

# Romantic Consciousness in Meena Alexander's *The Bird's Bright Ring* and *Gold Horizon*

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**Abstract**—Experience and poetic self are two critical parts in presenting romanticism and phenomenology while writing poetries. It is no different in the case of Meena Alexander as she has got the priority of writing the authentic feelings and truthful experiences. Primarily, it has also been identified with the confessional poems that they present the experience through a masquerade. The truthfulness of Meena Alexander in her collection of poems such as *The Bird's Bright Ring* and *Gold Horizon* have shown her passion in presenting her poetry in a line of experience through romanticism and the entire part of the experience that she has gone through her whole life. Effortlessness of her poetry and the themes dealing with patriarchy and colonialism along with the contemporary approaches towards religion and race in the approaches towards controlling the authorities in every sphere of her work have got importance equally.

**Keywords** — *phenomenology, romanticism, masquerade, confessional, effortlessness, colonialism.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Meena Alexander is one of the most renowned poets from the post-colonial period with her popular collections of poetry, including *Quickly Changing River*, *Atmospheric Embroidery*, *Birthplace with Buried Stones*, and *Raw Silk*. Alexander developed her interest in the area of Phenomenology and Romanticism while finishing her doctoral work in England. Sensitivity for the world has been presented in her works that also included the entire life of the poet while writing poems on the basis of phenomenology and romanticism. Two great works of Alexander after she developed interest in phenomenology and romanticism include *The Bird's Bright Ring* (1976) and *Gold Horizon* (1980). She was one of the most known poets from post-colonial India. Portraying the importance of poetry among the public (Dash, 2019). The metropolitan readership from western country was her target in the case of reaching a large number of readers to make them aware of the exotic nature of poetry from the post-colonial era. Therefore, this research paper focuses

on identifying and discussing the phenomenology and romanticism in the poetries of Meena Alexander in the form of developing complex and rhetorical poetic dimensions.

## II. DISCUSSION

Postcolonial literature revolved around the themes and motifs such as inequality, quest for identity, racism, and cultural dominance. Thematic concepts regarding colonisation and colonizers have been identified in the form of demonstrating thematic concepts and reflection of postcolonial writers. Understanding of phenomenology can help in evaluating and analysing these elements in the poetries of Meena Alexander. Phenomenology is all about describing the experience of the philosopher from the ebb to flow. Consciousness is an essential part in flourishing the imagination along with managing the human subject in history and society. The works of Phenomenology acts as the bridge between the thoughts of the writers and the readers. This aspect also helps in managing a friendly relation with the reader in her poem "Stone Roots." In this case, Meena Alexander has never failed to share her memory about her roots and the people of that place along with her feelings in her poems and memoirs. In the *Gold Horizon* she recalls:

Place names splinter  
On my tongue and flee:  
Allahabad, Tiruvella, Kozhencheri,  
Khartoum,  
Nottingham, New Delhi, Hyderabad, New York  
-the piece work of sanity,  
Stitching them into a coruscating geography,  
Why a single long drawn breath  
In an infant's dream might do,  
-ruined by black water in a paddy field.

Paradoxes of writing poetry were visible in the writing of South Asian women in the field of postcolonial literature. However, Meena Alexander rose beyond the issues as a solid phenomenon with the fully extended time dimension. She has never

failed in presenting a sure and pungent approach towards motion and space in the long and never-ending journey of her life in her poetry in *The Bird's Bright Ring*. She was sure about her thoughts and interests in the field of poetry. At the time of a rise in the novel writing, she chose to write poetry to give vent to her state of mind along with presenting the importance of language in cultural conditions. She experienced different threatening conditions regarding selection and usage of language in travelling all throughout the world. She went above all the issues she faced in her life as a poet along with managing the undeniable phenomena and issues related to increasing simplification approach towards poetry.

Exploratory wordsmithing in the poetic field has helped her to bring the natural condition and contribution towards writing poetry. For example, her poems such as "River and Bridge" and "The Bird's Bright Ring" have proved her mastery over volumes of poetries as a part of phenomenology. She brought in the ideas of values, forces, aesthetic, and social aspects towards the promising approaches regarding appropriate language selection (Varanasi, 2018). Most importantly, postcolonial texts revolve around the interpretation and negotiation of the difference and resemblance of the diverse cultures related to the East and West when it comes to hybrid space overlapping and interacting the isolation and the existence. In this specific place, Meena Alexander has shown her mastery in the process of significant genres regarding myriad cultures and hybrid identities.

Phenomenology of the poetry of Meena Alexander revolves around memory, ethnicity, and loss of homeland along with the dislocation of the predicament on the basis of the migratory experiences. She wrote:

She waited where the river ran,  
That summer as the floods began.

The formation of identity of the poet is another essential part of the poetries and romanticism in the form of gender, ethnicity, and race. Significance of place is the most important part in presenting the experience and personal observation through the external events. The poet has shown her experience with the imagination regarding presentation of the value of work along with the intention of the readers.

Oscillation and isolation are the most crucial aspects in the intense feeling of a person from both foreign and familiar approaches. Continuous growth in adulthood and childhood of the poet has been presented in minute details with decent words without hurting or offending the emotions of the readers (Kushwaha, 2019). It is worth noting that the poem "Gold Horizon" is the forefront of the poignant examination of the new world and the history. Primary concerns of the writing of Alexander have created the image of the history of dislocation and agitation related to self-creation.

Agony of migration is also shown in every aspect of her writing. From the different aspects, the thinking and approaches of the writer has also been identified in the field of romanticism. In her book "Women in Romanticism", Meena Alexander has shown her capacity in pure criticism and evaluation of the content from the romantic poetries of three renowned poets from English literature. It has also been identified that the autobiography of Alexander contains poems full of romanticism and her experience, that presents the "Night-Scene in Garden" by presenting a blend of her imagination and the approaches related to the aftermath of the traumatic events in her life. At the time of violence, she presented her poetries in the form of grace and tenderness with her experience (Valladares, 2019). Most importantly, accepting the wrong factors along with the larger sense plays a crucial role in the intrinsic approaches towards the imagination and the happy part of her life.

Reinvention of the wheel that moves up and down in life has also been presented in the form of extraordinary approaches towards learning the different ways and methods that can help to create better dimensions of growth of the worldly pleasures. Taking the next step in the process of learning the conscious approaches related to the discipline of the learned aspects can only help in presenting the history of the forces that has explained the difference between the odd imaginations and the reality. Conspiracy of the history and colonizers has also been presented in the poetries of Meena Alexander.

She has portrayed the importance of phenomenology and romanticism in the works of writers from parts of the contemporary world. Success of the poet lies in the approaches towards using the contemporary time and the history of romanticism and phenomenology

(Rustomji-Kerns and Sharma, 2018). For example, she has completed her original study of romantic poets such as Baudelaire, Whitman, Arnold, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Primarily, she has explored the inner worlds of the poets that have framed romanticism and selfhood in the form of variants when the back-and-forth movements of the guarantees of belief have been presented and constructed to reach the true self. Phenomenology of the insights and the role of the living body have also been presented in the form of variations from the selfhood that has been explained in the case involving memory, language, and significance of the place through the aspect phenomenology.

The sophistication of the poetry is noticed in the cultural and thematic approaches with the hope of producing better identification to the reality of the truth. The foreign and familiar aspects of life have created the different dimension related to collections of the memories and thrills from the previous life. In this concern, the collection of the poems of Meena Alexander has presented every aspect of the postcolonial era along with her intention to know the reality of life. She is a force of never-ending positivity that has never faded even after her death. She is the source of the light for her successors and contemporary writers in the form of identifying the post-colonial lifestyle (Sarkar and Haque, 2018). It has also been found out that Alexander has created the language and the image of contemporary India that is only concerned with the different time dimensions.

In both the collection of poems, Meena Alexander presents her memories like a never ending chain of her life and experiences. Alexander had mastered the art of filling the blank area of her mind with the verses of her experiences. These approaches have changed in different spans and dimensions of her life as she has presented in her poetry *Gold Horizon* (Lidia and Jayanthi, 2020). Presentation of the postcolonial life of Asians is the only concern of the poet that has never failed in changing the dimensions of work. Along with that, contemporary India is another essential aspect in the book that has changed every aspect related to poetic dimension. In this respect she wrote:

You have crossed a border, never to return  
 Strange in this soil, who will grant you burial?  
 Neck of my beloved, who will grant you burial?  
 Eyes, lips, nose who will shield you from sight?

### III. CONCLUSION

The use of language plays the most important part in presenting the themes of the poetry through the true experience from the colonial and post-colonial period. The poet has worked on her true self by reaching to the heart of her readers with romantic and phenomenological approaches. The real life experiences of the poet is the only factor that presents the different phases of her life and paints the pages of her books. The experience of Meena Alexander has also been depicted in the form of the exile presented in every hook and corner of the poems in both her collections - *The Bird's Bright Ring and Gold Horizon*. She knows about the process of meeting the needs and interests of her readers by going through the particular emotions in explaining her feelings without thinking twice. Sophistication in the parts of the cultural studies and foreign countries has been presented in minute details when it comes to presenting the familiar and foreign approaches in the institutionalism of the identification of the language in contemporary India.

Thorny reality for women is another crucial part of the phenomena of the writing of Alexander that have presented the collections. The procedures of transformation of the feelings and thoughts of the poetess explain the colonial pedagogy. The suppressing effect of patriarchy is an area of concern in the collections and transformation from Alexander's previous work. Lyricism is another crucial aspect which according to the poet is a place that should be protected from the outside world so that one gets enough space to reflect on the intense realities of the world. She is entirely free in the approaches regarding controlling authorities and the transformation of the poetic approaches.

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