



Womb - The Place Of Rent In Kishwar Desai's Origins Of Love

S. Parimalah

Assistant Professor, Department of English

S.T. Hindu College, Nagercoil. (Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli)

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Abstract: Kishwar Desai's novel *Origins of Love* sprouts with the reality of surrogacy industry in the present day India. Arrival of child to a parent gives the fulfillment in their marital life and the child gives an identity to them. But the barren life of every woman seems to be tragical in our society and also in abroad. In order to get away from their barren life modern women goes on to search for a surrogate to get a child of her own. Desai as a journalist receives the first-hand experience about the hard reality of surrogate life and presented in her novel with great originality. This paper focuses on the incruised life of surrogates and the reason for their unbearable pains. The study gives the outlook of how the clinics are becoming the successful entrepreneur by using the innocent woman's womb as the place of rent. It also enforces adoption as a noble work to save the life of humans who are starving for love and care.

Key words: Human bodies, Milk-can-shaped jars, Gestational mother, Blood transfusion, Pregnancy.

INTRODUCTION

Desai as a realistic writer presents the pathetic condition of Indian Surrogates with great insight and understanding their untold pains they faces for their livelihood. Womb is the gift of God to woman. It is the holy place for all human beings. But today it loses its holiness for the sake of wealth and prosperity. The love for their family and children turns them as surrogates and they becomes the symbol of sacrifice and suffering both in the form of physically and psychologically.

The novelist presented her views regarding the to-let of wombs in the multidimensional way and the legitimized violence undergone by the surrogate mother in the form of pre-natal and post-natal oppressiveness. It exploits the value of life as woman and her physical fitness is not to be given insurance. Thus the body of women became a product in the market of surrogacy and they turn as victims in the hands of customers as commissioning parents. This way of continuous exploitation will create a drastic change in the life of surrogates and their future will be an unanswered question.

Origins of Love gives the clear picture of adventurous life lead by surrogates in the clinic run by Dr. Subhash Pandey. The hospital gives red carpet welcome to the foreign clients to develop their business in the international market. But there is a danger with the transfer of sperm, eggs and blastocysts or embryos, anything that could goes wrong at any time. The Indian tourism department could even adopt it as a campaign slogan as "Pay for a Trip to Rajasthan and Get a Baby for Free..." (115).

The advancement of technologies, created a drastic change in human life. The hospitals are providing several advanced technical developmental works to attract the foreign customers. They also set up with pictures of various embryos dancing in the womb and a DVD with a computer-generated embryo performing gymnastics and clicking his fingers, endorsing the clinic. Surrogacy becomes a profitable business in our present society. The goal of the clinic Madonna and Child is to develop their hospital as one of the biggest hospitals in Asia for surrogacy. They provide the advertisement just like the poem as:

Just Come to Collect Your Baby
 Use our Courier Cryogenic Service
 At 100 per cent No Risk
 Only Send Us Your Sperm
 Pregnant With Baby
 You and Wife Can Take Rest New Life- Cheap and Best. (343)

In this era of globalization, the concept of motherhoods gets commercialized by hiring the womb for the span of nine months and the hired mother benefitted with economic growth and prosperity. The surrogate uses her womb as the bread winner to save her family and create an economic security. Their husbands are explained with this method of conception as they never have any physical relationship and all to be done in a tube through injection. Thus surrogacy becomes a money business for the sake of family enterprise.

The shocking reality of present day India is woman becomes a victim for the sake of money for their livelihood. Due to the successful running of the clinic, there is a list of five hundred women is prepared for the task from Punjab, Maharashtra and also from Delhi. In this business, very young girls who never get harvest are also ready for the sake of money.

The problem of unemployment and utter level of poverty enriches the easy availability of surrogates with increasing number even by the knowledge of their procedural violence. The growth of surrogate baby business increases day by day and reaches the dozen in every year. In order to flourish in business, they have started storing sperm and eggs for their patients as extra insurance for their future. They are also ready to prepare the artificial wombs for the next level of reproduction.

There is no truth in the life of modern man. He is ready to do anything to escape himself from any trapped situation. It is evident in the case of Nazir Ali. The Customs and Excise office gazed at the Milk-can-shaped jars in the hands of Ali. He gets the eye of all the cameras by pulling off his clothes and dancing to reveal his muscular physique. "These cans contain human embryos...which will become human bodies...and their parts" (89). The fact that the hospitals in Mumbai, Delhi and even in Gujarat have been inserting these imported embryos is described as, "these things coming in can ruin the environment-spread disease" (91).

The checking officers in the Airport may not open and check the milk cans in the hands of Ali. It may damage and it will be like murder. They also have the consideration towards their parents by the thought of humanity. The reporters try to point out his illegal business in the form of questioning Ali. But he answered, "The Law Has To Take Its Own Course" (94). It was a mantra used by every scancer in the country. Thus for the need of baby, the law is not to be followed even by the sub inspector's wife. But the hard reality is over a million babies were born to die every year. This news story was barely noticed by the media.

Motherhood is a boon to woman. Nowadays getting a child of her own is a very big challenge to modern woman. Here Kate dedicates all her comforts to get a child. The side effects of the fertility drugs also affect her entire body. Due to several miscarriages, she gets dropped down both physically

and psychologically. But with a strong mind to get a baby, she dedicates her physical comforts in several means.

The womb was the birth place of knowledge, so the womb was immune to educational degrees. That education also enhance the mother with well-fed, to have knowledge with vitamins and also makes her to have care with foetus in the womb. The ladies were in the age of mid- twenties and were barely educated. But it is a problem for the American couples to select a surrogate mother for their child. They expect the mother must complete the high school level for the better start of their child in the womb.

Newspapers are the powerful media to communicate with people and their silenced voices are highlighted by the journalist to make the public to get awareness about the current issues faced by the society and its implications will affect them directly or indirectly. A fresh article in the news paper, “With a picture of smiling Indian surrogates, revived his fear that thousands of Indian women were being bribed by the Western Kids, soon, with Western lifestyles and a corresponding decline in children growing up with Eastern traditions and culture” (410).

The life of poor is a curse in India in several ways of their life. They get eroded by the rich people for their own welfare. Thus the rich become always rich and poor always become poorer in the battle of life. The doctors like Dr. Wadhvani gets more involve in the embryonic stem-cell surgery and it is going to overtake even IVF. It also turns as a medical business opportunity and India would be at the forefront of it. The laws in India are completely against the illegal medical practice but the hospitals practice it personally and earn a huge profit by it. They also have the eagerness to help the VIP clients and experiment with poorer ones.

The world was full of sick, ailing and ageing people who would prefer the hospital for recovery. This is a boon to the medical practitioners in the postmodern era to earn the profit by making them to spend a lifetime in hospitals or on medication.

Most of the private hospitals prime aim is to earn name and wealth without having a real concern for the patients. In this novel *Origins of Love*, Freedom Hospital had been involved in bribing officials and conducting illegal experiments against the laws of nature. The real faces of the present hospitals of India are they would “... bring in people from the street to experiment with?” (433). Thus the real face of corrupted India from the hands of hospitals gets fictionalized by the novelist.

The matrimonial relationship created by gay and lesbian couples cemented with the ray of hope in a surrogate mother to deliver the child to bond their relationship permanently. This novel presents the case of lesbian couples Lydia and Nicolas who seeks to attain the parenthood by using the surrogate Radhika. But the religious and the social organizations are completely against this practice because it is the root cause of immorality. Radhika is a sixteen year old labor girl from Rajasthan. Her husband had suffered from a head injury when he is working in the constructive site. She gets trapped by Sharma and believes his false promise to recover him with better treatment. So he insists her to become a surrogate mother to save her husband. This makes sixteen year old Radhika to get pregnant with twins for Ludi and Nicolas, the gay couple from France. But Sharma as an entrepreneur in surrogacy business convinced the commissioning parents that she was a twenty two year old mother who needed the money to buy a flat.

The well-built physical features of Radhika, never makes anyone to question her age and to know her reality behind her life. She falls like a prey in the hands of Sharma and faced endless cycle of surrogacy by denoting her husband needed very expensive treatment. Thus she becomes a bonded slave and she continuously worked as a machine for child birth to pay for his treatment.

The deep analyzing of the text, gives the vivid picture of poor Indian women who gets eroded

by the false promises given by the doctors by showing the bundles of wealth. But however, the major chunk of money gets deposited in the account of the doctors rather than the surrogate. Ganguly monitored the development of the surrogacy industry and tries to create new innovation in their business to get more profit. He plans to create multiple embryos, using the eggs he had harvested from the adolescent girls. Likewise, they have collected eggs illegally even from the fifteen year old girl. This unnamed girl is ready to shed her eggs for the sake of money. In her own words, she said: “Money. I need...the money” (78).

The unemployment becomes a barrier in the life of many individuals and it makes even to dedicate their body for their livelihood. The adolescent girl gets spoiled physically when she donates her eggs in her unconscious state of her body. The local anesthesia and too much bleed from her body make her to lose her physical strength to earn the little amount of money for her life. The exploitation of woman is expressed by Renu Kumar Singh in her critical essay “Empowerment of Women” expressed her view as:

Woman’s position is worsening practically in every sphere...Woman is still found in least-paid jobs, long working hours and bearing full responsibility for the home also by fetching fuel and water, by doing work in family production units, without being paid for labour, by bringing up children and looking after the sick and the aged. She does lots of thankless jobs silently. (13)

The diasporic life of surrogates and their untold pains are portrayed by the novelist through the character of Preeti. She missed her two children and her husband, along with her sister in home. Her entire physical and emotional privacy gets eroded inside the four walls of the hospital. Sonia Ningtoujam in her book, *Image of the New Women in the Novels of Shobha De* gives her view as: “Women of the oriental tradition are in general adjustable, accommodative, pliable and service-minded” (6). Among them the Indian woman is more traditional bound. To her the well-being and happiness of the family is of more importance. She also becomes the custodian of family’s honour and prestige. Sonia the surrogate projected as the traditional bond women sacrifices all her desires and rent her womb for the well being of her family.

Thus in the novel *Origins of Love*, Reena pushed into the hell of surrogacy to save her family from the line of poverty. Her internal suffering gets correlated by the words of the critic Sheela Rani Khare in her, “Facets of Feminism in Shobha De’s *Starry Nights*” says:

Shobha De gives the view that even in modern time with all socio-political as well as economic achievements, the graph of women exploitation is shockingly rising. Women sometimes owing to the compelling situation of their life, are pushed into the net by their protectors while at other times their soaring ambition and will to assert their freedom, takes them into the tunnels of unimaginable sufferings. (184)

The emotional, physical and the psychological bound of mother with child are not easy to separate. The umbilical cord relationship forces the mother not to separate the child forever and it also shows her dedication that she turns her blood into milk through feeding. The surrogate mother is forced to miss everything as the real mother enjoys with her child. Even though she works for the money, the emotional and the physical bond of mother and child is deeply bonded and their long separation is pathetic and it is not explained by words. However the surrogates are not allowed to feed the babies by the commissioning parents. Without the knowledge of Australian parents, Reena nurse her boy baby in the private way. The emotional bond of a mother makes her to give kind attention to him but she have to miss him by one week. The separation of Reena from a baby is described as, “I can’t give him up, did I. I don’t have any children, as you know. I would rather have this one than not have one at all” (287).

The emotional violence gets pictured by the novelist by presenting Reena who gets disassociates from her contract after the delivery. Surrogates as per the contract, they have to get the money and leave the child right after the delivery. But in the case of Reena, the boy baby makes her to forget her agreement. The physical and emotional bond of a mother raised her voice as, "I don't want the money. This is my child; I know it. He is a gift from God to me" (288). The baby with fair and blue eyes was obviously not from her own eggs and sperm. The hospital had been clearly instructed that they had to divide their heads from their hearts, and realize from day one that they should have no emotional attachment to the child in their womb. But it is really a hard task for surrogates that they had carried the child for nine months fed it with their blood.

It is not more important, the production of babies in large number. But it is to bother the babies born in this world needed love, care and good homes with lovable and affectionate parents. It is one of the ways to control surrogacy and to save the lives of innocent babies in the orphanage. By holding orphaned child Amelia, Simran says, "I've found you a set of parents who will look after you and love you for who you are" (468).

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