
SEARCH FOR IDENTITY IN SHOBHA DEY'S STARRY NIGHTS: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

India is one of the traditional countries with male dominated society. In our Indian traditional male dominated society, the condition of the women is the same as that of the women who live in other male dominated societies in other countries. The portrayal of women in Indian English fiction is as the silent sufferer and upholder of the customs and traditional values of family and society. But it has undergone a tremendous change and they are trying to move out of the caged existence and asserting the individual self. They are no longer puppets in the hands of man. Many Indian women novelists have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity. The theme is from childhood to womanhood-developed society respecting women in general. Women writers have moved away from traditional portrayals of enduring self-sacrificing women, towards conflicts, female characters searching for identity; no longer characterized and defined simply in terms of their victim status. The women's presentation is more assertive, more liberated in their view and more articulate in their expression than the woman of the past is. The novels of Shobha De depict mental and physical sufferings of female-protagonists and other women characters. She concerns with sufferings of women that finds a central place in the novels. She also mocks on cosmopolitan society and women which marks her ironical attitude towards serious issues. Her autobiographical elements and biographical details will also provide an aid for the study of the paper. She is notable for her understanding of the women's psyche and her bold and frank treatment of sensitive issues pertaining to women does not present women's sufferings alone. Shobha De can peep into the inner aspect of characters with quite sensitive delicacy. In *Starry Nights* she portrays the persona of her heroine with various representatives of women like Malini-the wife of Akshay, Linda-a lesbian journalist, Amma- a pimp mother and Asha Rani- a rising porn actress.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic, Identity Crisis, Inner self, Victims, Obsession

1. INTRODUCTION

Shobha De (1948) is a modern Indian woman novelist, and a one-time popular model, columnist, and journalist as well. She is a modern novelist who recognizes the displacement and marginalization of women and attempts to turn this pattern upside down through her writings. In this series of writings of many Indian-English writers, Shobha De is one of the leading women fiction writers in English, who secures her distinctive place as a journalist as well as a novelist in the literary platform in India. She is the forerunner of the emerging Indian women with her liberated womanhood. Her women revolt against the traditional image of Indian women in words and deeds, be it business or sexual spheres. In *Starry Nights* (1992), Shobha De has anticipated the shattering of human esteems in this sparkling universe of Mumbai silver screen through the practical depiction of Aasha Rani, Geeta Devi, Malini and Rita. In our society, abuse and ill-treatment of women are opposed to indicating adoration, regard and comprehension for their own sex. Her books speak to the new Indian woman's voice. She demonstrates her hatred and aversion for their unscrupulous and socially unsatisfactory conduct. Indeed, Shobha De encourages her women to break down their conduct and quit posturing to be men.

2. MAIN THRUST

Starry Nights, the second novel of Shobha De, is said to be based on real-time Bollywood affairs. Hence the book is also being referred to as '*Bollywood Nights*'. The novel was a good success in early 1990's. As an upshot, it cemented Shobha De's position in the Indian literature arena as a bold novelist. She is often referred to as a bold novelist because she features female characters in her books and sex is something inseparable. The novel was in the limelight because of its Bollywood-oriented theme. The book provides useful insight as to how women and their relationships work in the high societies and what options they seek to remain in the relationship, and how to keep alive their physical desires. Bollywood is no place for a vulnerable, small-town girl like Aasha Rani. But that doesn't stop her mother from pushing her into a world of exploitation and bedroom casting calls. Aasha has no choice but to thrive-despite the vicious circles of starlets, pimps, and celebrities who want to see her meet her end. But the day she meets Bollywood's leading man, everything she's worked so hard for is jeopardized. Because she may be falling for Akshay Arora-and there's no room for love in a business where it's the stranger under his sheets holding the key to her success. With her innocence stolen

and nowhere else to turn, Aasha knows her downfall could come as quickly as her rise to fame. The protagonist of the novel is Aasha Rani, a dark, chubby girl from Madras who has striven for seven years to become a famous Bollywood starlet. Her mother, Amma, has pushed her to attain this status by selling herself into the world of blue films before she was twelve years old, and when she was fifteen to Kishenbhai, a once-famous producer who was encouraged by Amma to take her as a lover in exchange for a film role. She falls in love with Akshay Arora, a famous Bollywood sex symbol who stars in a string of hits with her. Akshay gets bored with her and after his wife confronts her unsuccessfully about her affair with her husband, he reveals to Showbiz magazine that she was a former pornographic actress. Sheth Amirchand, a Member of Parliament and the gangster that controls most of the Mumbai underworld, then takes an interest in Aasha Rani and she becomes his lover and restarts her career under his protection. She confronts him at a traffic light as their cars are next to each other and their affair is rekindled for a short time. She attempts to get Akshay to marry her, but when it becomes apparent that his interest in her is only due to his flagging stardom and not out of affection for her, she attempts suicide. Her lesbian lover Linda, meanwhile, writes a juicy scoop on her suicide attempt. Aasha Rani is terribly impressed by Linda's casual smartness. Linda declares: "*You are so young, so beautiful and successful. Had I been a man I would have wanted to marry you*" (S.N p.75). Akshay Arora chooses Aasha Rani for perfect bed chemistry over her wife, Malini, since he knows he cannot do whatever he does with Aasha Rani.

3. CONCLUSION

The novel provides useful insight as how women and their relationships work in the high societies and what options they seek to remain in the relationship, and how to keep alive their physical desires. The women in *Starry Nights*, in one way or the other, are related to the world of films. Aasha Rani, 'Sweetheart of the millions', breaks all sexual mores and social norms by her unusual and deviant behaviour. Nothing controls her desire to live a life of her own. Her sexual encounters with different men point out her sexual aggression. She defeats men at their own game, and demolishes the mythical image of woman imposed by patriarchy. Her novels can be termed as the 'protest' novels against the male-dominated Indian society where women are denied the freedom of expression and action according to their will and cherish and fulfil their own dreams. A woman, like man, is born to be free but in reality everywhere she is controlled by many man-made norms and factors victimizing and subjugating her in many ways.

4. REFERENCES

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