



Queer Aesthetics and Identity Fluidity in K R Meera's "*Jezebel*"

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ABSTRACT

Human is a social creature, who is surrounded by different class, customs and culture. Not only these factors, they are biologically differentiated too. Humans are biologically classified majorly under two categories male and female but there are other sections people who are considered to be as subordinate category people – they are LGBTQ+ community people. The paper tries to analyse the queer prominent character in the present novel of K R Meera's '*Jezebel*' and the transition of the protagonist which creates a concept of identity fluidity. The present novel explores various emotions and desires but are shaded down and focused on the social intrusion towards the so-called subordinate community which leads them to frame a false face around them. The hormonal imbalance that too changes and challenges persons personality which have been explained in the present paper. As a social creature human tries to frame up a false world where they try to fake themselves and other too which affect others and they been a cause of disaster. The paper tries to expose the personality of particular characters who enacted the major role including the protagonist as how they became the prey and the predator. Transition and transformation of the characters been highlighted in the present paper and the attitudes of the particular character is also been focused which develops a social motivation towards others.

Key words: queer aesthetics, identity fluidity, social intrusion, hormonal imbalance, subordinate community

Introduction

Indian English Literature has a strong root in the space of world literature. The main aim of this literature to expose the Indian culture and values through out the spaces. Indians can crown themselves as it has the world's ancient text not only in creativity but in productivity too holding the oldest text of medicine, mathematics and science. Indians are well versed in arts and architecture where as their arts transform from colours to lines and letters that creates strong words that influences and attracts people in different genre which includes verses, essays, dramas, novels etc. The great writers Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu etc are the part of this literature. The enhance this literature to the next level which influences not only the aristocrats but the commoners too.

Literature voices out different language, various emotion, various issues. The present paper tries to indicate certain issues that has been portrayed in the present novel "*Jezebel*", the present novel is a translated version of K R Meera's Malayalam novel named "*Sooryane Aninja Oru Sthree*", and translated from Malayalam by Abhirami Girija and K S Bijukumar. K R Meera is a finest feminist contemporary writer and a renowned short story writer. Her works mainly explore the theme of patriarchy, discrimination and other social issues. Her works are mostly simple in language which can easily create an impact among the readers. She even defines herself as a 'political writer', who had a greater vision towards the society and pen down the social issues which even reflects in her works. The present novel exposes the life of an ambitious doctor named Jezebel and how a marriage change her life which made her as a prey and how she overcomes it is the plot of the story. It has a transition of scenes from present court room and the past life of the protagonist.

The present paper tries to limelight the queer aesthetics which mainly discussed about the LGBTQ+ community people. 'L' stands for lesbians where a woman is sexually attracted to another woman, 'G' stands for gay where a male sexually attracts towards another man, 'B' stands for bisexual where a person sexually attracted to both the male and female gender, 'T' stands for transgender, person whose gender identity differ from their sex they are defined at birth and 'Q' stands for queer or questioning, the person who is don't label themselves as a lesbian, gay or bisexual. Amin and other co authors stated that- "We strive to think the queer as enmeshed within- and indeed, activated and enabled by – the structures of aesthetic form, social inequality, and conceptual categorization within which the work of engaged artists takes shape" (228). The present paper tries to focus on the queer people who deny their identity or they are people in the closet. They try to show themselves neutral or self-descriptive. Queer aesthetics is an art to promote the marginalized perspective of visual culture. It is a modern term to describes the contemporary issues related to the visual cultures.

The paper even tries to discuss about the concept of identity fluidity, it is a concept that describe how a person changes by the passage of time or by-passing situations. It can be influenced by culture, personal experiences or by environment. The societal notions can also be a prime factor for the change of a person. Navadeep stated it as -

Fluid in identity is not only due to multiple aspects of one's life which is intrinsically by the very nature of life which is intrinsically in flux. to illustrate the above argument two perspective have been considered below: Biological and geographical. Human body is constantly evolving. Old cell die and new are born such that cellular system is renewed every seven years. Equally interesting is the geographical factors that physically surrounds human life. (285)

In the world nothing is permanent, everything changes but how it changes is the primary concern, whether in a positive term or in a negative side. The present paper tries to present the change of person in a positive term which reflects binary notion of identity and creates a realisation of who they are. Self-realisation and self-analysis are a vital thing in everyone's life which have been portrayed in the present research paper.

Discussion

The present paper tries to analyse the work of K R Meera's "*Jezebel*" by exploring the ideology of queer and also focuses on the struggle to create an identity by neglecting the perspective of others.

The prominent work of K R Meera depicts a realistic vision towards the society which deals with a life of an ambitious girl and also relate other lives who struggles with their identity and even gender. The present work can be represented as a feminist version but it also includes lots of sensible things that has been seen in the present contemporary life. The story is all about the protagonist Jezebel who is doing her masters in medicine. She is totally an ambitious girl but a bit confused at the beginning regarding her life. The plot of the present novel is, how a life changes after the marriage and how her motive and intention changes from a confused state to a determinant one.

The perspective of queer aesthetics is probably seen in two characters who struggles to show their personality because of the societal norms who only values the main genders that is being a male or female where the other were considered as a flaw of lives. The gender crisis even affects the life of others where it affects both the prey and the predator. The marriage life of the protagonist is a great disaster who fight to gain her identity and to satisfy her marital needs but she failed as her husband was a puppet of her father-in-law and who is not capable to satisfy a woman's needs. The common factors of all the affected characters, that they are the victims of societal norms (the fear towards the words of other people).

Discussing about the ideology of queer, the two prominent characters can be justified. The one is Ann Mary who born for an illicit relationship that too for a married adult woman named Anita and a minor boy who later became a doctor named Sandeep. Anita was a good woman but her husband George Zacharia who worked as mechanic and addicted to 'wine and women'. She was always greeted with the 'scene of drink and debauchery'. He just searches for a woman who couldn't afford dowry and that how he finds Anita. She thought to change him but she failed and finds a boy who was her neighbour but he was in his tenth grade. Before Ann she has two children named Rosemary and Rubin with her husband and Ann was born for Anita and Sandeep. After the death of Anita by cancer, Sandeep took her custody. Jezebel was very much shocked that how a woman can have a relation with the boy who was in the age of her son. The action of Anita was not commendable but he is the one to whom she shares her sorrow and the playmate of her son Rubin. The greatest misery of Anita is all

about her third daughter Ann. The prior two were settled in life but in case of Ann her birth itself is a trauma. She was not welcomed by her father as she was born for an illicit relationship. After birth her body cheated her in the form of hormonal imbalance or hormonal defect. “Ann Mary ought to have been born a man. Because of a hormonal defect, her body became that of a woman’s. and yet she has not uterus. Her breast was not fully formed. When he realized that she would never menstruate. Sandeep was distraught” (82). Ann had an improper body but she feels herself a girl but her body demand her to be a male. The future of Ann might be in trouble or might not be but she was happy with what she feels herself inwardly. The queer aesthetics demands the same as they appreciate the people with different interest and different psychological factor by promoting the gay and lesbian life. Ann does not come under any such category but the way she approaches her body made her different from other girls. Ann was once tried to be molested by Jerome George Marakkaran, as her girly feeling made her to resist his action towards her.

The other character to be discussed under the topic is Jerome George Marakkaran, who framed himself a perfect man before the society – a great doctor, married to a doctor again, belongs to a pride Christian family but he too had a darker side that he had a sexual desire towards the same sex which can actually termed him as a gay. His sexual feelings were already noted by his father but to keep up the fame of his family before the society he made him to marry Jezebel, a poor lady who was unknown about his physical life. The partner of Jerome was Avinash Gupta that was revealed to her by her mother-in-law as “I knew that my son did not need a woman to sleep with. For that, Avinash Gupta is enough” (238). Jerome had a wired feature towards his sexual identity. He is actually a gay but at the same time he is a dad’s boy who cannot raise a voice against his father. Knowing his sexual desire, he married Jezebel and ruined her life without giving her any happiness physically or mentally. He is a ‘closeted’ kind of person but the way he approaches to another woman cannot be justified. He hides his personal desire by spoiling the life of an ambitious girl. The queer identity appreciated oneself but he hides it for the false fame and pride of his family.

Both the characters discussed have a unique identity and had a different way of approach towards their self and identity but both fail to appreciate themselves and celebrate their identity. The one was unaware of it where the other composed oneself in the closet, who is not interested in publicly disclosing their sexual orientation.

The concept of identity fluidity aptly suits to the protagonist Jezebel, as she changes herself and her approach towards life by the change of situations. Jezebel was once a soft girl who led a peaceful life with her parents. Born in a devoted family and a brilliant medical student. She got married with all the dreams that a girl has towards her marital life. As she states that “The moment has arrived. I’m going to be with my man, her heart prophesied. My husband. My man. We will be baptized in love. We will be one in body and soul till death do us part (25)”. She was an obedient daughter, a loyal and lovable person but her obedience was taken into advantage that she herself ruined her life by accepting the marriage proposal. Her mother was a strong believer of God who does everything according to the societal norms. She made everyone happy but she gains pain and miseries all around. She was criticised, hurt verbally and even unhappy in her marital life. The transformation of Jezebel is a kind of a healing process where she can withstand all the kind of weakness and made herself mentally strong.

All these years, I lived the way you wanted me to – prayed before every mealtime, went to church every Sunday, confessed, partook of the holy communion, fasted during Lent, and did not do a thing you forbade – Ammachi. I agreed to the marriage proposal you found me. The very first night, I found out he was not the one for me. But you kept me trapped me in it, Ammachi. For two-and-a-half years, I suffered his, and his father's, cussing and swearing. And what did I get in return? I'm a doctor. If I diagnose an illness, I treat it with medicine. If one medicine doesn't work, I give another. If nothing works, I surgically remove the infected part. All these days, I had the medicine you prescribed. And what did I gain? I ended up with an illness I hadn't had in the first place. All my happiness has gone. I can't take it any more. (151)

The change she took over is not only transform her physically but mentally too. She demanded a divorce with Jerome at the same time he met with an accident which led him to coma, her father-in-law tries to stop her but she breaks all the norms. Her mother-in-law supports her in all affairs, she even denies to care Jerome that he doesn't love her and it is not her duty to care him rather to flourish in her medical field. She faced many problems which roused by her father-in-law, even he tries to destroy her life and her career but she over every hurdles that has created by him and she prove herself strong rather being a fragile creature. Identity is something that creates by the same personality which cannot be copied nor imitated.

Like Jezebel, Ann can also be stated who change herself positively with all the discomfort and challenges she had in her life. She had to dispute with herself as her body became her rival. Her mother is the one who cares her but she deceased by cancer. She was a child born for an illegitimate relation so she had no value in her family. Even though facing all the problem she ended up happily by rejoining to her biological father. She decided to face the life in a stronger perspective. She made or transform herself with all positive shades. Ann states that "Ann Mary smiled confidently. 'I'm not scared of anything anymore, Aunty. I have my Achan. I have you, Doctor Aunty. There are people who love me'" (221). The carry her positive attitude throughout her life as her father not the biological one made her to work in car workshop but that too did not make her weak, she made herself skill full in the mechanical field to repair cars. For Ann Mary her attitude in her identity which flows throughout her miseries and later happy lives.

Conclusion

The present paper tries to analyse the variation of queer personality of the present character and even analyse the transition of the protagonist is a presentable manner. The paper tries to bring out the social ideology which had a different perception on special people and how those perspective affect the lives of the innocent where the protagonist is one such victim and how it leads to her transition. The queer ascetics can be appreciable but at time it affects the lives of ordinary peoples to. The situation can change people leads to identity fluidity but certain attitudes still remain which made people much stronger. The situation did not change people by they change the perspective of the people as how they look the problems and face it sometime it shifts from weaker to stronger and at times it shifts from stronger to much fragile state. The 'vision' is a great concerned factor in both the concept and how a people make it to their lives creates a change in person and to the society.

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