LITTCRIT

An Indian Response to Literature

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Cover Sculpture: Lamp inserted in the Human Web

Sculptor: **K.S. Radhakrishnan** is one of the most notable among the new generation of sculptors who has successfully brought about a definitive resurgence in Indian sculpture. Like many of his contemporaries he is a figurative sculptor, but his preference for modelling and bronze casting over new materials sets him apart. A modernist, he recharges age old sculptural processes with a new sensibility. His work, at once both intimate and universal, takes the celebration of sensuality as one of its central themes.

His works are exhibited in a number of public collections all around the world. Born in 1956 in Kerala he was trained at Santiniketan.

Julie P.S.

Lust for Liberation: Decoding the Marginalized Entities in the Celluloid

Abstract

The sweeping transformation effected due to globalization is throbbing every facet of life. Its impact on culture is so overwhelming that age-old taboos and traditional values inherent in our culture have been overturned in its course. Issues like race, gender, sexuality–that have been disregarded for years found creative expression both in literature and visual narratives. Marginalization and victimization caused by gender due to the "established" patriarchal regime, has made women invisible or shadowy figures in our culture. The obligation of media is important in this regard as they represent the social stigma in a society which in turn moulds it by revolting against such social constrictions. Marginalization of women and the power play involved to sustain them within the confines of patriarchy and the attempt to redefine their status has been a much sought-after theme for many creative artists. But a deeper analysis of such narratives nullifies their argument, and we see most of such attempts are misdirected and the pseudo embellishment falling as we proceed. But a different take has been poised by four renowned film makers in *Lust Stories*(2018), an anthology film, that "disrobes repressed Indian sexuality" (*Hindustan Times*). Completely from female point of view, this four shorts collection, revolves around contemporary human relationships. Travelling through various social milieus, we see the rigid hierarchy of dichotomy dissolving and various female instincts, which have so far been repressed by social and cultural barriers, finding their way to the forefront. Through the unconventional treatment of women, the movie has succeeded in budding the instinctive emotion of "lust" and its various shades through four women. The main objective of this paper is to identify the role of media in evaluating such themes and how far the movie has succeeded in deconstructing power structures and social barriers in society which have always negotiated women as a marginalized entity.

Keywords: power, marginality, gender, society, culture.

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Cinema has been an inseparable aspect of society reflective of social changes and capable of shaping cultural attitudes in a society. This intimacy is more evident in its ability to fix stereotypes and sometimes challenge age old conventions. Perhaps cinema always remained as a platform for unceasing debates on its representation of themes such as gender, culture and identity and the underlying power structures that mould such stereotypes. When cinema confronts us as a product of technology, as a combination of 'technos' (power) and logoes'(knowledge)in Foucault's perspective, it, infact, reveals itself as a product of power and reality. Unfortunately, man, as a producer of this power and reality has subverted the concept by relegating cinema to something that merely offers pleasure and comfort or satiates his own interests. But instead of being discounted as a product of crass commercialization, cinema can offer much scope if we consider it as a critical site where social reality blends with cultural representation.

Though Indian film industry holds a respectable position in world cinema, its failure to address certain taboos in our society, especially on gender and sexuality is debated repeatedly in academic circles. Since "no film is made in a cultural vacuum (Gray 99), it should concern itself with "what is most distinctive about humanity" (Eagleton40). But in such an attempt, quite often individual needs and desires get undermined by the societal needs due to the moral codes existing in that society. The situation grows worse when cinema considers the needs of women who dwell in a patriarchal cultural terrain because "in many societies, the cultural rules are unambiguously made by men who frequently choose, deliberately or otherwise, to use women as the symbols of their beliefs or policies" (Crossette181).Indian society being patriarchal, its social and moral codes confine women both physically and emotionally, thereby destabilizing her existence. American feminist film theorist Teresa De Lauretis in her article *Technology of Gender* describes gender as "the product of various social technologies, such as cinema…"(3), thereby describing the role of technology and cinema (as a product of technology) in the formation of gender construct in a society. Gender differences that are related to power and knowledge, create meanings and put men and women in different frameworks. Thus, along with the formulation of gender construct, cinema is expected to represent the nuances of this division, but miserably fails and instead opt for tropes that exploit these differences to the disadvantage of women. The space given to women on screen is limited and, in its attempt to emphasize the different shades of masculinity, it fails to give expression to the plurality of her voices.

Filmdom, even the industry as well as representation, shows the prevalence of male hegemonic culture. The unconscious assumptions or stereotypes film makers have been conditioned to believe since birth due to the power relations in the society where they are born and brought up, find expression