

**The Voice Of The Unknown: A Study Of Woman Kind In
Old English Period “The Secret Of Getting Ahead Is Getting Started”**

- Mark Twain

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Abstract

Women are the pillars of the society. They are the shapers of the basic unit called family. From the basic unit we learn a lot. In literature the partiality was found in various ways either in the name of birth or gender or even class and caste. They are also equal as men in society. They also intellectuals as men but we forget to acknowledge their identity and their intellectual ideas too. This article is going to highlight the women writers especially during Old English period and their unidentified voices.

Key Words: Voice, Disease, identity crisis, equal, unfamiliarise

We generally acknowledge literature which echoes that life and society. It expresses what we are and how we are. Literature is a good medicine to cure many diseases. The diseases such as longingness, identity crisis, politics and so on. Literature plays a crucial role in cure of these diseases. This article critically looks the old English period and its literatures and the voice of the unknown (WOMEN WRITERS) and their contribution in the literary arena.

“All of them are created equal and that they are endowed by their creator with creation, an inalienable right including life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness” states Thomas Jefferson in his *THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE*. Is it not only applicable for American literature but it is common to all literature. This article critically looks at the writings of marginalized or women writers from old English period and their role and contributions to the world of literature. The voice proves how they were neglected by the society and the struggle of those writers to overcome their sufferings and finally the fruits reached the people.

In English literature a lot of words, terms, and movements are borrowed from Greek, Latin and French, these three literatures play a vital role in order to

shape English literature into a complete product. Most of the English writers got the source for their works from these three literatures. These literatures not only gave a source but made a heavy impact on the lives of people in cultural, economic, spiritual and moral code too. Religious writings, personal voice lamentation, epic and narrative poems are popular during this time. Apart from these lais, complaint, and spiritual autobiography also practised and authorship or anonymous writings and the society did not allow women to write. That was the major reason to unfamiliarise such wonderful writers like Marie de France, Christine de Pisan, Julian of Norwich and Margery Kemp. These are strong literary figures of the time and most of us don't know who they are? The purpose of this article is to give voice them and glorify their writings and how they can also be equally treated like the male writers of the period.

The language, diction, theme, poetic device are given priority during old English period. Alliteration and Kenning are mostly used as literary devices during that time. For example the Epic *Beowulf* proves man's courage, valour and super naturalism to create sense in the mind of the reader. If a woman writer penned a work such as lais or complaint the society doesn't recognize it because of injustice towards the female writers and they don't have identity as a writer like male writers. The voices of women are found from 12th century onwards. The theme of courage, politics, Religious, lament, advice, are not only handled by male writers alone but female writers also practised these things in their work, even better than male writers and they go on to such an extent they discussed on Romance, Decorum or how to live and they questioned the author of men why could not common for all?.

In general women should be submissive or subordinate, Other, but we forget that they are the source of spirit and source of revolution. The readership becomes one of the most or controversial topic for thirteenth century, it dates from about 1225. Even a few women writers are found in this period they discussed their theme, which is entirely different from one other. But their theme is equally treated like male writers; even they go for nuances of Briton's life. For example Marie de France's LAIS a series of romances based unwritten Broton's songs. 'Romance' the idea borrowed from France and it reach in reach in the hands of female writers and she handled in successful manner.

Next the prominent writer form the tenth century was Hrotsvitha, an abbes from Saxony is generally regarded as the first woman writer in Europe. The Language itself governed by male and they are of the society about norms, codes and behaviour. But Hrotsvitha boldly attempt her notion through her writing about how to live? Her "Ancrne Wisse" also known as Ancrene Rewle is a best example of decorum, and highlight the people's life and manners.

Not only in England, even in France, Italy the literary world is filled with male writers and their and their writings are pen portraits of the life style of

people during the time. This time Christine de Pisan in France was the first woman to be a full time 'PROFESSIONAL' writer and questioned the authority of men's writings. She boldly questions the injustice done by the male society against female writers. In her *BOOK OF THE CITY OF LADIES*. She comments on *LAMENTATIONS OF MATHE'OUS* in 1371 a misogynist satire, which Chaucer's *THE CANTERBURY TALES* particularly wife of Bath also mention : "The Sight of this book, even though it was of no authority, made wonder How it happened that so many different men... all concur in one

Conclusion : that the behaviour of women is inclined to and full of every vise" (Routledge 25).

This notion was clearly mentioned in the Routledge's *History of literature in English* by Ronald carter and John MC Rae.

Translation is an art that transfers thought, idea, and conviction from source language to target the audience. Most of the translation work done by monks, male writers or well learned men. Even this art is wonderfully penned by female writers was mentioned by Anthony Woodville, her *MORAL PROVERBS TO CHRISTINE* was the first work written by a woman to be printed in English by Caxton in 1478. It is here that you can find that the word 'Authoress' first appeared in English. A lot of readership growing for Marie's *Lais* for books of instruction and devotion. Though a male priest or monks who highly concentrate on the doctrine of religious but at same time woman writings also choose "Religious" views as theme for her work, Marie de France is finest example of this kind.

Monastery is known for devotion, faith, simple life and practising the words of God dealt in vivid way. Here an ordinary lady Julian of Norwich in her *BOOK OF SHOWINGS* experienced such visions at the age of 30, in her deathbed but made a miraculous recovery, became a nun and set down her vision on analytical discussion of such difficult themes faith, sin and motherhood of God. This is the conclusion of her challenging writings, given here in the original Middle English.

There was corid that love war our Lord's meaning. And I saw full sekirely in this and in all, that ere of God make us, he loved us : which love was never shaked no never shall, And in this love he had done all his works, and in this love he made all those things as profitable for us. And in this love in our life is everstand. In our making we had beginning. But the love where in he made us, was in him for without beginning, in

which love we have our beginning. And this shall be seen in God without end, which Jesus not grant us. Amen!

[Lord : taught, sekirly: surely, era : before, slake : diminished, no : nor, everstand : everlasting, making : Creation, which that is that endless vision of God, not “ May]. (Rutledge : 26)

Lament, Ballad, Lais, Fable, complaints are the famous literary genres in the old English period. ‘KENNING’ is major literary device practised, the diction also is given consideration. The female writers who touch upon these fields for their writings to prove they are also equally intellectual like Male writers. Marie de France also know as Jane Harry [Mary de Jane] penned a remarkable work of art in the field of literature under the branch of Lais. Lai (lay) a term from old French meaning a short lyric or narrative poem. She chose Lais to discuss Arthurian Legend and other subject from Breton folklore written in octo syllabic couplets. This become known as Breton Lais in English in the 14th century, even Chaucer includes this in his *FRANKLINS’S TALE*. Later *lais* was considered as song in general and to short narrative poems. Where T.B. Macaulay’s *LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME-1842*. The Society does not recognize them as writers even they are highly intellectual.

The next icon of the age was Margery Kemp bring out the Prominence of autobiographical writing into literary arena. Her work ‘*THE BOOK OF MARGERY KEMP*’ [(to two men) the narrator in woman’s voice speaks loud and clear voice down her centuries in her revelation of her psychological state mind through the dreams of childhood and sexual desire in young age or towards her maturity and a she gives the book in her own name. Later *MOLL FLANCDERS* in Daniel Defoe’s novel which bears her name is perhaps the nearest later self castigating heroine her moral tale. Margery Kemp’s work was the first autobiographical work in English language, especially the spiritual autobiography, “A Pilgrimage to Jerusalem”.

Our Merciful Lord Jesus, saying this creatury Presumpcyon sent hire as is write three year great temtacyon. Of the which on of the hardest. I prefer wrytyn for example of him that come after that they should not trostyn on here own self, We have no joy in himself as this creature had

[Seyng: seeing, of..... Hardest; one of the hardest of which; purpose to wrytyn; intend to write down; for.....him : as an example for them; trostyn on trust in here: there, himself: Themselves, no drede: doubtless]. (Routledge-26)

Marie de France, Julian of Norwich, Hrotsvitha, Christine de Pisan and Margery Kemp are the icons of the old English period. They throw a light on the people's life and that light should not. Lament, Ballad, Lais, Complaint, and Epic are powerful medium of expression to reveal their Identity, but society could not recognize them and that is the cause they are called as unknown voices of the society during Old English time. Even though they are neglected by the male dominated society; they never stop to shape the society through their writings.

The literary world glorifies the writings of male writers and raise them to the level of speak. The role of their voice and views of female writers were suppressed in the hands of male writers of society. The content, theme, genre, are also equally they are well-versed like male writers but we couldn't acknowledge them and their literary outputs. Writings is meant for men not for woman, but they are exceptional and they broke the conventional custom that 'Writing' as a tool for female writers to prove their identity through their literary outputs. The iconic figures of this old English period are Marie de France or Marie de Jane, Julian of Norwich, Hrotsvitha, Christin de Pisan, Margery Kamp struggle a lot to get the identity from the society but they don't, but their works proves that they are good, intellectual, and well informed writers of the age.

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