

Mahadevi Varma Narrative Analysis In Hindi Literature

Abdul Matin

Assistant Prof.in Hindi Kharupetia College Thekerabari, Assam
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Abstract

Mahadevi Varma made the conscious decision to lead a nun's existence in her private life, yet she showed bravery in revealing female sexuality in her poetry. By exposing the physical and psychological abuse perpetrated on women, she rejected her society. Her delicate and outstanding use of language and imagery lovingly covered her risky issues. This essay focuses on how Varma overcame the challenges that women faced in her society by abstaining from sexual activity, engaging in resistance to colonialism, and providing for the underprivileged. She was an accomplished painter and translator. Despite having liberal beliefs, she was respected in her conservative community due to the self-made career she had achieved.

Keywords: Joy, women, survival, suffering

Introduction

Each year when the Holi celebration draws near, one cannot help but remember Mahadevi Varma, who was born on that joyous day in 1907. Before September 11, 1987, Varma, one of the greats of Hindi literature, had lived for eight decades. During that period, she steadily pushed her own boundaries and those of the women around her into uncharted private and public realms.

Varma's birth was joyfully celebrated by her parents and other family members because she was the firstborn in a prosperous middle class household. She ascribed her eclectic intellect in equal measure to her father, an English professor, and her mother, whose recitals of religious works by Bhakti saints, particularly Mira, left a long-lasting impression on Varma's developing mind. It's interesting to note that she was destined to become known as a "adhunik" (modern) Mira in the Hindi literary community. Observers have also attempted to draw parallels between the private lives of the two ladies who gave up their spouse roles in order to pursue their own identities.

Varma, who was just nine years old when she got married, was nonetheless allowed to continue her education, first at home and then at school and college. She completed her master's degree in 1932, proving to be a capable student. As she grew older, Varma made the decision to pursue a job rather than make marriage her life's work. She was disenchanted with marriage because of an early incident that was never openly addressed by her or fully explained by literary essayists. It's possible that this fact alone is what led to the perceived leap from feminist to female. This influenced Varma's subsequent life's path as well as her artistic ability and activism for women on both an intellectual and practical level.

To exercise her mind and express herself, Varma, like several other educated women of her era, turned to writing, volunteer work, and teaching. She had the audacity to make the "Kavi Sammelans" (poetry festivals) and compose both prose and poetry during those times. She was fortunate to have a soul sister in the similarly talented Subhadra Kumari Chauhan. Together, they formed the vanguard of a small sorority of Hindi literature's most celebrated female poets and authors. Although female authors were becoming well-known in other regional tongues, Varma stood out for asserting parity with men and being one of the four founder-leaders of a new romantic style of Hindi poetry known as "Chhayavad," alongside Nirala, Pant, and Prasad.

Varma's prolific writing career includes more than five volumes of poetry, as well as numerous volumes of autobiographies, essays, and literary criticism. She became known as one of India's most lyrical and prolific

writers thanks to her poetry and prose. But what truly sets Varma apart is her importance in addressing women's issues and her activism in aiding women in actually overcoming their vulnerability rather than just speculating about it. She authored sharp essays addressing the position and plight of women since she felt it was burdensome for Indian women to serve as slaves to men held in captivity by colonial power. The best of them were collected in 1942 as the book "Shrnkhla Ki Kadiyaan" after first appearing in the women's magazine "Chand" at the time (Chains of Subjugation).

Varma used both her brains and her talent to push for the freedom of women in order to inspire others to break the bonds of oppression. Varma spent nearly three decades as the dean of a women's college in Allahabad, molding the organization to better serve the underserved needs and goals of its female students. She began to use the power of her pen to highlight the unsung heroics in the daily lives of socioeconomically submerged women while also catering to the strata of young middle class women through the institution she oversaw. In some of her superb prose, these "woman warriors" (to use a term from Maxine Kingston's acclaimed book) were indelible. The most well-known example of this feminist literature is "Ateet Ke Chalchitra," a collection of short stories that focuses on the experiences of mostly women who had a significant impact on Varma's life.

Varma had little trouble adopting the asceticism and generosity of the Gandhian way of life despite avoiding active politics. She devoted a lot of her time to caring for injured birds, reptiles, and animals since she respected life in all its forms. Her house ended up resembling a menagerie as a result. Later, in her vivid memoir, "Mera Parivaar," she brought "these essential companions" to life (my family). Varma's concern for human and animal life also brought her closer to nature, where she witnessed an unfathomable mystery, expanse, depth, eternity, and an unbreakable soul. She compared the enduring ties that bind a person's heart to nature to the relationship between an object and its shadow.

Varma looked for a common thread in human experience and discovered it most prominently in sadness, which she saw as "poetry of life with the power to knit the whole world together in a single thread." She stated that the human being "wants to enjoy pleasure in alone but to share pain with everyone." Life won't be joyful until people make compassion their religion, she said. Sadly, some believe that Varma's compulsive connection to sadness is the result of a failed marriage or possibly of suppressed sexuality. This viewpoint is constrained since it is male-centric and measures a woman's contentment in terms of the presence of men.

This paper tries to emphasize the crucial role played by women in society's transition from a state of barbarism to civilization, as well as how femininity is crucial to the organization of the family and to people's psyches. Verma argues that conflict is incompatible with femininity and emphasizes how women's opposition to conflict and calls for peace have come to be seen as signs of cowardice and weakness within the larger patriarchal social structure that seeks to wage constant conflict for its own narrow self-interest.

From the lowest rung of civilisation to the first rung of barbarism, war has been a constant companion of the human race. With war, man not only welcomed his limited self-interest but is also ready to make his final plea to the public good. His hefty stone sword gradually changed over time into one composed of wood, iron, and steel before evolving into a weapon that was a thousand times more powerful. Machine guns quickly evolved from the less-sharp arrows that were used to pierce foes from a distance. The human race has developed a variety of ways to poison the breath of those who stand in its way, in addition to learning how to adorn itself with a wide variety of clothing and jewelry, live in tall skyscrapers, eat a variety of foods with artificial flavors, construct and live within the walls of race, color, country, and nation, and rule and be ruled by a variety of laws and bylaws. Today's science has given every man's destructive fantasies an earthly personality, attached every desire for a flight to the planet, and transformed every brutal effort into a material success. The outcome met expectations.

Today, every country is determined to eat another country's lifetime of collected cultural treasure in order to satisfy the first whim that comes to mind, acting like a predatory animal. It is impossible to avoid wondering what the mothers of these various nations and races—who cradle their breastfed children in a protective embrace, show warm respect to the elders, and cower in fear at the signs of impending disaster—are thinking as we listen to that cacophony of selfishness echo from one corner of the world to the next.

Is war suitable for women's temperaments or not, and if so, what efforts have males done to win their support? Despite their novelty, these issues are as old as life itself. While a woman's life begins with submission, a man's begins with conflict. But the woman, by adorning him with her soft hands, welcoming him with an adoring gaze, and by her affectionate submissiveness, was able to humble the man who had triumphed in the hard struggle of life.

The primordial woman, who vanquished man's barbarism and awoke the dormant emotions within him, could not have been kept in the dark about man's virtues and vices. These holy buildings were built on the female intelligence rather than the masculine might. Women's natural intelligence prevented them from allowing their struggle to blend with that of males; otherwise, the history of the human race would have been very different. Their temperaments varied in addition to their variations in physical strength. If woman is the creeper that takes up very little space on the land but whose dense foliage allows many seedlings to germinate and quickly eclipses the grandeur of the tree, then man is that tree that grows towards the sky by sucking away the sap from the surrounding lesser plants. While a creeper perishes the instant its numerous, entangled offshoots are removed, a single tree can be kept alive long after its branches and offshoots are chopped down.

The temperamental differences between men and women allowed them to get to know one another well. With the birth of children, women's submissiveness, which had been effective in humbling males, grew stronger. She understood that her role was to assist the weaker people in becoming equally powerful, not to rule over a strong guy. The basis of a household was laid when she realized she had this duty. She positioned her infant in front of the guy and explained to him that for it to grow up to be as powerful as he was, she required food on a regular basis, shelter from the sun and rain, and him to serve as a sentry to guard against enemies and wild animals.

As a result, man began to guard this new world with all of his strength, building a home out of leaves, gathering sustenance through hunting. He now felt the need for assistance from the same adversaries with whom he had before engaged in brave combat. The individual who could formerly hold his own in the face of difficulty now finds himself helpless in the presence of his loving partner and young child. This was because his adversaries could now demolish the beauty of his house rather than defeating him. The strong formed an alliance with the weak for both their own security and the welfare of those they were guarding. For their own protection and the safety of their family, the weak reciprocated. In this manner, the violent animal-like, warlike human race gradually widened the sphere of its welfare. Wars never entirely stopped, but as man became increasingly eager to protect his family, the human race started to kill and die in order to defend particular communities. Despite this, the woman lacked the bloodlust that frequently leads to conflicts being fought just for its own reason.

She is unable to view wars from a male perspective in actuality. Man was never able to develop a bond with the family that was equivalent to that of a woman, in part due to his character and in part due to his involvement in the battle outside. For a woman, the ruin of the house is the destruction of life itself, whereas for a guy it may imply the disruption of a source of happiness. She gave herself to the family so completely that she lost all distinction between her home and her life. She may not want to fight because fighting has a catastrophic impact on the family. Man would see the tremendous national grandeur that lies ahead of gallant troops as they march out to battle, while woman would consider the homes full of agonizing wails that are behind them. The first will claim that they are leaving because it is their country, while the second will claim that they are leaving but their devoted wives and kids are remaining behind.

Women are not only physically and mentally unsuited for combat, but wars also pose a significant barrier to their growth and development. A lady is only a woman to a soldier who has no hope for the future and whose eyes dance with the silhouette of death. The virtues of sacrifice, penance, meditation, love, etc., that she possesses, what will he even do with them? Only a companionable environment allows for the development of these traits. The courageous person who wakes up every day prepared to murder or perish would just want to take in a brief glimpse of a woman's alluring beauty. He does not have the time to assess the value of her wonderful characteristics, and even if he did, how long could he truly savor them? Due to this, a woman was never able to fully develop as a woman in earlier times of conflict. Neither a wonderful mother nor a contented wife were delivered to us in the form of the blood-stained Draupadi of Kurukshetra. She was divided among the Pandavas, fleeing around in terror of the enemy, and had to accept her role as a mere cause of war, just like other things of

surplus wealth. Even though we are hesitant to acknowledge it in the current situation, women can only develop their qualities in a tranquil social context.

Man was partially deterred from going to battle by the character of women and the allure of the household, but this instinct could not be entirely overcome. Outside the home, it was likewise impossible to end the conflict. Over time, as this selfishness spread, man started to pretend to act altruistically by tying his personal self-interest to the interests of his race, nation, or country. The ability to be happy increases the need for more. The desire to broaden one's authority also increased as one's sense of self grew. Man has evolved into a much more terrifying species than the brutish, unsophisticated barbarian in today's materialistic world. Man does regard woman and house as among the requirements of existence due to the fight outside and the monotony of the workplace. He will not allow a woman to stand in the way of his desire for power, though. Since his desire knows no bounds, neither do the amount of wars, the horrors committed, nor the injustices meted out. If a woman were to wet his path with tears at every turn, it would be a mockery of his bravery; if she were to constantly remind him of right and wrong, it would be a test of his intelligence; and if she were to forego her company, his dry life would become intolerable.

Ultimately, man discovered a straightforward technique that allowed him to be anxiety-free in order to overcome this obstacle. He made the following claim to the woman, like a fresh invention: "Your reluctance to battle is rooted in your innate frailty. You lack courage, and this is where your hollow sentimentality finds refuge. Your lack of independence shows that you require protection, which is something to be ashamed of rather than proud of. It was as if she saw a different reflection of herself after hearing this fresh assessment of her personality, one that regarded her as weak and despicable. Her urge to seek revenge on the Creator raged through every fiber of her body. She made a commitment to change into the man sitting next to her. Her jewelry were formerly the weapons she had discarded as representations of terrible carnage. She quickly lost the time-tested principles imparted in the school of humanity, and man was left with a clear and undamaged path. Although the victory that modern men have gained over women may not be beneficial to the human species, it is crucial to his limited self-interest.

Man is gathering an army of women who, when the time comes, won't stop the bloodshed by removing the weapon from his worn-out hand, would bury compassion under the rock of pride while listening to the distressed cries of humanity, and would feel duty-bound on having made affection a prisoner of material wealth. It is challenging to predict what is in store for the distant future. It won't be feasible to comment on that, but it won't come as a surprise if the current stagnation conceals the beginning of a storm.

It would be ignorant of history to claim that women have adopted this disguise just in the current context. In times of need, women have frequently carried weapons, shifting from their traditional role as creators to that of destroyers. The main distinction is that formerly this rage was just fleeting, arising from fear rather than reason. Similar to the difference between an attempt and an accomplishment, these two differ from one another. She took on the role of a destroyer solely to defend a noble truth, so the earlier sentiment did not turn into a sacrament. There is a growing perception among women in today's warlike nations that their race does not deserve to survive if they are unable to develop the masculine animalistic urge to destroy natural traits like compassion, mercy, affection, etc. They are therefore honing their swords in preparation for the slaughter of the offspring of their fellow mothers.

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