

Pinki Virani's Justification for Euthanasia by attributing the consequences to Brutality of Rape in Aruna's Story: A Study

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Abstract:The care of human life and happiness and not their destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government. "There is no quality of life when the patient is dead" is one of the controversial statements about mercy killing. By fighting for the need of legalizing mercy killing for certain rare occasions , Pinki Virani has become most turbulent controversy among Indian women writers and activists. But the fact is that the argument she puts forth brings out the predicament of modern women in Indian society in front of law. When law is biased and hegemonic, the ultimate destiny of women is to living 'dead' or 'deadly living'? is the main object the present research paper. This paper deals with the author's legal fight narrated from the novels of the author *Aruna's Story: The True Account of Rape and its Aftermath* (1998), tries to categorically lists out the argument between the legal system and the author about mercy killing . How the impact of vindictive nature of a man can lead a woman to the end her life in a pathetic state while living is shown by taking a real example happened to a nursing student in Bombay in the year 1973.

Key words: woman, rape, legal system, mercy killing, treatment of woman etc.

Pinki Virani national award winner, journalist-cum-author, human-rights activist ,controversial social campaigner, recognized for her work in the field of women's empowerment and social development by the Indian government, is a single-handed literary worker , has won critical acclaim for her four bestselling books "Once was Bombay" "Aruna's Story"; "Bitter Chocolate: Child Sexual Abuse in India" (which won the National Award) and "Deaf Heaven"

Pinky Virani was born in Dongri, Mumbai, India, on January 30, 1959 to Gujarati Muslim parents. She is married to noted journalist, public intellectual and author of 'Accidental India', Shankar Aiyar. 'Deaf Heaven' is also the first work of fiction in the Indian subcontinent. Her father owned a shop, and her mother was a housewife. She attended school in Mumbai, Pune and Mussoorie. She went to the US to study for a Masters in Journalism, from Columbia University,

on the Aga Khan Foundation scholarship. She did an internship at *The Sunday Times*, where she reported extensively on the race riots in Britain. She was recently recognized by the Indian government for her work in the field of women's empowerment and social development Her tireless campaigning for human dignity has led to landmark laws for two of the most vulnerable times of a human being's life -- in the beginning as a child, and at the end as a terminally ill patient.

Aruna's Story: The True Account of Rape and its Aftermath (1998)¹ is about the rape of a nurse that left her in a coma. A leading critic described it as "India's answer to Truman Capote's 'In Cold Blood'." 'Aruna's Story' is an account of former a hardworking, independent, and headstrong woman nurse in Mumbai, who was engaged to a doctor was brutally raped and assaulted by a coworker with a dog chain at her own hospital leaving her in a persistent vegetative state. Her attacker served a few years in prison but was never convicted of rape. As Virani takes initiation to plead for mercy killing of Aruna by asserting 'One man. Plus a savage twist of one chain. And the thirty seconds for his sperm to release' should not 'equal one broken woman'. Though in the beginning Supreme Court rejects, it later allowed passive euthanasia to be practiced in India, a big step that availed because of this one woman and her even bigger. Everyone will do the best they can for Aruna Shanbaug, but the times are such that their best will just not be enough. Few laws have been drafted to regulate the delivery of death.

Though many people argue² that the decision to kill oneself is a personal and private matter, one that society has no right to be concerned with. However, this is said with the false assumption that everyone who makes the decision to commit suicide is doing so in a sane and rational matter. For the majority of people who commit suicide, the ultimate goal is not death. A recent study taken from the Journal of the American Medical Association states that, "ninety-five percent of the people who commit suicide, or request it, are clinically depressed. In Aruna case it is mental shock that caused her to force to think about suicide. Speechlessness following a rape can go deeper. Aruna Shanbaug's continuing silence is not the outcome of fear or shame: she cannot speak at all. That "muscle in her mouth" with which she played a subordinate for not doing his job no longer receives any signals from her brain. They have been knocked out. When Sohanlal Bhartha Walmiki choked her with a dog chain before raping and robbing her, oxygen supply to parts of her brain was cut off, and she became bereft not only of the power of speech but of the power to express herself in any other way.

Aruna's right of a competent, terminally ill person to avoid excruciating pain and embrace a timely and dignified death bears the sanction of history and is implicit in the concept of ordered liberty. She also became cortically blind, lost the use of her limbs and the control of her muscles, and suffered a kind of emotional disability, which is manifested in inappropriate laughter and bouts of screaming. Her memory and most of her other mental faculties were also gone. Now 50 years old, she exists in a kind of semi-conscious limbo. Solicitously looked after by successive batches of the nursing community and the doctors and the administration of

Mumbai's KEM Hospital where she worked as an exemplary staff nurse a quarter century ago, she is permanently bed-ridden, curled up in an awkward fetal position

The evidence for the emotional impact of assisted dying on physicians shows that euthanasia and assisted suicide are a far cry from being 'easier options for the caregiver' than palliative care, as some critics practice have suggested³. The emotional impact caused by 'that "rapist-as-animal", Pinki Virani's description begins awkwardly,

"His eyes glittering in the dark, the man waits. He touches the dog chain, it is there. Waiting to be used. Its metal links feel cold to the fingers, but cruelly comforting."⁴

Apart from the variety of practical consequences, whether one is a supporter of a positive or a negative right of self-determination regarding euthanasia is significant in principle. A positive right of self-determination regarding euthanasia cannot be introduced without simultaneously acknowledging that, in certain cases provided for in law, society is duty-bound to take the life of a human being. A negative right of self-determination regarding euthanasia, on the other hand, can be introduced on the grounds that euthanasia, under certain circumstances provided for in law, is a matter for the judgment and conscience of the individual. The fundamental difference is that the first form of legalization, more so than the second, turns euthanasia into a communal, general matter, which must be acknowledged by society as a whole as being worthy of aspiring to ethically.

Writers investigative mind searches for proof hence provided a carefully controlled, step-by-step description of a horrific ravishment.⁵ It not only casts perceptive light on the motive but sensitively refrains from injuring the victim any more by this retelling. Pinki Virani stops short of describing the act. Throughout the otherwise graphically detailed book, she holds herself back whenever there is a danger of crossing the line into the voyeuristic exploitation of a real-life character. This delicacy extends to all the characters in the book, except Sohanlal. In the book, Aruna, who is of a fastidious and righteous temperament, tells her friend:

"That other horrible sweeper Sohanlal ... steals the dogs' mutton, like a vulture... I am just waiting for some proof. The next time... I will report him immediately."⁶

By logically arguing how the failure of law and police is also another reason why women in India better commit suicide when raped. Searching for confirmation of her hunches about the nature of the run-in between the two, Pinki Virani presents the actual statements of Sohanlal's fellow cleaners, who reported to the police that Sohanlal had said that he would "take revenge by molesting her" and that he would "spend one month's salary to sleep with her." Such confirmations vindicate many of the writer's flights of imagination. They also provoke thought about the deep-seated resentments that sometimes erupt into crime, when they cannot express themselves otherwise.

By comparing rape as stealing flesh like a hunting animal, Virani questions the need of survival of a rapist. The doctor's assessment of the patient's suffering is not the supreme criterion,

and self-determination should not be viewed exclusively as the patient's ability to consider and request euthanasia. Instead, it can be asserted that the perceived, limited opportunity a modern health service offers for exerting influence over decisions regarding one's own death is an integral part of the actual suffering for many autonomous patients who are incurably ill or even dying. Against this backdrop it can be argued that euthanasia is an option that makes particular sense for patients with unbearable suffering who are concurrently in a state where their ability for self-determination is intact⁷. By its very nature, euthanasia can be said to be a last resort that should be limited to those who have an altogether special need. In the book, Aruna, who is of a fastidious and righteous temperament, tells her friend:

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Aruna had been assigned to the dog surgery research laboratory, where Sohanlal was a "temporary" cleaner. In the book he is rough with the animals, drags them along with their chains. When she upbraids him (with "ice in her voice"), he says:

"Sister, you worry so much about dog hunger and dogs getting strangled. What difference does it make... when doctors kill them here?"⁹

That is when the "muscle in her mouth" (what a phrase!) utters some immensely loaded words. She warns him to "keep to his limits" or he will be "sacked on the spot". She has already been warned by her cousin Ramdas of the possible consequences. He asks her to consider the fact that he is poor and "therefore hungry all the time."

As all her novels have earned her praise as a writer who is willing to take literary risks and experiments with literary arrangements, Pinki Virani is undoubtedly the best artist who is exploiting the art for art's sake and delineating the real meaning of literature. Pinki Virani has narrated a brutalization through meticulous and persistent research. According to the research¹⁰, the story is both sad and angry, scathing, restrained, an amazing effort in retelling a true-life tragedy.

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