
FEMINISTIC PROSPECTIVES ON NISHA DA CUNHA'S NO BLACK, NO WHITE

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The presence of the British in India gave rise to sub-culture, which ushered for the better part of the three centuries. The Anglo-Indians and crossbreed people of India and European Decent carved a unique niche for themselves in British India's society. While their language, religious and educational background was European, they developed a style of life which was distinct from both their British and Indian progenitors. Some well-known Anglo-Indians include Sir Cliff Richards, Engle Bert, Humperdinck, and Merle Oberon. After India gained Independence in 1947, the majority of the Anglo Indian community emigrated to the U.K., Australia, and Canada. Nisha Da Cunha is widely regarded as one of India's finest short story writers. We see her at her best writing with a fine degree of sensitivity about women faced with uncertainty, fear, despair and romantic longing. She uses a number of female voices. The interior lives and believing of her characters as they try to come to terms to separation, rejection, loss, and death come alive. There is a Safe in the title story, who grapples with grief and isolation in the big city after she is relocated from the peaceful community where she grew up in the company of her beloved father and birds; Radha in 'Old Cypress' is left by her husband for a younger woman. We also witness the growing and difficult friendship of an irritable old man and middle-aged woman are drained jointly by their infatuation for books. A collection of considerable beautiful and powerful stories include the critically acclaimed Old Cypress and The Permanence of Grief. They are infused with Nisha Da Cunha's deep understanding of the fragility of the human condition.

Keywords: Anglo-Indian Community, Cunha's Perspective, Identity, and Isolation.

Introduction:

What do women write about usually? What is that women can't write about? Some people say about religion, politics, and sex. Women claimed that they could write about religion and politics, could not write about sex. Many of the women said they could not write about themselves, yet they write secretly. Some women pick up a pen and a paper, pouring out their emotions. Writing seems an addiction, a mechanism for survival. For most women writers in the country, writing remains an isolated, solitary activity etc. There are some peculiar problems that women writers face, as divergent from men. An age-old gender-partition of labor leaves women with little time to write. The essence of a culture of equality discourages women. Women believe that gender-based censorship is a major threat to women's freedom of expression.

In 1993 a writer, Nanotech Roscoe, reapers to the historical, worldwide silencing of women's voices through various means. The women's World Asmita project search to walk around the issue of gender-based censorship with Indian women connected in innovative writing in dissimilar languages. The workshops were created to permit writers to contribute the experiences, thoughts, and feelings in a cordially casual environment. This idea was to encourage participants to think and talk about their lives as women and as writers. Sultana Sharfuddin says that contemporary Urdu writers lacked a women's perspective and lived on a planet of delusion and fancy. They did not put forth the originality of their lives.

The common cause for the women was loneliness and alienation. They had no one to distribute their contemplations or experiencing with, many of the women found the burden of the restrictions placed on them, at home and outside, was unbearable. The emotional tumult and psychological puzzlement they underwent as a result of these restrictions, they wondered they were natural. Without any clear sense of how to brawl these constraints, the rebellious thoughts that churned in their minds. So many women claimed that they had picked up the pen as an instrument, a weapon of survival.

Nisha Da Cunha:

She was born in 1934. She went to school in Shimla and Delhi. She studied English literature at Miranda House New Delhi, for five years and then for twenty-five years pursued an extremely successful career at St.Xavier's College Mumbai, from the place where she walked out as Head of the Department in 1985. Nisha Da Cunha has directed several places including Carson McCuller's *Member of the Wedding* and Ibsen's *Wild Duck*. She has published four collections of stories. *Old Cypress: stories* (1991), *The Permanence of Grief* (1993), *Set my Heart in Aspic* (1997) and *No Black, No White: short stories* (2001) Nisha Da Cunha, with her son lives in Mumbai.

Book's by Nisha Da Cunha, *The Quiet of the Birds: Collected Stories* are published in 2005.

Thematic Analysis and Use Of Language:

The first three set the tone for the book. In "Ember Days", Connie Tim's rambles through a life that includes piano tutorials, perhaps a concern - cynical acknowledgments of the Anglo-Indian's neither-here-nor-there pose. Nisha Da Cunha, falling her authorial facade easily into the story, offers us an option of four diverse opening lines, three different conclusions, so that it always hang about open-ended, half-begun in our intelligence.

In Letting It Go, the friendship between four women survives the aging progression, the death of one of them, the voyages of another across the countries. In The Dearly Beloved, Kept Woman a worthless heading that, a woman survives her married lover, but stay behinds forever symbolized the state of waiting. By the fourth story, Salad Days, you're either going to be a corroborated or expand an incurable allergic reaction to her style of writing, and there are good arguments mulling in on the side of both advances.

Nisha Da Cunha is an indefatigable observer, a remorseless chronicler of the little details, the static and the tired-out optimism that builds up the lives of all those forgotten people on the tassel. But while she can conjure up tenderness and write fresh prose, her approach begins to aggravate on you by the fifth story. By the sixth, you're pleading with the characters to do amazing. The sense that is there, at the end of this baker's dozen of fictions, is that you've been in the presence of a master dexterity man. The respect Da Cunha decrees is authentic, but respect is a cold basis for a lasting association between reader and writer, and Da Cunha suggests few other feelings.

Nisha Da Cunha's background as a former university professor of English occasionally links the tales to the great names—Bronte, Austen, Frost, Spenser, and Wordsworth—but on the whole, the learning sits lightly.

Nisha Da Cunha is very frank in her expression. She describes very frankly about sex and society. She uses many images and symbols in her writings. Her language is appropriate but sometimes the reader may find it difficult to understand it. She is bold enough to express her ideas about women's struggle in society. She uses suitable diction in her writing. The story represented by her is a natural representation of real life. In her writings, we find a quest for identity. At the beginning of the first story many images of color are seen like. 'pale lemon', 'pale blue', 'streaks of orange' and the smoke began to fill the chilly air. She narrates the setting of the sun. (Page-3)

She adds different colored eyes-one green, one blue and one eye bean brown. This is a critical comment about her own race-a mixture of blood. She also says life is too short in the end. She doesn't want rain because it may spoil a fine sunny Sunday She describes rain in different aspects like rain on the coffin, rain on flowers, and wreaths, rain and tears on the faces shoes squelching with wet. The rain was Sunday's, rain was burials, rain was death,

and rain was getting up to the sound of it. (Page-2). She thus uses the image of rain in abundance.

She talks about the lifestyle of the Anglo-Indian community. They had a picnic in the shade, played tennis, rode ponies and horses, arranged dances, balls, arranged meetings, made friends, fell in love; not enough-white girls to go around. Plenty of girls, not the right color so lust or quick, hasty love over a single summer and then no letters, no addresses, no baggage so where is your bond. They did fit, neither with English society nor with Indian. They know that they were a half breed. They are a bad remainder for the English. The Indians did not accept them. They had a great aptitude for sports, they intermarried. The women were good teachers, good nurses, excellent matrons, in boarding schools and hospitals. (Page-11)

She describes nature. She watches the sky and the sea-Watch the sea turn from blue to grey to red and the sunsets like blood and the sky are streaked with a lemon light. She describes her life in Bombay, few cottages and trees. There are casuarinas and a wonderful brass filigree work, dargah lamps wing from a tall eucalyptus tree and great Dobermans streaked across the beach and garden. She thinks of life of bath who said, for I have had May life in my time. Of course, I have one wish and that is I don't last too long enough to be an old woman. Just a few years and the waiting should end, that's what I hope.

She sees different types of images on every wall and stacked together were large somber paintings. On every wall huge cavernous desk, paintings like the inside of the well, like crusts of blood, like death, like stone, like dead-wood. She also tells about galleries, coffee, bed; tidy the flat, to buy the newspaper and the lack of warmth. (Page-77, 78). The following sentence recalls a reference from *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austin: I see gray hair. I see my figure, not what you see in clothes hide most things. I see my forty-year-old body with bulges and ugliness everywhere. Here she narrates about sex. Darcy returning his cup of the tea to the table where Elizabeth Bennet was sitting. (Page-75)The following passage from *The Woman of my Age*. Shows the vivid images of nature that she uses and also the frustration that she has because of the dissatisfied needs.

Western wind when wilt thou blow,

That the small rain down can't rain?

Christ, if my love were in my arms,

And I am in my bed again.

She uses words like a stupid cat, stupid gas, stupid cooking, dusting and cups of tea. No not stupid cups of tea. She and he had shared many cups of tea, for many a crisis. Bad tea, sugar-filled tea. All milk and no tea. But talked forty years off and on. Sometimes tea from

the teapot with the lot of it split on a tin tray. Again she narrates a college with gray courtyards tall ferrets and great wood, paneled library and a jewel of the chapel. She uses names of dresses like khadi, kurtas, and pajamas and jhola. (Pages-3)

She describes Sunday mass, grave-yard and so on. She says that a human being needs a place with some tremendous tress; there is wood, there are fire and body burns in front of you. Really burns, real wood, real fire, flames, and later ashes. That is terrible, limbs, and brains and the thought of the lifetime and it is burning and dying all over again". She describes the season, a lifetime of work, success and failure and sun on the tree in the winter and the cool rain in the summer heat, and good wine and water and food the taste of the first chilled Alphonsa mango. She describes the emptiness-the empty playground, small room, small window, a basin at the end, a bed behind the screen, large desk-some books.

She says a good man and a good priest in his bed, alone in pain not wanting to die, agonizing about dying alone not able to say goodbye to anyone and giving up at last. That's what she kept hearing and seeing that image. There was no one to care or hear him. Here she speaks about the suffering of a man when he is in death bed. (Page-8)She also speaks about the age. He stood like all the cross of the world in his vile striped tights, T-shirt and brown socks and lace up. His hair was very black, out of Godrej, black dye. This shows her sarcastic remarks about trying to look young. Her description of nature comes alive again and again blended with the reality of life-its misery as in the following lines:

And if you ask how I regret the parting

It is like the flowers falling at springs end

Confused, whirled in a tangle,

What is the use of talking and

There is no end of talking,

There is no end of the things in the heart. (Page-86)

Cunha explains the gender issues openly. She brings out the age-old tradition of treating men and women with a biased view. She narrates the differences between men and women as men always get allay with things like this means men can marry a very pretty girl. Whereas women doing the same thing are judged harshly and over and over. They just aren't made that way. They get aggressive, they get angry and of course, their vanity is desperately wounded. But for a woman to be set aside, she describes again herself as slim but of no use-The face was old, the hair-thin so grin under a wide straw hat she was now of sixty-nine. She hates when it rains, all the time and lamps and lights had to be turned on at three in the afternoon. (Page-100) She says she is abandoned on a snow-covered mountain. She isn't left at the Mahakumbh to wake up on a chilly north Indian morning.

Thus through *No Black, No White*, we see Nisha Da Cunha's authenticity in language and her views about sex religion, nature etc. Her way of dealing with human life with its complexities and intricate human relationships between man and woman, father and child, mother and child is captivating.

Conclusion:

In the introductory part, we see what women write about and what they cannot write about and also what connects women to writing. There were many confusions and questions raised during and after a series of ten workshops on women. In the second and third quarters of the century there were many women novelists. Some of the women novelists are Rose Macaulay, Rebecca West; Elizabeth Bowen and Rosamond Lehman etc. Mainly some of them were the Anglo-Indian writers.

In each of the story, the writer gives a message, in the story *Ember Days* the writer speaks about colonialism and struggles of Anglo-Indians, their lives in the society, their loss of identity. She presents it very clearly. In the story *Letting it go*, she describes her three friends and herself, how they marry, how they spend their lives with their husbands. She also gives clear views on each one's mentality. In the story *Dearly Beloved Kept Woman* she speaks about herself how she loved a man who is already married to some other woman, but still how she loves him. When he died she wore white as a widow though she is not married to him. She describes the pain and agony in her. In the story *Salad Days*, she remembers her friend Abel. It is an affair to remember. They are passionate friends she says about Abel who really loves her but at last, she decides to be just friends with him. She also describes the beautiful place Jerusalem. In the story *Pebbles in a Stream*, she describes the accident on a mountain stream. She also likes to collect pebbles. Through this, she keeps the memory of her son. In this book *No Black, No White* we see the author at her best writing with a sincere tone, and a fine degree of sensitivity about women encountered with ambiguity, fear, despair and passionate desire. She uses a number of female voices each authentic, trustworthy and forceful to bring into sharp focus the inner life and feelings of her characters as they try to. Death is one of the most recurrent themes in the book the frailty of life and relations between man and woman are hinted at.

She also uses many images and symbols. Here in these writings we also find a clear representation of nature. Her stories recreate the sharp edge of emotion leaving the reader with a feeling of deep pathos and yet a strange serenity of acceptance. Being an Anglo Indian woman, Cunha presents her themes on two levels- one as Anglo-Indian and the second as a woman caught in various predicaments in life.

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