

Emancipation of Womanhood through the Translated Work of Rajam Krishnan's "The Lamps in the Whirlpool"

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Abstract: Translation as practice and as theory has become central to read Literature. Currently, the necessity of using translations in research as well as in teaching has increased. Translation in the context of globalization, multiculturalism, cultural hybrid, post-colonial theory, and an emphasis on inter disciplinary has gained importance. With its interest in crossing the borders between languages, cultures, and national literatures, translation is implicitly committed to performing and also to assessing theoretically the function and value of "translation" in the widest sense of the term. Translation is a fascinating and challenging field of study. Growing in theoretical, methodological, and cultural sophistication, translation studies is emerging as a significant and useful aspect of Comparative Literature and of the humanities in general. Translation is an ancient literary activity caused to survive the most ancient literatures in India like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Now translation has gained a particular place in Indian Literatures in English, because the rising contact with native Indian languages has proved to be one of the inevitable activities and parts of any language literatures in India. This paper is an attempt to show the emancipation of women through the translate work of Rajam Krishnan's "The Lamps in The Whirlpool." *Lamps in the Whirlpool* was first published as *Suzhalil Mithakkum Deepangal* in 1987. *Suzhalil Mithakkum Deepangal* renders the great effort of an educated young woman in an orthodox Brahmin family. She ascertains her way and comes out of its anesthetizing everyday life to find her precise emancipation by thinking that not to be under the control of uncomfortable demands and margins. She confronts predicament of the novel in which the atrocities committed in the name of the family to the protagonist Girija.

I. Introduction

Translation has become the tool of transformation of literatures in English. *The Lamps in the Whirlpool* translated from the *Suzhalil Mithakkum Deepangal*. The title of the novel *Lamps in the Whirlpool*, the 'lamps' symbolizes the situation of women in the family as well as the 'whirlpool' indicates the inconvenience that are faced by women. Specifically, the author gives a description of feminism and the orthodox regulations of the Brahmin community in this novel. She gives an emphasis to 'madi rules' and how Brahmin women are endured by that 'madi' rules. The present paper divulges how the central character, Girija moves violently in an orthodox Brahmin family to maintain her authority in her home and how she comes out by violating the convention in the orthodox parameter.

Rajam Krishnan is a prolific feminist writer who always presents the plight of woman in Indian society in her works. She is a receiver of *New York Herald Tribune* International Award in 1950 for a short story; Sahitya Akademy Award in 1973; Soviet Land Nehru Award in 1975. She has been privileged with a number of other awards such as Kalaimagal Award in 1953 and Thiru. Vi. Ka. Award in 1991. The novel presents the struggle of a woman in an orthodox Brahmin family.

II. Girija, The Protagonist's Characterisation:

Girija, has been the linchpin of the family and is used as a draught animal by her mother-in-law and her husband and there is not even an appreciation of her sincere works. The "madi" and "aachara" constitute the social ideology of a Brahmin society. It is this austerity and purity made Girija serve her husband and mother-in-law for seventeen long years uncompromisingly. Though an educated woman, she is equally foolish woman to sacrifice her life for the domestic harmony which the family enjoyed. In order to the bliss, Girija allowed herself to be treated like a worm and worked like a machine. She realizes her state of ignorance only when Ratna makes it clear that a single note, however melodious, does not create harmony. Girija, being the single note, is not a real zest in the family. It is nothing but exploitation.

Girija's husband, on the other hand, considers her as a worm destined to serve him and his mother. She is dazed at her husband's unkindness towards her when she enquired about a small briefcase. She is totally disillusioned and disturbed. An uncontrollable urge and an inexplicable desire have impelled Girija to leave home. She has torn herself away from her family with the implicit faith that she would find peace on the banks of the Ganges. The currents and whirlpools of life has wiped her courageous spirit and left her vulnerable and

afraid of life. However, Girija's encounter with the old lady nourishes her intellect and strengthened her body. She refreshes her spirit and plans to return home.

Contrary to her expectation, the mother-in-law and her husband charge Girija with infidelity and order to clear out of the house. She is horrified by their cruel assumptions. What pains her more deeply is that Samu tells his son Bharat that Girija is a "loose" woman and has runaway. Since there is none to defend her, Ratna and her friends understanding her predicament, give her temporary refuge in the hostel and take her as if she were a wounded bird. Girija's alter part of her life is somewhat better as she gets an employment with a nun. However, her concern is to see that her daughters are not destroyed by the family regiment.

The most pathetic aspect of her situation is that she almost loses her sense of self. Girija's personality simply does not exist anymore after her marriage. Education has not given her any rationale of her life. There is no time for "atma-vichara", self-enquiry. She loses hold of the fact that she is an entity and has a responsibility to herself and the society.

III. Emancipation of Girija

The novel is frontally feminist in its theme, treatment and language. The Indian woman in the family is worshipped as an angel if she annihilates herself for the sake of others. Or else she is cast away as monstrous, if not demonic. Rajam Krishnan is so irate at the self-righteous middle class Brahmin community and makes it as a point of focus in the novel. Infact, she challenges through the central crisis of the story the legitimization of the atrocities perpetrated in the name of the family.

Girija is awakened by the talk of 'consciousness raising' by Ratna, her husband's niece. Ratna incites Girija's consciousness by her talk

"I cannot bear to see a talented person like you trapped in a life ruled by blind orthodoxy. The madi concept is quite outdated and only a means to torture people".

Ratna may be taken as the representative of Rajam Krishnan. Her sense of right and wrong finds a voice through Ratna. The wrongs done to women in the name of "madi" have extremely impaired her.

Ratna tells Girija:

"What a disgrace! They treat you like a worm and make you work like a machine. Harmony is achieved only when all the noted are in perfect accord. A single note, however melodious, does not create harmony."

Even though the novel presents a convention with the Brahminical background and its accepted belief, it also suggests the illustration of the Indian woman and her predicament caught up in obligations towards her family. Rajam Krishnan is aggrieved to perceive that the mainstream of the Indian women has no nous of self identity at all. They lose their self identity after the marriage ceremony. Edification does not give any legalization of their life. They are converted into sacrificial goats in the formal procedure of administrating the family.

On the other hand, the author tries to explore, how an ignored child gets into the wrong path. Krishnan introduces a character named Runo, who is ignored by her parents. She lost her mother and father married another lady. So, no one is either to questioned or answer to her. In this case she becomes a drug addict and a drunkard. At last she commits suicide because of her boyfriend who cheated her. Rajam Krishnan through the character Ratna a granddaughter of Girija's mother-in-law symbolizes and presents the view on feminism. She stresses the need and importance of self- respect and identity that she fails to think about it.

Ratna inquires Girija

"Tell Girija, you are imprisoned in the four dark walls of this tiny kitchen where your education and skills are wasted. Girija, are you happy with this life? (12)".

The word of Ratna makes the protagonist Girija realize and analyze the place given by her husband and mother-in-law. After realizing the situation she could understand that she is treated like a worm without any respect and recognition. Eventually, Girija decides to come out of that mechanical life so without giving prior information to anyone she steps out her home to find some relief on the banks of the Ganga and reach Rishikesh Ashram. Before her departure from her home, she removes her 'diamond ring, earring and nose ring' that removal which is symbolized as the 'bondage of slavery'. Moreover, Girija removes her 'Mangal sutra' instead of that she wears a chain because it is made by her own cost.

Girija meets a sacred widow in Haridwar who has provoked to challenge the society after her husband's death. Girija gives explanation about her state of affairs to the woman. She advices Girija to think over and take life in her hands according to your view and act with lucidity. She returns home bravely with a sense of enlightenment, after four days Girija's husband and mother-in-law lay the blame on her with disloyalty and command her to leave the house. Girija disgusted and goes to Ratna, who is affianced in feminist studies in Delhi University. Ratna and her friends give her place of safety and take concern of her as if she were an offended bird. Girija looks for employment with a nun who runs a home for expatriate children. Her apprehension now is to see that her daughters are not ruined by the family routine.

Through the character of Girija, Rajam Krishnan establishes the fact that when an educated woman is sunk in such torpor, society suffers more because the possibilities of her enlightening its members become remote.

IV. Conclusion

Rajam Krishnan's Indian version of feminism is made clear by her positing the case of the motherless Runo from a rich family. Neglected by her drunken father, she takes to drugs and sex and commits suicide. Will Girija's daughters end up like that? Rajam then presents the catalytic agent of the novel, Ratna. Here is Rajam's ideal, the "new woman": well educated, full of self-control, mincing no words, ready to help and to engage her in purposeful action. *Lamps in the Whirlpool* is a well-wrought novel translated into expressive English, a triumph for both the novelist and the translators.

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