

Protest against Misogyny as Portrayed in Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or, a Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2017)

Rahmat Taufik Rangkuti¹, Tommy Christomy²

¹Department of Literature, University of Indonesia, Al Farouq Street, Depok, Indonesia

²Department of Literature, University of Indonesia, Depok, Indonesia

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Abstract: Violence against women is actually not a new experience faced by women throughout the world. India, which is portrayed as a country that respects and adores women through the story of the Goddess, in fact has complexity in women's issues. This is marked by a surprising finding by *Thomson Reuters Foundation* in 2018 which stated that India is the world's most dangerous country for women. Referring to the issue, this research aims to reveal how the biographical novel criticizes misogynistic views in Indian modern era. This can be seen through the marriage of a married couple from different caste classes. The husband is a person who belongs to the upper caste and works as a lecturer (professor) in the field of literature. He also claims himself as communism adherent who gets involved in political and revolutionary movement that fights for social justice. Meanwhile, the wife comes from the middle class and works as a young feminist writer. In analyzing the data / text, the researcher applied a feminist literary criticism approach combined with the concept of gender *écriture féminine* by Helene Cixous to see the independence of the main character at once the narrator in voicing her feminine world such as happiness, desire (to fight back), and her freedom. Meanwhile, the method used is qualitative method. The findings show that Indian women who have sufficient class and power remain very vulnerable when faced with caste and patriarchal domination. This research also shows that the misogynistic view is not only believed by the people who belong to lower caste and is close to backwardness. In other words, groups that have a high level of literacy are also very likely to have extreme misogynistic views. Urban spaces in India also become the arena for the men and the caste elites to maintain and to assert their power. To fulfil their ideological and political demands, men or the caste elites, including Indian politicians, continuously show their supremacy even though they are well established hierarchically.

1 INTRODUCTION

Violence against women in reality is not a new phenomenon or experience faced by women throughout the world. India, portrayed as a country that respects and adores women through its story of Goddesses, in fact has a complex women issue. The problem can be seen through the culture and unequal treatment toward women. In Indian culture, women are deeply believed to belong to the second class and part of male ownership. Indian women are often positioned as a group that does not have a proper place other than in the shadow of men. One factor that perpetuates the practice of subordination of Indian women is ideas or thoughts that have taken shape for a long time, collectively believed in the Indian culture.

This collectively believed culture creates disadvantages to Indian women, and even makes them vulnerable to violence. In most parts of Indian state, men are considered as a group that has a higher degree than women. This culture or tradition makes women not considered and unheeded in decision makings. The positioning women in such an unequal way seems to be a normal narrative in Indian society, making women tend to be marginalized. Therefore, women's rights and voices are never truly heard as something to consider, even by relatives and family.

In the struggle for their rights, Indian women often experience deadlock or even resistance. Referring to the issue, Heise stated that: "Violence against women is an extremely complex phenomenon, deeply rooted in gender based power relations, sexuality, self-identity, and social institutions. Any strategy to eliminate gender

violence must therefore confront the cultural and social structure that perpetuate it" (Heise, 1994: 24). In this context, to eliminate acts of violence in a community that tend to be patriarchal, any individual or group must deal with the cultural beliefs and social structures.

In history, Indian women did not just stand still and accept the violence they experienced. In the Middle Ages, several Indian women's movements came out and fought for the rights of Indian women to get protection from the violence they experienced. The movements succeeded in making the Indian government incorporate the issue of female violence into Indian amendments, one of which is the Mahar Law or also called The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 (Act No. 28 of 1961). With the existence of the women's movement and government amendments to protect women from violence, Indian women then began to gain positions in public spaces, including in politics. This was followed by India's democratic power and shown by the election of Pratibha Patil as India's first female president in 2007.

The progress experienced by Indian women has made Indian women today in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, Indian women actively participate in various public activities, such as education, politics, media, arts and culture, and also technology. However, on the other hand, Indian women suffer as silent victims of the violence they experience. This paradoxical situation has continued and led India to become the fourth most dangerous country in the world and the worst country among G-20 countries for women.

There are various forms of violence experienced by Indian women, but based on rankings, the highest form of female violence in India is rape. In every 20 minutes, an Indian woman becomes a victim of rape regardless region, including in New Delhi as the capital city of India. Sense of security for Indian women seems to be priceless because rape is almost everywhere, and the country in this situation cannot provide the security that women need. This is confirmed by the name given to New Delhi as "Rape Capital of India".

This social phenomenon in India, especially regarding the problem of misogyny, so far has aroused the attention of many Indian writers to express their support and sympathy for women. Indian writers such as poets, novelists, essays, and playwrights today have contributed significantly to raising women's voices. Those who raised the theme of women's emancipation in their writings are Anita Desai with *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), Chitra Banerjee with *The Arranged Marriage* (1995), Arundhati Roy

with *The God of Small Things* (1997), and many other authors.

The work used as the primary source in this research is English-written novel; *When I Hit You: Or a Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife* (2017) by Meena Kandasamy. This novel raises the issue of class culture and misogyny that is so entrenched in Indian society and gets carried away into family life. This novel is written based on the author's authentic experience during her marriage. *When I Hit You: A Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife* is Kandasamy's second novel work, published in 2017. A year after its publication, the novel ranked second in the Women's Prize for Fiction award in 2018.

When I Hit You: Or a Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife (2017) is a biographical fiction that narrates of a couple of unnamed characters from different backgrounds. The wife who is also the narrator is a middle-class woman and works as a young writer. Meanwhile, the husband is a man who comes from a higher class and caste, and works as a lecturer who holds the title of professor. For the husband, this is his second marriage, after his previous marriage to an upper caste woman ran aground. During this current marriage, the husband slowly and systematically subdues and oppresses the wife.

At the beginning of the marriage, the husband begins asking for full access to the wife's email account and all of his wife's social media accounts. The husband's reasoning is that openness will make their relationship more intimate. With his access, the husband removes all contacts connected to the wife's job as a writer. As the marriage unfolds, the husband strictly corrects every choice of word in the wife's writings. As a feminist writer, the wife character realizes that what the husband does is an effort to bring down her dignity as a woman. At this point, both of them no longer see their partner as a living partner, but an opposition that potentially threatens their respective existence. This then leads to battle or contestation in the domestic space. At the end of the story, the wife manages to escape and leaves her husband behind.

2 FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

This study aims to uncover women's efforts to challenge gender inequality in Indian modern era and what is the motive behind the oppression of the Wife. The analysis will be focused on looking at the position of the text through the focalization of

Wife character who is a feminist writer in voicing, urging, and even demanding equality that is still absent in Indian modern era.

when faced with extreme caste practice and patriarchal domination.

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

There hasn't been any research on Meena Kandasamy's novel *When I Hit You: Or Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife* (2017) so far. Nevertheless, studies that raise the same issue regarding violence against Indian women and women's resistance have been done many times. Thus, the research gap will be seen based on previous studies that raised similar problems, namely female violence, misogyny, and liberation struggle of Indian women.

Related to the issue of misogyny, Athwala (2014), Hubel (1993), Naikar (2010), and Yadav (2015) emphasize the conditions experienced by women and the implications for society. The three researchers in their findings express that the protests carried out by female characters became a social criticism of government agencies and the tendency of the public view of women. Athwala, Hubel, Naikar, and Yadav, all four researchers use a sociological approach to literature. Athwala (2014), for example, suggests that Meena Kandasamy through her poems express sharp criticism about sexual politics and the systematic domination of men who see social strata as privilege. Hubel (1993) reveals that the practice of female suicide is a strong criticism of patriarchal culture that is deeply rooted in society. Naikar (2010) states that leaving Hinduism to later embrace other religions on the basis of emancipation and self-liberation is a criticism of the patriarchal caste culture. Meanwhile, Yadav (2015) concludes that the resistance and struggle shown by Gauri as a female character becomes a social criticism, considering that India through government agencies often expose and commodify women as goddesses and holy figures.

Based on the mapping of previous studies related to the topic of this research, protests by Indian women are generally voiced through the focalization of the lowest-caste women or the Dalit/untouchable group. In previous researches, violence against women is in the form of extreme physical and sexual violence (violence in the domestic space of the lower caste). However, in *When I Hit You*, the voices of protest come from a woman from a middle caste (Vaishya) who has sufficient power in Indian society.

This research is considered important to look at the position of women, how women who have strong position and power in society remain very vulnerable

4 THEORY AND CONCEPT

In this study, the approach that will be used to address the issue of misogyny, gender, and women's resistance in *When I Hit You: Or a Portrait of a Writer as a Young Wife* by Meena Kandasamy is feminist literary criticism. Elaine Showalter's approach of the *woman as writer* (1977) in feminist literary criticism is used by focusing on the position of a female author as an autonomous entity, emphasizing rights and power of women's perspectives and experiences.

In its application, feminist literary criticism is inseparable from gender-based analysis. Therefore, this study will also use the concept of *écriture feminine* by Hélène Cixous to see the main character's (at once the narrator) agency and independence in voicing the world of her femininity.

4.1 Feminist Literary Criticism

This criticism is divided into two types; feminist literary criticism that sees women as readers and feminist literary criticism that sees women as writers. The theory used in this study is feminist literary criticism that specifically uses woman as writer approach or what is known as the ginocritical term proposed by Elaine Showalter in 1977.

The feminist literature criticism, in this case women as writer, becomes a basic point for the researcher to see aspects of femininity, sexuality, and extreme misogyny contained in the novel. This criticism is used to read the power relations of gender, women's resistance, and author's criticism (Meena Kandasamy) in protesting against gender injustice in Indian society.

4.2 *écriture feminine* by Helene Cixous

Cixous writes *écriture feminine* after Simone de Beauvoir's ideas in her book *The Second Sex* (1949). Cixous has different focus of thoughts about role and women as an entity. Cixous applies Derrida's reasoning (regarding the rejection of Western logocentricism) by deconstructing patriarchal thinking through text using feminine writing and reading of texts in different ways. Cixous thinks that the masculine writing method is rooted in the male genital with the libido being wrapped in the phallus. The masculine way to write is self-oriented, even

what is considered meaningful is only related to male or father, the phallic owner. For socio-cultural reasons, masculine writing is more considered superior than feminine writing. Cixous rejects masculine writing that holds binary opposition and always puts women in a negative position, being the object, passive, and the other; whereas men are identified as positive, active, and have full power over their subjectivity.

In her book *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Cixous thinks that writing is a revolutionary act that must be carried out by women. In a quote, she said “*And why don't you write? Write! Writing is for you, you are for you; your body is yours, take it.*” According to Cixous, writing is something that must be done by every woman. By writing, women will be able to change the world and will reconstruct people's views about women. Women must include themselves in the text and write for themselves as well as for other women to provide insights about their femininity and about the advantages they might not realize. A woman is a good writer. When a woman writes, she will bring unconscious experiences and insights into the text so that those who read it will be able to understand what women really are.

Thus, Cixous' concept of *écriture féminine* will be used to see the independence of the main character who is also the narrator in voicing the world of femininity such as happiness, desire (to fight), feelings, body, and authenticity as a woman.

5 RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative research method that focus on close reading and textual analysis. The interpreting of the text will also be carried out by using feminist literary criticism that focus on gynocritics approach (woman as a writer).

6 ANALYSIS

In introduction, it has been explained that one of the main points in the text is the Wife character's freedom in expressing and defining all things related to her feminine world. It becomes a space where the Wife can reject and counter all negative prejudices that are often addressed to Indian women, especially if they succeed in escaping marriage. In other words, the Wife through texts offers an opposing perspective toward socio-cultural efforts that see and perpetuate

the practice of subordination to women as something normal.

In this research, the analysis will be focused on highlighting the position of the text in representing misogyny in the context of the modern-day India. The analysis will be carried out by exploring the main character's point of view in seeing and responding misogyny that lead to subordination to her as an Indian woman.

6.1 Protest against the Continuity of Misogyny

As a feminist writer, the wife character highlights and criticizes the tendency of modern-day Indians who still consider women as part of the second class. The wife's criticism cannot be separated from her surroundings that tend to be negligent in maintaining and enforcing equality between men and women. This is apparent when the Wife compares the bitterness experienced by a feminist in the past with the bitterness she experiences in Indian modern era. This can be seen in the following quote:

Old-school feminists will speak about economic independence. A woman is free if she has the money to support herself. With a job, she will find her feet. If she has a job, it will miraculously solve all her problems. A job will give her community. One day she will walk into the office, and they will ask her about the bruise above her eyebrow and she will say she walked into a wall, but they will know it is her husband hitting her, and they will wrap her up in a protective embrace. In the framework of a job, a woman will find that one female friend who will see her through thick and thin. The job will create a support group for her, people who will give her access to the police, to the lawyers, to the judges.

Abstractions are easy, but my story, like every woman's story, is something else.

When I visit my husband in his college to hand him his lunch and I come across his students and friends.

How are you? Have you eaten? Do you like Mangalore? Do you like the weather? Do you like the rain? Do you like the Mangalore food?

How was last weekend? What's your plan this weekend?

Conversations here follow the same pattern. An endless back-and-forth relay

of absolute pointlessness. No question demands an honest answer. A question is asked as an exercise in formal behaviour. Whatever its benefits for the rest of humankind, I have now come to look at it as a design flaw in the construct of language. There's nothing in the structure of language to flash a code-red in the middle of polite verbal back-and-forth, nothing that can interrupt the staged niceness by being a secret cry for help.

I do not have anyone I can talk to about what is going on behind these *closed doors*. At the moment, I am not even sure if I want to talk to anyone about what I am going through.

I do not have anyone I can talk to about what is going on behind these *closed doors*. At the moment, I am not even sure if I want to talk to anyone about what I am going through.

I did not know that this was the exemplary life awaiting a newly married woman. (Kandasamy, 2017: 34)

In the quotation above, the contrast of the bitterness experienced by feminists in the past to the bitterness experienced by the wife can be said as an attempt to show that the Indian modern era in fact has not become a friendly place for women. The emphasis of the *Old-school feminists* phrase (followed by an explanation of the friendly environment at the time to victims of violence), contrasted with her as a modern Indian feminist becomes one of the points the text wants to convey, that (apart from Indian modernity, rapid economic growth, and many efforts has been put to guarantee gender equality in the past few decades) India in fact still becomes an unsafe or even dangerous place for women. This is in line with the research conducted by Chapman (2014). Chapman states that the idea of misogyny does not only operate in rural areas, but also in institutions and public spaces that are close to literacy and modernity.

In the quote above, the Wife complains and criticizes the tendency of Indian people who are ignorant in paying attention to women. When the Wife takes the initiative to deliver lunch to her husband and at the same time shows her bruised head, it can be said that she tries to show the pain she experiences to the public, hoping that she will get proper attention. However, the quote above is part of the criticism about the neglect she experiences. The emphasis of the sentence *I have now come to look at it as a design flaw in the construct of language* (Kandasamy, 2017: 34)

contextually can be understood as a response to the tendency of the community to question things that are very general and have no significance. However, the sentence above can be seen textually as the Wife's protest. The emphasis on the sentence *I have now come to look at it (as a design flaw in the construct of language)* (Kandasamy, 2017: 34) indicates a new awareness encountered by the Wife, that neglect or normalization of violence operates behind a series of questions from a husband's colleagues. So, the phrase *a design flaw in the construct of language* (Kandasamy, 2017: 34) can be said as a critical point of the text, that the notion of misogyny in India is not only constructed or actualized through direct verbal contact, but also through interactions that appear to be normal. This is in accordance with a research (Sapra and Jubinski, 2014) suggests that normalizing violence against Indian women is part of the violence itself. Both explained that Indian men often neglects violence experienced by women, aiming to build opinions that women are part of the second class who should accept all her husband's treatment as a form of loyalty.

In the above quote, "*There's nothing in the structure of language to flash a code-red in the middle of polite verbal back-and-forth, nothing that can interrupt the staged niceness by being a secret cry for help I do not have anyone I can talk to about what is going on behind these closed doors*" (Kandasamy, 2017: 34), this sentence becomes an affirmation of the misogynistic practice experienced by the Wife. The emphasis of the sentence above is an indication that the bitterness experienced by women is not something to be appropriately highlighted by men. Thus, the friendliness and hospitality shown by Indian men in the public sphere can be said as an hypocrisy behind the misogynistic view they keep in mind.

Still in the quote above, the italicized phrase *closed door* (Kandasamy, 2017: 34) is also a point that the text wants to convey regarding the bitterness that wife character experiences. The *closed door* phrase can be interpreted as a metaphor in explaining the various closed parties in Indian public space, be it the closest people, the community, up to state institutions that have the authority to uphold the rights of freedom, protection, and equality for Indian women. In the next quote, the Wife expresses her criticism of the misogynistic view passed down through generations and becomes something collectively believed. When the wife fills the vacancy left by the husband to teach in his class, she receives discriminatory treatment for her appearance. Students presume that women's hairstyle under the British rule

(sex workers for the British army) is still ideal for representing Indian women today. The students make fun of the loose wife's hair and identify it as part of traitor's legacy during the British rule.

Two days later, I have thought enough about the incident to formulate a fitting comeback to the student. Two days later, unfortunately, is a time-frame in which I've been reduced to irrelevance. The class that I was handling – on post-colonialism – was not entirely disconnected to the way in which I was being read. Hair is a vexed topic in the many subcultures that make up India: in the *Kamasutra*, a woman standing in the courtyard of her home, combing her untied hair, has been seen as the symbol of a wanton woman; the wild, untameable hair of possessed women has been seen as the sign of the devil itself; the matted hair of women saints and the shorn head of widows, a symbol of their having given up all claims to exercising sexuality. Not a pretty picture by any means. Where and how does the monster of colonialism enter this picture and pose for a photograph?

The superficial backstory is not very hard to spot: shorter, untied, loose hair was seen as an influence of European women – a corruption of the local ideal; a symbolism of unbridled, shameless desires; an effort at modernity at the expense of tradition; a betrayal of the national through an allegiance to the white man through a replication of the white woman's styling. [...] in the eyes of the lay people, a woman with short, loose hair in the bazaar also became synonymous with the white man's prostitute. She was the one who was sleeping with the enemy, sexually servicing the oppressor, and she deserved the greatest disdain.

In the six decades since the British left, some perceptions do not seem to have changed. In our postcolonialism classes, we speak of the empire writing back. But within these classrooms, we are still products of the same empire – carrying our bags of shame and sin. (Kandasamy, 2017: 74)

In the quote above, the wife's protests by using a post-colonial perspective can be said as a part of the criticism against the students' misogynistic view. On the one hand, the wife highlights the ambivalence of

Indian people who still believe that the way women define themselves (in this case through hairstyle) has not completely detached the negative stigma of colonial heritage. On the other hand, the wife highlights how the issue of hairstyle in the colonial period became something that is detrimental to women in the modern era of India today. In the quote above, the sentence *In the six decades since British left, some perceptions do not seem to have changed and we are still products of the same – carrying our bags of shame and sin* (Kandasamy, 2017: 74) becomes a part of the wife's criticism. The emphasis on the phrase *some perceptions* can be interpreted not only as a matter of hairstyle, but also in view of the misogyny that has existed since the colonial period. Barbara and Antoinette (1994) suggests that women in the British colonial period were seen as an inferior group by Indian men, despite the existence of regulations issued by Britain to improve the status of women at that time.

The emphasis of the two sentences above become part of the wife's protests against the sustainability of misogyny. The new generation or students are convinced to believe in misogyny, so that the misogyny becomes a stimulus for the new generation to associate everything about women with infamy. In this case, the students associate Wife's curly hair with prostitutes' in the period of English colonialism. The sentence *we are still products of the same empire – carrying our bags of shame and sin* (Kandasamy, 2017: 74) becomes the point the text wants to convey that students or young generation are trapped by the notion of misogynistic view that tends to be detrimental. The emphasis of the *shame and sin* phrase is also part of the criticism of the wife, that the strong conviction of most Indian people over this misogyny is something that is very detrimental and should be stopped.

6.2 Protest against Dressing Rules

Restrictions on human rights and freedoms, especially for Indian women, are still a social issue that has not yet found a light. In fact, Indian women are still limited every day in obtaining their rights and freedoms, one of which is the limitation on freedom of expression/dressing. Parents, husbands, and Indians living in rural areas usually limit women's freedom by demanding women to wear *sari*, *purdah*, or scarves (Maharani, 2016). Maharani added that this is done as a "disciplinary" effort to limit the movement of Indian women who are considered potentially damaging to the patriarchal order in one particular area.

In the following quote, the wife character highlights how the character of mother tries to limit her daughter's freedom to wear clothes. As someone who still believes that women should look as housewives, the mother demands her daughter to wear *sari* to limit and discipline her. However, as a feminist writer, the wife realizes that the mother's attempt is to confine and limit her rights and freedoms as a woman. In response to the tendency of the mother do such attempt, below is the wife's criticism:

I'm sorry, mother dear, but I disagree. Clothes shouldn't be a battleground. To me, they are about the way men undress themselves – always the joy of watching a lover's awkwardness when he hurriedly removes his shirt, first the left sleeve and then the rest of it pulled up from the neck. It is the easy way women dress and undress in front of each other, our clothes made for the hands of our friends, the zip that runs along the length of the dress, the bra hook, the sari pleats at the back, as if we become complete only when we take part in dressing each other. From me, you will only hear about clothes as things that we want to shed, clothes that remind us of the time we were lovers. (Kandasamy, 2017: 101)

In the quote above, the text (through the Wife's focalization) criticizes the misogynistic and conservative view that the mother still believes regarding dress rules. The first two sentences become part of the points of the Wife's rejection against the confinement set by the mother. The emphasis on the word *battleground* is an indication that the wife realizes that her mother has ambitions and desires to reduce her and put her back as a woman who accepts patriarchal culture. The wife's rejection with the emphasis on *battleground* is also an indication that she accepts and is willing to be an opponent of the mother to obtain her own rights and freedoms as an Indian woman.

The analogy of the freedom to dress to the way men take off their clothes is also part of the textual criticism: *To me, they [clothes] are about the way men undress themselves – always the joy of watching a lover's awkwardness when he hurriedly removes his shirt* (Kandasamy, 2017: 101). The sentence above implicitly emphasizes that every woman should have the same authority and rights to define herself. This is marked by the emphasis on the sentence – *always [feel] the joy of watching a lover's awkwardness when he hurriedly removes his*

shirt (Kandasamy, 2017: 101), indicating happiness and freedom (of men in dressing) as if it was a power that allows women to feel awkward when they see the opposite sex. In other words, women are designed to respect the way men express themselves, which has been completely absent in Indian women themselves.

The text's criticism is also seen through the sentence contrasting – *always [feel] the joy of watching a lover's awkwardness when he hurriedly removes his shirt* (Kandasamy, 2017: 101) and *our clothes made for the hands of our friends, the zip that runs along the length of the dress, the bra hook, the sari pleats at the back* (Kandasamy, 2017: 101). The emphasis of the first sentence (explaining the wife's stiffness when she sees her husband taking off his clothes) is an indication that men are powerful over their clothing (*untouchable*). In other words, women, even mothers and wives, do not have any power over men's clothing. Conversely, the emphasis of the second sentence (describing various women's clothing that is easy to open) is an indication that women are very vulnerable and do not have strong power to refuse control over their own clothes. Thus, contrasting the unequal rights and freedoms of Indian men and women can be understood as a form of the wife's demands to obtain equal treatment. This is also confirmed by the next quote: *From me, you will only hear about clothes as things that we want to shed* (Kandasamy, 2017: 101), emphasizing that the wife supposedly has the same rights and freedoms to define and express herself as a woman.

6.3 Protest against Modern Patriarchal Culture

In one specific chapter in the novel, the wife writes a letter dressed to a lover she has never met. In this chapter, the wife conveys her agitated voice about how patriarchal culture operates in spaces that adjacent to modernity and people who have a very good level of literacy. The wife highlights how misogynistic views are also very likely to grow in someone who is knowledgeable and trustworthy to be impossible to commit violence against Indian women. In addition, the wife also highlights how modern Indian men keep their misogynistic desires for later channel them to women they consider appropriate.

In the following quote, the wife highlights how her husband as a professor deceives her with positive promises before marriage. As a person who believes in communism, the husband (before

marriage) emphasizes the importance of class equality and the harmful capitalism for ordinary people. The husband also gives his nod to the wife's view that considers Lenin's opinions in the book *A Glass of Water* and *Loveless Kisses* sexist. But after marriage, the wife sees that the husband's progressive ideas solely become trick and deception to attract her attention and to find an opportunity to exert violence against Wife. In protest, the following is the wife's criticism against the husband's intentions and his misogynic views:

I write letters to lovers I have never seen, or heard, to lovers who do not exist, to lovers I invent on a lonely morning. Open a file, write a paragraph or a page, erase before lunch. The sheer pleasure of being able to write something that my husband can never access. The revenge in writing the word lover, again and again and again. The knowledge that I can do it, that I can get away with doing it. The defiance, the spite. The eagerness to rub salt on his wounded pride, to reclaim my space, my right to write.

Communist ideas are a *cover* for his own sadism.

I wonder how an opportunist like my husband managed to make inroads into a political party that I have always respected; how he succeeded in hoodwinking the leadership at every stage, how he came to be what he is today. For all its celebration of introspection and self-criticism, how could they not have seen him for what he is? Were they relaxed with what they saw, did they wash it all away as patriarchal, feudal tendencies that are inevitable in someone coming from a small village? Did they not notice his attitude towards women – were they fine with it, did they try to censure him, or did they themselves share the same kind of nervousness and disdain towards feminists? Was respect and love something that the radical only reserved for women who were gun-toting rebels, women who attended and applauded at every party meeting, women who distributed pamphlets and designed placards? How did these women survive these violent, aggressive men in their ranks? Did they walk out? Did they fight? Did they leave their sexuality behind or did they barter it to make life in the

organization easier? (Kandasamy, 2017: 89)

In the quote above, the sentence *Communist ideas are a cover for his own sadism* (Kandasamy, 2017: 89) is a point that the text wants to emphasize about the domestic violence she experiences. The emphasis on italicized *cover* is an indication of hypocrisy or something that is kept secret as an effort to achieve certain goals. The wife in this case as a victim of violence criticizes the hypocrisy of her husband who uses communism as a cover for manifesting his misogynistic demands. In other words, the husband (who from the beginning keeps his misogynistic desire) uses his knowledge and what he believes (in this case communism) to deceive and lure the wife to enter into his trap.

In the quote above, a series of question marks that question communism and its relation to misogyny become the points the text wants to convey in relation to men's perspective in Indian modern era. The intense question marks series indicate doubts and even the wife's tendency not to believe communism as the origin of the husband's misogynistic view. In other words, the wife believes that every Indian male, regardless of his social, economic, and educational background, is very likely to keep an extreme view of misogyny and the desire to manifest this view. This is in line with Lukose (2005) who affirms that men in major cities of India still believe that they have more privileges than women. Lokuse added that Indian men also have a tendency to harass women, if situations and conditions allow them to do so.

In the next quote, the wife highlights how hypocrisy becomes a cover for the husband to deceive her. As a person who claims to be part of the revolutionary movement of communism, the husband positions himself as a person who greatly contributes to the struggle against the capitalist system. The husband also explains how perspectives and values in communism could become the core in building a fair and just society, including for women. But during their marriage, the husband she sees is an absolutely different figure from the man she knows before. This can be seen in the following quote:

I fell in love with the man I married because when he spoke about the revolution it seemed more intense than any poetry, more moving than any beauty. I'm no longer convinced. For every genuine revolutionary in the ranks, there is a careerist, a wife-beater, an opportunist, a manipulator, an infiltrator, a go-getter, an ass-licker, an alcoholic and a dopehead. For every militant fighter who dies on the

front-line, a fraud comes and claims the slain man's greatness. For every original thinker, the parrot in the ranks who claims the wisdom as his own. Parties build themselves on the shoulders of real heroes, nurture themselves on their bloodshed, even as the imposters make merry. (Kandasamy, 2017: 89)

In the above quote, the emphasis on the last two sentences in the quote above become part of the criticism the Wife would like to point out. Simply put, the deception and committed by the the husband tends to be synonymous with a politician's effort to use certain things to achieve goals. Likewise, the husband, as someone who (claims) believes in communism and has been involved in the revolutionary movement, he promises to build a good and just marriage. In addition, during the marriage, the husband also claims many things that are in reality beyond his rights as part of the revolutionary movement of communism. This can be interpreted as the husband's indirect strategy to deceive and build a narrative for the wife that he is a figure with power, an important figure that need to be looked up to. However, the wife who works as a feminist writer sees massive contradictions in her husband and sees such contradictions as an indication of an attempt to trap, oppress, and confine her freedom.

As a protest and criticism against the husband's hypocrisy, based on the following two sentences: *For every original thinker, the parrot in the ranks who claims the wisdom as his own. Parties build themselves on the shoulders of real heroes, nurture themselves on their bloodshed, even as the imposters make merry* (Kandasamy, 2017: 89) become a point of emphasis by the wife. The word *parrot* indicates that the wife sees the husband as an animal which masks himself with attractive appearance and voices when viewed from the outside. Identifying the husband with a parrot can also be interpreted that the husband only has instincts without PFC process (ethical and moral considerations) regardless of all the good promises and self-cult attempts that the husband expresses before marriage. Meanwhile, the second sentence affirms the husband's hypocrisy who claims his involvement in the revolutionary movement.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Misogynistic views in India are still growing and are very detrimental to Indian women. This view in fact

does not only operate in a space that is close to backwardness and villages that tend to be patriarchal, but also operates in a space that is close to modernity.

The continuity of a misogynistic view for misogynists is crucial and is deemed necessary to continue. This can be seen from the neglect and normalization of violence as something normal. Women who experience violence generally will be ignored and even convinced that what they experience is something that needs to be received as an evidence of loyalty to their husbands. This is done solely to build an opinion that women will always be in an inferior position, and also prevent a shift in power that is culturally controlled by men.

The same motives are also applied in educational institutions. To ensure that women are always in an inferior position, students are projected by teachers who have a misogynistic view to make fun of and even look down on women who have the potential to damage the patriarchal order.

Regarding the vulnerability of Indian men, in this case the husband character, his decision to marry a lower caste woman and familiar with literature seemed to be the strategy of the husband (who is a professor of literature) to be able to assert his identity and dominance over the wife. In other words, the decision of the husband' to marry a Vaisha and young writer woman is a deception and intention based on misogyny. Thus, this shows that the views and ideas of misogyny in India are growing not only believed to terrorize the lowest-caste women and not have the power to fight back, but also terrorize higher-caste women who are considered potentially threatening men's power.

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