



A PARADOX WITHIN: GENDER REPRESENTATION IN V.S.NAIPAUL'S *GUERRILLAS*

Dr. V. Ganesan,

Associate Professor,

A.M. Jain College, Meenambakkam,
Chennai -114.

1. The World is what it is: men who are nothing, who allow themselves to become nothing, have no place in it
(V.S. Naipaul, **A Bend in the River**, 9)
2. There is no such thing as a single human being pure and simple, unmixed with other human beings... We are members one another
(Joan Riviere, quoted in **Postmodernism** 202)

A paradox has two opposite features.

What begins in love may end in hate
What begins in hate may end in love

A departure leads to arrival
An arrival anticipates a departure

What begins in anger ends in shame
Shame leads to rage
Art imitates Reality, Reality imitates Art.

It helps to know the importance of the other when we are with one feature. It always forces us to realize the other and makes us seek the other. When we experience the bitterness of hatred, we understand the bliss of love. When we suffer from the cruelty of suspicion, we





long for the comfort of trust. In short, when we shuttle between these binary opposites in performing our roles, we pass through the process of learning and understanding life. It is the process of acquiring Common sense. Common sense is not so common. It is the process of acquiring knowledge through the capacity of the mind and the body. Human life, which is sandwiched between life and death, is a journey through these paradoxes. The realization of these paradoxes in life is aesthetically sweet. It becomes a passage in which the paradoxes stand on two sides and a man walks between them hopping and stopping.

Representation gives insight into Reality. Reality often becomes a Representation. As **Homo Sapiens**, man is the male of the species and woman the female of the species. Man is considered as the stronger sex because of his masculinity and woman, the weaker sex because of her femininity. But life in the vortex of man-woman relationship creates tension and raises the question of equality between the sexes. It poses a battle between the sexes; the battle is being fought only to have a reaffirmation of life, to enhance the living condition of human life. Voices have been raised. Issues have been discussed. Clarifications, categorization and comparisons have been attempted at between sex and Gender; feminism and Gender studies.

“Sex” is natural and Biological, “Gender” is used to mean the social, cultural and psychological constructs imposed upon biological sexual difference.

Parts of other people, the parts we have had relationships with, are parts of us, as the self in both constant and fluid, even in exchange ever re-describing itself through its encounters with others (P. Waugh, 202)

One needs to understand the key terms in relation Gender study. They are “masculinity” and “femininity” which are currently in a “process of social change and radical assessment” (Masculine *Marx*, 148). Managing a situation or a task successfully can be termed as Masculine. Yielding to it and becoming unsuccessful can be termed as Feminine. A man can become a feminine and a woman can become aggressive and masculine. Masculine identity requires all-satisfying sources to solve or manage a situation or a problem. Therefore, Gender is not fixed, changes the roles according to the situation. On several occasions a person’s sex is an arbitrary, which is rightly said by Simon de Beauvoir, “one is not born, but rather becomes a woman” (74) which has come to be the most often cited and most powerful statement in Gender related studies. This statement leads to strong debate on “existing” as opposed to merely “living” which is different from Aristotle’s terminology in *Polis*.





An attempt is made to study these two terms in relation to different perspectives.

Sex is emotional	Gender is intellectual and logical
Sex is slavery	Gender is liberation
Sex is physical	Gender is metaphysical, ontological
Sex is a resignation	Gender is a “rising to occasion”
Sex concerns with Birth of life	Gender concerns with the way of living that life
Sex gives a form	Gender attempts at transformations and reformation
Sex defies trans-sex	Gender encourages trans-sex
Sex is Nature	Gender is a dialogue in Nature
Sex is constant	Gender is fluid, a continuum
Sex is a stage where	Gender performs its roles
Sex is Destiny as Character	Gender is Character as Destiny
Sex is colonialism	Gender is de-colonialism
Sex is dominance	Gender is a compromise
Sex dichotomizes	Gender reconciles
Sex juxtaposes the paradox of male	Gender assimilates the paradox within female

There is always a “he” in “she”; a “male” in “female”; a “man” in “woman”

“Gender studies” is not identical to women studies or feminist studies. There are a lot of differences between Gender studies and feminist studies.

The history of feminism is the history of woman’s emancipation. But paradoxically, when Nicholas Davidson wrote *The Failure of Feminism(1988)* stressing the fact that mutual trust has given way to mutual suspicion and even to mutual disgust, gender has become a post-





feminist term declaring the study of women and women’s writing obsolete, or what Ruthven denounces as “separatist”(204)

Unlike the feministic emphasis on women’s writing, gender theory explores the ideological inscriptions and literary effects of the sex and gender system. Gender theory allows to make comparative studies of women and men into the specific disciplinary field and to transform disciplinary paradigms by adding gender as an analytic category. The most important thing is Gender theory promises to introduce the subject of masculinity into feministic criticism and to bring man into the field as student, scholar, theorist and critics. Moreover, the addition of gender as a fundamental analytic category within literature, rather than its perpetuation as a feminine supplement to the mainstream obviously has revolutionary transformative potential for the ways that one reads, thinks and writes. Therefore, an attempt is made to say explicitly on the subject who raises the question “How just is gender?”(181)

Feminism centers on women’s writing	Gender theory decenters women’s writing
Feminism opposes patriarchy.	Gender neutralizes patriarchy
Feminism encourages the isolation of women	Gender encourages the relationship between man and woman
Feminism is a discord against nature.	Gender is a harmonious communication with nature.

Foucault’s model of power helps one understand Gender in right perspective. According to Foucault, power is exercised rather than possessed; power is not primarily repressive, but productive; repressive power represents power in its most frustrated and extreme form (as it is seen in colonial world); and power is analyzed as coming from the bottom. Disciplinary power is exercised on the body and soul of individuals. It increases the power of individuals at the same time as it renders them more docile. If one relates Foucault’s model with Gender’s masculinity and femininity, one can give new interpretation to Shakespeare’s Macbeth by analyzing Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. It will also helpful to fix Gender in broader perspective in the colonial and post- colonial literature.





In the colonial context, the colonizer is often considered as the powerful, thereby masculine by nature and the colonized who is meek and slave, is considered as feminine. In the colonial-racial context, the white holds the dominance over the black till now. The oppressed and the rejected blacks react violently to establish themselves. Sometimes the white women are invaded and raped. In the colonial and the post-colonial writings, racial and sexual violence are yoked together. If colonial power is repeatedly expressed as a white man's possession of the black women and men, colonial fears center around the rape of white woman by the black men.

V.S. Naipaul's **Guerrillas** is set in a colonial context. The two white people, Peter Roche and Jane, enter into a Caribbean island to look after the missionary duties. They are encountered with two black men, Jimmy Ahmed and his male partner Bryant. The whole novel hangs between two sexual scenes. In the first one, Jane dominates and she takes the lead. She becomes the master as a white woman. She teases Jimmy and irritates him. "She was white enough to be unreadable" (14). Jimmy was "full of hate of her"(81). This makes him enraged and forces him to give the final assault. In the second one, Jane is brutally raped, and given to Bryant for a ritual murder. Peter escapes from the island.

The first scene explains the second one. The final scene is one of the harshest scenes of sexual violence in English Literature.

"Sharp steel met flesh. Skin parted; flesh showed below the skin, for an instant mottled white, and then all was blinding, disfiguring blood" (243)

This novel can be interpreted from the Gender perspective on two levels. The failure of Jimmy in the first encounter, which has hurt his male ego, and his hatred towards the white people, and his feminine subjection to Jane's masculine way of teasing and irritating, make him act violently to attempt a revenge in masculine power. The dominance of Jane as a masculine white and her helplessness and her feminine surrender to the brutality of Jimmy enact her tragedy. In Foucault's terms both Jimmy and Jane execute the repressive power out of frustration. Their power is possessed rather than exercised. +The tragedy is due to the changing roles of the characters for wrong deeds based on indifference

Most critical theories are formulated to enhance the study of literature and thereby to offer some justice to society. Theories which aim at social justice are concerned with whether, how, and why persons are treated differently from each other. If critics happen to be egoistic in offering their views, their points of view may be taken as "biased" or "isolated". As Freud argued, if ego is the product of culture and if ego may only be defined in terms of separateness,





impersonality, containment, and pure reason, then culture has produced only divided and deformed human beings(204). If the principles of justice are to be applied one should take seriously that the modern society is deeply gender structured. Therefore, the recognition of the coexistence of these human states might be essential for the survival of the human race Otherwise, we may lament in T.S. Eliot's words

Where is the Life, we have lost in living
Where is the wisdom, we have lost in knowledge
Where is the knowledge, we have lost in facts (105)

Successful Marriages are Successful compromises. Also, A successful life can be based on successful compromises.

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