

RE-SPACING
MENSTRUAL
NARRATIVES

RAZEENA P R

Re-Spacing Menstrual Narratives

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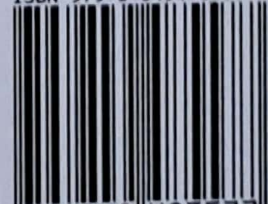
The book enables a plethora of menstrual narratives to interact with each other thus highlighting the diverse perspectives and positions which make possible more productive conversations—at the level of theory and practice.

Dr Janaky Sreedharan

This volume demonstrates the importance of considering the lived experiences of menstruators. These vary widely and are shaped by a range of different factors including religion, culture, socialization, caste, body and literature among many others. The compilation of research articles by scholars and academicians in this book aims to invite critical appraisals of the relationship between dictates of menstruation and the construction of femininity rather than aim to identify any linear progression of biological 'truths'. The dimensions of menstruation in different spheres of life shape lived experiences and this book is a series of chapters that focus on the voices and lived experiences of menstruators in different contexts. The coherence of this set of chapters lies in its deliberate diversity—in content, experiences, formats, and authors.

Razeena P R

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Eulogizing Period and Femininity: A Gendered Reading of Lucille Clifton's 'Poem in Praise of Menstruation' and Anne Sexton's 'Menstruation at Forty'

Dr G Priya

Abstract

*A woman's body has been subjected to and objectified down the ages in different cultural and social contexts. The biological changes and cycles of growth inherent to female gender have been assessed, criticized and dissected by writers. Menstruation, a cyclic phase in a woman's reproductive process often linked to Eve's curse in Paradise, exists as a social taboo hushed in public spheres of communication. Literary texts implore the body of a woman under various aspects. Woman writers' imprint their psychological experiences as expressive receptacle of a myriad of emotions-joy, love, surprise and anxiety embroiled with unbridled hope and nostalgia. This research paper odyssey Lucille Clifton's "Poem in Praise of Menstruation" and Anne Sexton's "Menstruation at Forty" through its magnifying lens anatomizing the narrative verbal compositions. It deconstructs the notions of impurity and dismantles the clustered false beliefs sphering menstruation. Hélène Cixous' *Écriture Féminine* serves as the critical tool of observation and evaluation. The poems taken for interpretation present a remarkable conglomeration of diverse ideas glorifying menstrual cycle on a rich canvas of metaphors and images reinforcing the language of female gender creating new, textual spaces. The paradox circling around the sign of fertility is dismembered and the poets use language variably to register their perceptions with vibrancy and excitement contrary to the sexually inhibited patriarchal language of abhorrence and dominance. These two poetic discourses on Menstruation act as the focal point to inclusion of gender equity.*

Key Words: Menstruation, Female body, Gender, Dominance, Female language

Introduction

So, Friends! Hold the bloody sponge up!

For all to see!

– Bernadette Mayer in "Ode on Periods"

For centuries together, women writers have been discouraged to register their thoughts outside the boundaries drawn by the patriarchal society.

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