
**FEMALE OPPOSITION AGAINST DOMINATION IN SHOBHA DE'S
"STRANGE OBSESSION"**

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Abstract

The paper, titled Female Opposition against Domination throws light on the importance of the institution of marriage life and familial love as represented in Shobha De's extraordinary novel *Strange Obsession*. It also highlights that women must be distinct to discriminate between the actual and illusory, fake and honest, poisonous and healthy. She also insists on the need for women to become master of their own self in the progression of attaining independence. The importance is laid on limitation the eccentric feminine desires which crush women. As a socially sensible writer, De attempts to fetch these blundering women back into the path of socially sanctified ethics.

Keywords: *lesbianism, psychopaths, harmonious existence, familial affection, the institution of marriage, liberty.*

Introduction

Shobha De, a well-known and productive living writer shows her social thoughts through the assertion of the feminine self. She mainly deals with the lives of the high-class society and examines the institution of family and marriage. She opines in *Shooting from the Hip*: "The whole question of the position of females in India is so wonderfully confused that it's impossible to take anyone stands on it" (108). Her passion for improving the condition of women deserves appraisal.

De's fiction arises from within the universe of her thoughts which has been made by the insubordinate attitude in her childhood, prolonged by her formal education in Psychology and enforced by her own involvements (as a woman). Her works are amazingly tricky, erotic and

totally fascinating. She uses her novels as a tool to break the bars of sex and gender system, which are part of the cultural and social background in India.

In the Western and Indian set-up, bisexual sets the usual and well-balanced, and lesbianism reflects strange and diseased. Her third novel *Strange Obsession* (1992) connects with the sensational theme of lesbianism. The novel revolves about the lustful lesbian association of two young girls, Amrita Aggarwal and Meenakshi Iyengar (Minx). The novel narrates the story of Meenakshi Iyengar's (Minx's) strange, eerie and abnormal passion for Amrita, a Bombay city-based model who in order to enter a career in the impressive superstar world, travels from Delhi to Bombay only to be struck by the deploying and Cunning Minx. Though Amrita is assisted by Minx in reaching her ambition of becoming 'India's peak paid model' in a remarkably small period of time in the world of modeling, she is finally enforced by the latter into a lesbian behavior.

Though she is cautioned about the threat of continuing her relationship with Minx by many of her friends, she finds herself powerless to loosen the controls of Minx. She desperately attempts to get as far as she could from Minx but Minx put all possible ways to develop an intimate relationship with Amrita by using obscure threats in order to control her thoughts and tries to sustain her relationship with Amrita. While Minx loves sexual encounters, Amrita feels awkward and trapped. Minx, who understands that the revelation of her lesbian orientation has created a dramatic impact in Amrita, tries to win the kindness of Amrita by telling a cooked up story about her own exploitation as a child from her father. Minx not only wins the heart of Amrita but also wins the favor of Amrita's parents by telling to take good care of their daughter.

Their relationship signifies a kind of typology in the current urban set-up where a woman is the enemy of another woman. Minx, a sociopath in a violent, tyrannical and cunning manner tries to control and lead Amrita. Whether or not you like it, you'll have to accept my presence in your life."(33) It is obvious through her words that "Minx knows what she is. She, consciously or subconsciously, identifies herself in negation. She is extremely passionate for Amrita and sometimes becomes violent" (Gajendra Kumar 84). Minx, to attain her goal, becomes clever and strong-headed.

Although Minx looks to be against the act of being passive and submissive to men, she fails to shoes her own deviance from the rule, instead, she defends her lustful feelings for Amrita in the name of pure love. Although Amrita answers with contempt: "I hate you. I'm not going to spend the rest of my life being controlled by a pervert...I'd rather die than live with you" (117),

Amrita's constant efforts in freeing herself from the continued miseries express the potentials of feminine conflict against domination.

Driven by intolerable lustful desire, Minx, who is at the edge of absurdity and abnormality, becomes a vicious force. De, through the accidents of Lola and Partha, reveals the mentality of lesbians in common. With no choice left, Amrita, back to Mumbai in the company of Minx. Her unusual sexual nature and act frighten Amrita and she admits: "I feel suffocated... I feel like a prisoner, I can't breathe.

Amrita rejects Rakesh Bhatia also, as she is fixed with the idea that she is being observed by Minx, deny her mother's proposal of her married life. Although she is not personally motives in taking him as a life partner, she considers it as a chance, a tool for her freedom from the captivity of Minx's domination, tyranny, and unfairness. When Minx comes to know of Amrita's marriage proposal, she flies into a fury. When Amrita gets married to Rakesh she hijacks Rakesh and in a struggle, she is severely injured. The novel concludes with the statement: "Amrita was free at last."(302).

Minx's unusual behavior can be considered to the lack of her parental guidance during her childhood. She grows up as a deserted and ruined child because of her mother's psychological sicknesses. In her childhood, she believes that living inside a web of her own and preserving the secrecy of truth as usual. It is from her childhood life that she starts telling lies and cheats truth by escaping the harsh realities of her life. Thus, she lives in her own world of imaginary. Through Minx, De shows that the part of parents is important in the foundation of children to help them develop confidence. De also posits the significance of family attachment in one's life and repeats that bad parenting pays to distorted behavior.

Thus, Shobha De, through Amrita and Minx values the institution of marriage and condemns the unusual paths taken by women in their search for identity and freedom. She demands men's equal contribution and collaboration to the cause of women's emancipation. As Morgan states that "... it is true that marriage, the home, and the family form the major areas of a woman's life", De-stresses the importance of marriage as it brings fulfillment in the life of a woman (148). Amrita and Minx throw light on the importance of the institution of Marriage and familial love which develop the inner strength and help in the formation and proclamation of identity in women. It also underlines that women lead entirely free and un-obsessed life, and be distinct so as to differentiate between the real and the illusory, fake and honest, harmful and healthy.

Rakesh who is free of the male-controlled attitude signifies the possibility of a pleasant marriage which supports women in achieving liberation. Towards the end of the novel, Rakesh promises Amrita of her safety: "the nightmare is over,you are here-- with me... forever, safe and secure."(251) arouses feelings of comfort in her that he will make a great husband. These words of support marked by honest love and care for Amrita evokes feelings of love with gratitude. Amrita, with a turbulent appearance of the past, admits marriage and wifhood as a blessed function and evolves a duty-bound wife. Thus, hope in her marriage life revives her identity as an individual entity, unlike that of the vegetative life in her past. In the end, as a fighter of sex abuse, Amrita recovers and rebuilds herself from the damages affected by mental suffering and guilt through marriage, love, and care. Through marriage, she celebrates psychological fulfillment and safety that she is changed into a self-obliterated and loyal wife overcoming the guilt of having secret relations with Minx in the past.

Conclusion

For De the key-concept to Man-Woman relationship is synthesis not split, a union, not discord, love not bitterness. Marriage is not a form of captivity and bondage but one of the security solutions to all the women's problems. Marriage neither throttles freedom nor symbolizes individual regression. Thus, the institution of marriage succeeds as the powerful force-the absolute good and the greatest blessed of human ties and duties, where man and woman become a harbinger of peace and love.

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