



REPRESENTATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN GARCIA MARQUEZ' OF LOVE AND OTHER DEMONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the brutal treatment against an innocent girl. It showcases the violence against the girl, Sierva and her fear. It also penetrates deep to bring out the sufferings of women in and around the world to the broad daylight. Garcia Marquez presents not only the sufferings of the girl, but also the blind belief of the people in the name of religion and also attacks the existence of cultural practice in his homeland. It concludes by stating that women should overcome from their sufferings than accepting it as a fate.

INTRODUCTION

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.

- C.S. Lewis

Literature is a reflection of the society, it not only reflects virtue, but also the existence of vice. The Writings on the woman's sufferings are commonly spoken by many writers, speakers and scholars. Many researchers have done as well as doing research on the violence which is imposed on women and they investigate to find solutions. Even many organizations are established to support the victims who undergo sufferings in the male-dominated society. The main reason for woman's sufferings is due to men, who consider women as inferior to them.



God created Adam and Eve as equal, but women are considered lesser than men in our society. The status of women is downtrodden and they are bound by the clutches. They are made to act according to the whims and fancies of men. Many kinds of violence are imposed on women like sexual abuse, genital mutilation, honor killing, etc., which makes women to suffer both physically and psychologically. In Alfred Lord Tennyson's *The Prince*, he rightly stated the pathetic state of women as, "Man to command and women to obey" (449).

Male- chauvinism is often discussed as a central theme in many works in order to bring changes into the life of women. In reality, women are still suffering all over the world. Women are addressed as Others, Double-Oppressed, Second Sex and Subaltern Women. The superior nature in men was seen at the time of Adam and Eve. Milton in his great epic poem *Paradise Lost* speaks about the fall of men from the heaven. In this epic, Eve is shown as a feeble creature. Satan persuades Eve to consume the fruit of knowledge. Eve was shown as the evil, tempted Adam to consume the fruit and it resulted in their downfall. Even in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, three witches in the opening scene tempt Macbeth to kill the king. Lady Macbeth supports her husband to perform the evil deeds. Therefore, many writers had shown women as evildoers.

To speak generally about violence against women, many women and girls have undergone sufferings by men. Violence follows like a shadow of women wherever they go. Domestic violence, violence at work place, Rape, Acid attack, Eve Teasing, violence related to dowry, etc., are the kinds of violence that are faced by women in today's world. The world became modernized and it has seen many technologies, inventions, but violence against women and girls are not changed. The government had taken steps to stop these kinds of violence, but still it exists like the shrub, *Prosopis juliflora*. This shrub absorbs water from the earth and makes the land barren. Likewise, men absorb the labor and blood of women through violence and make them like a barren land.

Numerous writers from various part of the world portrayed the existence of woman's sufferings in their respective countries. Garcia Marquez is considered as an icon of Latin American literature. Most of his novels deal with the sufferings of his country people and also he retraces the history of his country. *Of Love and Other Demons* depicts the spiritual violence which is imposed on an innocent girl, Sierva. It plunges deep in order to picture the sufferings which are undergone by a girl in the name of exorcism. This novel strongly speaks about the violence against the girl. Marquez depicted what happened in his society in the name of religion.

Sierva is portrayed as a silent sufferer, who accepts her fate without raising a question. Love is the major thing lacking in the life of Sierva. Especially, Sierva does not experience even a



tinge of her mother's love. Sierva is nursed by a black woman, because Bernada (Sierva's mother) has the fear of killing her own daughter. Marquez says, "Her mother hated her from the moment she nursed her for the first and only time, and then refused to keep the baby with her for fear she would kill her" (42).

At the beginning of the novel Sierva is bitten by a stray dog. Her father shows some concern over her in order to cure the disease. The way chosen by Sierva's father brings still more miseries into the life of Sierva. As per the advice of the priest Sierva is driven to the convent because he says to her father that Sierva is possessed by demons. The priest says, "That one of the demon's numerous deceptions is to take on the appearance of a foul disease in order to enter an innocent body" (55).

Sierva's strange behavior due to rabies made the priest to decide that she is a possessed child. This shows how men play the part in deciding as well as shaping the life of women. Even in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Bayardo San Roman shuns his wife Angela Vicario for losing her virginity before marriage. Sierva is made to stay in a strange place which made her to behave even stranger than before. Before, Sierva is an abandoned child, but in the convent she is made to be an isolated one. Sierva is treated meanly by others in the convent. They throw her like a dog into the cell, which is described as, "... they took her by force, kicking and snapping at the air like a dog, to the farthest cell in the prison pavilion" (68). Another incident which is mentioned in the novel remains about the life of women in general, "Sierva Maria sat down on the narrow bed, looking at the iron bars on the reinforced door, and this is how the servant found her when she brought a supper tray at five o'clock" (68).

Sierva is a twelve year old child, she has to be left free like butterflies in the sky, but she is made to sit behind the iron bars. Like Sierva, many women are kept behind the iron bars by men like a caged bird in the name of culture. Maya Angelou's *Caged Bird* says about the sufferings of women in the form of a symbolic term called caged bird. She says, "a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams/ his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream/ his wings are clipped and his feet are tied" (27-29). Not only the wings of Sierva but also other women's are tied by men.

Sierva experiences physical torture in the name of exorcism. Here exorcism is used as a weapon to injure Sierva physically and that gradually leads to mental suffering. The body of Sierva is not only torn because of exorcism, but also her soul. Men trumpets that women are troublemakers, but in real men are the problem givers who always put women in suffering. The horrible treatment of exorcism brought fear in Sierva. "Sierva Maria, beside herself with terror, shouted too. The Bishop raised his voice to silence her" (130), this shows the superiority of men who controls women by raising their voices.



In the later part of the novel Sierva got the love of an exorcist, Delaura Cayetano. Fear in Sierva has come to a day light while talking with Delaura. Sierva says, “She told him about the deafening choirs that sounded like war, about the demented shouts of the Bishop, about his burning breath, about his beautiful green eyes ablaze with passion. He was like the devil... What I want is to die” (131). The last line indicates that Sierva made her mind to accept the sufferings which are imposed on her. Not only Sierva but many women make up their mind to accept their sufferings as fate. So, this makes women to be known as silent sufferer.

The life of Sierva is completely filled with vacuum, whereas Delaura’s love comes as a soothing breeze into her life. Finally, Sierva gets a companion to share her emotions. Unfortunately, the love of Sierva lasts for a while. The people in convent sense the secret meeting between Delaura and Sierva and they blocked the way in order not to make Delaura to visit Sierva. The sufferings of Sierva cannot be sketched by words, it is a saga of sufferings. At the end of the novel, it is clear that the sufferings which she has undergone resulted in death, “The Warder who came in to prepare her for the sixth session of exorcism found her death of love in her bed” (147).

The Violence Prevention Initiative of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador finds solution to the problems which are caused by men to women. Their vision is to make the victims to live in the surroundings where the violence is unaccepted. According to them there are nine types of violence against women as follows, physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, psychological violence, spiritual violence, cultural violence, verbal abuse, financial abuse and neglect.

When the spiritual beliefs are used to control, dominate or manipulate the person is known as spiritual violence. In *Of Love and Other Demons*, the priest uses the beliefs of Sierva’s father and controls the girl by using the weapon called exorcism. Though the priest not intentionally made the girl suffer, but they're blind believing towards religion makes them to decide that the girl is possessed without examining.

When someone threatens and causes fear to others is known as psychological violence. Here, the process that takes place at the time of exorcism threatens Sierva and as a result, she shouts out in terror. When a person is harmed due to culture, religion or tradition is known as cultural violence. Sierva is the victim in the novel, who is harmed badly by her culture which results in death.



Women are bound and made to be speechless because of their culture, customs and tradition. Whenever they raise their heads, they are hampered by those things which are mentioned above. Each and every day, women come across the violent treatment by men. Nowadays, the firing speech of activist has made women to voice against their suffering. Whenever women undergo sufferings, they should think of Maya Angelou's *Still I Rise*,

*Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise. (29-41)*

In *Of Love and Other Demons*, Sierva gets tormented due to lack of the parental love, loneliness and spiritual practice, but at last her soul rests in peace in the name of death. Garcia Marquez not only portrays the sufferings of a girl, but also depicts the cultural practice and blind beliefs of people during his time. Women are not born to suffer in the hands of men. To talk and write on the woman's sufferings are not an alien thing. It is often spoken in many open forums in order to make the male-chauvinist world to be aware, that abusing women is punishable. Women are not inferior rather they are born warriors. Therefore, women should raise up from the sufferings.

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