

Natalia and Kannaki-A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The Russian character Natalia from the novel 'Quiet Flows the Don' is drawn from the soil and air of Soviet Russia. She is portrayed in the background of war. The turmoil of the war does not affect her directly, though it has got some impact on her destiny. But the picturisation of Kannaki is done in different circumstances. Yet both these characters are identical. Destiny plays a vital role in the lives of both these characters. They have to suffer for the deeds of other people. Whatever efforts they try to overcome or escape, all are in vain. Ultimately they have to submit before their fate. However their ends are sacred sacrifices and they become immortal characters in the realm of literature. It is so, because literature is a universal phenomenon and the sentiments and experiences of human beings are same. People are the same everywhere in this world and so literature is the record of all the activities of human beings.

KEYWORDS: War, Circumstances, Destiny, Fate, Literature, Activities.

Sholokhov has portrayed many characters in his Don novels. One of the most prominent character in the novels is Natalia, who will haunt the minds of the readers of all times. She is strong-willed and faces every situation nonchalantly. Being the chaste wife of Gregory she expects the same purity in her husband. But he was after Aksinia whom he loved dearly. This blemish in the attitude of her husband does not deter her from her stand in life. Even when she faces so many crucial situations, she never loses hope of a normal life. The crucial experiences, she had undergone might have turned her either a pessimist or a misanthrope. But she stands firm in her convictions. Her firm conviction towards her husband leads her to despair and she even attempts to commit suicide by slitting her throat. She only becomes a handicapped person. When Gregory returns to her, she never expects that it is a temporary meeting.

Natalia was not voluptuous enough to attract the love of a male. She has only love and devotion to offer her husband. But Gregory wants only sexual pleasures. He firmly believes that a man can be satisfied by the erotic sense of woman. The man will always go in search of a woman who can provide the maximum pleasure of sex. That is the one reason why he goes after Aksinia who may be considered as a sex queen. Natalia is rather a docile house maid. Realising the relation of Gregory with Aksinia, Natalia pens a letter of forgiveness to her husband which he rejects. Her relatives save her from the attempt of suicide. She meets Aksinia to make amends. But Aksinia is all fiery in her encounter. She insults her. The face of her baby resembles the face of Gregory. Natalia returns crestfallen.

She spends her time by looking after the parents, Gregory is separated from Aksinia for a short period Natalia was really happy. Life has again attained its rhythm. She understands she is going to be a mother. She feels that life is again blossoming. But Gregory is again lost in war and liquor. Natalia fails to understand the miseries of Gregory. She directly asks Gregory whether he is cheating her. He wants to lead a free life. He takes refuge in liquor and continues his relation with

Aksinia. Natalia again approaches Aksinia to ask her to return her husband. Aksinia insults her. The frustration of Natalia reaches its height. She even curses her husband. She decides to abort the foetus. She had already two children who were under the care of her mother – in law. In the attempt of abortion, she succumbs.

Kannaki is a well defined character in the novel *Chilappathikaram* by Ilangovadikal. The author was the brother of Chenkuttuva, the Chera king. The literal meaning of *Chilappathikaram* is the story of Anklet.

Kannaki is the wife of Kovalan, a resident of Poompuhar, the capital of chola dynasty. She is the daughter of a rich businessman. Kovalan also is the son of another rich man. Though Kannaki is a chaste and faithful wife, Kovalan finds satisfaction only in the relation with Madhavi, a court dancer. Abandoning Kannaki, he starts living in the house of Madhavi. Kannaki is also financially exploited by the mother of Madhavi. So she becomes bankrupt.

One day Kovalan happens to hear a song sung by Madhavi. He immediately realizes the blunder he had committed to his wife. He returns to Kannaki. They start living in Madhurai, rejecting in financial aids from their parents. Madhavi is the capital of Pandya dynasty. They lead a life of pennary. So Kovalan goes to the town to sell one of the anklets of ruby, of his wife. The merchant, to whom Kovalan approached had already stolen and anklet of the queen. In order to escape he accuses Kovalan of the theft. The king beheads Kovalan. The infuriated Kannaki goes to the palace like a storm and she breaks her anklets in front of the king. Seeing the terrible wrath of the woman, the king dies, heartbroken Kannaki sets the town in fire. Whether she was using a torch of fire or had evoked the god of fire is not known. The goddess of the city Meenakshi requests her to withdraw her curse. So obeys.

There are many similarities between Kannaki and Natalia. Both of them are wronged by their husbands. They are fully devoted to their husbands. They worshipped them like gods. But the men fail to understand the real worth of their five wives. They are really angelic. The error committed by their husbands, do not deter them from the path of devotion. Though the husbands go after lust and sexual pleasures, the women know that they will come back to them. They are ready to do any sacrifice. Natalia goes to Aksinia to request her to return her husband. But Kannaki is alone in her suffering.

Natalia is a strong character in Russian literature. Sholokhov's novel "Quiet Flows the Don" is enriched with different characters and their physical and mental activities. Among the characters, Natalia has created an indelible impression in the minds of the readers. Russian literature is enriched by writers like LeoTolstoy, Pushkin, Anton Chekhov, Dostovsky, Maxim Gorky, Sholokhov and a group of other luminaries. They were writers who stood firm on the earth.

Tamil is the most prominent language in south India, enriched by profound literature. The period of Sangha kings was the spring season for literature Chola, Chera, Pandya dynasties witnessed a period of renaissance in the field of literature. *Chilappathikaram* by Ilangovadikal stands as a milestone of literature. The book has inspired many later writers.

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