

## Self Liberation and Emancipation in Paro : Dreams of Passion

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**Abstract:** One fails to understand Paro's vision of freedom as only a few unethical people would call it freedom in the real sense. The question arises – How is she a rebel? She does not accept the social code of conduct as prescribed for women by Hindu Shastras.

**Keywords:** Liberation, Emancipation, Passion, Hindu Shastras.

**Introduction:** She had high ambitions in her mind and unfortunately does nothing to achieve them. The irony is that she curses her art master Marcus for taking liberty with her. Had she been pure at heart, she would have complained to the head mistress after the first meeting. On the contrary, she starts enjoying the whole affair as she admits:

But we had this art master – Marcus something. I loved painting, you know. I was good at it. I suppose I was very sexy-looking for a school girl. Anyway, there I was, busy with my landscape, trying to get the right cerulen blue for the sky and the fucking Vandyke brown for the trees. My folks were abroad so I stayed back at the hostel.

After all she revolts against the school ethics and the media is not to be blamed for circulating the news in the newspaper. The whole family had to suffer for this. In the college she meets Babu and does not feel any shame for her past. Everytime she is thinking of prosperity like a lustful woman.

She is almost a patient of nymphomania. R.S. Pathak aptly remarks:

Paro is thus a novel about human passions and their aftermath. Human passions owe their inception to certain incidents or accidents in life. Those who are able to sublimate their passions attain calm of mind, but most of them came to feed ... However, passions may have a deeper purpose in life : they may be in some cases mode of self-discovery. The characters of Paro and B.R. are illustrative of this point.

It is very difficult to accept Paro as a symbol of liberation and emancipation. How is she a liberated woman? Even The Gita teaches the lesson of regular work with love and then remain detached from the result of work.

On the contrary Priya as well as Paro do not have any feeling of restraint and decorum. They regard physical beauty as a means to enjoy physical pleasures.

Paro's beauty is her weakness and not a source of intellectual strength. Paro's sense of protest is false and hence she cannot be considered a follower of Women Liberation Movement. It is true that Namita describes the experiences of love and passion of the age of science. Women do not want to remain puppet in the hands of man. They want to come out of the four walls of the house. But they cannot do not allowed to behave as Paro does.

So many people enter the life of Paro and she cheats all of them. It is surprising that an Indian woman forgets the conception of chastity and devotion. As mentioned earlier, she starts enjoying sex with her art teacher in the convent school. Then, she returns to Mr. B.R. again and again for financial support as well as sexual enjoyment. Even B.R. knows her passions, dreams and ambitions and does not hope for any sincerity from her. One fails to understand her likes and dislikes and obsessions. Her mind is coarse like her coarse body. She thinks that she is young, though she is losing the glamour regularly. She feels interest in life as and when she has a new fish in her net.

After getting a son from Bucky she gets tired of him soon. Now she lives with Avinendra (from Ramnagar, U.P.) known as Lenin. Even servants sarcastically call her 'Asly Memsahib'. It is true that Paro has vitality in her character but it is a completely negative, 'excessive greedy vitality'. She feels no shame in borrowing money from Suresh. She knows that Lenin is short of money and yet enjoys a comfortable life at his cost. She was basically interested in the political contacts of Lenin and through him wanted to develop contact with politicians. Lenin talked to Karl Marx, corruption, politics, industry, administration etc. All these matters were ignored by Paro as she wanted emancipation from the life of a faithful wife. Priya defines Paro's triumph :

... her triumph at this declaration of love. Mockery and self-satisfaction clashed in their green depths.

She is proud of her tricks, though Priya has no right to find fault in her character. Paro knows how to defend herself if somebody calls her a 'bitch' or a 'whore'. If somebody

is helpful to her financially, she is really humble towards him and can offer anything to win his favour.

She practiced Yoga every morning to maintain youth and grace. She drinks a lot of wine, and like Shakespeare's Cleopatra remains conscious of her selfish purpose. Priya regards her a 'child of privilege' and remarks :

But now, with a despondent Lenin by her side, she had her first experience of deprivation, of the indignities of need. She didn't know about queues, and ration cards, and bus routes; and I don't think she even tried to learn; she only shut out that world, slugging down gin after gin and surviving in stubborn hope.

Namita Gokhale does not approve Paro's relations with Mishra and remarks :

Her affair with Mishra became one of the hottest scandals of the year. She rose swiftly and surely in social prominence, a sort of hetaira, and the Madonna of the garbage heaps. The lowlier papers, and Hindi magazines like Maya and Manohar, delighted in lampooning her.

It is true that fate brings various people in her company. She decides to play a role in a play and feels very enthusiastic playing the role of Clytemnestra on the occasion of Hindustani Theatre festival. There is nothing remarkable about his role of Paro. But she gets married with Greek citizen Loubas Leros who is a great admirer of homosexuality. Again her definition of liberation is misleading. It is just 'Passion, boredom vanity and jealousy'. and nothing else. Paro's behaviour and even Priya's conduct do not actually define any kind of liberation of women. If all women escape from home, the whole structure of society crumbles down.

Dr. Rashmi Gaur has made several remarks regarding Priya and Paro in her article Paro : A Tale of Two Ladies. Dr. Rashmi remarks :

Namita Gokhale's first novel Paro is a woman's evocative commentary on the sybarite decadence of the Indian upper middle class. The novel lays bare its charm and banality, its privileges and cynicism, its schisms and intrigues before the reader through the sensitive portrayal of two women

characters – Paro and Priya – who have been developed as foils to each other.

One fails to understand how does Paro protest against society ‘which has always tacitly supported campaigns to eliminate women’. This remark of Dr. Rashmi cannot be accepted, as Namita Gokhale does not describe the campaigns of man to eliminate women. Secondly, Dr. Rashmi remarks :

Namita Gokhale presents before us the complex gamut of the feminine search for identity against the backdrop of contemporary educated Indian society in a palpable manner. She successfully touches upon the traditional themes of women novelist...

It is true that the woman does not want to live with the traditional people. She does not want to keep herself busy merely in washing preserving, family parties, toilets, drawing rooms, halls etc. It is acceptable that some of the educated women do not lead an unhappy life and are really ‘exemplary wise’. However one fails to understand how Priya and Paro be called exemplary wise? How can they be regarded ‘the beauty of devotion and sacrifice’? Do they find great joy in making love to their husbands? Are they matured and wise and prudent in the approach to life? Are their dreams of youth justified? How do these two women emerge as ‘emancipated beings’?

Thus, Paro : Dreams of Passion is a psychological novel from the pen of Namita Gokhale. She analyzes the passions and expectations of middle class women like Paro and Priya who invite trouble for themselves with their own flirting nature. Secondly, Priya finds relief in writing her own biography and through this action, Namita Gokhale establishes the fact that the difference between the art of biography and art of narration is decreasing rapidly.

Here, Namita Gokhale peeps into the inner mind of her characters and at the same time describes their outer world.

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