thirties and trying to figure out where she fits in. The characters in both *Rudali* by Mahasweta Devi and *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison have to deal with hardship both at home and in the outside world. Even Pecola's father physically tormented her because of how much he loathed her. Since Sanichari was married at a young age and instructed not to respond to her in-laws, she, too, is subjected to torturous treatment by her mother-in-law. Feminist principles, which are relevant to women of all races and genders, are also visible in the context of prostitution. It is revealed in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* that Pecola is taught how to entice guys by three women—China, Poland, and Marie—who are prostitutes who live with the MacTeer family in one room. This is how they may thrive in white society. *Rudali* depicts a similar situation, with the women being coerced into becoming prostitutes by the malik-Mahajan and being willing to serve them for their survival;

'Cheap whores, selling themselves for a few annas, all old now. It's a hard Life. They still have to stand around, eyes lined with kohl, lamps in their Hands. They will come as soon as they know the old man's dead.' (R, 105)

The Bluest Eyes by Toni Morrison is only one example of how racism is certain to infiltrate into any work that deals with Black Feminism. Cholly and Pecola are shown to have been impacted by racism throughout their upbringing; as a result, they fail to voice their opinions and end up becoming racist oppressors. Because of the racial and emotional trauma he endured as a youngster, Cholly is unable to love or communicate his emotions. Racism hits him hard when his buddy Darlena finds out he has been having sexual relations with her. He is caught red-handed by two white guys, who yell at him,

Get on wid it, nigger," said the flashlight one. 'Sir?' said Cholly, trying to find a buttonhole. 'I said, get on wid it. An' make it good, nigger, make it good.' (TBE, 146)

In response, he rapes her as they instructed. Lorde defines rape as "not aggressive sexuality but sexualized aggression," which she uses to describe the crime as an act of fury. Additionally, Pecola, Cholly's daughter, falls prey to the discriminatory culture in which she lives. Pecola's affinity for Sherley Temple, a girl with white skin and blue eyes, reveals her need to blend in with the fabled room's other inhabitants. Maybe it is because she is Black and ugly, but the white guy at the corner store does not like her. Unfortunately for Pecola, her lifelong dream of having a beautiful, white, blue-eyed kid has come to pass. Thus, the boundary between nigger and color was always a significant matter to consider. There will always be linguistic, communal, and ethnic divides in society. Just like casteism has perpetually separated individuals in India, it has victimized Black people in the United States. Many of Mahasweta Devi's works continue to concentrate on oppressed populations, particularly those of the scheduled castes and tribals, who are at the very bottom of India's caste system. One cultural practice that raises questions about the interplay between gender, class, caste, and economic standing is the practice of professional grieving, known as Rudali, which is common among rural Rajasthani women of lower caste who have lost male relatives from higher castes. So, the tears have been bought. The intricate matter of capitalising on personal feelings and transforming them into marketable items has been sensitively addressed by Mahasweta Devi. She does an excellent job of capturing the lives of the Ganjus and Dushads, two minority groups in Tahad hamlet. The level of exploitation is so high that a little boy named Budhua is forced into servitude. Sanichari was subjected to economic harassment after borrowing fifty rupees from Mahajan Ramavtar. It was common knowledge among the Ganjus that the Mahajans would transform any woman who went to work for them into a whore and never returned. So, if racism is so pervasive in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, then in Mahasweta Devi's *Rudali*, we find distinctions based on caste and race. Toni Morrison addresses the plight of African Americans in the United States and highlights slavery as a major theme in her work. While fighting for equality, African Americans often felt alone and alienated because of the widespread lack of equality they encountered. In *The Bluest Eye*, the enslaved women's pain is

magnified in two ways. Because of both their gender and the color of their skin, they are already on the margins of society.

Conversely, Mahasweta Devi painstakingly and persistently expresses her inner desire for the eradication of untouchability. Social movements associated with Rudali have raised questions about bonded labor, the prevalence of feudalism in rural areas, the state's lack of oversight, and the forcible acquisition of farmland. By following Dulan's proposal, Sanichari becomes a Rudali, a professional mourner for the wealthy; this picture of the powerless Sanichari's rise to prominence in the Life of the predatory Malik Mahajan is evident in Rudali. As a result, she was oppressed on the margins of society due to her caste and poverty.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bhat (2022) looked at the ancient Kashmiri women's social standing. The authors combed through historical records and sources to understand women's roles in early Kashmiri culture. They looked at a lot of different things, including women's education, marital customs, economic participation, and roles in the home and neighborhood. The purpose of this study is to examine these aspects in an effort to illuminate the social and environmental variables that impacted the lives of women in early Kashmir. The study enhances our understanding of gender dynamics and provides a historical context for women's experiences in the region.

Krishnaveni (2021) analyzed the works of Indian women writers. It highlights the ways in which the oppression and male dominance that women faced at the time posed a threat to the traditionally feminine literature of Indian women. They contributed to the literary sphere despite these challenges and inadequacies. Via literature, they want to put a stop to repression.

According to Multani and Navleen (2020), Mahasweta Devi's narratives give voice to the silenced and the marginalized. Gender (including caste) boundaries, the origins of gender inequality, and the emancipation of the marginalized are all topics she explores in her radical and interventionist account practice. The legislative challenges of literature are envisioned by her endeavor to provide a voice to the marginalized and encourage the inferior to speak out. Through her erudite description, the senior writer primarily aims to make things possible. The underdogs in Devi's stories are not just shown in a negative light; they are also given opportunities to fight and even make a formal request. Sharma Vidyasagar (2020) The

Carrefour of several financial factors has its origins in literature. The power to resist and advance is inherent in literature. The inferior history that originated in the academy also shaped literature. Subalternity became a dominant ideology in modern Indian literature, and artists redirected their work towards marginalized communities. Published by Al-Assadi in 2019 Toni Morrison's female heroines' lives mirror the author's own repressed and repressed memories, which has caused many to call Morrison one of the most significant Black authors of all time. Using Freud's "hypothesis of suppression," this research aims to analyze Morrison's *Beloved*. This study will delve into how the main character of *Beloved* navigates her present situation by drawing on her past experiences. In 2019, Rabbani and Golam The book *Jazz* (1992) by Nobel laureate and African-American novelist Toni Morrison delves at the root causes of the pervasive racism that African American women endure. In keeping with the subjective approach to bibliographic research, this article examines the novel's depiction of Harlem as a place of gender, racial, and class oppression. The struggles of African American women who made Harlem their home in the middle of the twentieth century are portrayed in jazz. In 2018, Bollavarapu and M. As an unparalleled writer, Mahasweta Devi tirelessly spent sixty years penning, editing, and fighting for the underappreciated. Her efforts to represent the underdog are the thesis's bedrock. Her writing is unsettling since it reveals the reader's face.

III. NECESSITY OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION

The well-being of a society depends on the education of its female members. The fact that women are capable of learning technical courses, fighting in battles, saving the lives of the sick as doctors, teaching the next generation, and much more than men demonstrates that they are just as deserving as men. Society views women's proper domain as the home, and as they are unable to contribute beyond the home, investing in their education is seen as a waste of resources. People often fail to see that women have inherent value as human beings who should have equal access to educational opportunities, cultural events, and the freedom to choose their futures in accordance with their values and goals in order to make meaningful contributions to national progress. A reduction in the ratio of exploitation and domestic violence, as well as the ability for women to continue earning a livelihood after their husbands' deaths, may be achieved via educating women so that they can learn to share the earning responsibilities with men throughout life. The future of society, as well as her own and her children's, maybe brightly shaped by an educated

woman. Families' socioeconomic status can only improve with education, which also improves their health, independence, and capacity to choose their destiny. A lack of education prevents 65 million girls from knowing their rights, making good choices, and standing up to abuse and injustice. According to Marie (2014),... To rebel against the problem of gender inequality, it is crucial to empower women. As if that were not bad enough, women also had to deal with men's inherent superiority complex, a heavy burden of housework, and limited opportunities to engage in economic, social, and cultural spheres.

IV. WOMEN'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Even while the tradition of male dominance and shackling women has persisted across all societies, women have also been fighting for their liberation behind this culture. "The kept woman—wife or mistress—is not freed from the male just because she has a ballot paper in her hands; while today's customs impose fewer constraints on her than in the past" (1949: 813), meaning that even when women rebel for their rights in an effort to achieve gender equality, they are still not entirely liberated from the clutches of the dominant culture. Gender inequality is still very much alive and well; unfortunately, many women still endure exploitation, and domestic abuse goes unrecognized. Because it is in women's very essence to rebel against societal norms and expectations, "women" have shown their will to overthrow patriarchy's institutionalized oppression. For thousands of years, women have been oppressed by the same traditions, myths, and laws that they are now trying to dismantle. Working outside the home does not liberate women from domestic responsibilities; therefore, even if they are gaining economic independence, it is still a kind of exploitation, and women are no longer an oppressed class. As a result, women experience the double bind of domestic masculine protection' and the binary captivity of working outside the home. The lack of complete autonomy is something that "women" have been fighting against for a long time. Equal rights for "women" and "women's total independence," which have been goals of feminist movements for a long time, are still aspirational goals. Feminist movements, on the other hand, have provided women with the tools they need to stand up for what they believe in, fight for equality, and ultimately achieve social equality. The rights of women are defined by Mary Wollstonecraft in her work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. According to Wollstonecraft, women cannot be compelled to be 'domestic.' Women should be granted equal rights and the ability to "strengthen the female

mind by enlarging it, and that will bring an end to blind obedience." However, she also says that tyrants and sensualists have every right to try to keep women in the dark because blind obedience is always sought after by those in power. (16) in 1792. The piece refers to the human rights of women. To achieve "full equality between women and men and to eliminate all types of discrimination against women are basic human rights and United Nations values," which include women's rights. (14) in the year 2014. It is impossible to achieve gender equality or alter suppressive practices without first fully comprehending the challenges and injustices endured by women. A fundamental tenet of human rights legislation is the non-discrimination and gender equality. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights both ensure that women and men are entitled to equal enjoyment of the rights outlined in them and prohibit discrimination based on gender. (29 January 2014) In addition to the right to an education, autonomy, and a life free from oppression, women have a number of other human rights related to their sexuality and reproductive values, as outlined in the Women's Rights are Human Rights movement. Mary Wollstonecraft argues that men are dictators who "only want slaves" and "the sensualists only want toys." She goes on to say that despite numerous laws protecting women's rights, society as a whole refuses to acknowledge their equal rights. As a matter of fact, sensualists have historically been the most oppressive dictators, and ladies have fallen for their lovers' schemes just as easily as princes fall for their ministers while fantasizing about becoming king or queen! ("Wollstonecraft" 1792: 16).

V. CONCLUSION

On several levels, the protagonists' lives have been brought to shame by the male-centric culture that has kept them trapped in its ideals. At the sociopolitical level, Nandini faces anguish during police interrogation, while Sujata faces her mysterious presence and underappreciated familial standing in *Mother of 1084*. Black women in Toni Morrison's *African American servitude* framework have also been addressed as the most mistreated gathering due to "prejudice," "sexism," and "classism," just as the ancestral women of Mahasweta Devi have been described as the doubly oppressed group in a society dominated by men. At home, Nimi experiences domestic violence and abuse at the hands of her husband in the book *The Inheritance of Loss*.

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