

WOMAN'S EXCLUSORY LOVE IN NAMITA GOKHALE'S "THE BOOK OF SHADOWS" AND "A HIMALAYAN LOVE STORY"

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Abstract: Namita Gokhale has portrayed some memorable women characters. The women eulogized by Namita Gokhale are fiercely strong, fiery, and assertive, individualistic women who are cultural icons, with intense sense of loyalty to the clan and community. Her works are protest, an attempt to construct "new selves in new structures". She has chiselled heroic women characters that have the fortitude to face their destinies. Namita Gokhale's women characters seek affirmation of womanhood by reversal of roles, out doing their male counterparts and have the mettle to rise above the mundane and ordinary life, though they could not completely defy the moral but dogmatic, cantankerous standards. The women may not be raised to heroic grandeur but these New Women, seek release. Namita Gokhale has deconstructed femininity among those traumatized by physical and psychological violence and driven into exile from their body and identity.

Keywords: Love, Faith, Reality, Assertive, Individualistic.

Introduction: *The Book of Shadows* was written after Gokhale lost her husband Rajiv due to liver cirrhosis. She had been experiencing a great trauma and pain attributable to this, and the novel was a result of the anger and pain that was inside her. She says, "I didn't realize that this was a book about pain. (...) That's what I fuelled Rachita with" (*Shadows* words 18). Rachita is additionally filled with a great anger for what has occurred in her life. Her fiancé Anand conferred suicide and Anand's sister blamed her for it. All the while, his sisters plashed a beaker full of acid on Rachita's face, disfigured her physically, emotionally and mentally. This is the purpose behind Rachita's outrage and hurt which Gokhale ventures as an offshoot of her own hurt and anger. Rachita's visit in the mountains is filled with contemplative and philosophical considerations which overrun the novel right from the first page when she relates herself to the old house: "This house belongs to me, as I belong to this house(.....) presences, so different from the bewildering world below" (*The Book of Shadows* 3). These lines toss light on the place of her more youthful days is by and by giving her shelter, though she is distant from everyone else, however the world has rejected her, the house has a place with her and has ingested her. It also recommends that she is idealistic as anticipating for the dawn though at show it is sunset time the starting seeks trust. Later on in the novel she tells: "I have come to the hills to heal, to hide, to forget ... My face, that familiar index of my being, has dissolved into absurdity and abstraction. The avengers of my vanity have broken me, humbled me with these small depredations of skin and bone and tissue, leaving me less than I was" (*The Book of Shadows* 6). Rachita is in a condition of a perplexity and confusion. She can't come to terms with her deformed self and investigating a mirror is an incomprehensible and unbearable step. She cuts of all ties from her quick paced city life and society, wanting to spend her time in "solitude and soliloquy to come to terms with what had happened" (*The Book of Shadows*7). This act of investigating the mirror demonstrates that a feeling of positivism starts to crawl into Rachita's state of mind towards life. She had been living in a condition of refusal and denial, where she couldn't deal with the adjustments throughout her life whether it was on the physical level or a more philosophical level. She realizes: "My world had been undermined, taken apart, reduced to anarchy and chaos. (...)We are unable to see the important things because they are right before our eyes" (*The Book of Shadows* 230). Before going to the house on the slopes, Rachita used to show English Literature at a college, where she says she was an "overgrown student masquerading as an academic" (*The Book of Shadows* 4). Even her selling out of Anand talks about the consistency of her affection for him. The first page of the novel focuses towards Rachita's thought and familiarity with the fanciful stage when she says: "We define ourselves by the people that we know, by the face we see in the mirror. (...)Even the face I meet in the mirror is no longer mine" (*The Book of Shadows* 3). A lot of pity and recognition of the assault makes variation from the norm in her behaviour. Presently her life was totally exasperates by the past recollections and by the present hopeless state of her. Now and again, she needed to turn out from this

dilemma. Indeed, even she began to think or to envision strangely. She needed to end up an author, "I'll write a best seller and go for the launch in a black lace mantilla and have all the men in the audience wildly in love with me" (The Book of Shadows 66). It additionally raised the irregular imagination, "Perhaps. Or perhaps I'll just live here forever, and my sister will send me endless parcels of clothes and baked beans and Haldol, and I'll burn Lohaniju when he turns one hundred and dance on his ashes. Of course, I'd kill him first. Ha Ha" (The Book of Shadows 66). Some of the time, she herself felt that her conduct was not ordinary by any stretch of the imagination. She tried everything to comfort herself yet everything was useless. "Nothing is what it seems to be. Even my arithmetic is dismayed. Mathematics is sanity, especially when it moves towards increasing levels of abstraction. It battles change and disequilibrium. And now, these anomalies, these confusions. What is happening to me?" (The Book of Shadows 67). Rachita is endeavouring to search for colours, and attempting to look forward in life after a torturous attack on her, the physical ambush had disabled her ethical mind also; yet at the same time she is aspirational. She promote tells: Choice is the joker in life's pack of cards. Life is a steady arrangement of choices. Some you make and some are definitely made for you. (The Book of Shadows 87). Rachita has lost all feeling of understanding and thinking because of the emergency in her life. It is amusing how her typical life takes another hand directly over front of the mirror when she becomes a casualty of a corrosive attack: "...This was my first day in college after Anand's death. I saw her in the mirror, her face almost at my shoulder, and turned around in vague panic. And then it happened. As my vision blurred, as my consciousness dissolved in a river of searing pain, I could hear the tinkle of her bangles, glass against gold, and the swish of her starched cotton sari as she walked out, leaving me alone in the toilet block"(The Book of Shadows 6).

The character of Parvati, *A Himalayan Love Story* has been depicted in such a way, to the point that it procures sensitivity of the reader. A young lady without a father, an uncle the main male help and the mother not exceptionally understanding towards the young lady's sentiments. Every one of these viewpoints makes a thoughtful state of mind towards Parvati. She is youthful, filled with desires and aspirations however without assets, need to make her own particular space. However, she neglects to do as such adequately and grounds herself up in a refuge. The novel starts: "I have always recognized that I carry emptiness inside me, although I did not at first understand it."(A Himalayan Love Story 3) This announcement from the storyteller of the novel uncovers a vulnerability with respect to her, Gokhale's the greater part of the characters experience the ill effects of vulnerability and fall prey to wrong choices taken amid critical conditions. To affirm this view a supposition from an audit, which censures the opening sentence which is in opposition to the title of the novel; what is seen to start with is available all through the novel and even stays till the finish of the novel. The novel opens with a sentence from the champion Parvati: I have always recognized that I carry emptiness inside me, though I did not at first understand it. The sentence immediately tells one, if the title has not already done so, that the story to follow will involve a failed romance and will be what some reviewers describe as "sensitively told(Dom Moraes)Let me keep one of them," I begged, just one!" but mother was adamant; we could not afford it. "Then let me try them on," I said, just to see how they feel. The request was indignantly turned down, although she did soften, and promised to knit me a tasselled scarf after the Shahji's wife had paid for"(A Himalayan Love Story 9). The girl child isn't having a father figure and the mother is likewise not exceptionally steady; in addition they experience the ill effects of monetary emergency. She remarks when they couldn't bear the cost of a delicate woollen sweater. Such was their situation; the young lady was raised under such conditions, which affected her identity.

A Himalayan Love Story trails the lives of Parvati and Mukul, who grow up together in the Himalayan town of Nainital. One ends up noticeably caught in a miserable orchestrated marriage lastly winds up in a mental refuge, while alternate escapes the prohibitive and moderate slope tribes to live in Hong Kong, returning in middle age to satisfy the last "wishes of his previous educator, and to look for a lonely adolescent love. It is a thoughtful story, delightfully composed. Despite the fact that Parvati had turned into a theme for Mukul, he couldn't acknowledge her rough and decrepit appearance, outward appearance assumes a noteworthy part and quotes: What seized me more than anything else was seeing the blurred nail clean on her toenails (A Himalayan Love Story 6). It would be unique if that you were a kid, she would state indignantly, and afterward you could win and accommodate me in: my old age. But all you are going to do is get married to some no-good, and take my gold champ kali necklace off with you as dowry. It's double curse, to be first be born a woman, then get straddled with another female to provide for!" (A Himalayan Love Story 7). The girl was not acknowledged for considering, even her mother would complain. Such were the perspectives of her mom; Gokhale has depicted this novel inside the scenery of the Kumoan hills.

In *A Himalayan Love Story*, Gokhale has featured characters' straightforward lifestyles basic lifestyles of the general population in the slopes when contrasted with the life in the urban areas. It additionally accentuates the requirement for sustenance and how it assumes a critical part in one's life. The significance of nourishment is by and by featured in Parvati's life; she with her culinary abilities could possess an essential place at her in-laws put and even in her better half's heart. They were occupied with honey bee keeping and Parvati had learnt a great deal about it, the subtitle of the initial segment of the novel is additionally relating to bumble bees she clarifies: Male bees are usually short-lived, (...)Female bees do all the work of nest keeping and provisioning. (A Himalayan Love Story 11). The girl witnesses the things amongst woman and man, which abandon her awestruck; and she shouts: My world was shattered. People were not as they appeared. There was another life behind their masks. My mother and our tenant stood before me in flesh, their true nature unmasked (A Himalayan Love Story 22&23). This episode strongly affected the life of the girl; she even faces such a circumstance in her life later on, such a demonstration of senior citizens left a profound impact on the psyche of the little young girl. Soon her mother died of tuberculosis and she was moved to her uncles' house at Wee Nooke, here she bore the duty of the house as it happened to be a lone ranger's home. She remarks: The Parvati who lived with her mother in Jeolikote had receded deep into the past, and a merry young creature had set up camp inside me (A Himalayan Love Story 28). She additionally needs to state: I was preoccupied with my physical self. (...)I washed it off before the world could witness the transformation (A Himalayan Love Story 29). Gokhale has utilized the procedure of a journalist in her composition, as she happens to be a daily paper editorialist and a supervisor. None of the ladies characters stunningly depicted; some of them secure the reader's sensitivity. Mukul was completely lost in the past and thinks back their existence with Parvati in Nainital. She sees Parvati in her girl Irra; he could discover numerous likenesses in appearance and even conduct took after Parvati.

To sum up, most works of Namita Gokhale are enlivened by the status of ladies in society and in patriarchal system. Through her books she offers voice to the sufferings, to misery and agony of women inside their social standards and traditions. There is an emergence, a development in the identity of her ladies in which time, battle and circumstances assume a major part. There is an emergence, a development in the identity of her ladies in which time, battle and circumstances assume a major part. Every one of her ladies from the Grandmother to Shakuntala rise against the crippling society which hinders women' advance and dissident against all attempts to omit ladies' critical part in the family and society. Her ladies are victims of a traditional society which does not allow ladies to hold their own and considers the very issue of identity crisis as outrageous opportune ladies. Her ladies characters without a doubt uncover her women's activist ideology. Namita Gokhale needs women to perceive themselves. She says, "Women should find out their 'swadharma'. In dharma, being woman, what may sound to the world very wrong, in your instinct it might be right thing. You have to have the strength to do it."(Jain)

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