Abstract:

Patriarchy, as an ideology, assumes multiple manifestations in narratives, diminishing not only the might that lies hidden beneath the cracked echoes of feminism, but also the very elixir that keeps womanhood alive. It is here that the present paper, entitled "The Daughters of Patriarchy: Tracing Disparities in the Representation of Women in Indian Fiction in English" attempts to transpire the disparities that appear at the forefront in an artist's representation of its women, depending on the degree of his/her representation of patriarchy, as the title of the paper tends to accentuate. The paper would cogitate over the ill-effects of a phallo-centric ideology on the psyche of the concocted 'other', the daughters of patriarchy, through a cursory consideration of two novels, The God of Small Things (originally published in 1997) and Fire on the Mountain (originally published in 1977).

Key Words: feminism, patriarchy, narrative, phallo-centrism, representation.

An unjust social system, Patriarchy, that enforces gender roles- according to the feminist theory-where the male lot holds primary power and often predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property, and where females are subjugated, or relegated to the background.
In the Indian context, particularly in a familial domain, patriarchy assumes another manifestation—where "the father determines the varna of the child"; while "the mother determines his shreni or level of excellence". The male sex, during the 50s and late 60s, arrived as an irresponsible, careless group of bodies that had no time to take care of their families. And even though women established a social institution called "home"—as Mahadevi Varma inscribes in her 1942 collection, *Sringly ki Kadiyan*—they soon usurped their throne, and incarcerated their tender ladies within the four walls of their usurped territory.

Out of this patriarchal social set-up sprung two little souls—Sophie Mol (from *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy) and Raka (from *Fire on the Mountain* by Anita Desai), who emerged as extreme opposites. The only aspect that equated them together was the tag of being the children of ill-matched couples.

Daughters of broken homes, their parents outshone as ugly, ill-matched couples, where the male always attempted to undermine his woman. Chacko's illustrious lineage made him visualize a domineering image of patriarchy in the Ayemenem House (a symbol of anarchy that patriarchy nestles) through Pappachi's incessant subjugation of Mammachi. And he inherited the gifts of patriarchy and utilised them in a full-fledged manner, which his exploitation of his female employees shamelessly narrates. This domination also struck Kochamma. However, being a western woman, with a modern and liberal outlook to life, Kochamma soon divorced Chacko, with whom she had a daughter, Sophie Mol, and flew to England. Yet, the onus she had on Mol didn't make her succumb to the unageing torture, unlike Raka's Indian mother who found herself besieged by the violent arms of a drunkard "successful diplomat", Rakesh.

And soon, the novel discloses that Kochamma married another man, Joe, who happily accepted Sophie as his step-daughter. However, it later seemed that Kochamma was nothing, but a terrible victim of fate, as she soon loses Joe and Mol (who tragically dies by drowning), and, in a way, "mourned two deaths". It is here that the dichotomy of an Indian woman and that of the West appears at the forefront.

Kochamma, being an embodiment of an emancipated female, was acquainted with the legal rights that the government had to offer to oppressed women, and was courageous enough to
leave her husband when situations grew unfavourable. Like Rosie (from Untouchable by Mulk Raj Anand) who could peacefully walk down the streets in the evening, Kochamma, too, emerged as a powerful female character who spoke with pride, bravely battled acrid tribulations, and possessed the ability to say "No".

However, Tara (Raka's mother) succumbed to the torture, and slapped a tape across her mouth in the name of family honour and family image- typically fitting into the crushed woman paradigm. The success of the diplomat husband does not allow him to have an authority over the woman, but it is solely an Indian woman's spirit of sacrifice and self-abnegation that mars her down (which seems absent in women of the west). And, thus, the dichotomy.

The arrival of the two second-and-fourth generation daughters emerges at different planes. Where Mol (half-Caucasian and half-Indian; nine years old) receives a red carpet treatment because of her "whiteness" and "westernness" at Ayemenem House, Raka's arrival assumes a negative manifestation, as she is looked down upon by her great-grandmother, Nanda Kaul. Her arrival to Carignano intrudes the privacy of Kaul that she had yearned to experience for years, as she is addressed as "a mosquito flown up from the plains to tease and worry".

And the manner they pervaded across the narrative is also entirely different: where Mol happened to be an exuberant appearance in the novel, Raka spent most of her days in isolation, amidst the "Monkey Point". Considering Raka's personal sense of delight in solitude, Shantha Krishnaswamy rightly points out that it was her "childhood [that] hardened her into a little core of solitary self-sufficiency . . . [and] the conventional sweet smells and sounds of girlhood are ignored". Mol, on the other hand, seems to be completely unaware of the gore and loathsome happenings of Ayemenem House. She runs around like when a caged bird is set free.

However, as both the novels progress, Mol tragically dies by drowning- the lake seemed to engulf her charisma and magnetism- and outshone as a victim of fate. Raka, on the other hand, emerged as a maker of her own destiny. Recuperating, she sets the mountainside ablaze in an attempt to dilapidate the old and the trivial and make room for the meaningful. It is here that forest fires (the "fire on the mountain") arrive to represent the empirical manifestation of Raka's existential angst. Realizing her true self, Raka outshines as a unique character in Fire on the
Mountain in her tranquil isolation as well as her stubborn refusal to seek solace in the lure of false myths.

Raka and Mol, though being the extreme opposites, play a pivotal role in their respective works of art. Through their characters, (more likely through Rahel’s and Raka’s), Roy and Desai attempt to showcase the repulsive impact of patriarchy on the minds of these little daughters. During childhood, they witness oppression; when their eye balls wrinkle, they only revert to the same diabolical past that once haunted their mothers, and that now awaits to haunt them.
Works Cited

