

## Politics of Gender Appropriation: A Study of Poile Sengupta's *Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni*

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**Abstract:** The representation of gender in literary texts, both at private and public spaces, and of late at 'third' or 'shared space' as well, is the reflection of this power-politics involved in projecting gender. The long trajectory of resistance to gender appropriating forces— from small steps with suffragette movement, to Bronte sisters to Woolf to different phases of Feminism, along with massive socio-economic, cultural interventions transforming the world into a global world –all this express a gradual and perpetual churning of gender alignments, more from the perspective of marginalized entity. The agency projecting gender in literary representation-the author-is under scanner because of its perceived bias and prejudice in gender representation. The relationship between the authorial voice and the gender representation is very complicated and often controversial as well, leading to disagreements and divisions amongst the writers on the basis of their gender. Poile Sengupta's play *Thus Spake Shoorpanakha, So Said Shakuni* discusses and explores how the politics of gender operates in regulation, modification and appropriation of gender in twentieth century India.

**Key words:** Gender, Power, Space, Body, Language, Silence

### Introduction:

The representation of gender, masculine and feminine, is culture, space and time specific and innumerable signifiers like body, space, speech and socio-cultural mores of the day determine the gender identity. The constructing agency applauds the conforming agent with approving terms as 'dignified' 'acceptable' whereas denounces and deplores those not going by the norms with smearing. The powerful patriarchy has enjoyed complete control over naming and defining process, creating binaries and hierarchies like masculine/feminine, mind/body, good/bad, white/black, centre/margin, active/passive, reception/rejection, dignified/derogated etc. the projection of gender with its multiple markers like body, space, place, gender, colour, ethnicity, dress, costume etc. reflects the stratagems of the centre (man) in subverting the margin (woman). The representation of gender in literary texts, both at private and public spaces, and of late at 'third' or 'shared space' as well, is the reflection of this power-politics involved in projecting gender. The

long trajectory of resistance to gender appropriating forces—from small steps with suffragette movement, to Bronte sisters to Woolf to different phases of Feminism, along with massive socio-economic, cultural interventions transforming the world into a global world—expresses a gradual and perpetual churning of gender alignments, more from the perspective of marginalized entity. The agency projecting gender in literary representation—the author—is under scanner because of its perceived bias and prejudice in gender representation. The projection of gender, they believe, is as per the author's own conception of gender which is nothing but an expression of dominant discourse. The conventional patriarchy controlled gender-structuring process continuously stands re-defined, re-structured and re-imagined, and is constantly evolving into a new shape where masculinity is losing its traditional sheen while femininity is gradually acquiring masculine identity. Thais Morgan feels: "The interaction of writing and gender is complex and fraught with cultural significance when the author projects a voice from the imagined perspective of the opposite sex." (Morgan, 1)

The process of gender representation takes into accounts various spatial, temporal factors—fixed and fluid-like socio-cultural norms, sexual identity, ethnicity, body, language, spaces, racial features etc. and the process has been explored and analyzed from multiple aspects: Beauvoir's social construct theory to Butler's performance theory to Roland Barth's 'Death of the Author' (1967) at the expense of the birth of the reader and finally the arrival of digital texts and writings.

A thin line of protest that emerged the world over amongst the women writers, thinkers, and philosophers against the projection of gender on specific lines—masculine-dominant, active, assertive male and feminine- conforming, meek, submissive, pliant, passive female- also affected the writers in India as well. Gender as a signifier, with its visible signifiers (contours, appearance, skin) and invisible agency (socially constructed) assumes pivotal position in performance with body, language and stage becoming a site for negotiation and transformation of cultural dynamics of gender. Taking a cue from what the Western writers like Cixous urged women: "Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it" (Cixous, 876), the women playwrights in India, homogeneous in feelings, aspirations and sense of self and feeling a special communion, make an umbrella group in the form of 'Feminist Theatre' and voice the concerns they have felt for centuries about the woman as a gender from their own perspective. The 'Feminist Theatre' since 1970 has slowly come out of the shadow of mainstream theatre dominated by the male playwrights and protests against male playwrights' obsession with gender stereotypes. This block thinks that "[de]centring the authority of the playwright is crucial to the development of feminist theatre." (Singh, 2016, p.270) Their focus is on depiction of what is close to a woman's her heart, what stirs her sub-consciousness—feelings, emotions, relationships, belongingness, trauma, violence (physical, mental,

psychological), love, affection, dignity, position, space, their loneliness etc. Poile Sengupta is one of the major voices of the 'Feminist Theatre', alongwith Manjula Padmanabhan, Dina Mehta and Tripurari Sharma, and with her women-centric plays she constantly challenges the stereotyped projection of gender in the old-fashioned parochial, patriarchy-supporting customs and traditions and advocates subverting of the prevalent practices and mindsets with alternate possibilities. Thus *Spake Shoorpanakha*, *So Said Shakuni* explores how gendered identities continuously stand appropriated and re-appropriated with interventions from invisible power blocks. No doubt, Poile writes about issues very close to a woman's heart but she refuses to be labeled as a Feminist, to be closeted within certain boundaries and labeling. The present re-telling of ancient mythical characters' positions in the play questions the historical perception about them and unmasks the politics and maneuverings behind their representation. Elaborating about the objectives of the 'Feminist Theatre' Anita Singh remarks: "Feminist plays deconstruct the emasculating structures of ancient legends and criticize the feminine myths still operating in Indian society...Beauvoir expresses a commonly held feminist opinion by arguing that mythology validates the subjugation of women in patriarchal culture. Mainstream hero-centered literature and myth normalize contemporary patriarchal cultural values. It is precisely this process that feminist myth revision seeks to overcome." (Singh, 2014, 8)

### Discussion:

Poile's play *Thus Spake Shoorpanakha* is rooted in myths, because here the relationship between myth and history becomes closely inter-twined. There are numerous versions of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, with multiple understandings and interpretations of these mythical histories as epics but the present discussion focuses on Poile's literary text. All the incidents, actions and characters have alternative, deconstructive possibilities. While talking about this play, Poile says: "Thus Spake is a modern play that deals with conflict that is timeless. The two protagonists suffer because they belong to the oppressed communities; they are also forgotten by Valmiki and Vyasa themselves after a point." (Sengupta, 2010, 86) The play seems a redemption for Shoorpanakha and Shakuni as it presents them the most misunderstood characters of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, existing at the gap of thousands of years, and explores the pattern behind their slandering over the centuries. Two divergent images emerge with regard to the cosmic drama depicted in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—the earlier one having the sanctity of historical approval and the alternate one as presented by Poile, giving space and stage to these marginalized Shoorpanakha and Shakuni to put their sides before the world. Talking about the play, Poile says "...the play intermittently travels back in time to the two Indian epics—the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—and pulls them into present day relevance." (Sengupta, 2010, 242) Derided as lecher and temptress,

schemer and conspirator throughout the history, these two are allowed to come out of their forced identity and show their humane side. Shoorpanakha and Shakuni, devoid of any individual identity, bump into each other at the airport as MAN and WOMAN and appear fretting about their delayed flight and start talking to each other to while away time. Poile keeps Shoorpanakha and Shakuni's identity anonymous by referring them as WOMAN and MAN respectively —the former is projected as a seductress, enchantress, licentious and revengeful woman who cares nothing for the norms of the society of the day for the fulfillment of her physical desires: "I'm an enchantress." (Sengupta, 2010, 252) Shakuni is a hardcore schemer for whom revenge is the only solace for the brutalities afflicted on his family by the Kurus—usurpation of his father's kingdom, death of his brothers and forced marriage of his sister Gandhari with a blind king Dhritrashtra. Poile's projection of a defiant, bold and unorthodox Shoorpanakha speaks of the playwright's belief and sense of communion with the lot woman's position in society. Through new Shoorpanakha and aggrieved Shakuni she wants to alter the entire popular narrative generated by male dominated society through the centuries about the stereotyped positioning of Shoorpanakha and Shakuni.

Poile makes Shoorpanakha traverse two worlds on the stage—the mythical in the consciousness of people and the modern, in front of the audience with her stage intervention. Both Shoorpanakhas, mythical as well as on stage, having unreal or illusory existence, are deconstructed. The mythical transforms herself into a modern one with her costume, accessories, make-up, body language and the tone tenor of her expression tells that she has come off all the abuses thrown at her. Despite her long journey through the lens of male-gaze, she is as rebellious as earlier. No doubt, at times she appears a bundle of contradictions—she wants to re-write the codes of her own life as a human being and still she objectifies herself with her appearance to attract man. The relationship between mind and body becomes blurry; she has a mind of her own but at the same time she wants to listen to what her body demands, but her existence as a body is negated with the brutal alteration of her physical, territorial borders. Shoorpanakha as a rebel with her unorthodox approach and Gandhari as a conformist with her silence resist the identities thrust upon them. The regulation of their bodies (Shoorpanakha and Gandhari) signifies the presence of resistance to the existing power. Shoorpanakha has to pay a heavy price for expressing her longings, physically as well as socially. She understands her status as a woman, and starts comparing herself with Gandhari: "Your sister lost only her sight. I lost myself...I lost me." (Sengupta, 2010, 267) Being extrovert and domineering in nature and with a strong physicality, she has the feminine touch and craves for love, soft touches and companionship in life. Anita Singh observes: "Shoorpanakha represents all those women who are bold enough to remain single and declare their desire for male companionship without taking recourse to false modesty. Such women threaten the male

world and so they are described as dangerous rakshasis (demoness) who must be controlled/punished before they can upset the patriarchal set up.” (Singh, 2009, 166-67) Poile gives extensive space to her women to capture their reactions, both outward as well as at subconscious level—Shoorpanakha and Gandhari. In ancient India, a woman’s sexuality was always kept under control (Child marriage, Widow, Sati) and a ‘good’ woman never expresses her sexuality. Her sexual life was ordained as per the dicta of the patriarchy. Shoorpanakha is unconventional in this regard and threatens the established structure.

Desire works as a stimulant in the play and causes war; Shoorpanakha desires love, whereas Shakuni longs for revenge. Both are steadfast in getting what they wish for; they adopt all sorts of strategies, and even had to go through unspeakable indignities, physical as well as social, but they don’t budge from their stand. Like a normal woman, Shoorpanakha doesn’t hide her lusty desires, unacceptable to the male-world, and this invites the wrath of conventional male-dominated society; she is an “alter ego of Sita.” (Richman, 10) She has the combination of both-feminine and masculine—when she expresses her deep interiors she is the most feminine and when she retaliates she becomes masculine. Even in her physique she has the combination of the two; bodily, she has been blessed with a beautiful figure, but not beautiful so far her facial features are concerned. Gayatri Spivak explains how the centre-margin interplay of power-games are at work when a “...cultural identity is thrust upon one because the centre wants an identifiable margin, claims for marginality assure validation from the centre.” (Spivak, 55) They are conditioned to behave, speak, and conduct in particular at private as well as public places. Different writers have used their artistic liberty in portraying Shoorpanakha differently-ugly, demanding, demonized, beautiful, enchantress, and seductress. Shoorpanakha never fits into the image of a traditional, docile woman. She questions the institution of marriage, a threat to the institution giving legitimacy to human relations: “Do I look like a wife?...You don’t have to be married to know what a wife looks like.” (Sengupta, 2010, 255) Concurring with Spivak, Jasbir Jain says about woman: They [women] are able to redeem themselves mainly through devotion, sacrifice and sublimation. And even when placed within the family situation, there is a deep realization that they are alone, that they don’t belong, feel perpetually uprooted and on trial. They are also constantly exposed to male exploitation. In both kinds of accounts—the folk and the mythical—women’s lives are defined by male control, thus depriving them of the element of choice.’ (Jain, 2015, 325) Both Shoorpanakha and Shakuni have been projected as incarnation of Desire, and can go to any level for the fulfillment of their desire. The former is very much aware of her own self and brazenly rebuffs the co-passenger when the latter intrudes into her life: “Do you have to classify me?... (Wearily.) I am a woman, don’t you understand? A woman. Not a saint. Not a whore. Not just a mother, a sister, a

daughter. I am a woman.” (Sengupta, 2010, 267) The women who are unorthodox and unconventional in expressing their longings are looked with a smirk by the male dominated society and labeled as ‘demoness,’ ‘witch’ or ‘seductress’. By having control over defining and naming process, the dominant agency becomes intimidating: “By defining women by the pure/impure binary, ‘men could render them relatively harmless’, blunting their male challenge to male privilege.” (Douglas, p.36) The deconstruction of terms like ‘pativerta’(Dedicated to Husband) and ‘pati permeshwar’(Godliness of Husband)) confirms the politics behind the projection of gender in a specific desired way in a patriarchal society. Rekha explains how the patriarchy operates to make “Woman as conforming entity”—Those who conform are idealized, while those who deviate or resist, personify normative fissures, and tensions or embody ambiguities and thus produce unstable results, are demonized.” (Rekha, 11) Traversing through the rumblings of cosmic war, Shoorpanakha and Shakuni feel a special affinity towards each other. Shakuni evokes death and destruction with bomb in his suitcase to destroy the airport. But he is different from Shoorpanakha in the sense that he is blindly obsessed about revenge whereas Shoorpanakha is craving for soft touches and fulfillment in life with the man of his dreams. She dissuades Shakuni from the heinous act of blasting bomb at the airport; she is equally assertive and confident in her talks with Shakuni at the airport. Shoorpanakha appears completely devastated and lonely at the end when she remarks that Shakuni ‘turned out to be better bother than mine’. This suggests that she was not a victim of hostilities from the outside world only; rather her own brother and family was inconsiderate towards her. But despite all this, she doesn’t lose her sanity and rationality; she remains calm and dissuades Shakuni from taking any action.

The cultural regulation of human bodies as normal/acceptable and abnormal/unacceptable bodies emanates from power agency having the backing of patriarchy but at the same time it makes identity fluid, not fixed. The masculine identity demands the projection of feminine in a specific, desired way. The removal of Shoorpanakha’s body parts by the male agent is just to deny her sexual, feminine identity; placed in a voyeuristic position the agency overcomes his conflict by altering Shoorpanakha’s territorial sanctity of her body. Chopping off all that sticking out in Shoorpanakha’s body further intensifies the obsession of man’s own perception of himself with authority with his sticking out organ. Shoorpanakha expresses her humaneness, well aware of her own self as a woman: “I’ve forgotten how he hurt me. And I...(Softly.) I can’t hurt anyone anymore. I have lost the need to hurt...I am a woman.”(267) The target body inscribed and codified with socio-cultural inscriptions turn into a platform of resistance, as echoed by Grosz: “Body is never simply a passive object upon which regimes of power are played out.” (Grosz, 1990, 64) Body here becomes a metaphor—and covering this body with various costumes also lead to different interpretations, as the characters –



Shoorpanakha and Shakuni change their costume onstage—Shoorpanakha donning new outfits representing our times. Recounting the degree of violence against women, Gilbert admits that “...images of sexual violence suggest, women’s bodies often function in post-colonial theatre as the spaces on and through which larger territorial or cultural battles are being fought.” (Gilbert, 1996, 215) Shoorpanakha is very much conscious of her looks, colour, figure, and features and knows how the agency recognizes one’s identity on the basis of these markers. She understands that being dark with ordinary features, she can’t stand a chance before good looking, fair complexioned women, and she knows how gender is constructed: “Because she was dark and big. She wasn’t the way men like women to be. Fair-complexioned. Delicate. Shy...biddable. Pause.... Look at the Ramayana. The hero is tall ... straight-nosed ... handsome. The villain is grotesque with ten heads. The heroine is slender-waisted, dazzlingly fair. The vamp is dark, swarthy, big. Outspoken. Coarse. Therefore the vamp is a demon. Because she speaks her mind.” (Sengupta, 2010, 277) Fox describes “how bodies serve as signifiers, just as a text in a book or a piece of film. They have been attributed meaning, and they can be read by others, and rewritten, they are texts, carrying knowledgeability and power.” (Fox, 26). A woman is a walking spectacle for man; wherever she goes she invites attention on account of her physicality, body, shape, colour, even the costume. She is an object to be devoured by the male eyes as said by Laura Mulvey in her famous article: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly.” (Mulvey, 837) The mind/body (matter) hierarchical binary is at work in altering of Shoorpanakh’s physicality; Laxmana’s action of altering the geographical borders of a Shhorpanakha’s body speaks about male world’s obsession with a gendered body, because it is through her body that Shoorpanakha articulates her own self and rebuts the dominant structures. Madalina further extends this argument that “A woman does not live her body as an inert entity. Her everyday embodiment is complexly and continuously constituted as a socially constructed (female) body, a lived body, a constrained and regulated body and as a resistant body.” (Madalina, 111) Altering of Shoorpanakha’s bodily territory is to divest her of her sexuality and feministic identity. As body remains the most dominant and visible signifier of woman’s gender identity, this chopping of her body parts is a result of collective consciousness of men to silence any dissent. The denial of bodily pleasures to a woman as socio-cultural taboo, laments Cixous, is used as a stratagem to deprive her of identity: “We’ve been turned away from our bodies, shamefully taught to ignore them, to strike them with that stupid sexual modesty; we’ve been made victims of the old fool’s game: each one will love the other sex. I’ll give you your body and you’ll give me mine. But who are the men who give women the body that women blindly yield to them?” (Cixous, 1976, 885) One’s sense of identity is based on one’s sense of body, and this body belongs to the individual as well as to the

public; its movement in spaces is also regulated by gender-constructing forces. For a woman her body belongs to her only and any unwarranted, forceful encroachment upon her territory is resisted in different ways.

Body and space are co-related signifiers affecting the gender projection process. Space is an important signifier in determining gender, depending upon various processes of gender construction on the basis of spaces—private, public, or third or shared spaces. Shoorpanakha defies the traditional regulation of her gender identity by trespassing the boundaries constructed for a female gender: “Because she takes up space....What was Shoorpanakha’s crime?” (Sengupta, 2010, 277) This cultural regulation of human bodies as normal/acceptable and abnormal/unacceptable bodies emanates from power agency having the backing of patriarchy but at the same time it makes identity fluid, not fixed. The masculine identity demands the projection of feminine in a specific, desired way. She defies conventional norms of space occupation; with her solo, outgoing actions and she re-writes the norms of accepted behavior of a woman in a society, ruled by patriarchy directed norms. The German artist Marianne Wex observes how the gender defining forces affect the body posturing of man and woman in public spaces—women make themselves smaller, shrinks, don’t spread and take less space while men contrary to women, like spreading, covering more space than required. She argues that body language, with unconscious gestures, is the result of sex-based, patriarchal socialization behavioural pattern in daily life. She writes: “Beginning as children, men are encouraged on all levels to make themselves broad, especially in front of women while the intimidation of women leads them to take up as little space as possible.”(Wex, 1984) Body, still or stirred requires space. It can shrink as well as expand as per the requirement of time and to convey a meaning with its posturing. The defiling of a woman’s modesty with defacement of her body in the public space, on the stage is collapsing of those gendered spaces which are disadvantageous to woman. Woman’s body is attributed to be a spatial reality, rendering her passive, an object to be affected, ordered, exercise of authority before an active male agent that wants to cover or control woman as a space. Shoorpanakha’s sitting posture at the airport reflects her intimidating nature with her wish to cover more and more space to corner the ‘other’s space, defying the socially constructed the gender boundaries of feminine. Her desire to capture both chairs for herself and her reluctance to allow other passenger, a male to take the chair speaks of her desire to rewrite the gender specific spatial boundaries. Kathryne Beebe describes ‘space ‘as ‘dynamic, constructed, and contested. It was where issues of sexuality, race, class, and gender—amongst a myriad of other power/knowledge struggles—were sited, created, and fought out. (Beebe, 2)

Shoorpanakha oscillates between two centres—tradition and modernity—she wants to be loved and still rejects marriage, craves for love without accepting the norms of the day. A



woman defying marriage is viewed with suspicion and unacceptable to the society. Modern Shoorpanakha's advances towards Shakuni at the airport and her candid acceptance of sexual desires make her a rebel throughout history. She refuses to be controlled by the agency and her ventures in the forest defy conventional feminine gender. She displays all the ingredients of a masculine gender through her performative action (Butler, 1990, 139) reverses the prevalent patriarchy perpetuated gender roles. Shakuni outwardly appearing as a well-wisher maternal uncle of the Kauravas, is a sinister schemer whose sole motto is revenge against the entire Kuru clan for the sake of the injustice meted out to her sister Gandhari by compelling his family to marry her with the blind Dhritrashtra. He wants destruction of the entire Kuru clan and fans the fire of revenge among them resulting in war between the Pandavas and Kaurava. Shakuni while describing the lot of her sister expresses his deep anguish: "She [Gandhari] merely ... she ... deliberately blindfolded herself. She wore a dark, thick, bloody bandage over her eyes ... kept it there all twenty-four hours, all her life. Blinded. Living in constant darkness...in unrelenting night." (Sengupta, 2010, 264) He dots on his sister and the image of Gandhari's willful blindness haunts him and by provoking, instigating Kuravas and Pandavs to play the game of dice he leads them to their doom through war. He is determined to take revenge: "...when plotting revenge, nothing else is important ... not my nephews ... not me .... Finally ... not even my sister .... I wanted to turn everything to dust. Dust and ashes." (Sengupta, 2010, 271) But towards the end he appears mollified and can be persuaded to shun the path of revenge.

Speech and silence are two major strategic elements used by Poile for subverting the power structure. Shoorpanakha is very candid and outspoken in expressing her inner self and voices her feelings openly without any social inhibitions. On the other hand Gandhari adopts silence as a strategy. In the 'Feminist Theatre' women adopt their own ways and strategies to voice their concerns and to communicate with the world around them. She uses her own body, special kind of speech and language as well as her silences to register her protest. Poile describes silence as an effective dramatic device to communicate the desired thing: "Apart from the words, movement and gesture and also, paradoxically, of communication. In fact, among all forms performing arts, it is theatre that uses silence as powerful and effective device." (Sengupta, 119, 2014) The use of language is gender specific and in Thus Spake ... Shoorpanakha uses a language that makes traverse the traditionally constructed gender boundaries of masculine and feminine. A masculine sentence is full of intimidation, authority, command, and carries power with the use action, cuss words, full of vulgarity whereas a feminine sentence is persuasive, soft, loaded with feelings, assimilative characterized with docility and timidity. She uses a language that smacks of authority, assertiveness, voicing her sexuality and questions the gender boundaries: "She showed off her breasts and thrust out her hips. So?" (Sengupta,

2010, 277) 'What's happened, lover? No sex in the last six hours.' (Sengupta, 2010, 248), "To have casual sex with a stranger?" (Sengupta, 2010, 260)

The modern Shoorpanakha adopts silence and indifference as tools to put in place the male passenger. Her stubbornness smacks of a woman's counter to the process of gender construction:

**MAN:** Is this chair taken?

Silence

**MAN:** (Louder) Is this chair taken, Madam?

No Answer. (Sengupta, 2010, 246)

Later on, she is fuming with anger and puts MAN off with her choice of what Butler said power-ridden comments: 'Move your hooves off my chair.... (Shouts,) Move your fucking...'(Sengupta, 2010, 249) Towards the end she appears completely devastated and lonely when she remarks that Shakuni 'turned out to be better bother than mine'. This suggests that she was not a victim of hostilities from the outside world only; rather her own family was inconsiderate towards her, still she keeps her sanity.

### **Conclusion:**

Gender identity and its representation is going through a phase of churning, making it more fluid with gradual modification and erasure, more so in fast changing contemporary times where traditionally established boundaries are collapsing fast, every day offering new conception and possibilities within the masculine feminine discourse. Binaries are becoming obsolete with pluralities and multi-dimensional in every sphere of gender marking. Out of choice or compulsion or demanding situation, gender is gradually losing its fixed nature and identity with masculine-female and feminine-male. In Thus Spake Shoorpanakha Poile tries to deconstruct the power structures affecting gender representation as well as the designs latent in those discourses. The characters of Poile are what society or power structures made them; in the post-modern re-readings there are signs of sanity and humanness in their responses. In an interview with Poile, The projection of unconventional within the stereo types represents gradual metamorphosing nature of gender, stretching and expanding the patriarchy-controlled- boundaries: "The resistance that the writers/their protagonist bring to bear on a patriarchal domination, however does not aim at creating a coherent, closed, unitary and stable female subject. It is through these processes of confrontation and assimilation between man and woman that gender roles are recreated, redefined and restructured where the patriarchy is becoming more accommodative before the collective, subtle but assertive maneuvering of woman—writers, critics and thinkers. Ania Loomba's suggestion holds ground in this regard: "It would be better to reformulate the relationship as more inter-active, since

women are not just the ground for the enactment of agendas which are directed elsewhere but direct targets of these agendas.”(Loomba, 7) The patriarchal hegemony is continuously conceding the ground and getting weakened and the world is outwardly look becoming feminine but actually strengthening masculine signifiers. The gender boundaries are continuously stretching, shrinking, making it difficult “to take granted what it is to be a man or woman, or that the world is simply with divisions in it.” (Alsop, 2)

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