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Study of Postmodernism and politics in the novel of Meena Kandasamy's *The Gypsy Goddess*

Meena Kandasamy 's debut novel *The Gypsy Goddess* addresses the plight of a community of farm workers living and working in inhumane conditions, dealing with the relentless oppression and heart breaking atrocities inflicted on them by their ruthless landlords in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. In particular, this novel revolves around the historic massacre that took place in the village of Kilvenmani on Christmas Day, 1968, when Marxist ideology gained popularity among disenfranchised Dalits, or untouchables, who worked in brutal conditions on rice paddies. The Green Revolution also began to change food production irrevocably, boosting harvests, but forcing farmers to depend on toxic fertilizers sold by American companies. The purpose of this article will be to analyze the various ways in which Kandasamy, so far known as a critically acclaimed poet, uses the novel as a literary genre, together with some well- known post- modern theories and strategies, in order to reveal the shortcomings of traditional linear plot- driven novels, criticize the exoticism so

often shown in contemporary Indian fiction. As this analysis shows, the experimental nature of this novel which enables Kandasamy to confront readers with an unpleasant reality beyond the ability of the conventional realistic novel.

Keywords: Gypsy Goddess, Postmodernism, Caste, Postmodern Novel, Politics, Kilvenmani Massacre, Meena Kandasamy, Dalit Literature

Women all over the world, and especially in rural India, have faced challenges to get educated and it is doubly difficult for a Dalit woman. The few women who were educated and written came out with work in book forms that were largely autobiographical, inclined towards feminism and were also considered primarily as a women's movement to emerge from oppressive standards. One of them is Meena Kandasamy, an eminent Dalit writer who works closely with caste and gender issues and on the basis of these categories how society places people in stereotypical roles.

Ilavenil Meena Kandasamy is a well-known poet, writer, translator and activist based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. Most of her works focus on feminism and antiquity. Movement of Caste Annihilation of the contemporary Indian environment. Two poetry collections were published by Meena, Touch and Ms. Militancy. Two of her poems have won awards in poetry competitions throughout India. She edited The Dalit, the Dalit Media Network 's bi-monthly alternative English magazine. Her novels were The Gypsy Goddess and When I Hit You: Or, a young woman portrait of the writer. In addition to her literary works, she speaks in more ways than one about various contemporary political issues related to caste, corruption, violence and women's rights. She has an influential and regular presence in social media. She also writes columns for platforms such as Outlook India and the Hindu, sometimes.

The 1968 Dalit massacre was an outrageous episode in the history of India. The activist Meena Kandasamy, who published *The Gypsy Goddess* in 2014, tells us why she felt obliged to tell us about the tragedy and how the caste system still destroys lives.

Kandasamy deliberately places her novel in the sphere of Western literary tradition and compares her novel with literature in the West. Ironically enough, she turns her novel into a postmodernist novel by rejecting it, as the narrative technique and style of the novel properly show. Postmodernism says a person is a product of his social environment and social content. Literature in Dalit never has a subjective tone or voice. Dalit Literature has many characteristics of postmodern literature. It is, in a way, Postmodern since it challenges canon and defies Indian literary tradition . It believes in deconstructing truth, reason in order to show how the truth and reason have been constructed by the upper caste Hindus in order to dominate over the Dalits and lower castes. Similarly, in the West the truth and the reason were constructed by the white upper class males in order to suit their comfort and to exert and assert their dominance over the racial minorities and female sex and lower class. *The Gypsy Goddess*, has almost all the characteristics defined above in order to be aptly called as a postmodern novel.

In order to achieve social change, postmodernism exercises power, which thinks there are mostly political horrors in the West. But it is not known that caste horrors are not only limited to the social sphere, but are also part and parcel of the Indian political arena. Kandasamy uses the postmodern technique to expose the presence of these political horrors in rural India at grassroots level. Ironically, language is used. Meena Kandasamy ironically uses language. She says she doesn't write a postmodernist novel, but she writes one. When she says that, she is contradictory to herself. According to postmodernist the use and stress on the use of reason by the western civilization has brought havoc on the world in the form of wars and oppression. The idea of going against reason is therefore used by postmodernists. They believe in truth deconstruction and failure to adhere to specific rules and laws. Brahminical texts emphasized

a particular literary tradition in the Indian context. Those who tried to break the literary tradition were forced to without criticize their work. In this sense, Dalit literature has violated the Hindu literary tradition's rules and laws. The Hindu caste used the rules, like the rules of western civilization, to keep the Dalits away from gaining or producing knowledge. Meena challenges the dominant Hindu literary tradition of the caste by mixing the western literary technique with the sentiments of the eastern Dalit to create a new type of art in Dalit literature. The use of so-called vulgar language is a shift away from the Hindu caste's pure Sanskrit language. It therefore challenges their language purity and the hypocrisy inherent in their use. Postmodernist education idea is that education makes a person aware of his or her racial, sexual and class identity. Education was seen almost in the same light in the Dalits contexts. When Ambedkar strongly suggests educating the people of the Dalit community, he wanted them to be aware of their social position and social reality. The role of education in the Dalit community is therefore the same as that of postmodernists who argue that "postmodern education should emphasize works that are not in the canon." That's the case with literature from Dalit. And it focuses on the marginalized's achievements. It highlights the Hindu caste's historic crimes. It also shows the other side of the truth that postmodernists also advocated when they asked us to explore alternative ways to learn about society. Dalit literature is very much in the literary tradition of postmodernism. Dalit literature is always blamed for lack of literary esthetic meaning. Through her novel *The Gypsy Goddess*, Kandasamy once and for all places her novel in the western postmodernist literary tradition. It should not only be seen as a challenge to the Hindu literary tradition, but also as a turning point in Dalit literature history. Postmodernists believe that our present social context is characterized by oppression that benefits the upper Hindu castes at the expense of the Dalit community in the Indian context. It has its own limitation to depict truths through novels(books). The whole truth remains somewhere hidden, Although Kandasamy has tried her best to portray this one dark day in the most picturesque

way possible. The novel, *The Gypsy Goddess*, has no main character or hero or protagonist. .

A postmodernist novel does not believe in focusing on a single character.

The writing of Meena Kandasamy comes from the margins of Dalit literature dictated for many centuries by the caste code. She uses her voice not only to expose the Dalits' atrocities, but also to represent their anger as a response to these prejudices. Dalit literature is uniquely Indian because it is a by-product of a malicious caste system that has existed in this country for many years. Although India's constitution has abolished the caste system, it remains as firm as ever in its people's minds in many walks of life. It can be compared to American slavery and Africa's apartheid. Although India's constitution has abolished the caste system, it remains as firm as ever in its people's minds in many walks of life. It can be compared to American slavery and Africa's apartheid. Dalit literature is the literature that emerges as an outburst against casteism. Debut novel by Meena Kandasamy, *The Gypsy Goddess* is a bold and original work that recounts a massacre in Tamil Nadu's southern Indian state on 25 December 1968. Through the sections "Background," "Battleground" and "Burial Ground," Kandasamy describes a dark arc that eventually and unwaveringly reveals how 44 disenfranchised Dalit workers, including women and children, were burned alive by their landlords, and what retribution followed, "the biggest atrocity of castes in India." In the fictional version of this tragedy by the author, which draws on historical documents and interviews with survivors, farm workers are on strike after landlords kill a popular communist leader. The landlords are trying to intimidate them to work. They impose weakening fines, intimidate them with the police and savagely attack Dalit women. But Kilvenmani village's hungry people are determined in their demands for justice. The landlords finally sent a goon squad to attack Kilvenmani, who turned dozens of villagers into a single hut and lit it up. They eventually kill many villagers, turning their bodies into charred, unrecognizable bodies, and yet most of the perpetrators are released from the hook. Meanwhile, many villagers who lost loved ones are sent to jail in the massacre.

The Gypsy Goddess is equally animated, with ideas and black humor and righteous anger. Stylistically, it breaks many rules, and the narrative is stubbornly non-linear when we focus in this work through the eye of postmodernism and politics. We get a variety of busy voices instead of a central character. "well, I'm someone who gets bored easily," explains Kandasamy, and so I had to challenge myself. Also the story was so sprawling that I didn't want to limit myself to one person, I wanted to bring in the state machinery, the Communist Party, the workers, eyewitness accounts and police records.

Meena depicts the extremity of violence by cataloging each victim's fate, especially the children. Kids' death is a great cultural thing. Children are never a definite enemy, they have no views, so the killing of children is a very special brutality and one has to talk about it. But the novel by Meena is more than a fictional account of a national tragedy. The novel in our hands is "Tamil in taste, English in language, free from all poetry and prosody, dandy prose." The stubborn and brutal imagery of this novel is perfectly explored. Meena uses a range of narrative iconoclastic voices. A single breathless sentence that evokes the massacre with lucid, haunting descriptions is one chapter. Other chapters take the form of a communist pamphlet denouncing inequity or one of the landlords' letters. A section told in the second person, about a journalist who would commemorate the tragedy years later, confronts the futility of documenting such tragedies. Meena cuts with irreverent wit bursts this serious and sad novel. In addition to squandering words on these gimmicky, especially since the second half of her novel does a fabulous job of being an unusual book. The lyrical, radical core of this novel, which offers bold perspectives on the relationship between poverty and power, should be trudged through this material. She tries to deal with the tragedy throughout the book, as it also relates to related developments. There is a place where language flaws and police records and bullet lists must be put into service. Justice takes its slow meandering course after this brutal massacre and finally all landlords are acquitted. Meanwhile, some of the villagers who escaped

the fire are accused of killing an agent of the landlord and thrown into prison. All these incidents depicted in the novel show the intensity of the long-standing caste violence in India. Through her *Gypsy Goddess*, Kandasamy once and for all places her novel in the Western postmodernist literary tradition. It should not only be seen as a challenge to the Hindu literary tradition, but also as a turning point in Dalit literature history. Instead of the fall of the Bastille, the *Gypsy Goddess* burns the third estate to death and is ridiculed by representatives of so-called democratic institutions. The country is enslaved in its own traditional and religious chains. The fight here is not only for bread and butter, but also for human dignity, which every human being has a basic right to it.

Conclusion: At last it can be concluded that the lack of space and attention given to this awful event (Historic Kilvenmani massacre,) makes this novel even more relevant and important to convey what would otherwise be buried under the sands of time. The text becomes a powerful tool in the writer's hands, especially when the sleeping masses must be awakened. It has been shown time and time again that the pen is more powerful than the sword, especially during the French Revolution, when Robespierre and others used the power of the ink to make their voices heard to the otherwise deaf people in the position of authority and privilege. The author's voice and the narrator in *The Gypsy Goddess* is not meek and subdued, but powerful and powerful, even tone condemning. The reader is not spared because he is passive. The fourth wall was repeatedly broken. Obama is still called the president of color and K.R. Narayan, a president of Dalit. Economics and politics seem to have failed to solve the abominable problems of caste and race. Real democracy has not yet been achieved. One can only wonder how much more aboriginal Dalits' blood flows under the bridges.

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