

WOMAN: A FORCE OF NATURE

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Abstract

Badal Sircar is a realistic writer as he has presented the reality related to every phase of life. In his various plays he has depicted woman with a positive feeling. Woman is a natural force for Sircar. Natural force is necessary to create something new but sometimes it can destroy the things. In the play There Is No End playwright presents the view that male category is not the only exploiter of woman but many a time woman stands against other woman. This is not the new thing even our scriptures are the evidence. This paper tries to bring out the fact that very often woman becomes the biggest enemy for the other. Sumati, Manika and Mrinalini, three ladies who stand with different feminine quality, have been depicted in the play. These three characters present the same natural force.

Key words: Natural Force, Woman, Modern Theatre

Dylan Thomas in his poem points out that there is some force in nature which is not only creative but destructive also. As he says:

“The force that through the green fuse drives the flower
...is my destroyer”. (Thomas, 32)

Sumati, Manika and Mrinalini, three ladies who stand with different feminine quality, have been depicted in the play There is no End. Mrinalini is a middle aged woman has a character like Tendulkar’s Mrs. Kashikar in Silence! The Court is in Session. Manika and Sumati belong to the present age. Where former presents the suffocated female of the modern time, later stands with a suffocated young man named Sumanta.

As Sircar is a realistic writer he has presented the reality related to every phase of life. Woman is a natural force for Sircar. In his various plays he has depicted woman with a positive feeling. Natural force is necessary to create something new but sometimes it can destroy the things. These three characters present the same natural force. Mrinalini is responsible for ruining the life of Manika, on the other hand Sumati becomes the support of

Sumanta in search of his own existence. Manika has also a power in herself. Being ruined she doesn't give up her existence.

With the character of Mrinalini he has pointed on that aspect which generally remains behind the curtain. The playwright presents the view that male category is not the only exploiter of woman but many a time woman stands against other woman. This is not the new thing even our scriptures are the evidence. In the holy book Ramayana Kaykai being influenced by Manthara feels jealous for Kaushalya. Kaykai has been told if Ram becomes yuvraj she will lose her position. She and her son have to live a life of poor dependants on Kaushalya and her son. Influenced by this statement of Manthara she does the things which are familiar to all of us of how she makes the life of Kaushalya full of sorrow.

Modern playwrights have also shown this feature of woman in their plays. Vijay Tendulkar in his play, *Silence! The Court is in Session* throws light on this characteristic by the character of Mrs. Kashikar. Mrs. Kashikar is conventional in nature. She possesses the thought that woman should follow traditional values and customs. She tortures Leela Benare for her illegal behavior of unmarried motherhood. She blames Leela to wander with 'many men' in day and night. Mrs. Kashikar has been introduced by Leela as 'hands that rocks the cradle has no cradle to rock' (Trivedi, *Silence*). Mrs. Kashikar has no child that's why she feels jealous for Leela's fertility. Mr. and Mrs. Kashikar have adopted Balu but they were using him as a slave. In womanhood jealous is the supreme factor that can change the woman completely.

In the play *Sheish Nei*, Mrinalini also feels jealous with Manika. Her son is now falling in love with the girl. She is responsible for the tragic life of Manika. As she says that her son is 'trapped' by 'unscrupulous slut Manika'. So she does all this to protect her son. In the character of Mrinalini, sometimes we find the portrait of Gertrude Morell in D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers*. Mrs. Morell didn't allow her son to develop any relationship with a female partner. If it would be developed, she spoiled the relationships.

The reason was same for Mrinalini. Being over possessive for her son she ends everything for Manika. She herself admits, "I am a mother. What I did was for the sake of my own son. To save him. Which mother would do less, I ask you! You tell me..." (Sircar, *There is no End*, 3). She goes to meet with Manika's school mistress and tells ill things about her character to the head mistress. She tells her that, "Manika used to go about with all sorts of people" (4). When Sumanta asks in the court:

SUMANTA. How do you know she did?

MRINALINI. That type always do.

SUMANTA. You said people had seen her. You said she had been seen in a taxi with a well dressed, middle-aged lout.

MRINALINI. So she had.

SUMANTA. Who saw her?

MRINALINI. Never mind who. (4)

Mrinalini made up the story herself. To make headmistress believe on the story she even uses the name of father. She told 'that father had seen her' (4). Further Sumanta says:

SUMANTA. No one had seen her. You made up the story. An utter lie just to ruin a girl.

MRINALINI. Don't talk big. What harm came to her?

SUMANTA. She lost her scholarship. As a result she had to give up her studies for good. (4)

In this way a woman becomes the oppressor of the other. Manika is now an attendant in a nursery school. Being a good student, she has to give up her studies and later on she has been left by Sumanta. But she does not give up. She has still maintained that dignity and confidence. She has presented Indian modern girl who is being tormented by the society still surviving with her existence. Manika 'didn't read even upto the matriculation standard' (4). 'The Man' asks her whether Sumanta is responsible for her 'sorry condition', she counter attacks, "What is my present condition? And who told you it was sorry" (4). Her soul has been cut into pieces by the society. She has anger, agony and pain in her heart.

Now she has taken a stand against society. It becomes clear when 'The Man' calls her 'Miss Bose':

MANIKA. Who are you calling Miss? I have two sons.

THE MAN. Oh! Deam me! Is your husband also a bose?

MANIKA. I don't use my husband's name. (4)

Manika's financial condition was not good to continue her studies. Scholarship was the only mean to give it breath. But Mrinalini's misdeed ruins her future. She has to give her school. Since childhood her life is full of struggle. As her "father had been unemployed for a long time. On the pretext of being ill he never even tried for a job. Mother has to work to feed the family" (5). In spite of this, Sumanta falls in love with Manika. But Mrinalini could not see this happiness of other woman. She feels jealous with Manika for luring her son. At last Sumanta leaves Manika.

Presenting a modern woman she doesn't seem helpless. She accepts the truth in her own way, "What did we have in common? Education, intelligence, culture, class- we had nothing in common. He was so many cuts above me in all respects. He is moreover a Brahmin"(5). Manika was no longer a brahmin and belong to a poor family. These things make the condition worse for her. Mrinalini doesn't like the relationship of her son with Manika. And 'to protect her son' she spoiled Manika's life.

Sumanta also ran away from her for his own wish to change the society. Now she is married and has two sons but still has grievances as she remarks, "I understood and yet could not accept. I knew and yet did not want to know. Oh God, why didn't he turn me out? Why

didn't he ask me plain to get out and not hope for the impossible?" (5). She has been suffering a lot. Her present life is not any better than her past. She boldly accused Sumanta, "You have climbed up to high heaven- and I am the attendant maid in nursery school. My two sons have gone bad. And their father? No one knows where exactly he is having his drinking bouts now" (6). If she would have completed her studies, things could be better. But Mrinalini destroyed everything for her.

Sumati comes next. As her name suggests she stands for wit, intelligence and consciousness. Female characters in Sircar plays mostly stand for consciousness for example Nilpari in *Life of Bagala*, and Manasi in *Evam Indrajit*. When she meets Sumanta for the first time, it was the time of procession. Police was in search of revolutionaries to arrest them. A scene of violence has been spread out everywhere. In spite of such an atmosphere Sumati was quite normal. Sumanta observes that she is 'no longer frightened' (11). In his opinion, "in these situations women generally start weeping" (11). But Sumati was talking very naturally.

Sumati has been called in the court as a witness. When 'The Man' asked her about 'Sumanta's crime', she replies, "this accused's crime is that he wanted to live" (12). Sumati is with Sumanta everytime but like others she doesn't try to truss him:

SUMANTA(after a pause). Sumati- do you want...

SUMATI. No, I'm not asking you to marry me.

SUMANTA. I didn't say so.

SUMATI. You thought so. Forget it. You search. I'll also search.

SUMANTA. What will you search for?

SUMATI. You. (14)

She becomes the sharp contrast of Manika. She only gives, demands nothing. Sumanta has a good job of executive and he is getting good amount. But still he is not happy. Then Sumati suggests him to leave the job:

SUMANTA. I've discovered the fire inside is turning everything black without forging anything.

SUMATI. Give up the job, Sumanta.

SUMANTA. And after giving it up?

SUMATI. Take up some other job.

SUMANTA. They are all the same in this line.

SUMATI. Change the line then. (14)

Sumati becomes the consciousness of Sumanta who makes him realize that what is good for him. 'The Man' said that Sumanta "has wronged many persons- greatly wronged them. He must have wronged you as well- you are just suppressing it" (15). Then she defends, "Sumanta is trying to find himself- searching, probing. He has at last found himself- has finally realized himself in his poetry, in his writings. Sumanta has no doubts anymore, no hesitations. All his omissions- his mistakes and crimes- they have all been washed away

now” (15). Sumati is the only one person in the life of Sumanta who could understand him and become the pillar to support him. She encourages him time to time that he should ‘go on. Go on searching” (15).

Sumanta thinks that after becoming a poet, he has got everything and his search is complete. But Sumati again makes him realize that “there’s a gap- somewhere there’s a gap” (16). The gap exists between him and the real joy. So he needs ‘ananda’. Ananda here stands for the joy of soul. As she whispered ‘ananda’, ananda appears before him in the form of a man which was dead in the life of Sumanta. It comes and makes him realize that he should depict the misery, pain and suffering of the people in his poems, and then he will get the satisfaction and joy of the soul.

Sumati is different to Mrinalini and Manika. Mrinalini shows the negative features of a female as jealous, conservative and foremost has disrespect for other woman. Manika being tortured presents another aspect which is tolerance as well as courage. She is courageous enough to take a stand for herself. Third character Sumati is the most positive who presents real essence of a woman. She is a sharp contrast of Mrinalini and Manika. These three women have the negative and positive aspects similar to natural force which can be destructive as well as creative. Sircar realized this quality of woman. ‘The Man’ in *There is no End* being the mouthpiece of Sircar says, “Ouf! What a woman! Rather, what a tornado! A force of nature!” (12).

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