

Feministic Perspectives in Gloria Whelan's Homeless Bird

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ABSTRACT

The novel *Homeless Bird* belongs to Feministic fiction. The study deals with the genre of feminism that describes the difficulties of a little girl who takes up the whole responsibilities of her family. Most of the magazines and critics tend to read this novel as a feminist writing. It is a novel expressing widow's struggle to achieve a self identity and courage in a patriarchal society. This article is a study of Feministic Perspectives in Gloria Whelan's *Homeless Bird*. The aim of this research is to find out and explain the kind of struggles faced by Koly a woman protagonist in her life time. She is the main female character who reflects the significant meaning of widowed women's struggles in a dominated society. This novel is a celebration of resilience and love between a woman and her dreams.

Keywords: *Predicament of woman, family betrayal, Feminism.*

The novel *Homeless Bird* belongs to the Feministic fiction. The study deals with the genre of feminism, outlining it and describing the difficulties of a widowed woman and the typological variations that can be seen in here. Most of the critics and magazines tend to read the novel as a feminist writing or as a novel expressing woman's struggle to achieve an identity in the society.

Feminism is a social, political and historical movement of women to speak for social, political and economic equality between sexes. Feminism is not against man otherwise it is for woman and their equal rights in the society. The Feminist movements convey and recover the educational and professional rights for women that are equal to those for men.

The term Feminism and Feminists are creating awareness to the society where people are treated like animals. Because, they did not know the power of women in the society. In most of the places women are treated like slaves and they are portrayed as lifeless persons in the world. Therefore, the feminist movements protest against the inequalities and suppressions of women in the society. They recover the rights and equality for women to live their life freely and happily.

Homeless Bird is Gloria Whelan's most popular novel which won the National Book Award for young people's literature in 2000. It is a Feministic novel by Gloria Whelan. The story follows the experiences of a little girl to become a widowed woman. The novel completely deals with the life of woman after marriage, and the victory of women with hope and perseverance.

The novel *Homeless Bird* tells the story of a thirteen year old growing girl and about a struggle of a widowed woman. The story begins with a conversation between Koly and her mother. Koly is the protagonist of this novel she is a thirteen year old growing girl. In the beginning itself all can realize that this is a feministic fiction. Because, the novel starts with the marriage announcement of a thirteen year old girl Koly.

Gloria Whelan from a definite feminine perspective. Her female characters are endowed with a vision which penetrates human psyche. *Homeless bird* is a feministic novel which dealt with the lives and sufferings of the women in a patriarchal society. In this novel Whelan uses many woman characters they stands for the symbol of struggles and longing of freedom in a dominating society.

In this novel Whelan creates Koly, the protagonist who is belong to the poor family and doesn't have the educational background. In the beginning onwards, she is different from other women of her society. Because, Koly has a zealous to prove her identity in her society. But the society doesn't want to get an educated woman and they didn't allow her to share her feelings.

In the beginning Koly is thirteen and preparing for marriage. After her marriage with Hari in Mehta's family, she realizes her life won't be what she thought it, and it was going to be bad and unsatisfied. Whelan treats the character of Koly as, holds tight to her opinions and sense of self-worth. Another important female character in this novel is

Mrs.Mehta. Through this character onwards Whelan clearly says that, now the society is not dominated by men otherwise it is a dominating society where women are dominated another women and not by men. Mrs.Mehta is rightly come under this category; Mrs.Mehta is Koly's mother-in-law who is a cruel and rude lady. Sometimes Mrs.Mehta stands in the side of modern values. She wants to take decision and she orders her family to do her decisions. Mrs.Mehta is horrible to Koly but also she indirectly teaches her a lot about how to grow up and be herself. Chandra a sister – in – law of Koly she is the only person always care for her. When once Koly her husband Hari and their family go for a trip to cure Hari's disease. But unfortunately Hari dies. Now Koly is a widow. When they come to their home town, Koly is mistreat by her law and at last Mrs.Mehta neglected koly alone in Varanasi. From here onwards Koly starts her new life without the help of other. She lives in widow's ashram and makes a quilt to live her life. At that time, she meets Raji a driver who loves Koly and also give respect to koly and her dreams. He promises Koly to do job and live an independent life with him. Then the two of them get married and begin to live a new life.

After her mother-in-law abandons Koly in a city of widows, she struggles to make a living by herself and resists the temptations of evils to maintain the human virtues. In that place she meets Mala a colleague to Koly who is a beautiful girl. Once Koly expresses her feelings when one of her friend's thefts is exposed. At that time she says, "I was angry with Mala and disgusted with her stealing, and she was sorry for her."(176) All her beauty and cleverness was wasted. This character indicates that the inner beauty is more important than the outer beauty. Those themes are so familiar with new contemporary readers.

Koly's emergence in *Homeless Bird* is inspiring and important part in this novel. In this novel Koly is represented as an independent, courageous and compassionate female who tries to grap every opportunity to fight against the adversity and determines to take the fate in her own hands. In the beginning itself Koly's emergence is undoubtedly mentioned in the novel.

Thus the ending of Gloria Whelan's novel *Homeless Bird* shows that her woman protagonists overthrows patriarchal subjugations and free themselves. Life is not a bed of roses for everyone. It is full of hardships and struggles and one has to overcome those

hurdles in order to achieve success in life and peace in mind. Those who work hard and will achieve greatness whereas the idle people lose. The protagonist of the novel *Homeless Bird*, Koly is one such person who overcomes her hard phases in life and achieves her success. In spite of being rejected and experiencing a hard time both in the family and society, she is able to live her life to the fullest only because of her will power and strength. It is neither the society nor the family that gives her a new life but her own will power and determination. Only through them, she could be able to achieve success both financially and mentally so as to live an independent life of her own.

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