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### A POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST STUDY OF GARCIA MARQUEZ'S THE SAD AND INCREDIBLE TALE OF INNOCENT ERENDIRA AND HER HEARTLESS GRANDMOTHER

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to trace out the instances of 'double colonization' of female subaltern in Garcia Marquez's novella *The Sad and Incredible Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother*. The post-colonial theory of Gayatri Spivak is applied to trace out the 'dual suppression' of a 'silenced subaltern' in a colonized patriarchal power structure. Qualitative research paradigm is taken up as a prime research methodology that has guided data analysis. The data of the study consist of lines from *The Sad and Incredible Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her heartless Grandmother*. Garcia Marquez symbolically traces the history of Spanish colonialism in his novels and through his characters highlights the destructive effects of colonization on the psyche of suppressed subjugated subjects.

#### INTRODUCTION

Post-colonial feminism is a doctrine focuses on feminist maxim which spins around colonial suppression of women on the basis of gender, race and status in the society. Post-colonial critics argue that women is 'double colonized' within the patriarchal colonized society on the basis of gender, ethnicity and race ,and withdraws western feminism who use the term 'women' generally and universally for women which doesn't focus on ethnic identities. There is a cry of revolt in the post-colonial writings against the main stream from the margin and periphery. The 'double colonized' dictum of post colonial feminism got highlighted in 1980s with theorists like Erna Broadber, Ketu Katrak, Sara Sulehri, Chandra Mohanty, Trinh T.MinhHa and Gayatri Spivak.They all talk about the 'dual oppression' of female in a dominant power structure of patriarchal colonized society (Ashcroft,Griffiths,Tiffin 249).

Post-colonial feminism attempts to focus the study of women as a dual oppressed subject both emotionally and physically in the colonized society. Spivak lays emphasis on the 'subaltern women' in the milieu of colonial production and says "the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow (Spivak.5). This paper aims to focus on the 'silenced subaltern' in the allegorical novella of Latin American writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez through the lens of Post-colonial feminism. Garcia Marquez's *The sad and Incredible tale of Erendira and heartless Grandmother* highlights the issue of Spanish colonialism in allegorical tone. Through the character of Erendira and her grandmother Garcia Marquez illustrates the colonial power structure of dominated and dominant and the dual suppression of female in a colonized patriarchal society.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE POST COLONIALITY AND FEMINISM**

Post-colonial literature focuses on the study of the production of colonization, the process and results of the colonial binary of civilization/barbarity. It highlights the self-perceived destiny of the colonizer to rule and subordinate people by mitigating it as a sacred duty to tame people. In many colonized power structures women is given the position of inferior like the colonized subject who shares the same experience of suppression, subjugation and oppression. Minh-Ha discusses the women's suppression in colonized society in a very bitter tone as according to her women suffers double subjugation. She highlights the suppression of women and says that a women is always doomed to death and used as a toy in master's hands. (Minh\_Ha 264)

Postcolonial and feminist discourses try to restore both the marginalized colonized subject and the oppressed female. The subjugation of female emotionally and physically is compared to the suppression of the colonized subject in the power structure of colonized society. Sara Suleri in her *Meatless Days* (1989) discusses the same issue of imbalance between man and women which is created through hegemony as she says that "men live in houses and women live in bodies" (143). Sara Suleri highlights the dictatorial role of man in the society and shows women's subjugation silently to the domination of man as is shown in Mamma's character in *Meatless Days*. Ifat's character on the other hand shows a violent resistance against the patriarchal powers (132).

### **'OTHERING' OF WOMEN/DISOURSE OF POWER**

The colonizers create the colonized subjects and marginalized people by the discourse of power as Foucault says "discourse creates the world" (Focault 38). Woman is subjugated through the discourse of colonized patriarchal society. Discourse has assigned women the inferior subjugated place in the society. The suppression of women 'mutes' her and make her 'other' who looks at the world through the great 'Other' or the male gaze. The 'othering' of women resonates the colonized subject's othering who is subjugated in the same very way. Spivak discusses the 'othering' of the colonized and says women is neglected from the discussion and is left in shadow thus suffers 'Double suppression' (269). The literature of the post-colonial feminism is mostly the narratives of oppressed. Jones an African –American writer traces the history of the white colonizers and highlights the issues of women suppression in her absently-present colonizer Corregidora, who is an emblem of cruelty and nastiness ,fathers his own three generations. The black daughters suffer sexual brutality and suppression in Corregidora's hands (Jones 02).

### **SILENCED SUBALTERN/A DOUBLE COLONIZED SUBJECT**

The idea of women's 'double colonization' of female other became an eye-catching phrase in 1980s. Women is both colonized physically and emotionally by both patriarchal and colonized ideologies (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 250). The women of colonized power structure suffer suppression thus is 'silenced other'. Spivak raises a question ironically that can the Subaltern speak? Because in a power structure women as a colonized subject is made subaltern and then silenced and even if she speaks no one hears. The female of a colonized society is double imprisoned and suffers subjugation, suppression and resentment. Spivak highlights the issue of subaltern through Derridean lens and measures the 'silence of subaltern' (93). The colonized subject is fixed and the world is moving and the fixed subject is made a silenced subaltern by the power of discourse of the colonizer. Spivak claims that the west presents itself in its productive knowledge and talks in its own language to itself about the other. She answers her own question that the subaltern cannot speak because west has shut its eyes to relate to the 'other' other than its own archetype.

### **SUBALTERN'S MANIFESTATION OF IDENTITY**

Mohanaty, a post-colonial feminist discusses the issue of subaltern's muteness and utterance and shows the subaltern's strife for individuality after a deep void silence (265). She focuses on the struggle of third world women who is marginalized and silenced. Contemporary writers and theorists show the strife of the silenced subaltern for manifesting identity as they discuss the relationships and experiences of the subaltern in a suppressed power structure and then a continuous strife for freedom and existence. The silence of the subaltern female makes her reach the state of 'nihilism' as discussed by Paul Sartre, which according to Sartre is a psychological disastrous effect of the suppression. French feminist Simone de Beauvoir's dictum of female as a 'second sex' is what the colonial female suffers in the hands of colonized patriarchal power structure. The journey of subaltern from muteness to utterance is a debatable question which is responded in a different way by writers and theorists. Some like Spivak ironically say that Subaltern can't speak and can't be heard while others like Marquez, Jones and Sulheri show the strife of the silenced subaltern for manifestation of identity and existence in a chauvinist colonized society (89).

### **ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIVE FRAMEWORK**

This paper analyzes Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novella *The Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and her Heartless grandmother* through the lens of Gayatri Spivak's dictum of post-colonial feminism. Garcia Marquez's Novella *The sad Tale of innocent Erendira and her heartless grandmother* is an allegorical story about the colonial suppressions of the marginalized natives and further about a female who is 'double colonized' in the chauvinist colonial power structure. The story starts with a seven years old, innocent Erendira who is allegorically shown as the 'suppressed subaltern' double colonized by the colonizer as well as by the patriarchs of the society. Erendira grandmother is the epitome of colonial power who serves the role of 'Great Other' in Erendira's life and suppresses her to bereavement. Erendira a double colonized silenced subaltern suffers both in the hands of dominant male as well as the colonizer in the power structured society.

### **ALLEGORICAL REPRESENTATION OF POST-COLONIAL FEMINISM**

Garcia Marquez discusses allegorically the disparaging effects of colonized period of Latin American countries in the hands of colonizers in his Novella *The sad Tale of Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother*. Garcia Marquez through his characters shows

the disturbed psyche of the colonized people and their suffering. He throws light on the way the colonizers create 'hegemony' and subjugate the colonized subjects both mentally and physically. The grandmother of Erendira in the novella is shown as the colonizer who in a very wise way becomes center and marginalizes and suppress Erendira, her seven (7) years old granddaughter. Erendira suffers both physical and emotional terror under the power of her grandmother. She is treated worse than an animal by her grandmother and shown no mercy which is a real characteristic of the colonizers (as cited in Frank 04). Erendira works for her grandmother day and night but she shows no mercy by making her a prostitute in the age of fourteen. Grandmother's attitude towards Erendira is same of a colonizer as she orders her in a dictatorial tone "Iron all the clothes before you go to bed so you can sleep with a clear conscience, Yes grandmother...And feed the ostrich, Yes Grandmother" (Marquez 5). The way Erendira says yes to her grandmother is same of the colonized subject and the colonized female is more in shadow as she is double colonized and displaced.

### **OTHERING' OF ERENDIRA /DISCOURSE OF POWER**

The subaltern is created with the discourse of power and in the same way power is also created through discourse. The use of binaries of colonizers and patriarchs subjugate women. The binary of white and black, Them and us, civilized, barbarian is used to show the superiority of the colonizer, in the same very way the word women is a binary of man according to Jacques Derrida and it is used as a signifier for the signified man, the relation of which is arbitrary. Garcia Marquez celebrates the same aspect of discourse in his novella *The sad Tale of innocent Erendira and her heartless grandmother* and illuminates the power of discourse both as a colonizer and patriarch. The grandmother of Erendira creates hegemony in such a way through discourse that Erendira as a 'colonized subject' gets compelled to obey her. The grandmother puts all blame on Erendira's shoulders when the house gets burnt and she makes Erendira responsible to pay her back for the house thus makes her a prostitute at the age of fourteen. Garcia Marquez illustrates the power of discourse and hegemony through these allegorical characters. The grandmother an epithet of colonizer says to Erendira that she has to serve her throughout her life so that to compensate the loss of the burnt house for which Erendira infact was not responsible. Serving this very purpose the Grandmother takes Erendira to the storekeeper to sell her virginity to the storekeeper for some dollars (Marquez 7). The way Erendira is sold to the storekeeper shows the suppression of an allegorical colonizer and the way she is treated by the storekeeper shows the brutality and dominance of the patriarchs in a power structure society. Erendira's grandmother behaves as the 'Great Other' who is gifted with the destiny to rule and who understands the subject 'other' well. Erendira's grandmother convinces her by saying that you don't have to complain because you have the most beautiful life of a princess, luxurious room, serving band, so according to grandmother there is no reason for Erendira to complain.(Marquez 44). Erendira thus is shown as a figurative subject by Garcia Marquez suffers both the pangs of patriarchy as well as colonized subject.

### **ERENDIRA, A SILENCED SUBALTERN/DOUBLE COLONISED**

Garcia Marquez's allegorical portrayal of characters resonate Gayatri Spivak's maxim of 'silenced subaltern'. Erendira a colonial subject suffers dual oppression as Spivak says the colonized female subaltern is more shadowed(02). Erendira is marginalized and silenced by the colonizer and says nothing except yes to her grandmother. She serves

more than sixty (60) customers a day and shown no mercy and love from her grandmother."Erendira, who never spoke except it was unavoidable" (Marquez 01). She is silenced both by the dominant male and the 'great Other'. Garcia Marquez portrays Erendira's character as a 'double colonized' colonial subaltern subject who's lips are sealed to death. The cruel way she is treated by the male customers show the cruel attitude of dominated male who treat her worse than an animal and she shrieked and cried like an animal after serving 40 customers one after another made her tremble badly But even after this condition she has shown no mercy by both the dominated male and allegorical character of her grandmother who serves as an emblem of colonizer says" There are only ten soldiers left"(Marquez 16) .The grandmother answered and to this "Erendira began to weep with the shrieks of a frightened animal"(Marquez 17).Garcia Marquez symbolically shows relation of Spain with its American colonies through the character of Erendira and her grandmother. Garcia Marquez uses the genre of novella for the cramped emotions as a colonized subject.

### **ERENDIRA'S DECOLONISATION**

The journey of Erendira a colonized double suppressed and subjugated subject which started from her annihilation ends in her struggle for decolonizing herself. The extreme suppression resulted in resistance and finally decolonization. The way Erendira gets treated by her male customer's sown seeds of rebellion in her and finally she opened up her silenced sealed lips and spoke for her freedom and manifestation of identity. Erendira's grandmother when locked her in dog chains for the punishment, the soldiers around rebelled against the grandmother and took Erendira's bed on their shoulders and placed it in the mid of the market while Erendira was all naked (Marquez 43).

The way Erendira is suppressed double by the dominated male as well as the colonizer is the pet-up emotions of Garcia Marquez against the Spanish colonization of Americas.Erendira finally starts her struggle to decolonize herself and plans with Ulises to kill her grandmother. By the strife of three of four times Ulises finally stabs the grandmother and Erendira gets freedom and runs away to the unknown field. She decolonizes herself and vanishes away into unknown fields, celebrating her freedom and individuality. The decolonization of the protagonist Erendira somehow answer's Gayatri Spivak's ironical question that yes the subaltern can speak if she strives to speak and she could be heard as well in the patriarchal society. Garcia Marquez's novella is a cry for revolt against the subjugation of the colonizers and ends in an upbeat way eradicating the anarchy of colonization.

### **FINDINGS**

The data of this study was analyzed through 'Qualitative Content Analysis' and following findings are thereby drawn.

- Garcia Marquez's selected work *The Incredible and sad tale of innocent Erendira and Her Heartless grandmother* represents several aspects of post-colonial feminism through different characters.
- The characters of the *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and her Heartless Grandmother* highlight the issues of 'double colonization' of the silenced subaltern.
- Garcia Marquez's Novella *The Incredible and sad tale of innocent Erendira and Her Heartless grandmother* integrate slavery and freedom to portray the colonial dominance in the selected work.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Garcia Marquez highlights the issue of 'double colonization' in his novella *The Incredible and sad tale of innocent Erendira and Her Heartless grandmother*. His characters are the real epitome of the colonizer and the colonized. His subjugated silenced character Erendira answers the satirical question of Gayatri Spivak through the act of 'utterance' and shows courage and bravery to decolonize herself. The novella serves a pent-up of a colonized subject voiced his feelings allegorically by showing the relation of the colonizer and colonized and the subaltern female who suffers dual oppression.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Following are the recommendations made in the milieu of the conclusions and findings:

- A Research study of 'Post-colonial Feminism ' and 'Imperialism 'can be conducted on Garcia Marquez's other novels and characters as this study only focuses one single short novella
- Research work may be conducted on the colonization of Latin American Countries as the literature of Americas is strife of a subaltern who tries to speak.
- A Research can be conducted on Garcia Marquez as a freedom fighter against the subjugation of colonizers.

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