

A Feministic Reading of Nikki Giovanni's 'Woman'

J.Vigneshwari,

III B.A. English Literature,

Holy Cross College (Autonomus),

Nagercoil.

Under the guidance of

C. Christal Jani,

Assistant Professor of English,

Holy Cross College (Autonomus)

Nagercoil.

Abstract:

Yolande Cornelia Nikki Giovanni Jr. is an American poet and writer. She is considered as the "Poet of Black Revolution". Her common themes include race, gender and other cultural issues. She uses lots of metaphor which is her unique style of writing. The poem "Woman" by Nikki Giovanni is about a woman who searches for an identity. She describes the journey of a woman. She searches for a true identity and freedom, but her husband denies to give her. The main ideas in this presentation include Marriage, Feminism, Culture, Dreams and Hopes etc. The poet Nikki Giovanni, who perfectly explains the pathetic nature of women and also the older traditions. She points the minute and small wishes of all the women through the poem which includes caring, secured and independent life from her life partner.

Keywords: Marriage, Feminism, Culture, Dreams and hopes.

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The institution of marriage is the central feature of all forms of human society. It is the deepest as well as the most complex of all human relationships. To a woman marriage

gives both financial and social security, to a man a lifelong companion and a helping hand. Both complement each other. It is a virtues path in life. It is not only the union of two people, but it is a union of two families. Two souls meet each other with a lot of expectations. When it does not get fulfilled it leads to misunderstandings. This poem depicts the women's expectations from her man, but he denies to give her. It shows all her small wishes. She wishes to be a blade of grass, but her husband denies to be a dandelion. Even though the grass grows under the feet, her man does not want to shine in all causes. Later she wants to be a robin. But her husband refuses to be a tree. It can be interpreted that robin is compared to simplicity and a tree is compared to stability. She seeks security, caring and stability from her man, but he refuses. She then controls herself to a spider. The web here refers to family, society, etc. But her husband refuses to be a wall. Then she turns to a book, but he denies to read it. She pleads her man to understand her. But he is not ready to do it. In order to gather scrutiny she turns to be a bulb hindered of blossoming.

The word feminism refers to an intense awareness of identity as an interest in feminine problems. It is the necessary resistance to the patriarchal power. It is a movement that originated to empower women to fight against the injustices that she, as an oppressed category, suffered in society. The basic assumption about feminism is that it is about analyzing woman's oppression and trying to remedy it. It examines women's social role, experience, interests and feminist politics in a variety of fields. In this poem 'Woman', Giovanni expresses the pathetic situation of women. She was completely immersed in marriage and unable to come out due to culture. She seeks freedom and independence, but it is refused to her. She tries every opportunity, but her attempts seems to be a failure. In a society all women are considered as sexual object. They are mean to cook food and to do the household. She pleads her husband to understand her. But he denies. Towards the end she accepts that the strength and identity lie within her and she accepts to be a woman. It shows the original conditions of women.

Culture is considered a central concept in anthropology, encompassing the range of phenomena that are transmitted through social learning in human societies. Cultural universals are found in all human societies; these include expressive forms like art, music, dance, ritual, religion, and technologies like tool usage, cooking, shelter, and clothing. The concept of material culture covers the physical expressions of culture, such as technology, architecture and art, whereas the immaterial aspects of culture, such as principles of social organization, mythology, philosophy, literature, and science comprise the intangible cultural heritage of a society. It is the social behavior and norms in the society found in human societies. In culture, marriage is unavoidable. It is a happy funeral. It puts an end to a girl's happiness within a day. She is considered as a stranger by her parents in some societies and she is not allowed to stay in her parental home for so many days after marriage. The souls are with lot of expectations. The two types of attitude regarding marriage. The one is to accept it because of their culture. The other attitude is about misunderstandings and leads to broken marriages. There are also a lot of successful marriages. The secret of successful marriage is a pure understanding and complete independence given to each other.

It also potrays womanhood. It means a quality considered to be a nature or characteristic of woman. The line "Womanhood is something you don't consider until it hits you" (brainyquotes) aptly says the real definition of womanhood. Every girl as well as boys will have a beautiful dream regarding their marriage. Both of them hopes their life partner should have certain qualities. They dream of a perfect better future. Both the sexes wish to lead a truthful and sincere life. By concluding, the poem directly depicts the utter bad relationship and also her struggle to hold a position in a society. It uses the main ideas of personal growth and freedom. The poet also gives remedy that a successful and a happy married life is only possible my mere understanding. A basic trust on each other and respect towards each other.

References:

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