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## Analysis of Rupa Baiwa's *The Sari Shop*

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**Abstract:** The revolutionary growth of Oriental Literature through their writings counter attacks on Oxidant thus paves a sparkling way towards world literature where we found a novel taste of Oriental literature with its delicious aroma where some precious gems of Indian literature with their unique creativity glorified the name of Indian literature with its beautiful, realistic Indian context and also paves various dimensions for the readers to enjoy the Indian literature with a fresh look. Thus, while reading the book *Sari Shop* I also experienced such kinds of fresh taste within it, notably themes like “Every coin has two sides or some times more than two” which is not merely a theme rather a fact which is applicable in ever one’s life, thus, contains a symbolic representation of microcosm of the macrocosm and shows the oppression of capitalist’s people on proletariat through its central characters. The central idea behind to write this topic is “To highlight this important theme which flows like flux in the novel thus giving both of the central characters novelty with its innovative dimension----Every coin has two sides.”

**Key Terms:** Every coin has two parts and sometimes more than two, Gray, dark and sophisticated sides of the coin, Proletariat, Capitalist, Sari shop, Kamla, Ramchand.

“That rare creature, a writer who can interweave comedy and tragedy with elan ..... [Bajwa’s is] a stunning debut” {Out Look} , publishes her first novel, *The Sari shop* in 2004, depicts about her hometown and distinction of class in India, as Bajwa was born in Amritsar, Punjab (1976). Although for her novel Bajwa faced a bit of criticism yet on the other hand, the novel earns numerous prizes including “The common wealth award” and importantly India’s “Sahitya Akademi Award” in 2006. The sari shop “A complete piece of fiction” [Man’s World] concentrates on the life of its protagonist Ramchand, a deprived shop assistant at ‘Sevak sari house’ in Amritsar. The novel begins with the description of a proletariat which revolves only around capitalist-----

“ Ramchand had over slept, waking up only when the loud noises of a brawl in the street..... he rushed out of his room and made his way towards the shop .....was one of the six shop assistants who worked in the sari section.” (Part I, Page No—3)

From the description of the story we found the Ramchand was not born poor, but suddenly in an accident his parents died therefore, brought up by his uncle who captured all his property.

“Years later Ramchand had realized many things. He realized that his had once had a shop. A very small one .....by rights that shop should have been Ramchand’s. Instead it now belongs to uncle’s son.....Ramchand just couldn’t be bothered to fight for what was his anymore.” (Part I, Page No---47)

Although Ramchand wanted to continue his education but unable to fulfill his dream, thus lead a laborious existence. But then there was a sudden change comes to his life after his visit to ‘Green Avenue’ (Kapoor’s House), the rich English speaking Kapoor household to deliver saries for their daughter’s marriage .Noticing them conversing in English Ramchand became nostalgic about his father’s dream therefore very enthusiastically went to the book stall and bought a few second hand books as well as an ‘Oxford Dictionary’. But soon all of his efforts got upturned introducing him with the malicious realities of life, thus introducing him with the true picture of

Kamla's life, wife of Chandaar. Kamla, another proletariat like Ramchand, can be considered as the worst sufferer in the victorious world of capitalist only because of her revolt against them. Here, in the novel, Kamla is the only female figure who is enlightened and able to understand the oppression of the capitalist; therefore behaved in such a way that deconstructs the traditional norms of female behavior.

“Marriage happens to everyone, red beads rarely came one's way.” (Part II, Page No—147)

Although on the other hand by depicting the female figures like Mrs. Gupta, Mrs. Sachdeva, Mrs. Sandhu, Mrs. Bhandari, Bajwa portrays the commodifying female folk who themselves allows them to be oppressed by the male one. But on the other hand character like Kamla shows her geniuses in spite of all the sufferings given by the capitalists. Surprisingly considers as insane.

“And who is she? No body. It is so unwise to her. At least she should have thought of her husband, no? While living in the same water, a small fish cannot afford to make enemies with crocodile. But who will explain that to her? She is completely mad I think”.

Rupa Bajwa in her novel introduces the idea that “Every coin has two sides” (9<sup>th</sup> chapter, part I) which also struck very profoundly to our protagonist Ramchand, when he read it in the essay. But now by relating the term in the context of the novel one can say that both Kamla and Ramchand are the two sides of the one coin. Here, if we consider the term ‘one coin’ (symbolically) as the ‘proletariat society’ suppressed by the ‘capitalist’ and Ramchand and Kamla are the victims of this society who contains both sides of the coin, thus, making a balance and standing on its edge revolted against the capitalist society.

Although, in most of the cases the term “Every coin has two sides” refers to the differences or two polar opposite sides of the one thing which cannot be united but here, Bajwa gives these idea only through the depiction of Reena Kapoor and Kamla who deals with the polar opposite situations as well as destiny. Here, Reena Kapoor can be considered as the shining part of the coin and Kamla can be the darker side. But coming to the character of Ramchand and Kamla, they had only one difference, the difference of gender (male and female). Otherwise while looking at the character of both Ramchand and Kamla, we found that from their childhood they suffers a lot. Ramchand lost his parents and Kamla lost her mother and forced to drive out her life with her own effort depriving of any kind of tenderness and affection. Same as the case with Ramchand, his uncle too deprived him from study and snatched his property likewise patriarchy snatched Kamla's freedom.

“Girl must learn household work, and the sooner they started, the better it was.....” (Part II, Page No---141)

Again,

“No Kamla, you will just wear the thin Gold chain... what will people think if you wear glass beads on your wedding day”.(Part II, Page No---149)

In both of the cases we found that both are exploited as well as oppressed by capitalists or the one who is superior to them. Ramchand was exploited by Mahajan whereas Kamla firstly, by her family then by her husband and ultimately by the capitalists. Therefore, they revolted. Their protest is against the capitalist's society who is shown here more powerful than God itself.

“There was a Ganesha idol installed near the foot of the staircase that led up to the first floor. Ramchand usually stop before this idol for a moment every morning..... but today he just hurried up the shaky wooden steps as fast as he could”. (Part I, Page No—6)

In every now and then capitalists keeping their sharp eyes on the proletariat tried to exploit their victims. As we know that proletariat has very little sense of class consciousness proves from the behavior of Chandaar, husband of Kamla, therefore, tortured her like hell.

“You have been very unlucky for me, Kamla. Ever since I married you, I have been having nothing but bad luck” (Part II, Page No---156)

Same as the case with Ramchand too, who in every now and then was also exploited as well as oppressed by Mahajan.

“Coming late? You think I don’t notice? Am I blind? Are you a king or something? Raja Ramchand? Should we send an entourage and a bagghi to pick you every day?”(Part I, Page No--6, 7)

Another more thing both of them shares that both of them are also lead by misfortunes throughout their lives, therefore, we can relate the misfortune of Kamla with that of ‘Tess’. In the words of Hardy.....

“Happiness is nothing but an occasional episode in the general drama of life”.

Thus, we can say that, as both of them belongs to the same category i.e. proletariat as well as experienced same kind of suffering, therefore, revolted against the traditional norms of society and its oppression . Till this level both Ramchand and Kamla can be considered as the two sides of coins who share the same things. But at the level of protest, although both of them protested, yet Kamla’s revolt is more strong and everlasting than Ramchand’s. After the death of her unborn child and then her husband’s acquisitions, Kamla went for a prolong journey of protest which ended with her murder. But the protest of Ramchand distanced to only thirteen days.

“And then Ramchand spat. His spit landed on a gorgeous turquoise sari.....Then Ramchand wrenched his arm free, and ran out of the shop, not looking back once”.(Part II, Page No 230)

After this incident Ramchand had spent the next twelve days locked up in his room. A strange twelve days without any rage, reservations, contentment, doubt, objective and grief, feeling completely void. But at the day of thirteen he proceeds to his senses, the very actuality of life.

“What had he done? People died to get a good job all their lives.....he had thrown a perfectly good job away. How could he survive now”? (Part II, Page No---237)  
Therefore, went to Mahajan and sought for forgiveness to him.....

“Bauji, please forgive me. I don’t know how I could have.....”(Part II, Page No---239)  
Mahajan too returned his job back to him with the note that “Every one makes mistakes when they are young” (Page No—240), shows the need of proletariat in capitalist’s society in order to give their system a sound run.

Thus, analyzing the both characters one can say Ramchand and Kamla are the two sides of a same coin which differs only in one position-----the level of protest where Kamla has crossed Ramchand remaining stagnant in her position of protest whereas Ramchand in order to fulfill his basic needs of survival went back to triumphant capitalist’s world as for him there is no escape. Therefore, both Kamla and Ramchand can be compared as the two sides of one coin fulfilling and sharing both similarities as well as dissimilarities to make a proper balance , thus to stand on its edge. Even if we have a look on the narrative technique of the novel we can find the following of same pattern, based on third person narrative where we found author herself as narrator and Ramchand as narrator maintaining the two fold of the coin.

Although, the very naturalistic idea that every coin has two parts runs as a flux in the novel but we find a mood of deconstruction where we can smell the fragrance of not only of two sides but more than two; thus can relate Kamla’s sides with Reena Kapoor’s, Mrs. Kapoor’s with Mrs.

Sachdeva's, Mrs. Bhandari's with Mrs. Gupts's, Hari's with Gokul and Gakul's with Rajesh and Shyam. But most notably the character of Reena Kapoor can be considered as the third part of the coin, the shining and sophisticated part of the coin having contrast with the sides of both Ramchand as well as Kamla, the gray and darker sides of the coin.

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