

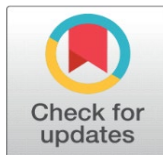
TRAILS AND UPLIFTMENT OF BROKEN WINGS: A COMPARATIVE READING OF AMULYA MALLADI'S THE SOUND OF LANGUAGE AND A HOUSE FOR HAPPY MOTHERS

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ABSTRACT

The Indian English Writers capture the changing moods of the Indian society and Amulya Malladi serves as a best example in portraying them. She has contributed immensely to bring out the sufferings of the people belonging to the Indian society. Her novel *The Sound of Language* (2008) portrays the problems faced by the refugees all over the world generally and the sufferings of the settlers of Denmark in particular. The characters taken for analysis are Raihana, Layla and Christina. The novel *A House for Happy Mothers* (2016) portrays about the realistic journey faced by the women undergoing surrogacy in a strictly traditional society and their hidden heart-wrenching emotions. The novel briefly describes the confusing mentality of a childless woman named Priya. The paper portrays the universal trails faced by women and how they struggle hard for their own upliftment and the upliftment of their family members. The paper highlights that individuals are themselves responsible for their own pitiable plight and personal upliftment plays a major role in one's development instead of the external upliftment rendered to them by the society or the family members.

Keywords: Tradition, Anxiety & Struggle, Personal Upliftment, Emancipated New Woman



1. INTRODUCTION

The novels of Indian Writing in English generally deal with realistic experiences of the Indian middle class women. They present the trials and tribulations faced by the educated women in the society due to the societal rules as well as their family circumstance that gives excess importance to tradition. Amulya Malladi belongs to this category.

Amulya Malladi is an Indian diasporic writer who has nearly eight novels to her credit. She is an engineering graduate born in 1974 and is currently residing in Denmark. Some of her distinguished writings are *A Breath of Fresh Air* (2002), *The Mango season* (2003), *Song of the Cuckoo Bird* (2006), *The Sound of Language* (2007), *A House for Happy Mothers* (2016) and *The Copenhagen Affair* (2017). The selected novels deal with the problems faced by women and how they uplift themselves to greater heights after undergoing worst difficulties.

The Sound of Language was published in 2008. It is a luminous story of bravery and tradition and the novel explains about the power of language through an incident where an Afghan woman and a Danish widower form an unexpected alliance. It talks about an international saga of racial violence and the final upliftment of the protagonist, Raihana and her distant relative named Layla. Christina is Raihana's Danish teacher and she too faces various psychological trials due to her involvement in the problematic life of her talented students.

2. TRAILS AND UPLIFTMENT OF CHRISTINA:

Christina maintains a smooth relationship with her husband. As a result, she is uplifted from the trails that she faces in a successful manner. Her husband often warns her not to be close to her students and not to interfere in the personal history of her psychologically affected students.

Holding a responsible position of being a teacher, she was very kind to her students and treated her as her own children and as a result, she often talks unconsciously of their plight to her husband. Despite having personal trials, she is well-known for her positive vibes and this is exposed in her attitude related to Raihana's life. When Christina senses that Raihana is tensed, she comforts the latter by talking about the nature of the job that she is going to enjoy despite being unsure of her own capacity and the adjustment capability of Raihana. She goes to the extent of commenting Gunnar's house to be dirty and stinking. Her attitude creates doubt in the minds of the readers if she too had suffered from unexposed trials with no one to uplift her. Her behaviour echoes the situation portrayed in Rosenfeld H. Alvin's A Double Dying : Reflections on Holocaust Literature that " . . . for the memories express a double burden, that of recalling the horror while at the same time string for a moral and psychic reconciliation" (53).

3. TRAILS AND UPLIFTMENT OF LAYLA

Layla is a kind-hearted woman and she helps Raihana in her misfortunes. As a result, she faces various trails and she is often worried thinking of the upliftment of her only son, Sharukh. Due to the issues faced by her at a young age and societal status, she doubts Gunnar even on hearing about his description. When Raihana's teacher Christina explains the life history of Gunnar that he was a recent widower, Layla imagines her experiences with various sorts of men and she requests Raihana to refuse the offer without any second thoughts. When the former refuses to pay heed to her words, Layla remains quiet, thereby regarding the incident as a trial. Her attitude of uplifting others is exposed when she compels Raihana to leave Gunnar if he tried anything inappropriate towards her. She voluntarily encounters the difficulties faced by Raihana by arguing with an elderly woman named Khala Soofia and hurts her saying, "You know . . . all we hear is how wonderful she is but she doesn't even write often to her own parents and doesn't care that they live alone. . . . If my children treated me like that I wouldn't think they were so wonderful" (TSL 78).

In the same way, she comes to Raihana's aid twice – especially when Raihana was attacked by three boys with a racial attitude and when the house in which they stayed was demolished with a glass bottle glittering bright with fire. The trials that she faces is similar to the difficulties faced in general by the settlers and this is depicted in the article of Aparna Lakshmi and Chrissie Gracelyn David in their article titled Imitiaz Dharker's Minority : A Sensory Re-Imagination of the South Asian Diaspora Trauma of Being Hated as a Foreigner as:

An immigrant's dense dilemma of choosing between adopted land and homeland recreates his / her crisis of racial identities. A foreigner . . . an immigrant is always caught in the dilemma of between-ness. An immigrant turns into an exile in quest of identity and comfort of home . . . the foreigner is never a member . . . but a stranger who is always visitor or intruder infiltrating into their comfortable home. (104)

Layla indulges in unnecessary trials voluntarily due to her psychological temptations and hence she suffers difficulty in uplifting herself. For instance, she hates Khala Soofia for questioning Raihana about her past life experiences. Her feelings of dislike emerge as an outburst due to the suppressed trials and its occasional reminiscence. She often imagines that her son might suffer from racial discrimination and she expresses negative behavioural trait, that hinders her upliftment. But, towards the end she starts regaining her stand due to the everlasting support of her husband and the timely support of Raihana. The result is that she is capable of taking incidents in her own hands and altering its conclusion as per her personal interests.

When Raihana was attacked by native boys with racial indifference, Layla equips herself and goes to her aid at the proper time and saves the former from further misfortunes. She boldly compares Raihana's plight with the upcoming

sufferings of her own son and compels her husband to think of incidents from her point of view so that it may help in uplifting their family. In the same manner, when three boys throw a bottle glittering bright with fire at their window, Layla is capable of overcoming her trials and she acts with individuality. The result is that she tries in uplifting Raihana by warning her from afar to run out from the house along with Sharukh despite encountering great damages.

4. TRAILS AND UPLIFTMENT OF RAIHANA

Raihana suffers from psychological trails as she is left to the mercy of the world. Her life is under threat due to the anti-Taliban activity of her husband even when they are in power. She does not receive any parental aid and does not have an education for a livelihood. As an upliftment, she is offered with an asylum by the Danish government under various conditions. Her distant relative, Kabir and Layla also come to her aid and help her by sharing their residence on a temporary basis. Yet, she faces psychological trial as the plight of her husband, Aamir was under check due to his job as a pamphleteer against the Taliban regime. The result is that she refuses to speak out her turmoil. The situation turns from worse to worst when she is able to identify a dead man's face with the bodily contents spilling out from his body and her dilemma is explained as:

... Raihana didn't have the words. She was considered strange ... a little too quiet. She had ... been through some ... tragedy, they all sensed. When she talked about going back ... it just confirmed their suspicions ... The man's body was imprinted ... and every time she thought about Aamir, the eyes ... looked at the dead man on the street ... if he had been Aamir. (TSL 8, 42)

Raihana feels psychological upliftment when she reminisces about the life that she had lived with her husband. When the people of Denmark questioned whether she was beaten by Aamir, she happily answers to them in a negative. She experiences the feelings of unruliness when she is forced to undergo the trials. Her plight is compared to that of Thamma of Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* where she says:

Where's the difference then? And if there's no difference both sides will be the same; it'll be just like it used to be before, when we used to catch a train in Dhaka and set off in Calcutta the next day without anybody stopping us. What was it all for then – partition and all the killing and everything – if there isn't something in between? (151)

The Danish government compels the settlers to obey a rule that states that they must learn the language in the school designed especially for this purpose. Raihana, personally, experiences trials in learning the new language due to her psychological issues she felt the language to be too tough and her teacher to be too strict. Despite knowing the answer, she is unable to voice it out as she thinks that no one will uplift her. She compares herself with Layla and submerges her openness. The negative remarks of her friend, Wahida instigates her trials further, but she suppresses her irritation.

Malladi's next novel *A House for Happy Mothers* portray the pathetic situation faced by the Indian married women who strive hard to succeed in their desires despite their trials. The novel portrays the issues of the childless women. The trails faced by Priya serve as a best example for the trails faced by women who remain childless.

Priya is unable to sleep as she does not have a baby and she disturbs him to the core as he is able to sleep peacefully at night. She does not receive the comforting pat of her husband and she also did not receive the supporting aid of her dear parents. The result is that Priya felt as if her wings are broken and the trails faced by her make her to imagine that there will be no one to uplift her in her life. She is often reminded of the societal rules in childbirth by her mother, Sushila alias Sush and she hates it. When Priya expects an upliftment in her life through a surrogate mother, her own mother registers her negative opinion strongly. The trials can be explained through the statement of her mother openly by saying:

... don't be stupid. If you can't have a baby, maybe you're not meant to have a baby ... Have you thought about that instead of running ... impregnating some strange woman with their child? ... My own child is exploiting my people ... I will never support this. It's an exploitation of the poor ... be ashamed of yourself. (5)

Her mother does not support Priya as she had faced a different trial in her life when compared with her daughter. While she stays possessive regarding the welfare of her family members, Priya remains selfless. She uplifts her situation and tunes her mindset into desiring to have a son as it may give company to her husband, Madhu in his old age. When she confuses herself thinking about the future of her baby due to her age, she uplifts her thought by thinking that her husband will remain to be a great father but faces a psychological trial when she doubts her capacity to be the best mother as Sushila had not served as an example of a proper mother to her.

Priya had uplifted her husband in various accords. She had allowed Madhu to choose the surrogate, and accepts his decision in choosing Asha who is unknown to them for the reason that she was only twenty five years old, is a mother of two children, came from a good family, had a sister who had served as a surrogate and it was Asha's first time as a surrogate. The psychological trial that she faces is explained when Priya with tears in her eyes says, "I couldn't stand it for if she isn't pregnant . . . I want a baby Madhu" (HHM 14).

When Priya senses disturbance due to the unsupporting and hurting words of her own mother, she uplifts herself by consoling that surrogacy is attractive than adoption because in the aspect of adoption the character of the child cannot be controlled and it may remain confused and unknown forever. At the same time, she will be able to render an uplifting hand to a poor woman and help her generously in leading a peaceful life. Her nature is similar to the comment of Tim Cresswell about Zera on M.G.Vassanji's No New Land in his work titled Place : A Short Introduction that, " . . . place is also a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world . . . so Zera has made the most out of the Canadian "space" by getting herself productivity and satisfactorily involved in fruitful pursuits" (11).

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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