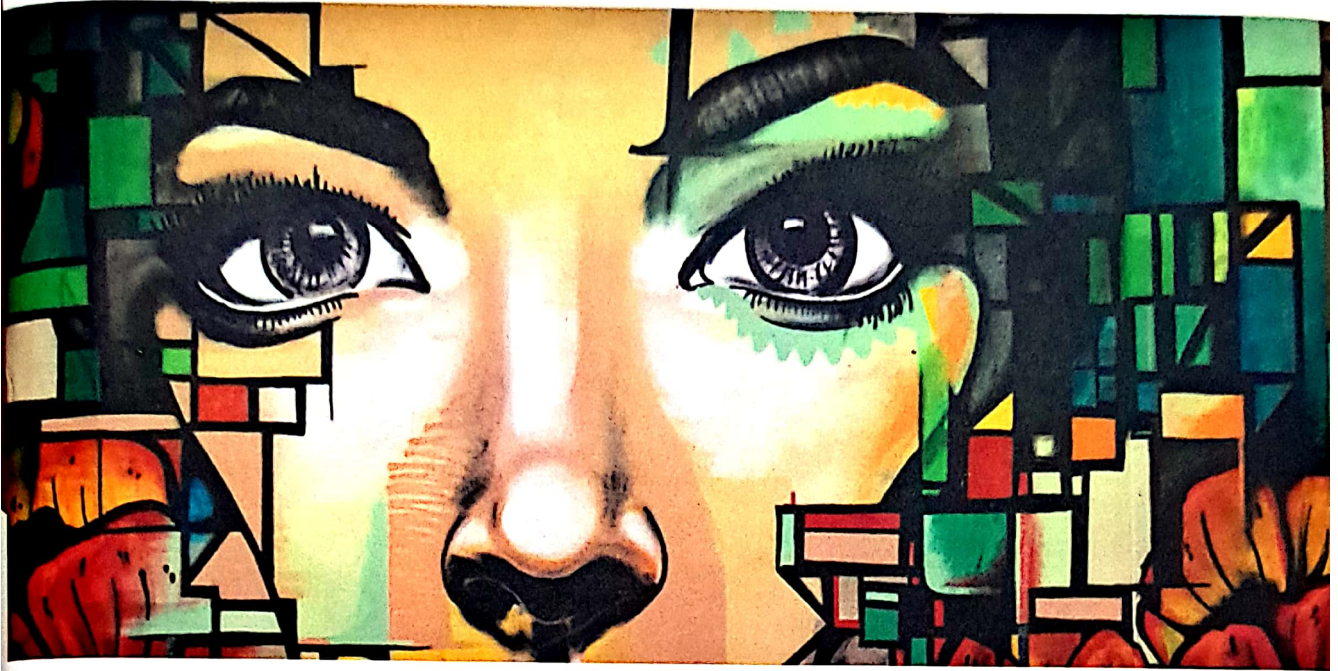




CULTURAL STUDIES



THE NEW AVANT-GARDE

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Worldwide Circulation through Authorspress Global Network
First Published in 2021

by

Authorspress

Q-2A Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi-110 016 (India)

Phone: (0) 9818049852

E-mail: authorspressgroup@gmail.com

Website: www.authorspressbooks.com

Cultural Studies: The New Avant-garde
ISBN 978-93-91314-89-7

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Printed in India at Thomson Press (India) Limited





Dr. G. Priya teaches English at Fatima College, Madurai, Tamil Nadu. Bold and optimistic, this perky, green panther advocates gender equality and fosters the research quest of learners. She loves to imprint her thoughts in Creative Writing and spreads positive vibes to the world at large. She has her ideas poured in through chapters and articles published in various books and journals respectively. She has also delivered lectures and organized conferences for numerous colleges under the University. Having a teaching experience of more than fifteen years, she also dons the role of a research guide under Madurai Kamaraj University for the past five years. Her areas of specialization are Gender Studies and African Literature.



Dr. Minu Mary Mathew, currently the Head of the Department, teaches Literature in the Department of English, Assumption College(Autonomous), Changanacherry, Kerala. Her over enthusiasm in acquiring knowledge has earned her four Master's Degrees (English Language and Literature, Philosophy, Psychology and Christian Studies). She specializes in Gender Studies. Her areas of interest include American literature & Post-Colonial Literature.



Chasmi Maria Chacko is a Research Scholar pursuing her doctoral degree from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala. She has worked as an ad-hoc faculty for Aided colleges and as an Assistant Professor for two private colleges. The research experience gained after her MPhil degree with a University rank has initiated her into publishing papers in various journals. Her areas of interest include Cultural Studies, Queer Studies and Comic Studies.



AUTHORS PRESS
Publishers of Creative & Scholarly Books

ISBN 978-93-91314-89-7



₹ 800 | \$ 40



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CHAPTER 5

Deconstructing Power Structures: Undoing Gender in Ursula K. Le Guin's "She Unnames Them"

G. Priya

She is water: soft enough
to offer life, tough enough
to drown it away.

Rupi Kaur, Milk and Honey

Abstract

Gender functions as a powerful tool of emancipation and oppression in the societies across the globe. False hierarchies of gender practices and norms have devalued the fundamental equality stunning the male gender into pre-fabricated social roles and authoritative domain. This paper presents a panoramic view of Ursula K. Le Guin's short story "She Unnames Them". Ursula K. Le Guin dismantles the gender identities and analyses the entrenchment of gender roles and diverging degrees of power structures through the narrator in the story. The 'she' in "She Unnames Them" intentionally unnames the creatures emphasising her oneness with Nature. She asserts her identity and manifests her presence and importance within a larger spectrum of the gender paradigm. The paper also highlights the need for dismantlement of the male centric status quo which has rooted through the ages.

The inquisitive, wise 'she' empowers herself in the process of undoing that had been done earlier. The shift of narration serves as an empirical element in relating the biblical allusions with the character focusing on the gender-neutral language. Ursula K. Le Guin questions the gender stereotypes coerced on communities and postulates the new order for the emerging resilient female. "She Unnames Them" addresses stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity fostering positive personal identities.

Keywords: Power structures, Gender-neutral language, Gender Identity, Gender roles, Stereotypes