

## THE ROLE OF COLONIZED MOTHER: A STUDY OF GIRL (PROSE POEM) BY JAMAICA KINCAID

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**Abstract:** Memory is a human's deep root by which we draw our past experiences, that also focuses on human unconscious process which weakens or even jeopardizes human persona and provide a psychiatric and psychologic analysis of the dehumanizing effects of colonization upon the individual. It is also known as *the beginning of knowledge* gains through the sense of experience.

A mother's affection shapes their children's future and converts it into their life long positive outcome, on the other hand, lack of maternal warmth and validation warps their sense of self, makes them lack confidence or be wary of close emotional connection, and shapes their future into physical and mental trauma. Jamaica Kincaid through the depiction of personal life, represents the mother's stereotypical role in the society, which also reflects *Kincaid's* (writer) own feeling of anger towards her mother.

The paper's aim is to first look at the concepts of race and gender in reference to African American literature and take a glimpse into the mind of woman then briefly expand the world's innate ideas where the male holds the primary power. The following paper will focus on the issues of race and gender through the short story *Girl* written by *Jamaica Kincaid*.

**Keywords:** Collective Unconsciousness, Identity, Motherhood, Tabula Rasa.

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*"Oppression, ruled and still being ruled by patriarchy, government, Caste and religion, women are forced to break all the strictures of the society In order to live"* -- (Preface, *Sangati*)

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Black women and other women of color have been historically marginalized in *feminist* movements in the United States. Literature is the voice to the marginalised people. Through literature writers distort pre-established perception of the society by giving the real image of the society. According to Jungian psychology a society replete with the primitive images that is inherited from the earliest human ancestor and turn into a form of collective unconsciousness.

Colored men will be masters over the women moreover black women would suffer from a "triple bondage that man never knows. Black tradition to speak for itself about its nature and various functions, rather than to read it, or analyze it, in terms of literary theories borrowed whole from other traditions. Writer mainly concentrate over human double consciousness which is the idea that black people must have two field of vision at all times. They must be conscious of how they view themselves, as well as being conscious of how the world views them. Through the story, *Jamaica* (writer) questioned the fundamental, fixed principles and assumptions which is provoked by patriarchy myth and examines the stifling roles that denied women freedom of expression. Thus the story can be seen as advocating a woman's right to act and speak for herself.

Writer as Jamaica Kincaid, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Gayl Jones and Zora Neale Hurston candidly focused on the perilous, embittered and brutal relationship between black man and woman. Black women in America being black, female and poor have been victimized by racism, sexism, and classism, not only from the white world, but also from their own men. These women have faced the problems of race, class and gender, which have pushed them towards a margin. These are systems of societal and psychological oppression that have adversely affected the lives of blacks in general and African-American women in particular.

Black Women have been victimized not only by racist, sexist and class bias, but also by scholarly neglect. Yet, over the centuries they have tried to present their case, their quest for freedom and attempts at self-assertion through literature.

Jamaica Kincaid is an expert lecturer, educator, editor, essay writer, literary critic and short story writer, but it is her work as a novelist that makes her such a significant member of the Black American canon. Though her works are loosely build to autobiographical but it maintain its aesthetic beauty of writing that coupled with its political power.

Jamaica Kincaid (Antiguan-American novelist) walked her first step to portray all the hardship of her community and discuss the evils nature of society. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau says in his work *Discourse on Inequality*-that man is naturally good and that vice and error are alien to him. Thus he flawlessly says that we are good by nature but corrupted by the society.

Though women of her community are self-dependent. Because all women earn their wages but psychologically they are depended by white authority or social concept where people mind leads by *binary opposition* that believes in *presence and absence dichotomy* where *presence* occupies a position of dominance in Western thought over *absence*. Thus concept of bipolar is also related to *hierarchical system* and logo-centricism which is also known as Phallogocentrism that refer to the privileging of the masculine (phallus). Therefor woman who has been "colonized" by phallogocentrism thinking (Hélène Cixous in *The Laugh of Medusa*).

Jamaica believed that black women's triple oppression based on race, class, and gender preceded all other forms of oppression. Additionally, she theorized that by freeing black women, who are the most oppressed of all people, freedom would be gained for all people who suffer from race, class, and gender oppression.

*Girl*- a prose poem by *Jamaica Kincaid* presented power and weakness of a mother, who is psychoanalytically influenced since childhood about western society which built on patriarchal foundation. Motherhood posed great challenges to African American women under slavery as reflected in literary works by Black writers. Black mothers lost the opportunity and freedom to perform roles of 'caregivers' to their children. As victims of such humiliating and shameful experiences, the black women, realizing the implication of this situation to their sex, developed survival strategies to protect themselves and their female children. This resulted in some very strange relationships between mothers and their daughters. This paper re-examines mother/daughter relationship that existed between black mothers and their daughters and the implications of such relationship on the Black American society. In the fiction *Girl*- mother is trying to pass down certain beliefs from her culture to her daughter that the mother wants her to inhabit. The mother constantly reminds her daughter of how to become the "perfect" woman in order to fit into the society that they live in. As the story goes on, the mother's directions get more demanding thus through story *Kincaid*, presents a unique example of mother trying to protect her daughter using the discouragement of female sexuality and showing how it defines what it means to be a girl and shapes the way woman are expected to behave. Her mother emphasizes things like cooking, cleaning and sowing to help define for her daughter what being a girl means. She also focuses on not behaving like a boy, which prevent her daughter from even playing marbles. In short to be a real girl you must be a housewife and cannot do anything distinctly masculine. Which reflect two views first mother own fear for her daughter insecurity in the enslavement environment. She wants to protect her beloved from the harshness of the slavery where she can become the victim of sexual exploitation at any moment. Which also illustrate mother terror stage regarding the incidents of brutality and inhumanity upon the female slave population. Thus she provides advice of how to do certain domestic behaviors, including making Antiguan dishes, as well as the more assertive points of being a respectable woman and upholding sexual purity.

Second view of the prose poem consist is mother stream of consciousness where the idea of patriarchy is fixed in her flow of thought. Her view for woman in a position where her place is subservience to men.

As she teaches to her daughter that “the chores and behavior are more directly related to a woman’s duties to men such as ironing a man’s clothes”. Thus

The author’s tone and mood for the story demonstrates the residual effects of the slavery and colonial takeover of her land. The girl speak only twice in the story voicing impulsive and objectionable to her mother teaching shows her new perspective towards life and her self-affirmation. Her voice towards mother’s teachings reveal her struggle to archetype male-dominated society where she struggle constantly for freedom or self-identification.

The prose poem also reveals the generation gap between mother and daughter that present a different attitude of opinion. Mother represent the ideology of *Angel in the House*- it adopted the ideology of *cult of domesticity*- according to *Coventry Patmore*- women and men are naturally predisposed to excel in a specific realm of society or culture. Women were regarded as being given to aspects of the private or domestic sphere which generally entailed caring for the house and children, while men were made for the public sphere which makes it appropriate for them to leave the home for work and civic obligations (*The Angel in the House*), who embodied the feminine ideal: a wife and mother who was selflessly devoted to her children and submissive to her husband. Whereas daughter embodies *Virginia Woolf’s* concept who is ready to debilitating cultural roles of “*angel*” and “*the monster*” which assigned to them by patriarchal institution and generated the concept of *The New Born Woman* or *The New Aspect of Woman* by *Sarah Grand*- The term “New Woman” was coined by the writer and public speaker Sarah Grand in 1894 (271). Who is more active participant in life as a member of society by creating the concept of *fin de siècle* and generate the ideology of *equality*. The New Woman, a significant cultural icon of the of the *fin de siècle*, departed from the stereotypical Victorian woman. She was intelligent, educated, emancipated, independent and self-supporting. The New Women were not only middle-class female radicals, but also factory and office workers. As Sally Ledger wrote: “*The New Woman was a very fin-de-siècle phenomenon. Contemporary with the new socialism, the new imperialism, the new fiction and the new journalism, she was part of cultural novelties which manifested itself in the 1880s and 1890s.*”

Thus through the portrayal of *daughter*, *Kincaid* present the concept of the advocacy of woman’s rights on the grounds of political, social and economic equality to men and theorized that by freeing black women, who are the most oppressed of all people, freedom would be gained for all people who suffer from race, class, and gender oppression. Only than woman will discover her individual soul who will be liberated from predestined roles assigned to them by monarchy of man.

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