



ज्ञानम परम ध्येयम्

# Govindlal Kanhaiyalal Joshi (Night) Commerce College, Latur

Shri Harihar Pratishthan's

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Affiliated to Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded

in the memory of

Late Govindlalji Joshi

One Day

National Conference

on

Recent Trends in Literature

साहित्य के नवप्रवाह

साहित्यातील नवप्रवाह



पु. गोविंदलालजी जोशी



This is to certify that Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss. Gawali Manisha Baburao

of Shivaji Mahavidyalaya, Hingoli

has participated as

a Delegate/Resource Person/Chairperson for a One Day National Conference organized by the Department of English, Hindi and Marathi of Govindlal Kanhaiyalal Joshi (Night) Commerce College, Latur on 18th February 2019

He/She presented a Research Paper entitled Nalini and Malti New Indian Woman

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Chief Editor

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(I/C Principal)

Editor

**Shaikh Aref**

Asst. Professor, Dept. of English

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- **Dr. Sujata Chavan**, Chief Editor

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**Nalini and Malti New Indian Woman**  
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Most dramatists in the past, whether writing in the past, whether writing in the regional languages or in English, fostered the conventional picture of man as the bread-winner and protector and woman as dependent and powerless. The woman was portrayed as an idealized being who willingly accepted her socially assigned role of a daughter, wife and mother.

41 But this picture began to change in Indian drama in English towards the middle of the twentieth century. Drama began to reflect the new awareness of woman. Participation in the freedom struggle, opportunities for education, the influence of feminist movements, began to give women a sense of being individuals in their own right. Women began to rise in conflict against traditional concepts. Thus, it is observed the representation of the 'New Women', whose image existence is marked by a struggle for identity. For this purpose two plays - *Nalini* contained in *Three Plays* (1969) by Nissim Ezekiel and *Thorns On a Canvas* (1962) by Assif Currimbhoy have been focused.

The two representatives Nalini and Malti are similar in many ways. Both are painters who refuse to be dictated to. Both are unmarried. Both desire to be independent. A major difference in their portrayal is that while it is observed that Nalini as a woman who has already arrived, whereas Malti is in the process of arriving.

The real Nalini is very different from the Nalini of Bharat's imagination. As opposed to Bharat's picture of a dabbler in arts, she turns out to be a serious artist well-versed in her art.

Nalini has to undergo a conflict with man." It is through the portrait of Nalini that Ezekiel tries to project the struggle of a genuine artist who wants to establish herself by her own effort." She sees through him and rejects his advances. When Bharat accuses her of being a prude, her retort is "Prude? for what, surrendering to your empty charms, your hollow ideas, for not admiring your self-indulgent description of how you live! You expect me to consider you honest, because you admit your weakness. It's sheer hypocrisy." Bharat and Nalini are put in contrast to each other, so as to reveal the difference between the fake and the genuine. The playwright reveals the ulterior motives of such promoters of art and the resistance is necessary because "the general notion about woman as a shadow-figure to a male caretaker, be he a father, a husband or a son, continues to persist."<sup>3</sup>

*Thorns On a Canvas* is a satire on art academies with their vested interests. Art academies which claim to have the intention of promoting art, often throttle young promising artists. The characters are symbolic. The patron represents customary patronage which aims at self-aggrandizement and does not care for true artistic merits. His daughter Malti, symbolizes perfection without a soul. Yakub and Nafesa stand for natural art forceful, raw and original. Though the play is about the struggle of an artist against the tyranny of collectivised art, it is significant that Currimbhoy chooses Malti to represent the artist in conflict.

Malti, who learnt art in the Ecole de Beaux Arts in France, is subdued at first when faced by her domineering father. But she is intrigued as well as fascinated by Yakub and Nafesa. She is aware of the fact that her painting lacks soul and her journey towards self-realization of an artist begins when she appreciates Yakub's paintings of her. The play revolves round the transformation in the character of Malti and in her awareness of what constitutes art.

The conflict with man can be seen in Malti also. An



attempt is made to transform Malti from "a beautiful love... in to a buzzard,"<sup>4</sup> by the Art Academy owned by her father. She obey her father when he asks her to paint certain types of paintings for her exhibition. However, both Malti and her friend, Nela struggle against the attempt to suppress their individuality in art. It is the sense of dissatisfaction that opens the door to fulfillment in the case of Malti and Nela. A meek surrender to the forces of society would only result in blowing out the artistic flame.

Most men do not react favourably to women who are free of the male dependency syndrome. They feel threatened because with women's education and employment, virtually no area remains an exclusive male preserve.

Bharat finds it difficult to understand a woman like her who wants "of create a world to her own, just as a creative man does, a woman with the will to explore herself and the world around her."<sup>5</sup> He reveals his annoyance when he calls Nalini, "an independent woman with the intelligence of a man and the determination of an orthodox Indian mother-in-law. She's a living insult to men..."<sup>6</sup> Ezekiel reveals where he stands when finally Bharat says, "There's nothing wrong with Nalini. There's something wrong with us."<sup>7</sup> This is where Ezekiel deserves the greatest credit. It would have been unthinkable for a dramatist to have a male character voice such thoughts in the fifties.

The New Woman walks a path fraught with difficulties. It is not easy to break the bonds of convention and create a new role-model. This often leads to conflicts within women. Nalini is interested in selling her paintings because she wants to be on her own and does not want to be independent on her parents. She wishes to be true to her vocation of painting. She describes the conflict within her as she paints. Ezekiel does not mention the other aspects of the conflict within the emerging Indian woman, which some other writers have taken note of:

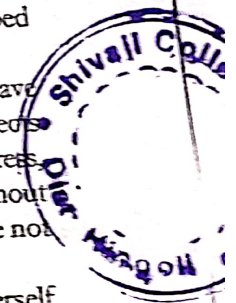
An educated, working woman is comparable to Trishanku, a character in Hindu mythology who

had  
To hang between with his body... The working  
woman  
Who steps out of the traditional confines of the  
home  
In to the world of work, faces a similar problem  
for  
She can never be fully accepted in the world of  
work nor  
Can she come back to the world she has stepped  
out of and left behind.<sup>8</sup>

In Nalini, we are made aware that creative artists like Nalini have to suffer an identity crisis throughout their lives, all the aspects of the crisis have not been dealt with. Mental stress, psychological trauma, the lack of support within and without the family and among the members of one's own sex have not been explored.

Malti has also to undergo a conflict within herself before she can break free. She has to step-out of the confines of her studio and see the reality of life. The reality may be painful. But without pain "there can be no awareness without it there can be no birth... no greatness to paintings."<sup>9</sup> she realises the truth in Yakub's words and goes to his room when he invites her. A shock awaits her and finds Yakub and Nafesa in bed together. However, she understands that this is only another step in her self education she will attain the rose of love and fulfillment only if she is ready to experience the prick of the thorn. She resolves the conflict within herself and changes Bukay in to Yakub and steps confidently into the future with him.

Thus, Nalini in *Nalini*, Malti in *Thorns On a Canvas* represent the New Indian Woman who is characterised by authenticity, candour, assertion, independence and courage. The New Woman is not deterred by the discouraging attitude of society. She is not defeated by the conflicts within her. She





strides forward, ready to face the challenges that life has to offer. What is significant about both Nalini and Malti, besides the establishment of their own identity, is the effect they have on a male character.

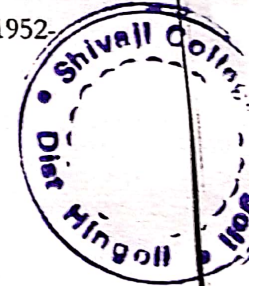
Nalini acts like a catalyst and makes Bharat look into himself. She gives him a new awareness of himself and of women. Malti succeeds in inspiring the mechanical Bukay to Change back into the Naturalist Yakub, and try again to storm the portals of art. Both Nalini and Malti, at the end of the respective plays are seen looking eagerly and expectantly towards the future. Malti hopes to paint a masterpiece. She feels "a change, it must express itself ... urgently. It's like an unknown experience..." Nalini's words towards the end of the play *Nalini* are almost an echo of this, "I want to be on the side of change, the unpredictable, exploration, discovery, invention, in short the future..."<sup>10</sup>

Nalini and Malti, stand for the new Indian Woman who has the confidence that she will be able to bring about a change in society and turn male domination into a myth. As Ezekiel tells the woman person in one of his poems, "Do not be satisfied with the world/that God created. Create your own..."<sup>11</sup>

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