

ISSN : 2395-4132

# THE EXPRESSION

An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal

**Bi-Monthly Refereed & Indexed Open Access e-Journal**



**Impact Factor 3.9**

**Vol. 3 Issue 4 August 2017**

**Editor-in-Chief : Dr. Bijender Singh**

**Email : [editor@expressionjournal.com](mailto:editor@expressionjournal.com)**

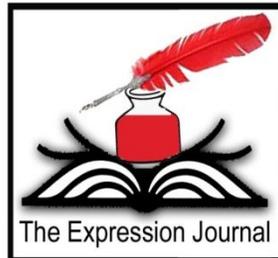
**[www.expressionjournal.com](http://www.expressionjournal.com)**

# The Expression: An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal

(A Peer Reviewed and Indexed Journal with Impact Factor 3.9)

[www.expressionjournal.com](http://www.expressionjournal.com)

ISSN: 2395-4132



## **Toward a Post-Colonial Narrative: Mahasweta Devi's "Breast-Giver"**

**L. Krishnaraj**

**Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Hindusthan College of Arts and Science  
Nava India, Coimbatore.**

.....

### **Abstract**

Post-Colonial literatures are distinct in the way of narration. They project the story in a peripheral perspective. They attempt to manifest the colonial aspects through the works. Hence this paper is an attempt to explore the Post-Colonial narrative in Mahasweta Devi's "The Breast-Giver." This paper would also lead to know about the literary techniques. This paper has analyzed the text with special reference to its narration. Literary techniques can even be used effectively by the Post-Colonial writers. Many Post-Colonial writers use these techniques in their works. The Indian Post-Colonial writers are at the third phase of Showalter, "Female Phase." They also create literature with more quality as equally the male writer. This paper illustrates the various narrative techniques and their significance to the Post-Coloniality.

### **Key-Words**

Postcolonial Literature, "Breast Giver", Mahasweta Devi,  
Discourse, Style, Narrative Techniques.

.....

**Vol. 3 Issue 4 (August 2017)**

**Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Bijender Singh**

# The Expression: An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal

(A Peer Reviewed and Indexed Journal with Impact Factor 3.9)

[www.expressionjournal.com](http://www.expressionjournal.com)

ISSN: 2395-4132



## **TOWARD A POST-COLONIAL NARRATIVE: MAHASWETA DEVI'S "BREAST-GIVER"**

**L. Krishnaraj**

**Assistant Professor, Department of English  
Hindusthan College of Arts and Science  
Nava India, Coimbatore.**

Postcolonial Literatures are considered as an alternate English literature. It projects the voice and suffering of three centuries colonialism, pains of migration, alienation and slavery. The Post-Colonial literature cannot confine itself with telling stories and fancies. It has got a social role. Post-Colonial writers are expected to do fidelity to the society of which they are a part. They cannot stick to the conventional way of narration. They need to approach their themes and plots in a different way. Narratology is the study of narration, narrative techniques and devices used in a work of art. M.H. Abrams defines narratology as:

It deals especially with the types of narrators, identification of structural elements and their diverse modes of combination, recurrent narrative devices, and the analysis of the kinds of *discourse* by which a narrative gets told as well the narrate- that is, the explicit or implied person or audience to whom the narrator address the narrative (Abrams, 182)

This uses the artistic talent of an author and quality of a work of art. This has been paid much attention since 1970's. This is not formalistic approach; this is largely different from the formalistic approach. There are many narrative techniques like, linear narrative, long narrative, third person narrative, focalization, hermeneutic, metafiction and so on. The effective usage of these techniques converts a verbal message as a work art with what Jakobson calls "literariness" (Right, 150). This paper is an attempt to discuss the narrative techniques implied by Mahasweta Devi. This paper also attempts to bring out the literariness and quality of the author by delving deep into the narrative techniques in the story "Breast-Giver."

Being an activist and a post-colonial writer, Mahsweta does her role better than the writers of her age. She has lived in a society where social evils like slavery, communal clash, indentured labor system, women oppression are yet to be exorcised. Her writing reflects her time. She has chosen an innovative narration to deal with her society. The Story "Breast-Giver is a epitome of Indian Post- Coloniality. This story deals with all the singularities and pluralities of Post-Colonial Indian Society.

**Vol. 3 Issue 4 (August 2017)**

**Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Bijender Singh**

# The Expression: An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal

(A Peer Reviewed and Indexed Journal with Impact Factor 3.9)

[www.expressionjournal.com](http://www.expressionjournal.com)

ISSN: 2395-4132

The story is in linear narrative form. The linear narration is a method of telling the story in a chronological sequence. There would be a process in the story without going back or going forward. The writer uses this technique in this story. This helps the reader to understand the story directly. The story is narrated by a third person. The narrator is omniscient throughout the story. Point of view is an important aspect Post-Colonial literatures are told by the self-conscious narrators, who want to reveal the author that they are narrating what has actually happened. It also challenges the Western ideology of the things. Certain things might have been portrayed as barbarian by the native writers but only a post-colonial Self Conscious narrator would reveal the fact behind the practice.

The story is in dialogic form. This has been introduced by Bakhtin who puts it as "...a literary work is not a text whose meaning are produced by the play of impersonal linguistic or economic, or cultural forces but a site for the dialogic interaction of multiple voices, or modes of discourse, each of which is not merely a verbal but a social phenomenon" (Abrams, 73). In a dialogic form, the story would be presented from the perception of a third person. The narrator would be the key role of the plot. The narrator remains omniscient throughout the story. There is a difference between discourse and story. Story refers to the chronology of events in narrative and discourse refers to manipulation of the story in presentation of the narrative. Discourse also refers to the usage of the materials like similes, metaphors, verse, etc. Here the story is a discourse as the narrator makes the effective usage of the literary devices.

Post-Colonial discourse challenges the Western narrative and Western style of writing. The Western writers find writing as a medium of expressing the imagination while the Post-Colonial writers consider that it is a medium of inspiration. Thus, the Post-colonial discourse differs to a great extent from Western narrative. The writer does not confuse the reader with either analepsis or prolepsis or what is known as flashback or flash forward. Tunneling is the best device fitted for a novel or a drama. Using this technique in a novel or drama would add flavor to the story. It is not needed for a short story. There is no usage of such devices here. This facilitates the reader to have a clear and direct understanding of what the author is coming to say. Hermeneutic is a technique used in a work of art. This is the way of creating suspense in a story. Hermeneutic is the way of creating suspense by the action of a person where as proairetic refers to creating suspense by some actions, for instance, taking a gun. The role and significance of the characters Jashoda and Kangancharan are revealed only at the end. Normally this mode of writing story would be used in detective stories. The author makes persuasive use of this technique to present a realistic story. Post-Colonial literature represents the decentered concept of universe. Individual works are not isolated creations; much of the focus in the study of Post-Colonial literature is on intertextuality. This refers to the relationship between a text and another text within the literary history. Some critics point this out as the writers' lack of originality and reliance on clichés. In this story, there is a connection between two texts. Jashodha is a character from Hindu mythology. She is portrayed as the mother of Lord Krishna. She is presented merely as a poor Post-Colonial or a professional mother. The writer presents the story with her own artistic talent. There is an intertextuality in the story. The characters are the links between the texts here.

The writer might have done deliberately in order to make a parody out of the myth. Hence, Mahasweta attempts to demythify the then believed myth. It is also a trend of Post-Coloniality. A reader must be well versed in mythology to have a full understanding of the character Jashodha.

Vol. 3 Issue 4 (August 2017)

Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Bijender Singh

# The Expression: An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal

(A Peer Reviewed and Indexed Journal with Impact Factor 3.9)

[www.expressionjournal.com](http://www.expressionjournal.com)

ISSN: 2395-4132

Poioumenon (plural: poioumena; from Ancient Greek “product”) is a term coined by Alastair Fowler to refer a specific type of metafiction in which the story is about a process. According to Fowler, “the Poioumenon is calculated to offer opportunities to explore the boundaries of fiction and reality-the limits of narrative truth” (Rosenthal, 95) In many cases the work would be about the narrator’s frustrated attempt to tell his own story or story of a protagonist. This story is a best example of this kind. Here the omniscient narrator makes a cynical attempt to tell the life of Jashodha. Post-Colonial literature has its significance with this literary device. It often attempts to tell the truth. But most of the times, what reaches the author is just the fiction .Truth remains at the bottom. Hence Post-Colonial writers make the use of poioumenon.

Fabulation is a term sometimes used interchangeably with metafiction and relates to pastiche or magic realism. This is not realism but this rejects realism. It rejects realism as it burdens the story and people perceive literature as a medium of relief. Post-Colonial readers want to air all their problems through literature. Fabulation rejects the traditional notion of a story telling and traditional structure of a work of art. This permits the usage of magic elements or any other which is not at all the part of the story. This story is a best example of this kind. The writer challenges the Indian structure of a short story that a story should record a moment of a person’s life. Here the narrator is not a traditional narrator. The way of telling the story is entirely different. The narrator faithfully and carefully represents the life of a person. There is a close connection between the role of a narrator and the story. If this story were narrated by somebody else or had it been a first person narrative, the idea might not have been conveyed effectively. There is a parallel between life and language and history vs. fact.

Minimalism is an innovative literary technique used by the Post-Colonial writers. In this way of storytelling, the readers are expected to play a role in the story. The author does not give minute details rather they provide only some surface level details. The writer would be more economical in using the words. Literary minimalism is one of the Post-Colonial literary techniques. Here the author uses the words economically. The author does not give any minute details about the minor characters. Even in the way of telling the story of Jashodha, the author left many things open to the interpretation of the reader. The writer’s phraseology is also good in depicting the story. Here author uses Bengali dialect and English together. The language is clear, direct and simple.

Thus by reading this text narratologically, layers of significance can be brought out. This would also lead to know about the literary techniques. This peruse has analyzed the text with special reference to its narration. Literary techniques can even be used effectively by the Post-Colonial writers. Many Post-Colonial writers use these techniques in their works. The Indian Post-Colonial writers are at the third phase of Showalter, “Female Phase.” They also create literature with more quality as equally the male writers. Thus by approaching the Indian Post-Colonial writers in such a way, the readers can enhance their perception of Post-Colonial writing and they can get to know the perspectives of Post-Colonial writing in India.

# The Expression: An International Multi-Disciplinary e-Journal

(A Peer Reviewed and Indexed Journal with Impact Factor 3.9)

[www.expressionjournal.com](http://www.expressionjournal.com)

ISSN: 2395-4132

## Woks Cited

Abrams M.H, Geoffrey Galt Harpam. *A Handbook of Literary Terms*. New Delhi: Cengage Learning India Private Ltd. 2009, Print.

John Samuel. *Post-Colonial Narrative Techniques*. New Delhi: Eagle Press, 2009, Print.

Mundhra. S.C ed. "The Breast-Giver". *Trans. Gayatri Spivak. Indian Short Story Collection*, Bareiley: Prakash Book Depot, 2012. Print.

Rosenthan, Caroline. Ed. *Fake Identity?: The Imposter Narrative in North American Culture*. National Bibliothek. 2012. Web. *Google Books*. 19 July, 2017.

Vol. 3 Issue 4 (August 2017)

Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Bijender Singh