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FEMINIST CRITICISM

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ABSTRACT

One of the major assumptions of gynocriticism is that writing by woman is always dominated by a gender consciousness. Gender is a cultural construct. There is no distinction between the experience of man and woman. All these arguments came from gynocriticism. In a woman's writing there is something which reflects her writing. The gynocriticism assures that this difference in gender in man and woman has something to do with woman's writing. The objective of gynocriticism is to discover the specificity in a woman's text, which makes it not a man's text but a woman's text. This idea i.e., a woman's text is a separate text reflects a literary tradition which is minor. The gynocritics were helped by the critics of 90s and this assumption was helped by other branches. In other words, this awareness of gynocritics comes from their awareness of what happens in other branches, particularly in the minority tradition. To be frank, the development of post-colonial literary tradition in 1970s helped the gynocriticism. Like the post-colonial literary tradition (a minority tradition), a woman tradition is a minority tradition as compared to the larger tradition. Could the minority tradition has its own tradition? Or it should be with the larger tradition- the question arises. Likewise, can the woman texts have a different critical practice? Or it should be judged by the major literary tradition! However, a reading of a female text is different from that of a male text is the first assumption of gynocriticism.

Keywords: Gynocriticism, Feminist, Criticism,

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INTRODUCTION

The basic themes of feminist criticism are :

- A) Theme of female aesthetics,
- B) Gynocriticism,
- C) Concept of canon formation
- D) Feminine writing or the female subject or the literary identity of woman, and
- E) Theory of gender.

Let us discuss these major themes of feminist criticism in a more elaborate way.

(a) *Female aesthetics*

Female aesthetics, being emerged by the feminist critics of different countries, has become one of the themes of feminist criticism. It is based on a universal concept—a universal woman nature and culture. This concept was actually developed because of a particular social phenomenon aroused in America, Germany, Russia, and Italy etc. Woman in groups, in different countries, is an upshot of feminist politics and they are responsible

The assumption of female aesthetics is that, there are different literary consciousness of female which is different from the male. The movements Gathers momentum because in U.S.A. there is the development of 'Black Literature' (Negro literature) in the 60s that provided the insights for the growth female aesthetics. The negro has a different consciousness from the whites, says Negro or Black literature. The aethenic literature growing in America in the 60s provided sufficient light to the growth of female aesthetics. Following the Negro literature and aethenic literature, the feminist critics say that the women has a separate literary consciousness. Hence, female aesthetics is the 'female literary consciousness as expressed in literature' or 'the female sense of beauty'. This female literary consciousness or female sense of beauty is not only distinct from man but, unlike to the female society as a whole, irrespective of race, nationality and colour. This is the claim of American critics. Rather than patriarchal ideology, it is the female aesthetics that works.

The French feminist critics developed *Ecriure femaine* writing. They argued that the female has particular style of writing, not merely a feminine consciousness. This feminine style of writing is different from man. They said that chronology and orderliness are there in male, but the linearity is not there with female. The female writing is open-ended, non-linear, and associative in style. In female writing there is lapses and gapes, breaks and broken syntaxes. So, the female practice of 'écriture feminine' paves the way for the development of definite female consciousness.

In germany the female aesthetics was developed with the autobiographical and confessionan genre. The female writer is autobiographical, confessional, even more than the romantics. For instance, kamala das in India is in favour of autobiography and confessional writing. Whereas the male works through a senser principal- he suppresses and hides his feelings-the women frankly expresses her feelings.

for the later development of *female aesthetics*. Those feminists who were reacting against the patriarchy, concept of canon formation in literary creation and criticism, formed a separate movement called *woman's liberation movement*. This movement in France is called *écriture feminine* and in Germany it is called *Weiblich Aestheit* (female aesthetic). These two, in fact, make the way for the movement of femle aesthetics.

However, Julia kristeva, the French femininst critic challenges this idea. Sh calls it a utopian idea. He criticizes the idea of women aesthetics as unreal. According to her, just as gender divides male from female, so also the social customers, race, colour and nationality differentiate female fom male. She calls it a pseudo-patriarchy as it takes its stand from male. She calls it a pseudo-patriarchy as it takes its stand from an essentialist view of women and human mind . it is, to her, an illusory and essentialist concept; so, one cannot bother about that. The feminist critics themselves were fighting against themselves. The idea of different colourly women's writing is different is utopian and illusory. So the idea of women aesthetics is essentially utopian.

(b) *Gynocriticism*

We have seen that one of the themes of feminist criticism, i.e. female aesthetics is based on a universal concept, a universal women nature and culture. Gynocriticism takes its departure from this assumption by saying that women ae different in terms of nature, race, culture and nation, and hence they cannot be universally studied. It addresses to mere practical problem and it is a more pragmatic. The term gynocriticism says, it is a specific feminist reading criticism of women's texts. Unlike feminist criticism, it is concerned with text-centered criticism, the aim of gynocritics is to read the literature written by women and to show what characterises the literature of women as women. The tradition of literary criticism in the west from the 19th century onwards was a text-centered study which had an influence on the birth of gynocriticism.

One of the major assumptions of gynocriticism is that writing by woman is always dominated by a gender consciousness. Gender I a cultural construct. There is no distinction between the experience of man and woman. All these arguments came from gynocriticism. In a woman's writing there is something which reflects her writing. The gynocriticism assures that this

difference in gender in man and woman has something to do with woman's writing. The objective of gynocriticism is to discover the specificity in a woman's text, which makes it not a man's text but a woman's text. This idea i.e., a woman's text is a separate text reflects a literary tradition which is minor. The gynocritics were helped by the critics of 970s and this assumption was helped by other branches. In other words, this awareness of gynocritics comes from their awareness of what happens in other branches, particularly in the minority tradition. To be frank, the development of post-colonial literary tradition in 1970s helped the gynocriticism. Like the post-colonial literary tradition (a minority tradition), a woman tradition is a minority tradition as

compared to the larger tradition. Could the minority tradition have its own tradition? Or it should be with the larger tradition- the question arises. Likewise, can the woman texts have a different critical practice? Or it should be judged by the major literary tradition! However, a reading of a female text is different from that of a male text is the first assumption of gynocriticism.

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