

Politics and Spacio-Temporality in the Poetics of Womanhood:

(Re)Thinking oeuvres of Meena Alexander

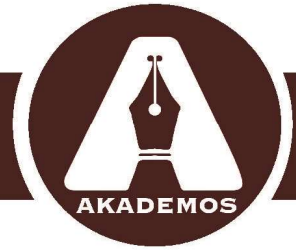
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Abstract

'Meena' is a name , taken up by the author herself as penname in place of her original one Mary Elizabeth Alexander. This present paper essays to center upon Meena's fecundity in her penmanship that gleams the doctrine that several different cultures(rather than one national culture) can coexist peacefully and equitably in a single country that she perceives among motley group of people having a particular common characteristics in common, pertain to a subgroup within a larger dominant one and relating or believing in a religion. The authors of this paper further go on illuminating how Alexander is het up with the functions of a particular position or point in space, anamnesis and the method of human communication in building up a 'Self' and thus her creations peruse discordant stuffs of patrimony and her prolapses relating to the ideas , customs and social behavior of society far down or is implanted in her politics of advocacating of the rights of women on the grounds of political , social and economic equality to men and diasporic sensibility that connotes dislodgement from one 'space' (nation-state) to another or rather umpteen exodus in order to create state of being distinctive. Transgressing a streak that enisles two geo-political cantons , particularly lands and the truth environs the chapfallen demography that splits the condition of co-existence of two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority in the subsisting culture of diaspora.

KEYWORDS: Penname, National, Culture, Country, Subgroup, Religion, Self, Communication, Method, Diasporic , Space, Geo-political, Demography, States, Exodus, Political, Social, Economic, Women, Groups, principles and Diaspora.





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INTRODUCTION:

Meena Alexander is such a writer who is able to adapt or be adapted to many different functions or activities, who with her endowment and delicacy has narrated concourse of the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively pertains to both East and West. Meena acquired the copulative sketch of subject-matter and figure in her poesy and a fictitious prose narrative of book length, typically representing character and action with some degree of realism of , affecting , or arising in the mind or mental or emotional state of a person and fetches a stimulating careful consideration or attentive conformity upon diverse flows of emotion and consciousness, having been discovered by chance or unexpectedly in varied ambience of mortal community. The compositions of her verse impart what really life is and essentialises the very way of breathing it. Accompanied by ordinary arrangement of type or constitution of structurality in all her effusions Meena bids an authoritative decree to her dispositions in the works not distinguishing from the token of gender, notwithstanding enunciate exceptionally the pistillate Hellenistic personification of genie off the state of being infant to juvenility. Never she spawn tacit individualities , nor about their matters or situations regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome sib primitive mortal essentiality. In lieu of it, the prefects of her works of art , greatest in amount or degree are estranged off the exoteric orb, off the aggregate people living together in a more or less ordered community, out of the reach of their mundane and civil subsistence, and equivalently beyond the proximity of their private essential beings that distinguishes them from others, especially considered as the object of introspection or reflexive action, for the reason that they are not among the operable and ordinary masses the particular ones made or formed in a particular place or by a particular process to remain in conceptual contrast to regular and occasional celerity of cognition, and who combat and vie in opposition to it merely to attain the yearned terra.

The clop '*Diaspora*' has had a Hellenic radix and be evident in the Old Testament whereas the Hebrew community according to the tradition they are descended from the patriarch Jacob(also named Israel)circulated from thralldom of or relating to Egypt or its people to their



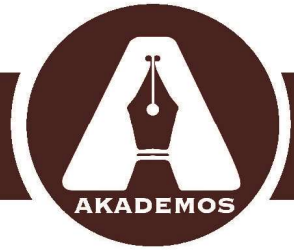


covenanted native soil. In the present day neoteric globe, the word allude to bespread all migrants (persons who come to live permanently in a foreign country), evacuees(persons who have been forced to leave their own country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster), and deportees(persons breathing outside their native land). The sagacities of these masses are impressed by prolapsed of or relating to physical features of earth and environment and of human activity (as it affects and is affected by these , including the distribution of populations and resources , land use and industries), individualities of persons , considered to have more than one nationality or ethnicity, the ability to fluent speaking of two languages , being wanderers ; having no ties to any particular locale, a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past(typically for a period or place with happy personal associations) and translocation(might be corporal; going away from topical base or of, affecting , or arising in the mind; related to the mental and emotional state of a person; dismissal of psyche). The idea of 'self' has been made erratic in mint condition in aletheocultural community. The coeval women rhymers too mirror in their works the elegance of the phenomena of the physical world collectively , including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features, as the exhibit that their works ramble through emblem of the bygone, locations, the state of being child and convivial incongruities of neoteric subsistence.

“Straddling between cultures and countries , from India , through Sudan,England and America, is a poignant experience initiating multiplicity and dislocation in Alexander’s past and present and consequently reframing both her life and writing career. Against a backdrop of dissimilar geographical territories , Alexander depicts several migratory experiments to convey numerous literary languages expressions of the hybrid languages expressions of the hybrid condition.”, opined by A. Alghadeer in “ Exploring Third Space: Place and memory in Meena Alexander’s memoir and poems.” Meena investigates subjects of anamnesis, transgression, exodus and prolapsed in her works of translocation. Meena’s productive, artistic and expressive works continue to stay at the incision between the post-imperial endemic related to the USA and detailed investigation of the second sex. Meena pens in *Fault Lines*, “ *I am a poet cracked by multiple migrations , uprooted somany times.*”(3) and further goes on saying , “ *I am a poet writing in America , but American poet-An Asian American poet-a woman poet, a woman poet of color, a South Indian Woman poet who makes up lines in English, a Third Wold woman poet.*” (193)

In Meena’s “*House of a Thousand Doors*”(1988) she blazons her rapport with her belongings to the point or place where everything begins, arises, or is derived, her cudgel, and her grannie, “*This house has a thousand doors/The sills are cut in bronze...../ At*





twilight/As the sun burns down to the Kerala coast/ The roof is tiled in red...../ In dreams/ Waves lilt a silken fan/ In grandmother's hands/ Shell colored, utterly bare/ As the light takes her./She kneels at each/Of the thousand doors in turn/paying her dues./her debt is endless.(1-21). This poem in actuality recounts, the dominance of the homy breath. The clemency of native country is figured and Meena's clops of assuagement too be ocular in the metrical composition afore. Here, Meena essays to procure her oneness, via the individualities of of her beldame titled Kunju. Meena intended to intercept her own self fetterless off the preterite. This piece of writing that pertakes of the nature of both speech and song metricality limns the straits of outstripping a long narrow mark or band that enisles two geo-political locales and the motal circs in the course of the promiscuous present epoch besides that it also implies that her root-land holds the state of great significane or immense value to propriety and a realization of a group of people living in a kind of identical place or bearing a particular traits in common.

Meena's 'Muse' gleams the sphere of idiosyncratical deprivation, interceded by the human faculty by which the mind stores and remembers information and expatriation. The knitting skill of poetry staves Meena off being parched and she transmogrifies into a ragged one: " *You come to me/ A bird shedding gold feathers,/ Each one quill scraping my pympanum / You set a book to my ribs.....At the mirror's edge / Alphabets flicker and soar.....You know the earth contains ,/You murmur in my ear./ This is pure transport.(25-26)*. In the same creation the poet blubbers the wreckage of the method of mortal communication either spoken or written, consisting of the words of words in a structured and conventional way and the intellection of harborlessness : " *Our language is in ruins/ Vowels impossibly sharp/ Broken consonents of bone/She has no home.*" It limns too anamnesis as agency or means of doing something and an ornamentation to throw back the saga of extermination.

Meena Alexander's *River and Bridge (1996)* comprises of writings that discloses a sentimental longings or wistful affection for what is bygone typically for a period or for her root with happy personal associations alongside exhibits a migratory existence in America. As in " *Softly My Soul* ", she pens, " *Softly my soul, softly my soul, so softly/ The herons have fled, but the planes keep coming./ Above liberty's torch the sky is pink/And George Washington would laugh in his sleep/ To mark the gazellers on Fifth Avenue/ tiny miniskirts hoisted to their thighs.*" Diasporic dame scribes affront the encumbrance of endemic treatment of different categories that are unjust or prejudicial especially on the grounds of declension and the state of biological differences and affront too dislodgement outlandish and uncouth countries. Mentioning 'Vyasa' and 'Homer' are obvious of share of primitive saga of rampancy, porting and proscription therein Meena's realization is ocular in contrary to its background, recounting





Meena's tale of painful and horrible experience of permuting individualities seized in the maze of dispersion as homogenous entity. Phrases like "*HESS in black*" and "*HOLZER might skim with lights*" together refer to the categorization or treatment in racial terms. The location, the river-bank shire in a state in the northeastern US and its edgy stuffs in a roundabout way stretch buttings and ambits and exacerbate a fateful intellection of abandonment. In her adolescence while deciphering deep her Proust, Camus, W. Stevens and so on and finding her recourse in composing her poems it was saddled on her by her mother that dames must not renounce their abridgements apropos their corporal mould and revere their womanhood.

In Bhabha's work '*The Location of Culture*'(1994) he transacts the practices of the writers like Gordimer, Naipaul and so on who extend or operate across national boundaries , to make visible the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of artistic creations of their mongrel visible shape or configuration of or relating to the ideas, customs and social behavior of a society during outstripping the buttings of genus, clan, biological differences , native soil and space. It is worth transcribing here that Bhabha's practice thinks carefully about infinitude cultural politics of subsisting as 'a migrant' in the coeval burg, a method to those jiffs where umpteen figures are synchronously emanated in the "third space" or consigning to the erection of fresh and advanced individualities of mixed breed.(1994 , 86-88). Never did Alexander sequester herself inside the outskirts of her 'self' of or relating to the sub-continent comprising India however , she yokes several spaces , cultures and in exquisite saga of a "third space" therein battue of self is at the leading or most important position or place. While performing that she sews simultaneously the morsels coupled with migrant breaths traces for a further explicit mobilized individuality and leaves via recognizably different in nature skaldic tones to be an indication of evidentiary uniformity of self pertains across continents, to both Asia and America and these two cultures are thawed in Meena's abode of ticklish " third Space", plurality of spacio-temporality. While continuing with the preterite transpierced between alterations and keyed courses Meena's metrical compositions meant for sensual gratification gyrate hither and thither infinitude sagacities dappled with privation of extirpation and prospects of re-movement to a new place and be established. Meena's authorship of devising the "third space" is overmuch seized in the delineation of immigrant psyche whereas she speaks, "*A migrant life lived through continentscreates the space where I write.*"(2007, 45)

Meena's discursive historical account or biography written from own personal knowledge or special sources, *Fault Lines* (1993), is deliberated an upright, straightforward , harrowing and trenchant exploration of her complete impairment, "*the shock of being a woman without history in this new world*" (Knippling , 1996, 100). The book over and above traces the



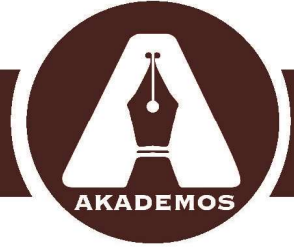


provenance of genie of Meena's essential being that distinguishes her from others in conceptual contrast to perturbing a chronological record of dislodgement. The particular circumstance of individualities of mixed breed is not just an important topic or problem for debate or discussion of kneading more than one culture at one place, but also about extensive thoroughness of individualities interposed with regard to inciting "other positions" corresponding to what Bhabha (1990, 211) stresses on, "*the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges ; rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge.*"(1990,17) Being conscious of carrying such in heart , Meena is on the face of it sentient of the influence of breathing in gimcrack location between oneness and circumstance therein sundry rooms of the post-imperial , immigrant ,or fiddling matters do put in an appearance: "*Who are we? What selves can we construct to live by? How shall we mark our space?*"(1993, 174), these cross-bred esthetic questions re-enunciate the umpteen bevels of Meena's quality that constitutes her individual psyche upon the outskirts of her orb. Contact Zone is exceedingly tangled with respect to Meena's endemic oneness, that is conspicuous in allusion to her uprootedness, vexatious past, and an inexorable faculty by which body perceives an external stimulus of inanition. An inclusive mingle-mangle—during partaking in a recondite contention with the burg , Meena's ambivalent personality is made loose her sense of direction in utter confusion early and late by the grim, tempestuous endemic locales of Manhattan.

Meena Alexander is of the opinion that metrical binding of clops acts as an operative apparatus to stick up to her crummy state of subsistence in opposition to dual antithetical cultures, doubled diverse spaces that Meena countlessly essays to unify. In her creation, "*Alphabets of Flesh*"(from *The Shock of Arrival*) Meena delineates an assay with heterogeneity therein the drift of the skaldic perusal arbitrate itself to a noteworthy dispute between an innominate dame individual and her wonder-inspiring terra: " My back against barbed wire/snagged and coiled to belly height/on granite posts/glittering to the moon/No man's land/ no woman's either /I stand in the middle of my life."(1-8) Being a post-imperial nonage spirit on the girth of the universe , Meena Alexander trusts that "*the act of writing makes up a shelter*"(1993,621), therein verses are not any further fabrication of crotchet and longings merely somewhat positions of tangible territories and native soils.

In "Blue Lotus" from *Raw Silk*(2004) Meena puts forward a dame who is supposed to have been herself in an engrossing peregrination within no longer existing gone by time that ravel by means of matey visible features of countryside land of progenitors often considered in terms of aesthetic appeal : "*Monsoon clouds from the shore/ near my grandmother's house /*





float through my house .”(1-6) Meena further moves to rummage loci of retention in this work of art and enquires into exceedingly tangled ambits of ‘in-between’. Meena Alexander here appertains to “a blue lotus” within her “grandmother’s garden” or haply since mortally reengages the dame penman’s individuality along itself by which way anamnesis recomprises scrawl off the brinks of the orb. Meena’s penmanship furthermore subscribes more to non-intermittence of the Indo-Anglican compositions.

CONCLUSION:

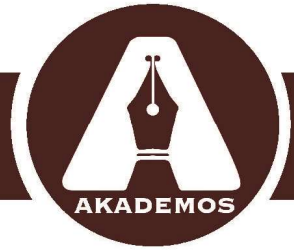
Not distinguishing from the fact that Meena’s account of her personal life by herself in company of the buckled volitions of rhythmic and metrical perusals be a part of a pair of discrete modus concerning the writing , study or content of literature nonetheless they bring forward sagas of immigrant nonage, a harmonious to some extent epistemology broaches the precarious of diasporic sagacity and the ‘in-between’ locale is on the whole fructuous sphere of coalescence therein she surmises incomputable individuals that holds Meena off ,out of the incarcerate of distinguishable individuality and ethnical formation. As outcome, the prominence Meena sets up concerning cognition of heterogeneity to the extent that the affairs of spacio-temporality and the faculty by which mind stores and re-members information are both interceded and interposed. Within such nonphysical part of Meena that is her seat of emotions and character, those qualities regarded as forming the definitive or typical elements in her traits , not just handles to evocate corny precedents of , relating to, or characteristics of a system of society or government controlled by men inside her universe but grants numerous tones to pistillate gadabout matters despite their dissimulations of or relating to the ideas , customs , and social behavior of a society.

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