

Understanding Colonial Feminism in both India
and Korea during colonial period through the
works of two Contemporary writers Mahadevi
Verma and Kang Kyeongae: Focusing on
Mahadvi's works*

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[Abstract]

Both India and Korea have experienced a bitter stroke of Colonialism for a long period of time and colonialism has affected almost every walk of life. Women were worst victims during that period. In one hand they were bounded with many traditional restrictions on the other hand, they were soft target of the colonial powers. It was the extreme of the sufferings which paved the path for

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them to rethink their space in the society as well as in the country. It was the colonial period in which they have seen many revolutions in society which gave birth of social consciousness, political consciousness. The social consciousness and political consciousness have not only ignited the women of these two countries against the colonial powers but also against the indigenous society which had put various restrictions on them. A great impact is observed in the literary works of Korean and Hindi women writers. Voice of Feminist movement has been observed in their works. This paper will aim at the literary works Kang Kyongae, a women writer of pre-independent Korea and of Mahadevi Verma, a Hindi women writer of pre-independent India and will show that how these two women writers have raised their voice against the then existing system and tried to give a voice to the movement of women empowerment which turned into feminist movement or feminism.

Key Words: Colonial Feminism, Social Patriarchy, Self-consciousness, Individual Liberation, Mahadevi Verma, Kang Kyeongae, Indian Literature

1. Introduction

"I have bathed the darkness of many a night. And washed the redness with the yellow vermillion of the evening..."

Mahadevi Verma, Neehar (The Mist)

Both India and Korea have experienced the bitter stroke of colonialism for a prolonged period of time, and colonialism has affected almost every walk of life. Women were the worst victims during the period. On one hand, they were bounded with many traditional restrictions; on the other hand, they were soft targets of the colonial powers. It was the extreme of the sufferings which paved the path for them to rethink their space in the society as well as in the country. It was the colonial period in which they have seen many revolutions in

society which gave birth of social and political consciousness—it has not only ignited the women against the colonial powers but also against the indigenous society which had put various restrictions on them. A great impact is observed in the literary works of Hindi women writers: resonating voices of feminist movement have been observed.

Generally, it is argued that the wave of feminism which has struck India (and many other nations in the East, including Korea) came from the western world and that it has mobilized the women society to fight for their liberation from the patriarchal society. It may be true to some extent; however, it is not only the western wave of feminism but the historical circumstances and social and cultural values of India and Korea which played a pivotal role. The manner feminism emerged in India and Korea completely differs from the West.

In this paper, we will explore how feminism evolved in India by looking into Mahadevi Verma, a prominent writer of the second wave of feminism which entered in the first quarter of 20th century. In India, women have long been oppressed under the system of structural hierarchies and injustices. Women's role in pre-colonial social structures reveals that feminism was theorized differently in India compared with the West. For example, the idea of women as "powerful" had been accommodated into patriarchal culture through religion in India, which has retained visibility in all sections of society. Nevertheless, because of the colonial atrocities, the social patriarchy became more rigid and unfavorable to the women society, and in course of time, the status of women went through a pathetic condition and they got shackled in unwanted chains of social stigmas. Hence, this study aims to revisit the literary works of Mahadevi Verma, a Hindi women writer of pre-independent India, who is often compared to Kang Kyeongae, a well-known women writer of pre-independent

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Korea. It also aims to show how Verma has raised her voice against the existing system and tried to give a voice to the movement of women empowerment.

2. Social and Literary Backgrounds

2.1. Women's Social Status in India

When literature was in its oral tradition, Indian women had made their presence felt in the literary world and kept Indian society awakening. It started fading with the continuous invasion of foreign powers. With the arrival of the British rule in India in mid-19th century, situation became the worst, and women were forced to be bounded in various social atrocities—which, in course of time, became their fate. No one was there to listen to their voice; their own society made them outsiders. In Korea too, the social and cultural status of women went through a radical change with the beginning of the Japanese colonial rule in 1910. Admittedly, even before the arrival of the Japanese rule, there was Yangban system where Korean women were forced to live a deprived life; however, the shape and depth were altered under the forced rule. In the western world, woman were sharing the pride of the colonial power on the contrary; Mahadevi Verma and Kang Kyeongae were on the opposite side. One was the victim of the British colonial rule while the other suffered under the Japanese rule. Unlike western women, these two were bounded with the utter darkness of social patriarchy and were constantly experiencing the bitter truth of traditional conservatism of the society

whose face turned uglier under the colonial rule. Mahadevi Verma was even opposed to learn Sanskrit at university, as it was considered as the language of Brahmin class; unlike western feminists, Mahadevi Verma's feminism evolved in a completely different form.

2.2. Social and Literary Backgrounds

Mahadevi Verma encountered the social zeitgeist where women were being used as instruments rather than fellow beings by foreign rulers as well as their own society.

Mahadevi Verma was born in 1907 in Farrukhabad, United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (now in Uttar Pradesh, India) and died in September 11, 1987 in Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh, India). She has been an Indian writer, activist and a leading poet of the Chhayavad (romanticism) period in Hindi literature.

Since childhood, she has observed the differences between the oppressed and dominating classes. When she was trying to understand the world, it was a time of brutal colonialism and deep-rooted social patriarchy. On one hand, there was a dominance of romantic literary writing; on the other hand, there was a women-centric writing which centered around an urge of freedom from colonialism as well as liberation from social, cultural and political suppression. At one end, she was unconsciously evolving as a romantic poet; at other end, she was emerging as a safeguard of her own people of the same gender. Simultaneously, she was recognized as one of the four Chhayavaadi (romantic poets) poets of Hindi literary horizons, a silent feminist. She was perfect enough to understand the social zeitgeist of the nation and to move and raise her voice through her literary prose and poetic writings. Mahadevi Verma was—and even today—capable of moving

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the reader to tears in her portrayal of the eternally imprisoned but essentially free feminine soul and stirring a deep and fiery passion through her prose. Her mark is very much present in the highly lyrical prose, which comes through her short stories and essays and poems. In her literary works, she dealt extensively with women, and each characterization is deeply personal, resonating with the anguish of the tormented woman.

Mahadevi Verma's significance of tackling Indian women's issues and as a nationalist and social woman activist and of attempts to overcome their vulnerability rather than only theorizing about them is what really make Mahadevi Verma different from other contemporary feminist writers. Sensing the burden of Indian women serving as slaves to men in the patriarchal Indian society, enslaved by colonial power, she came up with many marvelous writings highlighting and debating the role and social status of Indian women in the society. Most of her writings related to women issues were published in 1930s in a women's magazine called Chand (moon), and later, all her works compiled in a book called Shrinkhala ki Kadiyan (chains of subjugation) in 1942. In 1930s, Mahadevi Verma was emerging as a feminist writer highlighting the women issues and trying to ignite them to emancipate from the shackles of Indian societal patriarchy.

In particular, Ateet ke chalachitra (sketches from my past) published in 1941, a collection of short stories based on her interactions with women who touched her life during her stint as principal of a school for girls, is considered one of her best works.

Verma's ideas display many similarities with Kang Kyeongae's fight and essence of feminism reflected in her initial writings Pageum (English translation: Broken Zither) published in 1931 and later Ingan Munje (Human Problem) published in 1934.

Even when most intellectuals were infected with anxiety and abandoned their duties to face the reality due to external pressure, Kang Kyeongae continued to depict the misery faced by women under the colonial rule and sought the possibility of transforming the colonial oppression into national solidarity (Song, 1990, p. 67).

Kang Kyeongae's works are not limited to individual female issues, but reveal the true female issues through sexual abuse while reporting how the lower class has been oppressed by the upper class (Lee, 1996, pp. 13-16). In the works of Kang Kyeongae, there exists an absolute narration of women's reality, agony, anger and the process of survival in male-dominated, frustrated, social structure of Korean Peninsula and of Japanese colonial rule. Pageum deploys realistic touch to illustrate extreme poverty and social irony; Ingan Munje also depicts the misery and social deprivation to imply the intrinsic human weakness. Both of them did prolific writings to give a proper sharpness to the movement of feminism in their respective country and society and have paved the path of emancipation and individual as well as collective liberation from colonial as well as social patriarch. She gave a revolutionary voice to the contemporary women world to fight for women's existence, identity and self-liberation.

3. The Rise of Feminism in Indian Literature

The influence of social and political status of colonized India is clearly visible in the first half of the 20th century and gave birth to a new literary genre which used to move around the theme of

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nationalism, feminism and socialism. As a colonial victim, India had seen a great paradigm shift in literature, as it was a great source to express the voice of the nation in particular and of individual. During the period, India was struggling with established rigid social norms, extremism of colonial power and with the quest of education in general and of modern education in particular. The women's status was pathetic, as they were not only the victims of extremist colonial power but also of the societal patriarchy in their own country. These two had worsened the life of women. It was the period of frustration, hidden anger towards patriarchal society as well as towards extremist colonial power and period of the realization of self-achievement which sowed the seed of feminist movement, and this voice of feminism is very vividly reflected in her works. Through a close reading of the selected works of Mahadevi Verma, we can examine women's conditioning, their internalization of patriarchy and the reasons for their inability to subscribe to any oppositional action. Textual resistance functioning within the feminist, cultural and colonial milieu of the works provide a platform to understand the theoretical debates and to identify various resistant strategies deployed in her works. The real revolutionary voice against male dominating society, feminist tone and a voice of significant women feminist writer could be sensed in the works of Mahadevi Verma: she discusses women issues with a rare candour. Verma (1937/2003) writes:

Society is collective of such individuals as have agreed to be ruled by some common regulations that allow for homogeneity and equality in their diverse conduct in order to publicly safeguard their personal interest. [...] When a society gives a lot of amenities to some individuals without any contribution from them and keeps others deprived of even the

essentials of life despite their hard labour, it can only be said to have strayed from its goal because such a situation can exist even in a savage state. (p. 122)

Feminism, like humanism, does not arise from theories but from experience. It is not the result of a sudden anti-women incident; it is the outcome of persistent anti-women acts that prevail the society for decades or centuries. It is a revolutionary reaction against a patriarchal system or an anti-women cultural, social, religious or political system where woman is not even considered as subordinate but just a slave. Mahadevi Verma has experienced the bitterness of the male dominating society which ignited her to come forward and raise her voice for the respect and right of women. The social, cultural and political treatment she has experienced in her own society forced her to fight for her and her fellows' existence and to raise voice in her literary works to regain (if there was at any point of time in past) or gain the right of equality and respect in human society.

Mahadevi was an emancipated and liberated woman, and perhaps that is the very reason why she was so intrinsically in touch with the sufferings of the bound woman. Her significant contribution to the literary world is only matched by her work in the field of women's welfare which set the tone of liberation movement for the women in the society. While her verse and prose actively sought out the terrors faced by the woman in a rigidly feudal society, she addressed these issues in her role as an educator and tried to inculcate the sense of liberation and self-respect of women.

In one of her earlier works, Mahadevi Verma says (cited in Jain, 2000, p. 21):

"In sapno ke pankh na kaato, in sapno ke gati mat bandho"

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(Don't cut the wings of their dream and don't obstruct their path). She urges the society not to cut the wing of the dream of a woman and not to obstruct the path of a woman's dream.

Her literary world is multidimensional as it has been formed by poetry, essays and criticism and everywhere there is a women discourse at the center either in direct or indirect form. In fact, there are two shades of her literary works. One is of poetry and other is of prose: in poetry, there is flow of compassion and pain which has aroused due to traditional and social atrocities; in prose, there is a flow of social realism and social thought which is centering on women discourse. When Mahadevi Verma wrote

"Tumko piDa men DunDha, Tum me DhunDhungi PiDa"

(I searched you in pain, I will search pain in you) her writing became a victim of a patriarchal interpretation (as male critiques interpreted "you" as biological male). This is not what Mahadevi Verma means when she wrote these lines. It is a request for equality in pain (Singh, 2015, p. 335).

The female literature of the 1930s features the challenge against patriarchal society as well as the female consciousness as the victimized and underprivileged beings in Korea (Lee, 1996, p. 12). In 1930s, female writers have either depicted the collapse of the traditional marital relations in relation to the chaos of patriarchal values or approached female liberation within the framework of class paradox; Kang Kyeongae's works belong to the latter (Lee, 1996, pp.13-14). Kang Kyeongae's literary works attract due attention as they center on the female issues under the colonial rule within a wider framework of universal agendas. Since the modern notion of feminism has been

introduced belatedly (early 1970s) in Korea, Kang Kyeongae's portrait of women's self-consciousness—to understand female issues from the perspective of feminism—are of great significance (Kim, 2004, p. 73). Despite Kang's contributions, the co-existence of the class notion and patriarchal female consciousness reveals that the female consciousness described in her works is still suffocated in the widely-held conservative realms (Park, 2003, p. 260).

4. Mahadevi Verma's Feminist Approach

When we analyze *Main Hun Ek Paheli Bhi* (I am the first) of Mahadevi Verma, she has been brilliant in expressing the women discourse. Throughout the work, She has expressed agony, struggle, pain, slavery, revolt and hope of a women who has been struggling for her existence. When she writes *Main nir bhari dukh ki badly* (I am cloud of sorrow which is full of tears), she is not only expressing her own mental, social and political status but also expressing such status of the large women section. She has clearly let the patriarchal society aware that the world of your companion is not more than a pond of sorrow. When we closely listen to the anguished voices raped in simple words of poetry and prose, we find that one creation of the God is always underprivileged and the supremacy of the other creation of the same almighty.

4.1. In Search of Self-Liberation

Mahadevi Verma believes that the life of women is cold, filled with darkness, filled with absolute silence and their life is nothing but a

chain of death and all these curses of the life of women will melt only when there will be a *taap* (fire). There must be fire for fighting for the existence as it is rightly said "bina agni ke judaa na loha, maati sona." (without fire, iron, soil and gold could be added) (cited in Shukla, 2009, p. 40.) So women must have fire in their heart fight back to come out from all sorts of shackles which have been imposed by both colonial powers as well as by social patriarchs. Verma was sensing the absolute fire of the entire creation in her literary works and the same fire she wanted to be inculcated among the women of their society. Throughout her literary career, she has given a pungent sharpness to the movement of feminism in India has called the woman of the world to join to liberate her and establish a life full of self-respect and to live with a right of equality. For her the movement of feminism was just to be the part of that but she took it as a mission to liberate her own people of own gender.

Expressing her own anguish and tearful and sorrowful emotions, she tries to add it with the anguish and tearful and sorrowful emotion of the universe where every woman is in the state of mind and heart. Very beautifully she has expressed her concern related to the state of mind and heart of the women of the world in this lines "Mere haste adhar nahi jag, ki aasnu ladiyaan dekha, mere gile palak chhuo mat, murjhai kaliyaan dekho (Please don't see my smiling lips but see the chain of tears of the world. Please don't touch my tearful eyes but the faced faces of the world.) (Verma, 1934, p. 21). She is trying to draw the attention of every individual of the male dominating society and of colonial power towards the tearful life and dilapidated condition of the women in the existing society and urge them not to be confused if a woman seems happy to please them because in reality she is just playing an imposed role which she has been staging forcefully on the

stage of the world. Through her writings, she has given a pungent sharpness to the movement of feminism in India while calling on the world to join to liberate her and establish a life full of self-respect.

4.2. Towards Consciousness of Existence

Mahadevi Verma never hesitates to make the world aware with the proper identity, existence and equality of the woman. She writes "Unse kaise chhota hai, mera yah Bhhikshuk jivan?" (How my life of despair/beggar hood is smaller than theirs?). Here, Verma seems to touch the culmination point of her female discourse. She accepts that her life is full of sorrow but it does not mean at all that the world of women is smaller. Her world is as large as theirs; what missing is that is equality, sense of respect from fellow brothers. In her literary works, woman stands for the woman of the whole nation and of the world. Woman of Mahadevi Verma's literary work is very much conscious of existence and identity. She never rates herself lesser than anyone else and also approves the right of equality. In her essays, the subjection of Indian woman is clearly reflected. But the way she has raised these issues is no rebel but simplicity. She is very impartial in her approach as she accuses both male and female world for the pathetic status of woman in the society. She believes that both genders are equally responsible. In *Apani baat* (my story), *Shrinkhala ki kadiyaan* (chains of subjugation), Mahadevi Verma (1942/2014, p. 10) writes that the solution of the problem depends on the knowledge of problem, and it expects the ability of the knower of the problem. Therefore the person who wishes to get the rights and power must bear the quality of being a righteous one (Verma, 1942/2014, p. 10)

Further, she writes that the woman in India is regarded as Goddess

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but at the same time and by the same society she is treated as a dependent being. She clearly says, "woman has become Goddess of Temple but at the same time a slave of house" (Verma, 1942/2014, p. 11)

Mahadevi Verma has also raised a very important issue of imitative character of Indian women. She feels that Indian women adapt and imitate those acts which are favourable to social patriarchy. It makes social thread stagnant, and individual subjugation becomes narrow. Therefore, she believes that it is the imitative character of Indian women which is responsible for their pathetic condition. The dependent nature has made Indian women's personality nothing but a mere mirror of man and shrank her importance.

On female discourse of Verma, Vishambhar Manav writes that

"Mahadevi Verma used to feel that the main weakness of Indian women was the lack of strong personality. They neither had the idea of their status not the idea of their duty. Those who wanted to help them they always oppose." (Manav, 1977, p. 155.)

There is another Hindi critic, Ramchandra Tiwari, who writes that "writings of Mahadevi Verma are women-centric. In her essays she has sympathy for women and she is annoyed of those social elements traditions and practices which have ultimately become chains of subjugation for them. She wanted Indian women to liberate themselves from those chains of subjugation with without being rebellious and she also wanted them to maintain the fundamental of their womanhood untarnished." (Tiwari, 1999, p. 630).

4.3. Imbibing the Asceticism and Altruism

To get women to smash the chains of subjugation, Verma harnessed both her intellect and talent to work for their emancipation. As the dean of a women's college in Allahabad, Verma spent nearly three decades at the institution, shaping it to best meet the ill-served needs and priorities of female students. While she catered to the strata of young middle class women through the institution she headed, she also began to use the might of her pen to bring to the surface the unsung heroism in the day-to-day life of socio-economically submerged women. While staying away from active politics, Verma had little difficulty in imbibing the asceticism and altruism of the Gandhian way of life. Her respect for life in any form also led her to spend a lot of her time in caring for injured birds, reptiles and animals. So much so that her home became a menagerie; later, she brought to life these primary companions in her colorful book of recollections *Mera Parivaar* (my family). Seeking a common denominator in human experience, Verma found it preeminently in sorrow, which she perceived as poetry of life with the ability to bond the whole world in a single thread. She observed that we all wish to enjoy pleasure in isolation but to share pain with everyone, and concluded that only when people adopt compassion as their religion will life be joyous. Sadly, Verma's compulsive attraction to sorrow is characterized by some as a product of a failed marriage or even of suppressed sexuality. This view is limited because it is male-centric and applies the measure of male presence to a female fulfillment. It is hard for a male-conditioned literary and social world to acknowledge that the excessive longing "for that unknown someone" expressed by Verma in her writings may be anything but carnal or male-generated.

One of Kang's noticeable works—*Ingan Munje*—depict the vulnerable

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status of women who silently fulfill their roles but are blamed and insulted (Xu, 2011, p. 54). In 1930s, Korean women were destined to suffer due to destitution, poverty, and colonial rule; unlike men, women had dual sufferings from patriarchal oppression as well as forced colonial rule. Nevertheless, the low-class women in Kang's literary work obviously have the class notion and suffer to overcome their passive Self. Also, the modern woman in Kang's literature suggests the true female consciousness as opposed to the hypocritical or false consciousness by stressing the "live knowledge" that impacts the people (Kim, 2004, p. 28).

Kang Kyeongae's human issues not only touches upon the destitution and isolation of the underprivileged during the times of the colonial rule, but also explores the agony and anxiety of the female intellectuals who have the duty to establish the female identity under the colonial rule. While the traditional self-consciousness of women has been forced to extinction, Kang Kyeongae agonizes over the female self-consciousness and self-realization from the perspective of self-motivated and independent female identity. (Park, 2003, p. 257).

5. Conclusion

Since early 1900s, a number of literary critiques have claimed that psychological and psychoanalytic approaches contribute to a deeper understanding of literary works (Jang, 2009, p. 166). While recognizing this perspective, the present paper focuses more on the historic background as the elapse of time certainly provides the objectivity of literary interpretation.

The effort made by Mahadevi Verma for women's emancipation is more than a theme. It has always been a mission for the rest of Indian women; even today, they have not overcome the issues Mahadevi

Verma had experienced and encountered. Her words and works are serving as a forcing guide for billions of women living in Indian society. Social issues like child marriage, illiteracy, atrocities and widowhood are still prevalent in India, and to emancipate the shackles of these issues, Mahadevi Verma is still very much relevant. If Indian women have to liberate themselves, they have to be Mahadevi Verma and fight to tear down prevalent social patriarchy. Almost like the multitude within oneself, the polyphony inside the monotone, Mahadevi Verma contains inside her a lot of rivers: those resonating with a shared womanhood which resulted in the form of feminism, with Rani Durgavati of the Garh Mandala who took on Akbar's army in 1564 (defeated them twice before losing the third battle), the seventeenth century Rani Chenamma, Chandraprabha Saikani raising her son as a single unwed mother, back in 1923, Pandita Ramabai (who married a man of a lower caste, became a widow, converted to Christianity and began a home for the widowed, homeless, orphans called Mukti Sadan), Tarabai Shinde, Bhandaru Achchamamba, Matangini Hazra, Kamala Das and of course the great Lal Ded and today resonating in heart and mind of millions of woman of the world in every corner. Her wings are being enlarged and her dreams are getting fulfilled every day and night, and women of today are trying their best to enjoy all sorts of equality and liberation which used to be meant only for the leaders and their followers of social patriarchy. Her voice of feminism will resonate in every act of woman to emancipate the darkness if it is encountered or it will come at any point of time in future too.

To sum up, the colonial rule has played a significant role in paving a path of women empowerment and raising a voice against the then established patriarchal society and exposed the decrepit situation of women world. The platform of these efforts was laid down in the last

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century through the works of Mahadevi Verma. Her milestone work *Shrinkhala ki Kadiyaan* (chains of subjugation) has given a new flight to the women discourse in Indian society. She has cultivated a message among women as well as in the society that men and women are equal in the eyes of nature and are not competitor to each other. Also, she was instrumental to inculcate the idea of self-liberation among woman of her own society. Her works became a torch bearer, milestone and inspiration for the future women generation in particular and to the human generation in general. She has electrified the women of their respective society to encounter and understand the prevalent destroying role of suppression by colonial power as well as by social patriarchy. It was the effect of Verma's works that Indian women did not succumb to the harsh oppression imposed by either colonial power as well as by social patriarchy; Indian women started challenging the existing web of traditional anti-women social setup and stepped towards the movement of women empowerment. In order to gain their on lost and snatched individual identity and self-reliance Mahadevi Verma blew a baritone of feminist movement through their significant literary works.

Since Kang Kyeongae's post-colonial feminism explores the female embodiment of the colonial paradox while focusing on the female resistance to paternal capitalism within the diverse context of gender, culture, class, and ethnicity, she symbolizes the penetration of the Other that goes beyond compromise to shatter the deemed homogeneity (Park, 2007, p.47). As the Korean society under the Japanese colonial rule had forced women to disappear into oblivion, the female Self had to give way to the Other (Kim, 2004, p. 65). In other words, Kang's literary world casts doubts over the complete Self of women, as the awareness of the Other is distinguished from that of men (Park, 2012, p. 69).

As Verma's works shed painful but progressive lights on the colonial feminism, the authors hope that much research is accumulated to look into the common nature and developments of feminist movements depicted by the contemporary Korean woman writer, Kang Kyeongae. If the women discourse of the two writers are put in the center, there will be a very effective and result and will be very instrumental in the formation of a true human society as well as a true nation.

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[국문초록]

인도와 한국의 동시대 작가인 마하데비와 강경애의 작품을 통한 식민시대 페미니즘에 대한 이해: 마하데비를 중심으로

김도훈 · 고태진

인도와 한국의 공통점으로는 '식민 강점기'라는 뼈아픈 과거를 꼽을 수 있다. 상당 기간 지속된 식민 지배 속에 악몽은 일상이었으며 삶의 다양한 모습에, 각계 각층의 오늘과 내일에 붙이길 수 없는 왜곡을 가져왔다. 강점기를 겪으면서 여성의 삶은 특히 피해였으며 이는 기존의 전통적 억압에 침략자들의 착취와 폭력이 더해졌기 때문이다. 고통의 끝에서 여성들은 비로소 공동체와 국가 내에서의 그들의 역할을 성찰하게 된다. 극단적 상황이 오히려 여성들로 하여금 혁명을, 사회적이자 정치적인 자각을 촉발시킨 것이다. 이는 한국과 인도에서 공통적으로 드러난 현상이며 전통적 억압에 대한 반발은 물론 여성 중심의 반식민지 투쟁으로 이어졌다. 이러한 사회적 투쟁과 혁명의 움직임은 식민 강점기를 살아온 한국과 인도의 여류작가들에서 여실히 드러난다. 이러한 메아리는 서구의 페미니즘 운동과는 맥을 달리 하며 식민지의 어둠에서 활동한 여류작가들만의 독특하고 전복적인 목소리로 전해진다. 본 연구에서는 인도와 한국의 식민 강점기 여류작가들 중 마하데비 버마와 강경애의 작품 세계를 통해 기존 체제에 대한 전복과 여성의 권리 회복을 위한 작은 걸음, 식민지 시대의 페미니즘의 특성을 살펴보고자 한다.

주제어 : 식민시대 페미니즘, 사회적 가부장주의, 자각, 개인적 해방, 마하데비 버마, 강경애, 인도 문학

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