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Program: B.A in English

Course Title: *Metaphysical Poets*

Course Code : *ENG 419*

Date: *5th February 2024.*

Answer To The Question No.-1

ABSTRACT

The present study provides an analysis of two major poems written by Andrew Marvell: "To His Coy

Mistress" and "The Garden" from a feminist perspective. The study examines how women are

exploited by men; how they are considered as objects of their pleasure in "To His Coy Mistress" and

how they are demeaned to a very degrading status and as less attractive and less beautiful when

compared to the beauty of a tree in "The Garden". The poet condemns women and establishes a

world without them in a way that indicates his hatred to them. One focal issue the paper is to

underscore how the misogynistic tendency adopted by men toward women adversely impacts their

relationships as lovers. Women, in the two selected poems, are shown as so naïve and innocent that

men can easily be fooled and trapped to gain certain physical advantages. How patriarchy manipulates the

fundamental rights of women is another focal point of the study. Through a close textual examination

of the lines of the selected poems, the researcher will pinpoint how Andrew's frame of mind in his

portrayal of women is feminist oriented. The study concludes with examples from the selected poems

that Andrew Marvell's narrator shows his specific frame of mind in portrayal of female characters.

The female characters have been presented in such a way so that readers' sympathy might be

achieved and by doing this he deploys various literary tactics. The Female characters are so naïve and

innocent that male characters are able to easily make them fool and trap them to gain certain

advantages.

Keywords: discourse analysis, feminist perspective in poetry, "To His Coy Mistress", "The Garden"

1. INTRODUCTION

Feminism, in its general sense, is a reaction against the prevailing patriarchal practices of men in their adverse

conduct towards women. It is a term used for the eradication of gender bias. It is also an attempt to do away

with the inherent oppression of women in a male-dominated society.

Discrimination, violence, segregation,

subjugation and subordination are some words that are used for the representation of women in society. Gender

is one of the propelling forces which have engendered a bulk of narrative. The feminist writers have

meticulously used the narrative strategies to evince their stance regarding the socially charged and polemical

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issue of gender construction and representation. So, feminist perspective of any literary piece manifests and

unearths the latent issues where female has been portrayed as an inferior being. Feminist literary critics have

such bent of mind that rejects patriarchal frame of mind.

It would be absurd to talk about feminism and not to mention three waves of feminism to explain the superficial

differences upon the concerns of feminism throughout the history. Women's demands for an amelioration in

society increased largely in 19th century, but it does not mean that it was the start when women were

challenging their segregated position in the society.

The arc of this theory is to revolt against any kind of superficial restraints. It has obtained a stunning place in

gender debates. By the time it didn't constrained itself to societal aspect rather became an irresistible subject for

academic theorists. Whether it is feminism as a social movement or feminism as a literary theory, these are not

distinct from each other; both try to seek gender inequalities and should not be taken mistakenly.

Women in pre-feminist era were not considered even a human being and were forcefully or willingly denied

from the rights which they deserved. She was a symbol of sex, as many have said. Man was considered a

blissful creation of God and woman was taken as his slave, or in more lenient words, perhaps as a caretaker for

her husband and children, that's why man thanked to God for being a 'man'. On the other hand, woman

remained passive and was so much absorbed in her role as a so called care taker that she thanked to God for

being made her according to the wishes of her master, obviously a 'Man'. Her identification was nothing unless

she was conceptualized in the mirror of a man related to her. It is some forty or fifty years back that the world

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saw an emergence of a new critical moment in the history of feminism in particular and history of women

subjugation in general. Although the struggle for equality was not new, but this time, it left a solid impact on

culture and society and it also prefigured the debate into further contest. It presented a new version and diverted

its focus from mere economic or social rights to the wider concepts of self and identity.

Feminism as a movement is the result of unjustified and disqualified division between male and female in a

society. It is a reaction against prevailing patriarchal practices as patriarchy is always there behind the unjust

behavior towards women. Violence, segregation, subjugation, subordination and discrimination are some words

that are used for the representation of women in society and feminism is an endeavor to eradicate these lower

and inferior positions of women and to bring them up equal to man's superior positions (Kumar, 2017). The endeavor for eliminating these reservations of women can never be successful as far as patriarchy is there because it is the main culprit for the degradation of women and up gradation of men. Thus boundaries are differentiated between men and women according to their so called hierarchal positions in which patriarchy rules the lives of women. Kate Millet expresses this view in her book in these words, "the patriarchy went on for centuries and is still well-integrated in our society. Men don't need to practice patriarchy with violence, because it is efficient without it" (Millet, 1990; p. 43). This very general biasness has been perceived by many critics and analysts, presumably pushing the debate into the limelight of critical theory.

Women have remained a segregated part of the society that is why there has always been a struggle to end this segregation on the part of the women. Feminism is a way to that struggle (Kumar, 2021). Feminism, as a literary theory, has propagated multiple issues related to woman's rights. The feminist literary criticism of today is directly related to the women's movement of the 1960. It plays a definite role in exposing mechanisms of Patriarchy. As a political theory, it has also succeeded in accusing a lot of women's rights for their weak

position in a society, so that women may also be able to exercise their influence in the running of a society.

Women are differentiated on the basis of their sexuality or cultural and social unjust operations in the societies,

Judith Butler (2004) in her book, *Undoing Gender* elaborately presents differences among various terms like

sexuality, gender and sexual differences and proposes that these sexual differences are real or not, these must

fulfill the objective of equality. Indulgence in the debate of terms may lead theorists to the bundle of

misinterpretations, so the feminists' debate is not about to win the contest over difference among terminologies,

it should be defensive about women's rights at global level.

Andrew Marvell is popular poet of the 17th century and he is mostly popular for writing political satire and

lyrical verse. There is not a lot of information about Andrew Marvell's life after he left college; however, some

of his early life is known. Marvell was born in 1621 and grew up in Yorkshire, England. Andrew's father was a

professor at a church. When he was twelve years old, Marvell went to Trinity College to study in Cambridge,

England. After the death of his father by drowning, he decided to stop pursuing his master's degree and left

school. Much of the information regarding Marvell's life at that time is unclear. Some believe that while

Marvell was at Cambridge, he was converted by the Jesuits and left college, but this story cannot be proven.

Marvell is also thought to have traveled for years studying different languages and writing after he left

Cambridge. Some believe he was a government agent. Others believe he tried to avoid going to war. For a

period of time in the 1650s, Marvell is thought to have worked as a tutor. It was during this time that he was

thought to have written some of his best pieces of literature.

Marvell also worked in various public offices. During the time that Marvell was in office, there was a lot of

political tension and strife in England. Marvell criticized in his writings the court and Parliament based on his

experiences in public office. Marvell was able to use his political position to help get his friends, such as a

fellow poet John Milton, out of trouble.

After spending almost two decades in Parliament, Andrew Marvell died of a fever. Some people gossiped that

the Jesuits, who Marvell often wrote about in his poetry, poisoned him to death, but these assertions possess no

substantial ground. Marvell's poems were published in 1681. The preface of the book was written by Marvell's

former housekeeper Mary, who posed as Marvell's wife to protect his estate.

Marvell's writings are composed of

lyrics and poetry.

1.1 Research Problem

The present study investigates the impact of the social pressures on the individual female characters in the two

poems and the reaction of men toward their naivety, submission and subjugation. They have to suffer at

different levels. The main problem of the research lies in how women, represented in the two poems as

exploited both physically and spiritually victimized as a result of their subjugation by men and how their

sufferings increase and results in an identity crisis.

1.2 Research Significance

The significance of the present study lies in providing a deeper understanding of the feminist approach adopted

by Andrew Marvell in pinpointing the sufferings of women in the face of the different oppressive social and

cultural forces prevailing in the society in the two selected poems. The feminist approach considers women in

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light of the different social, cultural pressures that surround them and their struggle to adapt to their situations.

Here, Feminism can be seen as a gateway for the reader to think of the status of women under any given

circumstances before condemning them. In Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" and "The Garden", the speakers'

suffering at the domestic as well as the outer community levels and their predicament can be enlightening to readers.

1.3 Research Objectives

The present study aims at exploring the different forces that conspire against women as a result of their

submission to what men want them to be. The main objective of the study lies in exploring Andrew Marvell's

feminist approach and his vision of the dilemma of women as a result of living in a male-dominated society. In

short, this study provides literary cognizance to readers of the poetry of Andrew Marvell and endeavors to

familiarize them with the Feminist approach in literature. The study seeks to underscore how women are torn

between the physical requirements wanted by men and their attempt to achieve self-complacence. Here, the

researcher explored how women have to struggle at different levels to come to term with the kind of life forced

upon them by men from a feminist point of view.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher's choice of Andrew Marvell for critical appraisal is largely informed by his unique status as a

male writer who displays an interest in projecting the condition of women during his time in his poetry.

This section of the article sheds light on the related literature akin to Feminism which is a movement for the rights of women. Shedding some light on the literature akin to Andrew Marvell, M. Craze, in his book *The Life and Lyrics of Andrew Marvell (1979)*, sought to erect the argument on Marvell's poetry by applying Michel Foucault's early work on power and Bauman's theory on liquid that seeks to manifest that lives operate through subversive surveillance. Another book entitled *Textual Harassment of Marvell's Coy Mistress: The Institutionalization of Masculine Criticism (2014)* by Duyfhuizen. This book illustrates that the causes and effects of a patriarchal system in the light of the prevailing condition in the society affects gender roles. Also, the analysis of patriarchy and masculinity shows the image of woman in "To His Coy Mistress" is upheld by people who hold prejudice against women.

On the other hand, shedding light on Feminism the theory in question, Ritzer (2004) suggests that "Feminism is kind of critical social theory which included in social context, political, economic, and history that is facing by injustice people". She states that "Certain terms in contemporary theory, such as work, family, patriarchy, and sexuality, are used to sum up the basis experiences of women". Davies (1996) opines that "Feminism is

women's assertion of their equality with men and their demand for access to those roles and positions of public

life traditionally regarded as the province of men". The themes, which feminism explores are discrimination,

objectification, oppression and aesthetic sense. This movement voiced against the oppression of female rights in

society.

2.1 Feminist Discourse

Feminism is a set of ideologies that is concerned with defining, exploring and defending rights of women in a

society. It doesn't propose any single concept or thought. Feminism is a theoretical debate over the issues of

masculinity and femininity, thus feminist is the one who believes in the concerns of feminism and directly or

indirectly involves himself in the struggle of women's rights.

The arc of this theory is to revolt against any kind of superficial restraints. It has obtained a stunning place in

gender debates. By the time it didn't constrained itself to societal aspect rather became an irresistible subject for

academic theorists. Whether it is feminism as a social movement or feminism as a literary theory, these are not

distinct from each other; both try to seek gender inequalities and should not be taken mistakenly. Butler (2004)

puts it thus,

Feminist theory is never fully distinct from feminism as a social movement.

Feminist theory would have no

content were there no movement, and the movement, in its various distinctions and forms, has always been

involved in the act of theory. Theory is an activity that does not remain restricted to the academy. It takes place

every time a possibility is imagined, a collective self-reflection takes place, a dispute over values, priorities, and

language emerges (p.175).

Feminism as a movement is the result of unjustified and disqualified division between male and female in a

society. It is a reaction against prevailing patriarchal practices as patriarchy is always there behind the unjust

behavior towards women. Violence, segregation, subjugation, subordination and discrimination are some words

that are used for the representation of women in society and feminism is an endeavor to eradicate these lower

and inferior positions of women and to bring them up equal to man's superior positions.

Simon de Beauvoir (1974) is one of the most prominent exponents of women's rights. She has pinpointed the

otherness of women in her landmark book, *The Second Sex* in which her thesis centers on the issue of the

existence of woman, and whether this existence matters or not for the rest of the society. In accordance with her

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views woman is not more than a plaything or an object of sex. She is visionized through the lenses of man who

take them as sexual beings, i.e. women representing sexuality while men representing humanity. So man is the

subject of the world while woman is the object. They are thoroughly different from one another because society

does so by placing and fixing their identities in so-called patriarchal and hierarchal system in which woman is

the defective part of the perfect world of man. Simon de Beauvoir (1974) assigns this difference in masculine

and feminine terms, as she puts it:

“The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality

the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man presents both the positive and

the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general, whereas woman

represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity” (p.12).

Debate over the status of women is never ended. This debate is featured by the discrimination towards women,

whether this discrimination is based on sex or gender or any other controversial point.

Literature is the work of art that is actually the depiction of life of its characters and of society, in general. It

represents a society's norms, culture, traditions and its social phenomena in a realistic manner. That's why

people are fascinated by any work of literature as a matter of fact; it is the reflection of those people's lives

(Zhang et al., 2022; Ajmal & Kumar, 2020).

There have always been host of opinions regarding feminism among literary critics, thinkers and theorists. In all

its manifestations, feminism has tried to refuse patriarchal superiority over matriarchy and seeks to find sexual

equality. Raman Selden is another critic who has said that feminism is a clear cut refusal to masculine authority

in the society. According to her, "throughout its long history, feminism has sought to disturb the complacent

certainties of such a patriarchal culture, to assert a belief in sexual equality and to eradicate sexual domination

in transforming society" (Selden et al., 2005: p.115). She describes that feminism is challenging, extending by

the time and is constantly in flux. In recent times everyone is aware of the purpose of his/her creation and wants

the freedom of action and expression, feminism is a revolt against the suppression of this freedom which is

denied to female lot of society.

Feminism assumed new shapes in every epoch as it is not likely the same as it was in its earlier stages.

Literature has always been a major source in creating women's portrayals.

Patriarchy was always there to define

the opposite boundaries for male as superior and female as inferior one. Peter Berry, in the second edition of,

“Beginning Theory” elaborated his views about the representation of women in literature. His main concern

remains with “conditioning” and “socialization of women”. As he says that depiction of women in literature is

also a form of socialization that depicted the acceptable positions for them in a society. (Barry, 2020; p. 122)

Feminism does not stand alone as a literary theory or movement. It relates itself to other school of thoughts also,

as structuralism, post-structuralism, psycho-analysis or Marxism. In past times it was limited in approach but

with the passage of time other departments of literary concern and social institutions started to think about the

emerging voice and see the relevant issues to be further analyzed. Although the debate was domestic in nature

thus not to be raised on international platform but its effects were creating troubles because any issue related to

women could not be neglected for a long time of period. Terry Eagleton (1986) has propounded relative views

about the subjugated position of women as emerging from social inequalities based on materialism.

Social and economic materialism has remained a dominant factor throughout the history and it has profoundly

affected the condition of woman in a bitter way (Yang, et al., 2022; Pourshahian & Kumar, 2022).

The End