

STUDY OF CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF PERUMAL MURUGAN'S NOVEL: ONE PART WOMAN

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Abstract

Cultural and religious beliefs are the main part of this novel. Murugan was inspired to write the novel after seeing couples around him struggle owing to their inability to conceive. The story is set in Murugan's hometown of Tiruchengode in Tamil Nadu, and the novel's major protagonists are members of the Kongu Vellalar Gounder caste, which Murugan himself is a member of. The novel's original title is derived from the Tamil term Madhorubaagan, which refers to Lord Shiva's androgynous aspect in Hindu mythology. Murugan received a grant from the India Foundation for the Arts in 2005 to do background research for the novel. During his study, he stumbled across a historical social practise for dealing with childlessness, which he chose to incorporate in the book. The practise's existence has been contested.

Keywords: Caste, Religious Conflict, Love, Violence

Introduction

Perumal Murugan is a Tamil novelist, poet, and university professor who has written six novels. Mathorubhagan, whose English translation is One Part Woman, is a novel about a childless marriage and the effect of childlessness on Ponna and Kali, two landless farm labourers. The book highlights many problems about gender, patriarchy, and masculinity – all of which are entwined in a worldview dictated by limited societal norms that label childless marriages as completed. One Part Woman is a book based on an alleged old cultural tradition among residents of Thiruchengode, a town in Tamil Nadu's Erode region. According to historian Romila Thapar, it is the tale of a childless couple with an unquenchable yearning for children, "depicted with exquisite compassion, sorrow, and tenderness." Additionally, the book is keenly sensitive to issues of gender and sexuality and compassionate in its handling of yearning. While it is essentially an emotional work motivated by personal aspirations and losses, it also unnerves the reader with its candid examination of simple notions of progressiveness. The culture in which the novel is situated is permissive in ways that the urban middle class in the same state as a whole is not, despite the fact that well-known suppressive markers such as caste rules still retain power. However, as is the case everywhere, the real impediments to pleasure and development take on far more personal dimensions. Murugan is the most talented of his age of Tamil authors. He is versatile, sensitive to history, and aware of his duties as a writer. Apart from his deep connection to Kongunadu and its people, he is an accomplished linguist, one of the few modern Tamil authors who have studied the language officially to the doctoral level. One Part Woman is a deep and impassioned book that, as the blurb puts it, lays bare with unsparing clarity a relationship trapped between the demands of societal convention and the pull of inner concerns.

Religious and Cultural Aspects

The custom of seeking impregnation in the name of god via an unknown man seems to have gone out decades ago. Kali and Ponna were undoubtedly among its last victims. For ages, the traditional practise was practised not just in India, but also in a variety of other civilizations. Due to a dearth of facilities at the time, such as artificial insemination, another man could only impregnate a woman under stringent circumstances (like mandating that the act is not for pleasure and that he has to stop soon after impregnation, etc.) This was also done in India but only in rare instances when a kid was vital to the society's well-being and he was impotent.

The practise was known as Niyoga. Here are the rules of Niyoga from Wikipedia.

1. The lady would consent to this only for the sake of legally obtaining a kid, not for the reason of pleasure.
2. The chosen man would act in accordance with Dharma, seeing it as his obligation to assist the lady in bearing a child and not for personal gain.
3. The kid produced in this manner would be regarded the husband-child, wife's not the designated man's.
4. In the future, the chosen guy would avoid any father connection or attachment to this kid.
5. To prevent misuse, a man might only be selected in this manner three times throughout his lifetime.
6. The act will be seen as one of Dharma, and while doing it, the man and his wife will be thinking solely of Dharma, not of desire or lust. The guy will do it in the name of God in order to assist the woman, while the woman will accept it only in order to carry the kid for herself and her husband.

Some Cultural Tradition

Additionally, the book vividly depicts life in an Indian hamlet, the social hierarchy established by the caste system, and the people's beliefs/customs throughout the narrative.

The book casts doubt on women's position and function in Indian society. For a culture that professes to promote gender

equality - worshipping a god such as Madhorubagan, who is halfwoman - it is really astonishing that Indian women are appreciated not for who they are, but for their capacity to achieve motherhood and devotion to the family unit. With gentle, straightforward language, Madhorubagan sheds light on this hypocrisy. Madhorubagan elucidates India's strict caste-based stratification, which is particularly apparent in Indian villages. Tamil literature is still in its infancy. With a few notable exceptions, the first generation of Tamil writers mostly focused on the lives of educated, middle-class, and predominantly Brahmin people.

We have seen strong books during the past decade that depict the life of people on the periphery of Tamil society - Kallars, Barathavas, and Dalits. This is a good development, all the more so since these authors do not write as representatives of their caste or group, but rather challenge the community's ideals as a whole from an egalitarian perspective. The inclusion of Madhorubagan to this tradition is deserving. Kali and Ponnayi are a childless couple who live in a society rife with taunts, insults, and innuendoes. They get assistance and guidance in a variety of ways, some of which are well-intentioned and others of which are just cruel. Ponna is compelled to drink bitter infusions prepared from neem leaves by a 'auspicious' widow. She has guys make not-so-subtle hints about their availability. She does a fear-inducing trek on a perilous rock near a temple in order to bribe the gods. She is considered unsuitable for parenting since she was repulsed by the smell of a baby's faeces. Surprisingly, she is not the only one 'accused' in this case.

While Kali is continuously pressed for a second wife, he is also mocked for his 'impotence.' He has everyone from distant relatives to random neighbours vying for a piece of his heirless land after his death. More than his love for Ponna, he is prevented from marrying again by his dread of proving his impotence. After all, it was his forefathers and mothers who raped a tribal girl and brought about her misfortune. Being childless in such a culture at that period is tough. It irritated Kali that, despite the fact that they may have a million problems in their own life, individuals took tremendous joy in poking and probing other people's misfortunes. In the sixth month after the wedding, Ponna's mother-in-law That month, she kept an eye on Ponna's menstrual cycle. As soon as it occurred, she instructed Ponna to consume the juice of several shoots on the third day. She said emphatically, "Do not consume anything else, even by accident." The juice will be acrid.' Her objective was to have a child, and she was prepared to go to any length to accomplish this aim. Maladikkal-the danger of strolling around the barren rock The degree to which the couple is driven by social shame demonstrates the community's effect and influence on the person.

Castism in Rural Area

Castes, Traditions, And Identities Culturales in One Part Woman by Perumal Murugan has become a cult classic on the subcontinent, enthralling Indian readers and igniting debates about caste and female emancipation. One Part Woman is set in South India during the British colonial era but has a strong contemporary relevance. It follows a couple, Kali and Ponna, who are unable to conceive, much to the consternation of their families—and to the crowing delight of Kali's male acquaintances. Kali and Ponna make many attempts to conceive, including offering at various temples, atoning for previous transgressions of deceased family members, and even circumambulating a mountain said to heal barren women, but all to no effect. A more radical strategy is needed, and the yearly chariot festival, which honours the deity Maadhorubaagan, who is half woman and half man, may hold the key. The celebration culminates in a carnival on the eighteenth night, during which marriage restrictions are loosened and consensual intercourse between unmarried men and women is permitted, since all males are considered gods. While the festival may seem to be the answer to Kali and Ponna's problems, it quickly threatens to tear the pair apart rather than bring them closer. One Part Woman is a dramatic examination of a loving marriage that has been stretched by the expectations of others, as well as an assault on the harsh restrictions of caste and custom that continue to limit opportunity and pleasure.

Conclusion

Cast and culture plays an important role in rural society of India. It is an odd contradiction that progressive Indians, despite their desire to eliminate caste, have little or no knowledge of the daily realities of particular caste groups in their native homelands. Even as modernity stalks and often displaces these communities, they remain captive to the traditions of the past that have supported them for generations. Are they ever going to be able to live in a secular future? Perumal Murugan has provided us with a peek into the nature of our common fight.

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