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തോ, സംസ്ഥാന സര്‍ക്കാറിന്റേതോ, സാംസ്കാരിക
വകുപ്പിന്റേതോ ആയിരിക്കണമെന്നില്ല. – എഡിറ്റര്‍

Reimaging Sita in *The Forest of Enchantments*: A Study of Revisionist Mythmaking

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The paper, 'Reimaging Sita in *The Forest of Enchantments: A Study of Revisionist Mythmaking,*' evolves from the awareness that the discourse of mythology is always androcentric in nature in which the central characters are constructed in a way to glorify and idolize male hegemony and masculine prowess. Female representations in androcentric myths are misogynist in nature and are always distorted by male perspectives and preferences. Revision of patriarchal myths from female perspective exposes the strategically concealed misogynist elements in androcentric myths. The study seeks to analyse how Revisionist Mythmaking, at its best, is exemplified in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel, *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019). She reworks Valmiki's epic Ramayana from a feminist critical perspective and effectively uses the technique of Revisionist Mythmaking to resist the patriarchal strategy of sidelining and silencing women. The paper critically analyses how the novelist portrays the character of Sita in a female perspective, unlike in the epic. It also presents how the novelist gives voice to the neglected female characters in Ramayana, thereby filling the gaps and silences of an androcentric epic. Hence, the study explores the possibilities of Revisionist Mythmaking in the process of redefining female identity.

Keywords: Revisionist Mythmaking, Androcentric, Misogynist, Patriarchy, Female Identity.

Ideals and ideologies inherent in a culture are expressed and reflected through their myths and folklores. As myths and fairytales are disseminated through various cultural products, their latent ideologies powerfully haunt human mind. Moreover, the discourse of mythology is a potent tool strategically used by patriarchy to perpetuate male dominance over women. Hence, in androcentric literary praxis, female representations are generally distorted. Furthermore, these representations are instrumental in creating a cultural space to legitimate patriarchally conditioned women. According to Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Guber, the women readers who internalise these patriarchal myths, are "fated to inhabit male-defined masks and costumes . . . that male-defined masks and costumes inevitably inhabit her, altering her vision" (1979, p.19). Consequently, the androcentric myths mould a male -centred universe and prescribe various the gender roles. In the gendered universe, female characters are presented as beautiful, vicious, cowardly, and unaggressive, while male characters, in absolute contrast, as active, productive, heroic and virtuous. Myths and fairytales create and circulate extreme negative stereotypes of female images like modest maidens, faithful wives, wicked witches and beautiful temptresses and so on. Moreover, the universal image of the brave and powerful male protagonist who conquers all obstacles and triumphs in his attempt to save the damsel in distress projects women as extremely frail stereotype and justifies all male privileges.

While male writers utilise myths in their writings as artistic and hegemonic tools, feminist writers find out the negative side of using myths for the stereotypical representations of women in literature. In her *Encyclopaedia of Feminism*, Lisa Tuttle remarks that the most effective strategies of feminist criticism are to "ask new questions of old texts" (1986, p. 184). Accordingly, in the twentieth century, with the emergence of postmodern philosophy and second wave feminism, many female writers have come forward to question the subject positions of the female characters in various male-centred myths. In order to challenge and subvert the misogynist ideas hidden in these texts, feminist writers offer new meanings, alter the conventional perspectives or reimages characters to suit their needs. This strategy is collectively known as revisionist myth making. Following

the feminist theoretical concepts of Claudine Herrmann, Alicia Ostriker observes in "The Thieves of Language: Women Poets and Revisionist Mythmaking" that feminist mythmaking is "the challenge to and correction of gender stereotypes embodied in myths" (1982, p. 73). She used the Promethean imagery of theft and notes that "the project of defining a female self has been a major endeavour" (p. 70) in this mode of writing. Moreover, Ostriker's metaphor of Female Prometheus has gained wide popularity in the academic sphere and many feminist writers have utilised the concept and echoed the celebrated metaphor in their writings. According to Ostriker, revisionist mythmaking is a conscious feminist project in which "a vigorous and various invasion of the sanctuaries of existing language, the treasuries where our meanings for "male" and "female" are preserved" (p. 71). Fairytales, myths and epics constitute the major repository of culture where gender identities of a culture are constructed. Ostriker rightly endorses the idea that revisionist mythmaking in women's poetry is one of "the significant means of redefining ourselves and consequently our culture" (p. 71). The meanings conveyed by the patriarchal myths offer a single perspective, which the feminist writers deconstruct through their feminist revision of myths, thereby opening up possibilities for multiple perspectives or interpretations. In her view, the appropriated texts necessarily "consist of hit-and-run attacks on familiar images and the social and literary conventions supporting them" (p. 74). Similarly, Nancy A. Walker rightly observes in *The Disobedient Writer: Women and Narrative Tradition* that the feminist writers deconstruct the phallocentric myths and fairytales. Furthermore, Walker adds that their "revisionary, 'disobedient' narratives . . . expose or upset the paradigms of authority inherent in the texts they appropriate" (1995, p. 7). What Walker has termed as a 'disobedient text' follows a narratological approach which involves "a reading that resists sexist and racist formulations and that results in a new text that attempts to overturn these formulations while remaining sufficiently referential to the original to make clear its point of origin" (p. 3). Thus, the feminist writers consciously reevaluate the patriarchal values of androcentric mythologies and give new interpretations to traditionally accepted meanings of canonised male- centred texts.

In the androcentric myths, male voice dominates and misogynist ideology prevails. Consequently, the revision of androcentric myths is one of the effective strategies to rectify the misrepresentation of women. Revising myths from a female perspective expose the misogynist elements that are intentionally concealed and hence invisible. This article is an analysis of how Chithra Banerjee Divakaruni employs revisionist mythmaking in her latest novel *The Forest of Enchantments* (2019) to resist patriarchal strategy of side-lining and silencing women. This paper is relevant as it explores revisionist myth-making as a critical tool to challenge and deconstruct patriarchal ideologies embedded in classical epics like the Ramayana. By reinterpreting silenced female voices and reimagining their experiences, revisionist retellings expose the gender biases of traditional narratives and offer alternative, empowering perspectives. Such re-visioning is essential for reshaping cultural memory and advancing feminist discourse in literature. Moreover, the study analyses the possibilities of feminist revisionist mythmaking in redefining the female identity in the novel

Nevertheless, it is important to note that rewriting myths is not a monolithic process. In *Fairy Tale as Myth/Myth as Fairy Tale,* Jack Zipes points out that there are two different ways for rewriting myths and fairy-tales. In the first method, termed as 'duplicates,' the narrative reaffirms and supports the traditional structures and values of the original epics. It simply reasserts the entrenched value system of existing power structures. Conversely, in the second method termed as 'revisions,' the writer attempts a revision of the ingrained assumptions, ideologies or paradigms of the original text. It attempts to reflect new ideologies and configurations through "incorporat[ing] the critical and creative thinking of the producer [of the revision]" and "alter[ing] the reader's views of traditional patterns, images, and codes" (2002, p. 9). *The Forest of Enchantments* can, therefore, be considered a feminist 'revision' as it retells the Valmiki's epic from a feminist perspective, introducing feminist ideologies, viewpoints and values. Divakaruni reworks on *Ramayana* with subtle changes in female characterisation. Furthermore, as she does not deviate from the main plot of *Ramayana*, there are no unexpected twists and turns

in the novel. In fact, the revision of the epic is possible by altering the method of narration without altering the original story. Consequently, the novelist positions Sita at the centre of the novel and adopts a method of retelling the entire events of *Ramayana* from Sita's perspective. The novel is restructured in a first-person narrative. The novelist traces every significant moment in Sita's life from a female subjective viewpoint. In the eye-opening prologue of the novel, the novelist points out that androcentric, canonical myths entail a re-interpretation. It raises important questions about the notions of dhrama, kingship, family and masculinity.

At the very beginning of the novel, Sita is shown, in a dejected mood, at the hermitage of Valmiki. Looking back on her life, Sita realizes that her present condition is deplorable: ". . . a queen bereft of her kingdom, a wife rejected by her husband at the height of his glory" (2019, p. 1). The novel commences with Valmiki urging her to read the first copy of *Ramayana*, "the story of the glorious king Ram" (p. 1). Nevertheless, after reading the entire story, Sita painfully realizes that the content is hostile to her identity as a woman. Accordingly, the novelist utilises the strategy of revisionist mythmaking in the novel to subvert the masculinist, hegemonic ideology of feminine submissiveness. Contrary to the epic version, Sita immediately assumes a dominant position. Hence, the novel opens with Sita's demand for the necessary corrections in the *Ramayana* composed by Valmiki. She is conscious that her pains and perspectives are totally absent in that grand narrative. Thus, she vehemently protests against the one-sided narrative: "What occurred when I was alone in the darkness, under the sorrow tree, you don't know. You don't know my despair. You don't even know my exhilaration, how it felt-first in the forest and then in Ayodhya" (p. 2). Accordingly, the novelist has transfigured Sita from a meek submissive wife to a rebel who demands the inclusion of her perspective in the epic. *The Forest of Enchantments* presents Sita as a character of strong will and sharp intellect, who is extremely aware of her rights in a patriarchal society. Moreover, she questions the patriarchal argument that the epic is written by divine revelation: "It must have been a god that brought it to you, then, and not a goddess" (p. 2). In her revision of *Ramayana*, Divakaruni's Sita makes narrations

and observations about her own life, thereby amending the plot line with a feminist touch. By giving priority to Sita's thoughts and feelings, the plot of *Ramayana* gets expurgated of its original patriarchal content.

Myths spread the false notion that the passive female needs a male support for survival. The male dominated society and culture has always viewed a rebellious, untamed woman who refuses to conform to the patriarchal norms with a sense of dread. Passivity, obedience and submissiveness are hailed as feminine qualities, whereas intelligence, aggressiveness and independence are suggested as masculine traits. Divakaruni's greatest achievement in her adaptation of the epic is her deconstruction of Sita's image depicted in patriarchal discourses as a silent, submissive, all-suffering and dependant sexual adjunct. She is retelling the story of Sita without the hegemonic valorisation of Rama. Her Sita is equally talented and independent like Rama, but in a different way. She recreates rewrites and revisualizes the androcentric world of *Ramayana* where women reduced to static and submissive objects.

Furthermore, Sita, in Divakaruni's portrayal, is very independent from her childhood onwards. She is a gifted child. She has a special ability to heal. In Sita's palace, her parents built a "healing house" for her in which "she examined many of the sick, and instructed the physicians on the administration of unguents and potions" (p. 7). With her touch the dying patients "grew quiet and breathed easy, and some did not open their eyes again" (p. 7). This special power of healing, moreover, empowers her from her childhood itself.

From a patriarchal perspective, to be feminine means to be passive; autonomy and independence are male attributes. But in the novel, Sita is portrayed as someone who is as self-determining as Rama is. Sita's decision to go to the forest with Rama, who was expelled from Ayodhya, is a very deliberate one. Divakaruni suggests that rather than accompanying her husband into the jungle, Sita has made up her mind to reclaim her lost childhood. She wants to fulfil her long cherished childhood dream to live in the forest. She persuades all the relatives, including her husband, to accomplish this secret childhood desire. The novelist portrays Sita as the daughter of the Earth who craves to enjoy the enchantments of forest.

Furthermore, while Rama is busy at the reconstruction of Ayodhya after his return from Lanka, Sita proves equally responsible at the palace. She detects the deteriorating condition of the dilapidated palace and decides to recreate it in its former splendour and glory. Notably, she never reveals Rama about the pathetic condition of the royal kitchen or ask his advice for these domestic matters. She immediately appoints the cook Sharav as the chief for the reconstruction. She hands over to him the heavy gold bangles gifted by Mandodari in Lanka and necessary orders:

Take these. Sell them in the market and keep some of the money for yourself- you deserve it for being such a faithful retainer all these years. Then buy all the ingredients you need, and cook a fine meal for the royal family. . .. Get good, experienced workers, tell them that they'll be well paid, and set them to work. I'm putting you in charge of all the domestic staff. Let's get this palace back in shape!" (p. 274-275).

Thus, in *The Forest of Enchantments*, Divakaruni brings Sita out of the cocooned image of a woman of silence and passivity which is the common feminine behavioural pattern in androcentric narratives. The female view of reality projects many distinctive positive female representations in which women are always dynamic, active and powerful.

The novel primarily focuses on the relation between Sita and Rama, in which Sita is neither submissive nor dependent, unaffected by the towering personality of Rama. Indeed, *The Forest of Enchantments* challenges the conventional mythical paradigm that places Rama at the apex of the hierarchy and relegates Sita and other the female characters to the peripheries. By destabilizing the conventional norms, Divakaruni constructs a woman- centred universe, where Sita questions Rama even when she reluctantly obeys his decisions. Sita is portrayed in the novel as a person who is not blinded by the adoration of her husband. For instance, after her first brief conversation with Rama, she is sceptical of whether he can be a loving husband: "what of his wife? Would he ever consider her to be as important as his dharma? What would his dharma say about the importance of loving his wife?" (p. 40).

Furthermore, she frequently questions Rama about his ethics and notions of Dharma. The novel illustrates Rama's explicitly inhuman decision to abandon his expectant wife after the battle with Ravana and its emotional impact on her. Significantly, she novelist evidently points out that Sita is subjected to the fire test not because she wants to return to Ayodhya and live with Rama but because she desperately wants to establish her fidelity and integrity. The novel rejects Rama as a vulnerable man who follows public opinion rather than his own consciousness. Consequently, this character trait that compels Rama to force Sita to face another fire test after several years: "You must go through a test by fire in the courtroom, so that the sages and attending kings and ministers of the court can witness the fire-god vouching for your innocence and purity" (p. 355).

Nevertheless, Sita, who chooses a figurative death by returning to the Mother Earth with her self-esteem rather than becoming the Queen of Ayodhya, is more central to the message of the novel than Rama, who goes great lengths to fulfil dharma. She addresses Rama as the "King of Ayodhya" because she knows very well that he has always placed his role as king above all other roles. Moreover, immediately after recovering from her mental breakdown, she proclaims her decision to reject his kind offer to establish her virtue again: "Because this is one of those times when a woman must stand up and say, *No more!*" (p. 357). Thus, Divakaruni subjects the image of Rama as a man of dharma to trial. She redefines Sita's identity from the perspective of experienced realities and makes an earnest attempt to liberate Sita from the conventional patriarchal structure valorised in myths,

In addition, feminist revisionist writings also lead to the exploration of hitherto unnoticed sisterhood among female characters of the original epic. *The Forest of Enchantments* generates a new sense of community based on female sisterhood to resist male oppression. In the novel, Divakaruni throws light on the non-conventional bond between the female characters and the diverse ways in which women support each other. The positive aspects of the female-female relationship are also highlighted in the novel. From the beginning to the end of the novel, the relationship between Sita and

Urmila remains empowering. Moreover, the novel reveals the mutually supportive relationship between these two sisters as well as many sympathetic sisterhood relationships in the epic. In each female characterisation, Divakaruni breaks down the negative feminine stereotypes pervasive in the epic. Sita can understand Surphanakha better than anyoneelse and she questions Rama about their brutal treatment of Surphanakha: "To mutilate her horribly? She was first an infatuated girl- you could've easily scared her off" (p. 150). Her relation with Kaikeyi is also a matured one. After her return from the forest, Sita easily forgives Kaikeyi: "Were Kaikeyi's actions, which sprang from love for her son and her desire to secure the kingdom for him, that much worse? She had'nt hurt me any more than Rama had" (p. 286). Thus, Divakruni recites the epic without its oppressive logic of patriarchal regime. The unconventional bond between Mandodari and Sita is also foregrounded in the novel in a constructive manner.

In Divakaruni's novelistic discourse, she attempts a feminist retelling of *Ramayana*, emphasising the overt gender bias embedded in the phallocentric epic discourses. Traditionally, in the grand narratives of epics, there are fewer female characters than the male characters. The literary patriarchs have appropriated the sacred texts as effective instruments to glorify the heroism of male characters and marginalise the female lives in the male- centred literary universe. Consequently, the female lives are narrated from a masculine perspective, which is detrimental to the female identity.

In order to change the gender bias that has been ingrained epic narratives for ages, the author of *The Forest of Enchantments* provides sufficient space to the peripheral female characters of the original epic to testify their unique female experiences and justify their innermost thoughts. In this context, Ostriker rightly observes: "the motivating force behind women writers' revisionist myths is the subversion of dominant ideology's hidden male bias" (p. 214). She further points out that a feminist writer "simultaneously deconstructs a prior 'myth' or 'story' and constructs a new one which includes, instead of excludes herself" (p. 215-216). Therefore, to destabilize the patriarchal representative praxis, in *The Forest of Enchantments*, Divakaruni not only dismantles many patriarchal notions about Sita,

but also gives voices to many peripheral female characters deliberately quietened in Valmiki's epic narrative. Consequently, these female characters, from Ahalya to Madodari, etch out the contours of the dominant- dominated interactions with various subjective positions of female choices. At the beginning of the novel, many females like Surpanakha, Kaikeyi, Ahalya, Urmila, Mandodari and Sunaina request Sita to include their lives in her narration: "write our story, too. For always we have been pushed into corners, trivialised, misunderstood, blamed, forgotten or maligned and used as cautionary tales" (p. 4). Recognizing, that her story would never be complete without including their stories too, Sita prudently agrees to their suggestion. Hence, Sita's retelling of *Ramayana* includes all muted female characters of the original, who longs but fails to speak out.

Divakaruni, in her attempt to develop an outline of the revision of the epic *Ramayana,* begins with a reworking of the hitherto misunderstood female characters with a view to undoing the injustice done to them by patriarchal power structures. In the novel, she attempts reimage the unnoticed female characters in order to subvert the patriarchal values or incorporate fresh gynocentric empowering paradigms or alter the perspectives as per the need of the narration. The novelist adeptly unravels the 'psyche' of the marginalised female characters, thereby suggesting alternative possibilities for the original epic. In the novel, Queen Kausalya suggests the pain and distress a woman feels when she has to share her husband with another woman. Throughout the novel, Kausalya is depicted as a more vivid living character than in the original epic. In the original *Ramayana*, Kausalya is portrayed as the epitome of the dutiful and submissive wife and mother. She is depicted as gentle, pious, and devoted to both her husband, King Dasharatha, and her son, Rama, embodying the idealized virtues of patience, sacrifice, and maternal affection without questioning the patriarchal norms surrounding her. Divakaruni's feminist perspective identifies the depth of Kausalya's mental break down and agony due to her husband's lack of love and caring and the forced banishment of Rama from the country. The novelist beautifully reveals the unfathomed psychic depth of the Queen of Ayodhya, who desperately longs for the love, care and attention of her husband, son and daughter-in-law.

Further, Divakaruni's mastery lies in the fact that she successfully makes her readers feel that they are intimate with the female characters who they are reading about. What strikes the readers most is the diversity of the female characters; Divakaruni makes her female characters gain their significance and meaning from the very setting, which they are a part of. In the novel, the narrator presents a humanitarian judgement on the ostensible evil characters like Surpanakha and Kaikeyi. Although the readers initially hate them for their wicked nature, the success of the novelist depends on the reader's decision to understand and accept them eventually. The novelist stunningly portrays how Mandodari considers Sita as her own lost daughter and how such a mother- daughter relationship develops between them. Although there is no such storyline in the original epic, the subplot points to the novelist's talent to interweave new stories into the old text. Kaikeyi, as Divakaruni portrays her, is a very efficient woman and a queen of extra ordinary talent. The only flaw in her character is her strong desire to see her own Bharatha anointed as the king of Ayodhya. In the final part of the novel, Kaikeyi is portrayed as a woman who has realised her mistakes and atoned for them. At the end of the story, when Rama forgives her on the advice of Sita, the readers also forgive her.

Feminist revisionist writers cherish a secret appeal towards the neglected female characters, who are 'monsters' in male perspective. In Valmiki's epic Surphanakha's characterisation is negative, and associated with *aasura guna*. Valmiki portrays her as the primary cause of Rama-Ravana war. Divakaruni subverts this patriarchal culture in which woman is only an adjunct of the men. The novelist intentionally recreates Surphanakha as a woman 'bent on revenge.' By projecting the female aggressiveness, Surphanakha undermines the patriarchal paradigms of the mythological world. Divakaruni reveals the female version of reality in which Surphanakaha is brutally assaulted for revealing her sexual desire for Rama and Lakshmana. She challenges the patriarchal norm that it is unwomanly to express desire. The portrayal of Surphanakha as a strong woman, transformed into a 'monstrous and revengeful' *raakshasi* to make amends for the pain and humiliation she endured. The novelist provides

a space for Surphanakha to articulate her resistance to the maltreatment meted out to her by Rama and Lakshmana.

The other notable reworked female character in the novel is Ahalya. She was a woman who took the curse of her husband, Maharshi Gauthama for the crime she did not commit and turned into a stone. She was reborn as a woman again from the stone by the touch of Rama's feet. Actually, she is victim of the sexual abuse by Indra. An excerpt from Sita's visit to Gauthama's ashram during their exile period in the forest is beautifully incorporated into the novel. Ahalya is presented in this episode as a woman who has vowed never to speak to anyone again. The novelist suggests that her oath of silence is her protest against her husband who had unreasonably cursed her. Moreover, Sita was deeply saddened by Gauthama's callous nature towards Ahalya. As a woman of integrity, Sita could easily realize that Ahalya's present life is a silent protest against her husband who caused the spiritual separation and disharmony in their marital life. Thus, the novelist provides a feminine touch to the epic by retelling the experiences of the muted and neglected female characters and reimaging them. Nevertheless, these reworking might have affected the internal pattern of the storyline of the epic, it functions "as new embroideries, adding fresh images and colours to radically alter the picture" (2001, p. 25). Moreover, in this way the novelist exposes the misogynist ideas ingrained in the original epic.

In addition, myths and fairytales popularise the perception that a male protector is indispensable for a woman. They emphasize that marriage is the ultimate goal of a woman's life and it brings the greatest happiness for her. However, contrary to this idea shared by *Ramayana*, Divakaruni rightly points out that in marriage a woman has to give up her independence and individuality in exchange for the love and protection she thinks she will get from marriage. Furthermore, Divakaruni highlights the diverse ways in which men dominate in marriage relationships, entrap woman in selfishness or captivity. Divakaruni illustrates the fact that for the female characters like Sita, Urmila, Mandodari, Sunaina and Ahalya, marriage is captivity or a death-in -life experience. Consequently, Divakaruni's feminist retelling of the epic tears off the façade of marital bliss. The way in which the

novelist exposes the hollowness of the institution of marriage without ever seeming to do so is remarkable.

In feminist standpoint theory, Sandra Harding suggests that marginalized groups, particularly women, have an epistemic advantage in knowing and representing their own experiences because dominant (male) perspectives are partial and often blind to the lived realities of women. Through her feminist retelling of *Ramayana*, Chithra Divakaruni Banerji projects an accurate reflection of the intensity and diversity of female experiences. In *The Forest of Enchantments,* Divakaruni writes about the turmoil and predicament of the mythical female characters destined to live in a patriarchal society, which intends to subjugate them unconditionally. In this regard, Adrienne Rich notes: "Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for women more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival" (p. 168). Indeed, Sita's traumatic life experiences, heartbreak and resilience, stare at the readers from between the lines of her narration of *Ramayana*. Divakaruni's revision of *Ramayana* can be read as a feminist endeavour to foreground women's natural and innate pattern of experiences in a patriarchal society. Furthermore, she reinterprets the epic, revisualises the myth and reimages some of the characters. The relevance of this paper lies in its critical engagement with the theme of revisionist myth-making, which seeks to interrogate and reinterpret canonical texts like the *Ramayana* from a feminist standpoint. By foregrounding marginalized female voices and experiences that have historically been silenced or distorted within patriarchal narratives, revisionist myth-making offers a necessary corrective to the traditional epic discourse. It not only challenges the androcentric assumptions embedded in such myths but also creates a discursive space for alternative, gender-sensitive perspectives that reflect the complexities of women's lives, identities, and agency. In doing so, this paper contributes to the broader feminist project of reclaiming cultural narratives and exposing the ideological operations of patriarchy within them. *The Forest of Enchantments* is a critique of the misogynist undertones in *Ramayana.* Importantly, Divakaruni speaks for all marginalised and muted women characters in the epic,

whose energy, creativity and power are drained off in a hostile, male
-centred culture. The novel, therefore, dismantles the single
authoritative male subjective voice of the original epic and incorporates
the multiple, intertwined female voices. The novel provides deep and
surprising insights to women and serves as a sign-post to direct woman
readers along the right path in their quest for identity. Finally, she
expresses the absurdity of patriarchal myths and illustrates how
women's life becomes insignificant when they follow the path
patriarchy has designated for them.

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