

rejected as 'satirical caricature' by 'the card-carrying member of the Special Lenin Troupe'. "It is insult and offence. See, two beards at least are improperly affixed in spite of the admonishing presence of the proletariat." (TMLS 31) Thereafter Camoens leaves communism and joins the congress party but does not take an active role.

There is yet another instance of ironical parody when Aires da Gama brings a British bulldog and names it 'Jawaharlal'; he names it to provoke his brother, Camoens. But it is ironical that he holds it till the end as his best company. Even after the dog's death, he stuffs it to make a toy. The same is treasured by Moor after the death of Aires. The reconceptualization of history takes its peak with the central character, Aurora. During Indian Independence movement Aurora moves to Bombay leaving her husband, Abraham in Cochin to manage the spice business. She becomes a giant public figure alongside Vallabhai Patel and Abdul Kalam Azad. Her arrest after the Quit India resolution makes her a national heroine. She spends two years in Dehra Dun District Jail and when she emerges she is twenty years old with white hairs. In the middle 1945, Aurora spends her twenty first birthday in Bombay without Abraham in the midst of city's artistic and political luminaries. Nehru is not present but he sends her Hogben's *Science for the Citizen and Mathematics for the Million*, a book as a gift. Later, in the story the cook makes a doubt about the "father" of Moor because he was delivered just after four months of conception. Moor himself is suspicious about his mother's relationship with Mr. Nehru. He feels he might be the heir of the 'great man' since exactly nine months before his birth Aurora was in Delhi to receive a State Award – 'Esteemed Lotus'- from the President. At that hour Prime Minister was with her who had returned from England. Ezekiel, the cook, testifies it should take two nights and a day to return from Delhi. But whereas Aurora took three nights to return which confirms that there must be something between his mother and Mr. Nehru. Moreover newspaper started scribbling about their relationship which stopped suddenly after the quiet visits from Abraham's emissaries. Moor also relates about the Prime Minister's interest towards the last Viceroy's wife, Lady Mountbatten.

But let the clock travel a further four and a half months in reverse and there is Aurora Zogoiby in Delhi, entering a ceremonial hall in Rashtrapati Bhavan, and being received by Panditji himself; there is Aurora Zogoiby creating a scandal, by giving in to what the newspapers would call an 'unseemly display of artistic temperament', and saying loudly into Nehru's appalled face: 'That chicken breasted mame! Edweenie Mount-teenie!God knows why you go keep on going sucking back like a beggar at her gate. (TMLS 176)

Aurora draws a controversial picture representing an actual incident where Abbas Ali Baig, a cricketer is kissed by a lady watching the test match against Australia at Bombay's Brabourne Stadium in 1960. The picture was called *The Kissing of Abbas Ali Baig*. The same incident is also commented by R.K.Laxman. "Even the cartoonist R.K. Laxman's celebrated Common Man, was perched in the East Stand bleachers,

looking shocked in his goofy, unworldly way.” (229) History and fiction is further mixed in the incident of the bomb blast in Tamilnadu in May 1991 where Rajiv Gandhi is murdered. Abraham seems to have a hand in the bomb blast. On the same day Jimmy Cashondeliveri (Aurora's son-in-law) who dies in a car accident is reported to have travelled along with Uma Sarasvati, the former lover of Moor Zogoiby. But she denies to have travelled together and reunites with Moor. After the suicidal attempt of Uma, Moor is arrested for smuggling drugs. He is released by the influence of Mainduck (dada) with who he remains for a few years. Later, he reconciles with his father. Towards the end of the story he goes to Spain to get back the lost paintings of his mother, Aurora. He struggles for life against Vasco and eventually escapes safely. To understand historiographic metafiction better one must accept that history and literature were considered branches of the same tree of learning until nineteenth century. So history had to be combined with worldly experiences in order to come out in the form of metafiction. As we read one could understand the truth and lies of history mingled with a fictitious story of the past. This connection between fiction and history is posed as a problem in historiographic metafiction. According to metafiction there is nothing called true or lie.

As Susan Sontag, the prolific writer of America, says, “The truth is always something that is told, not something that is known. If there were no speaking or writing, there would be no truth about anything. There would only be what is”. (Kaur 1)

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Are Indian Middle Class Women Sandwiched between Tradition and Modernity?

- Annie Nirmala M.

Abstract: This article discusses about the conditions of women sandwiched between tradition and modernity. Women of the middle class are oppressed due to the traditions of the patriarchal society. The mentality of the men is so rigid that they cannot accept women given equal importance in the family and society. The freedom enjoyed by women is so little, as majority of them are subordinated to men right from their birth. The battle of emancipation is undergone only by few women who later have turned out to be successful writers using their pen as their sword to liberate women from the age old suppression to traditional men and society. The modern age has left women confused between tradition and modernity. Their education leads them to independent thinking, for which their family and society become intolerant towards them. They struggle between tradition and modernity. It is their individual struggle with family and society through which they plunge into a dedicated effort to carve an identity for themselves as qualified women with faultless backgrounds. This paper also discusses about some of the works of Indian women writers who have artistically portrayed their characters who are suppressed due to various traditional practices of our country and their plight for freedom from this male dominated society.

Keywords: Tradition, Modernity, suppression, liberation, patriarchy

Tradition and modernity is a regular but strong theme that signifies the status of women from the age old period to the present. The women's position in the family and society, due to conflicting demands of tradition and modernity is complex and they locate their choices within the framework of religious and cultural practices. Women's battle each day to rise to new levels in all fields has faced resistance from traditional forces that has led to violence against women, and sometimes this is labelled as defending the honour of the family. Women are considered as the feebler sex. Though women in India are personified as Shakthi, the position of women is only lagging behind men. This affects not only the quality of life of women but also their children who are brought up by them. The problem of women in the family, society and in other walks of life, have become worldwide problems. The struggle of women to have their own rights becomes a conflict due to the century's long tradition of always granting women, an inferior status which further leads to violence against women, just to uphold the honour of the family. What is Tradition and what is modernity? Tradition is a burden that acts as an obstacle to change and resistant to the new. It holds customs and habits that had been passed on from generation to generation not allowing individual to transform to the changes around us. On the other hand modernity is refashioning oneself according to the present world. It is a source of wisdom, knowledge, of survival etc. Modernity invites the unenlightened world to

follow its path. As Prof. Ganganad Jha says "Tradition is the accumulated experience of yester years. It is an indicator of the path trodden and understood in proper context. Modernity is the quality of being current of the present, accepting new beliefs and practices and ignoring the superstitious beliefs of the past."

The most astonishing achievement of modernity is to bring new dimensions for women in their lives. Women traditionally are noted as an important member of the family casting various roles as a daughter, a sister, a mother, a wife etc. But modernity gives her an opportunity to gain equal status with men. These opportunities sometimes bring insecurities too in playing their different roles in domestic life. It became a challenge to the modern women. It is sometimes very ironical that when it comes to tradition and modernity it does not apply to men. It is significant that very often a man's possibility of being described as modern or tradition rests on his unsupported attitude towards women.

In simple words as the dictionary says "Tradition is the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way." Modernity is "the quality or condition of being modern." This paper speaks upon how women are sandwiched between this tradition and modernity, and undergo a continuous conflict between the two. To put forward, how are the middle class women leading their lives in our country? Aren't they caught up within so many social norms of the patriarchal society? Women to become free, need to empower herself, to fight against various cultural practices to achieve her self-goal. Women strive hard to balance her various roles of a daughter, wife and mother. Society sometimes scorns at women if she seems to demand for equal rights with that of men. Not if equal rights at least the basic rights of having education, choosing a profession, in decision making within the family etc. As a saying goes woman was made from the rib of a man. Not from his head to top him, nor his foot to be stepped on by him, but from his side to be equal to him, under his arm to be protected by him, and near his heart to be loved by him. Is this status given to women? Women are looked upon as only procreators. When the first baby is born and if it happens to be a girl not all members of the family are happy with the child and whereas if a boy is begotten there is double joy in the family. So the subordination of the girl begins from the day one itself when the child is born. Women or the girl child is considered to be a burden upon the shoulders of the parents for they think it is waste of money and time to invest upon her - educating her. While this is so in our society the boy child seems to be blessed. Parents are in an assumption that only a boy or a male would lessen their burden at the time of their old age. They are ready to go to any extend to spend money on them. This is the traditional practices that have been going on since time immemorial. The girl child's freedom to do what she wants is disallowed from the time she is small. She is not even allowed to wear clothes like what pleases her. Not allowed to go out and play, just because she is a girl. And she is not allowed to speak out what she feels regarding her choice of life partner. Whoever the parents want her to get married, the girl without any objection has to accept. This is the traditional practice in the patriarchal society. India has undergone a

lot of change in the present modern era. Opportunities are in large amount given to youngsters. Women compete with men in all fields. Women had to fight to free themselves from the shackles of suppression and to explore the outside world. And in spite of the entire struggle when she recognizes her inner talents and succeeds in that field she is married and has to give up her aspirations and surrender herself to her husband suppressing her emotions in a new environment with her in-laws with the thought that a husband is the sheltering tree. This is the situation of women in India of at least the middle class women. So women try to balance between tradition and modernity rather than completely neglecting the age old patriarchal practices.

The present paper tries to substantiate the above said facts by focusing on the different works of selected writers in Indian writing in English. The problems faced by middle class women are beautifully brought out in the creative writings of Indian Women writers like Kamala Das, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantra Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharathi Mukerjee, Rama Mehta, Jhumpa Lahiri and others. The works of these writers are purely Indian as they openly discuss the various constraints of women in the society which is the result of their external observation. These writers use their pen to reform the lives of suppressed Indian women. The heroines of these writers reveal the courage and potency to question the tyrannical role of the society, culture but still they cease to step forward in the path shown by westerners. This paper explores some of the works of these writers on the conflict between tradition and modernity faced by women. Kamala Das with her bold language has brought out not only the existential pressures during the modern Indian women's journey from tradition to modernity, but also the woman's sense of obligation to reality. She protests against the oppression of the female class and wants to emancipate women from the stereotypes of the society. In *The old Playhouse*, she revolts against male domination and the consequent dwarfing of the female. In another work *My Story* which is an autobiography she describes about her own pitiable situations. She says that the society is ruled by men and so it has formulated a social code of conduct for women. She challenges the traditional roles of women and brings out the emotional emptiness and desolation of married life and the amount of depression faced by them. Through all her works, Kamala Das wants to make women aware of their freedom and uniqueness and to unshackle themselves from the traditional values framed by the male society. Nayantra Sahgal's novels show her deep concern with the dangerous state of women in the patriarchal society. Many of her women characters rise against the deadening culture which hampers women's progress and rebel against all attempts to elide women's focal role in the family and society. These women characters are targets of orthodox society which does not permit women to hold their own position in the modern world. All these women characters abide by the hardened concept of male supremacy and seek to shrink male superiority successfully, unaided by a man. In a male dominated society these women hoist the flag of gender-equality and seek free rein for their race. In *Rich Like Us* the character of Sonali represents the best of modern India and