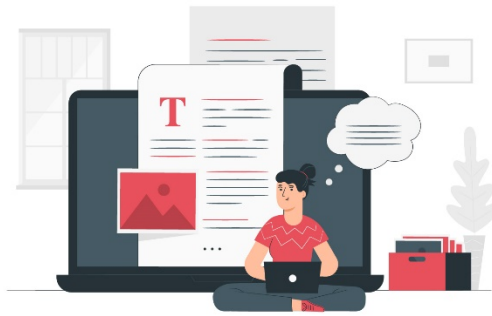


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Suniti Namjoshi: Ways Many; Aim One- Freedom for Women

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Abstract:

Suniti Namjoshi, the first Indian lesbian poet openly declares her lesbian identity through her poetry and claims freedom for women in various ways. She herself is an epitome of freedom for women as rejecting the “stop” command of the “policeman” like man in heterosexual relation, she left India for ever and took to lesbian identity. She is found to have written volumes of poetry and in most of them she fights for women’s freedom and women empowerment. She writes for the great and broad purpose of freeing women adopting various ways. Sometimes she satirises the inferior position of woman as “toy” or “Pinocchio”. In another, she teases men’s use of women as “giraffes”. She claims a woman’s right as a “human” and exposes openly the gender discrimination of her mother between a female “human being” and a male for obstructing education to the female. As a woman she cannot accept “muteness” and feel like an “upside down swan”. She describes man as “ugly beast”. She claims woman freedom and equality expressing openly the carnal desire in her. She cudgels even to convert the religious myths to endorse the Adamic complex at fault, showing “brown snake and Eve” coupling. In many of her poetry, she portrays the deep and close affinity and compatibility of the lesbian relations between a woman to a woman when they enjoy walking “hand in hand”.

Keywords: freedom, equality, lesbian, heterosexual, myths, compatibility.

Introduction

Suniti Namjoshi (1941-) being born in a Chitpavan Brahmin family of Pune left India for the taste of freedom in life, resigned the top-class job of IAS and shifted to McGill, Australia and later on joined at Toronto University as professor in literature. She got highly influenced with the

Gay liberation movement in 1978-79 and in 1988 left the job of teaching and took to writing and settled in Devon. As Vijayashree C. says, “A refusal to be bound by conventional roles, a restless striving after reality and a quest for alternate modes of perception and expression mark her life and work (Vijayasree 24). She began her writing career in 1967. She has written *Poems (1967)*, *Poems of Govindraj(1968)*, *More Poems (1968)*, and *Cyclone in Pakistan (1971)*, *The Jackass and The Lady (1967)* and *From The Bedside Book of Nightmares (1984)*. *From The Bedside Book of Nightmares (1984)* is her constant effort for ensuing women’s identity at home and at public as well. Malleswaramma eulogises Suniti’s work and says: “She is poet gifted with ironic perception and wit” and she further adds about her, “The multi-cultural interaction has heightened her sensibility” (Malleswaramma 29).

She satirises man’s domination over woman and for man’s love-less passion for woman and as a contrast to it, she celebrates the love, compassion and compatibility of the lesbian relation between a woman to woman. She is one of the first daring women to have declared openly about her adoption of lesbianism and her relation with Hanscombe. She concentrated in writing with the grand ambition of women’s freedom. She is not hesitant to manipulate even the traditional myths and holy scriptures to meet her feminist goal of man’s exploitation over woman. Her poetry shows that to fetch women’s freedom, she is prepared to restructure the society, condemning and exposing the demerits of the traditional patriarchal culture, where a woman has to sacrifice her freedom completely. This paper aims at exploring Suniti’s adoption of various ways for exposing women’s sufferings and to achieve women’s freedom. The paper adopts a feminist study of her English poetry from various volumes of her poetry books.

Suniti is highly disgusted with the society’s man-dominated patriarchal culture where a woman is not recognised as a human being; where her existence is totally nullified by others in the society. Her poetry can be otherwise named as the epitome of women empowerment. For man’s domination over woman, Suniti satirises calling man “policeman”. Man acts as a policeman to control woman. Heterosexual relation means to Suniti, a bondage to the police like husband. Freedom according to Suniti is the other name of life and life means poetry and she does not wish to lose the rhythm of her life by accepting any policeman in her life:

A policeman? He raised his hand? So,

He said “stop”. But is that poetry?

Is that life? Now there are no policemen

In my mind, neither traffic, nor otherwise (“Various Reasons”)

Suniti “discards the traditional sex roles and heterosexual relation as they confirm the subordination of a woman. In heterosexuality every woman is simply defined by and is the property of man with a right of possession to her body, her services and her children. It is a system which supports male domination, instead of love and support from a male” (Gupta 183). So, she denounces such barter system to be exchanged between a man and a woman as she thinks her freedom is more dearly for her and she is a great admirer of Adrienne Rich, who thinks, “Heterosexuality is a construct, a system imposed on women by societies throughout history which makes lesbian experience invisible or seem ‘abnormal’.” (Humm 175)

Suniti condemns gender discrimination in the society. She becomes surprised that the mother discriminates between a son and a daughter even while imparting education to them. Addressing her mother, she attacks at her discriminating attitude of gender towards both the “human being” and asks her:

You eventually produced a human being who was very like me

He thought of his father and his father’s father

I thought of my mother and my mother’s mother

It seemed almost natural that we frequently fought

But it was not natural. He was carefully tutored

You didn’t make it clear that I ought to have lost.

(“You Eventually Produced One Human Being”)

Suniti’s claim for equal opportunity of education for both man and woman reminds Mary Wollstonecraft’s striving effort for the importance of women education, she had appealed to

Talleyrand to revise the education policy by then, which had allowed education for women till the age of eight. She attributes all the social evils' root cause to this debarring of women of education and writes, "men and women must be educated in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in". She gives her opinion that if woman's mind is to be strengthened then, it should be enlarged with education and writes: "Strengthen the female mind by enlarging it, and there will be an end to blind obedience, but as blind obedience is ever sought for by power, tyrants and sensualists are in the right when they endeavour to keep women in the dark because the former only wants slaves and the latter a play-thing" (quod. in Mukhopadhyay 16). Vijayasree gives further information about Suniti that "during her sabbatical, she had read Virginia Woolf, Kate Millet, Adrienne Rich and other important feminist writers of the time and her own work that followed became a part of her committed struggle for the realization of gender justice." (72)

Suniti is likewise affected with her mother's gender discriminating behaviour just like Eunice de Souza and Sylvia Plath and she too is at a rebellious frenzy of kill or be killed concept against the mother's domination over her life, as she reacts:

It might have been simpler, mother,
If you had found me in a Cabbage patch,
Green and round and exceedingly healthy
Then you could have eaten me,
Or if I had been a cater-pillar
And you had been a leaf. ("This child Baby F")

Observing such bold claim for gender justice in the modern women poets like Suniti Namjoshi and others, Jasbir Jain says, "the modern Indian women poets are no more celebrating the sufferings of 'Sita-Savitri syndrome'" (Jain xvii). Rashmi Bajaj also says, "the modern women poets have aroused from the "phoenix" in them to claim the "gender-generated crisis" for women who are assigned as "nothing, nobody, non-worthy" (Bajaj 1) in the society.

Suniti openly confesses her motif that she cannot bear the injustice remaining silent and feel herself like “upside down swan”, but prefers jotting down to expose the hypocrisy of the society which privileges one gender with a supreme identity and marginalizes the other into a corner:

And she wrote her poems because muteness

Terrified her,

Seeing, as she did, in the level lake water

An upside-down swan. (“And She Write Her Poems”, *JL* 16)

Suniti is determined to write as “writing becomes a quest for charity, charity being the highest ideal of human life”. (Vijayasree 15). A.V.V.V.Malleswaramma in the article “Quest for Identity in Modern Indian Women Poets in English: With Special Reference to Suniti Namjoshi” recognises Suniti’s claim of her identity of woman as a human being in her poetry. She also opines that Suniti’s writings “reveal not merely self-expression but a means of self-exploration and self-assertion” (Malleswaramma 29). She complains, “In the world of women poets Suniti finds no proper place” and regret that in spite of Suniti’s effort to bring the “real change in the status of women, it is not encouraged and liked by women”. Trying to assess causes of less attention to her works, she hypothesizes that perhaps her “rueful truth telling” may not be appealing to the readers and the critics as the “world appreciates meek and submissive one but not with brains.” (31)

Like Helene Cixous, the famous feminist, Suniti also urges in *Building Babel* that woman should write woman and she writes that woman shouldn’t accept the role of a typecast:

“The problem is we’ve all been typecast”

“The problem is God”

“No, no the problem is man”

“The problem is us. For original sin/ Look within”

“The problem is mother!”

“The problem is words” (qutd.in Vijayasree 27)

Jasbir Jain also has the same saying. In her book, *Women’s writing:Text and Context* (2014), Jain suggests that woman “should aspire to visibility and recognition in the literary and political world, and their work to be read across gender divisions.” (Jain xv)

She claims the recognition of a woman as a human being and so she should be sustained with her human rights. Maintaining her feminine grace, without losing her self-respect, and with no sub-ordination, or begging she emphasizes upon her right as ‘human’. She justifies that she too is having the identity of a ‘human’ and does carry the normalcy of humanly passion and desire and claims:

.....I need you and am human

‘Do not make me beg,

Not ask for more than you would give. (“Grace”)

Suniti’s contempt for the heterosexual man-woman relation is clearly observed again in her poem “Beauty loved the Beast”. Suniti projects her disliking towards the institution of marriage like Kamala. She takes to a girl naming her with a positive metaphor, Beauty, who gets married to a prince hoping that he would shower her with love and affection. But what she finds out is nothing but bestiality:

Beauty loved the ugly beast

And thinking ‘twas a prince she’d wed,

Waited for his shape to change,

And found out there were two beasts in bed. (“Beauty and Beast”)

The same concept of emotion-less man-woman relationship is also embodied in the image of dog-like behaviour: “In the end/we mated like dogs” (“Metamorphoses”). But, her pungent satirical remarks on the man-woman relationship are not appreciated by Kanwar Singh and she terms it “nasty satire” (Singh 79). At the same time, Rashmi Bajaj defends Suniti saying that she

“is so much disgusted with the merely physical in love that she talks nowhere of love but always of sex in a satirical vein” (quted.in Singh 79). But still, Kanwar is not able to accept Bajaj’s endorsement of Suniti’s satiric attempt. She feels “Namjoshi’s articulations are, de facto, more cynical than satirical and she quotes A.N.Dwibedi’s remarks, “if one were to accept her version of love, as indicated in “Beauty and Beast”, the whole human relationship between man and woman would flounder on the rocks of ruin” (qutd.in Singh.79).

Iyengar too critiques her poem as “a dry,ironic,cynical note”. Dwibedi finds “a touch of banality and gimmickry” in her “content, style and language” and says that there are several such poems in her volumes, which may be termed,what Monika Varma says, as mere “literary doodles” (qutd.in Singh.79).

Suniti, to assign woman with freedom also adopts putting the ugly attitude of man. In the poem “Aphrodisiac”, Suniti draws image of the ugly attitude of man who suspects even if ‘wedded and bedded’ and like an ‘unicorn’ with ‘white horn’ at the centre of the head, Suniti tries to portray an absurd and ugly looking man and narrates:

Being wedded and bedded
And not being pig-headed,
He sought the horn
Of the white unicorn
For the world is an ugly woman (“Unicorn”)

To express her feelings on man as suspicious by nature, she compares man seeing the world as an ugly woman; for the use of ugly woman, she becomes a prey to criticism saying that no woman in the creation should be called ugly.

Beauvoir has the same sayings that in marriage, man dominates over woman, issues orders and even expects the wife to take permission of him for her breathing:

Marriage incites man to a capricious imperialism: the temptation to dominate is the most universal and the most irresistible there is; to turn over a child to his mother or to turn over a wife to her husband is to cultivate tyranny in the world; it is often not enough for the husband to be supported and admired, to give counsel and guidance; he gives orders, he plays the sovereign (*TSS 566*)

To endorse the ugliness of man dominated woman relation, she presents two girl friends' deep compassionate affinity holding 'hand in hand' 'stop' at intervals and 'consult one another' and then 'proceed', deriving pleasure in very small and petty matter like 'picking up pebbles, sea shells, seaweed':

They are digging in the sand,

Then they stop, consult one another, then proceed.

And now they are walking hand in hand;

They are picking up pebbles, sea shells, seaweed. ("Narrative Distance")

Suniti draws a subtle imagery of "prison bars" to lay the dominated position of woman. She places the woman to stand behind the prison bars, symbolising her suspended freedom from her. The woman is not allowed with freedom to enamour 'bright flowers' of hope and Suniti gives such situation with a shallow and morose 'black and white shadow', comparing it to the 'zebra stripes' of 'discontent', and hopelessness, having no colour left in life symbolising the loss of all the charms in life, left with 'no means of escaping prison bars':

No one was enamoured of bright flowers,

All rested in the black and white shadow, built

Their patterns out of zebra stripes, discontent,

But knowing no means of escaping prison bars. ("Blind Sun", *JL.32*)

She criticises the arbitrariness of man over woman in the traditional heterosexual physical relation with the help of the imagery of "duck" and "drakes", through which she symbolises

man's domination over woman: "The arbitrary order: ducks/ Quenching in the pond./ Drakes mounting them." ("The Arbitrary Order", *JL34*)

Through an animal imagery of Cyclops, Suniti tries to open up the eyes of the barbaric attitude of man society that does not hesitate to give mental and physical pain to woman:

Lady since I have behaved badly you can

Whip me in public with my shirt off

Or my pants down. Undoubtedly I shall

Make a ludicrous figure. But were you aware?

such barbarisms occur only in your homes? ("The Cyclops unrepentant", *JL.37*)

Suniti places the pathetic position of woman in the society. She criticises the position of a woman as nothing more than a dog: "But I am that dog /It was I who howled, /I who was hurt" and then the aching heart of the woman is laid there in that poem: "I felt the pain. /And it is I /Who despised myself" ("Biped", *FBBN. 46*). In another poem, Suniti compares the male partner as a 'dragonfly' that hovers 'over water' and writes while inspiring women not to be silent and scary over the attempt of men's possession and domination girdling over their freedom. She symbolises woman as 'water', that stands for purification and asks, "Was it courage or fear that kept us silent/ Watching the dragonfly over the water?" ("The Head of a Rose")

Suniti adopts Giraffes imagery for women and presents her ironic treatment of man's using woman as object just as the giraffes which are peaceful, graceful and beautiful like women are used as 'objects of art':

But, giraffes, you understand,

Are quite all right:

Their stylised necks

And thin limbs

Makes it easy to see them

As objects of art. (“Giraffes are ALL Right”, *JL.53*)

In the poem “The unicorn”, while displaying a woman’s failure in achieving love and losing almost no hope to get it in future, she creates an imaginary animal that looks like a horse and has a straight horn in its middle of the forehead, which in reality has no existence at all. Personifying love she addresses it: “Love, will you ride with me? /But my love stayed behind” and she herself supplicates the answer: “Far away behind me, /And I rode the wild unicorn /Past love and foul weather.” (“The Unicorn”)

Suniti also exposes the duplicity of man and their over ruling over woman boldly and satirically identifying woman as ‘doll’ at home. Like Kamala, Suniti also cudgels sarcastically with the toy use of women as found in the poem, “Pinocchio”: “I’m a doll /Made of brown wood. My features never change”. In another poem, “Whittler”, which means a toy, she satirises even more ironically mentioning the doll’s price as free of cost: “The doll’s souvenir, bought at a fair/And you paid, you paid nothing at all./The doll’s a sample”. The poem contains another two lines that satire at man, who thinks, acts and behaves himself as the possessor of woman: “The doll is a poem./Ah no, the doll is my wares./You pay with a smile” (“Whittler”). Suniti Namjoshi’s poetry resembles what Sally Haslanger later on declares his definition of a woman and a man in terms of being subordinated and dominating respectively:

S is a woman iff [by definition] *S* is systematically subordinated along some dimension (economic, political, legal, social, etc.), and *S* is ‘marked’ as a target for this treatment by observed or imagined bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction.

S is a man iff [by definition] *S* is systematically privileged along some dimension (economic, political, legal, social, etc.), and *S* is ‘marked’ as a target for this treatment by observed or imagined bodily features presumed to be evidence of a male's biological role in reproduction. (Haslanger 39)

Her poem, “Red Flower” gives a demonstration of a man exploiting a woman sexually:

Strip the petals one by one
Till you come to the private parts,
Mouth a giggle. Everyone asserts
A roll in the mud means nothing
Nothing at all, and the complex mind
Sees infidelity only a symptom
Of passion. The other use of the flower
Is to tear the petals, “Love me/Not”
The answer to which or the search for truth
Is the theme. (“Red Flower”, *Poems*.8)

Suniti is a fabulous myth maker. Mary Daly complains in *Gyn/ecology*, “Patriarchy perpetuates its deception through myths” (quod. in Vijayasree 55). Suniti is bold enough to challenge the patriarchal myths and very boldly cudgels with the age-old traditional religious myths to manipulate and produce new tales as per her feminist goals. Through her manipulations of the traditional myths in a new form, she boosts up the moral courage of women. In “Jackass and the Lady” she rejects the traditional dejected, rejected and blamed Eve and creates a new Eve who enjoys the coupling with the brown snake with a confident and contented Eve, who rejects the superior complexed Adam who blames her with fault:

Her form in clear water made him
Raise his head.
His length slid about her limbs. Eve

In her turn
Encircled the snake, pressing her body
To him.
Curious coupling, brown snake and Eve,
Caught in a twist
Of the blind green coil being Adam
And evil and Eve. ("Her Form is Clear Water", *JL*)

Suniti on the path of a true feminist, re-works the religious myth in the poem "Her Form is Clear Water", falsifying the Adamic complex of considering Eve at fault. Her molding of the conventional myth resembles that of Adrienne Rich's essay "When we Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-vision" that exhorts to rewrite the traditional writings and myths into a new shape that would help in gynocritic writings as in the essay a sentence reflects:

Re-vision- the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction is for us more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival...this drive to self- knowledge, for women, is more than a search for identity: it is part of our refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society. (Rich 167)

Suniti again uses her oeuvre of myth manipulation and makes use of Sisyphus and Penelope story as per her need of arousing spirit in women to come up from the level of maintaining virtuosity and stop trying to become an 'angel' under a marginalised status. She exemplifies manipulating the Sisyphus story thus:

Sisyphus rolled his boulder to the top
Then he kicked it down, since he was
At heart a simple artist, who greatly
Delighted in the sound of thunder

On the other hand, she juxtaposes the story of Penelope, wife of Oedysseus, who has been waiting for twenty years for her husband's return:

But Penelope was a housewife.what
Governed her?Mere habits perhaps?
Or storage of wool” Or the desire to attain
An impossible Perfection? Sometimes
I have thought it was ordinary rage.
Virtuous women punish themselves.

While claiming equality and freedom for women, Suniti adopts another technique of “uninhibited expression of feminine desire” and “celebration of woman’s body” in her poetry and she challenges that women are not *the second sex* or the inferior sex. During the inception of women writing in English, Sarojini Naidu was pretentiously writing to be crushed under her beloved’s love and writes: “Crush me o love, betwixt thy radiant figures /Like a frail lemon leaf or basil bloom” (“The Path of Love”). Sarojini Naidu’s pure conventional mode of worshipping the husband/ lover as God is transparent in the poem, “The Feast”, where she celebrates even the dust of the lover’s footprint as sacred like the flower of worship to the lover: “Let me gather Love, instead /The entranced and flowering dust /You have honoured with your trade” (“The Feast”). But, the bold Suniti Namjoshi contrastingly with her own original identity, unchecking her salacious desire is found to be displaying it in a celebrating mood. She openly challenges that woman is equal to a man and she also bears the natural passion of physical desire and she lets it flow in words unchecked:

I give her rose with unfurled petals,

She smiles and crosses her legs.

I give her shell with the swollen lip.

She laughs. I bite

And nozzle her breasts.

I tell her, “Feed me on flowers

With wide open mouths”,

And slowly,

She pulls down my head. (“I Give Her the Rose”, *JL.43*)

Suniti very boldly challenges the age-old convention of expression of woman’s body as a taboo and exemplifies openly displaying the woman’s body in poetry. She appeals her girlfriend arousing her with passionate desire, gifting her with rose and satiates her desire to be loved very sensuously unlike that of a man. It gives her the completeness of a human being and she does not feel any need of any man to accomplish her sexual desire. Tanu Gupta thinks this rebellious attitude is just a way to resist the heterosexual relationship or else it gives birth to isolation, self-hatred and suicide and writes, “Lesbianism is not only the denial of patriarchy or an act of resistance as it has always been perceived. But it is more than this. It has of course included isolation, self-hatred, breakdown, alcoholism, intra woman violence and suicide.” (Tanu 132)

Kamala Das is usually considered as the outstandingly daring poet to express woman, her body and her desire openly. But, in comparison to Kamala, Suniti may be conferred as bolder than Kamala because with a lesbian identity, expressing the desire of a lesbian is expected not to be received easily and positively even in the advanced societies. Her wish to “caress” her girlfriend from feet to sex springs in her and she does not check it with the fear of the conventional society. Her desire is challengingly declared by Suniti in her poem:

Will you

take to the sea, my darling? Will you let me caress you?

The tips of your feet, your legs, your sex?

Will you let my tongue caress you? Will you

lie in my arms? Will you rest? (“Well, then let slip the masks” 14-18)

Suniti is the first Indian woman writer to have openly declared her sexual choice as a lesbian and has since held that the kind of sexual life one chooses to lead a purely personal matter, where an individual’s autonomy should neither be checked nor curtailed. Her lesbian

mate was Gillian Hanscombe, with whom she enjoys both physical and emotional happiness. She views compulsory heterosexuality as a repressive social structure that systematically subordinates women and reduces them to the status of “the other” in a male dominated socio-cultural system. (Vijayasree 26)

Her lesbian identity is declared once and again in many of her poems as in “Let Slip the Mask” asking her girl friend to accept her proposal publicly:

And if the sun
is too strong, should burn too much, will you
walk with me to where the light is more calm
and be in me where the seas heave and are
serene and heave again and are themselves?

Vijayasree further informs about Suniti: “...as a lesbian feminist and joined the activist group. During her sabbatical, she had read Virginia Woolf, Kate Millet, Adrienne Rich and other important feminist writers of the time and her own work that followed became a part of her committed struggle for the realization of gender justice” (Vjayasree 72). In another poem, Suniti introduces the lesbian identity as divine calling both the women sacred and secular describing them as “God” and “Goddess”:

“In that particular temple
A god slept
And a goddess danced,
and in another
a goddess slept and a god
danced

.....

Suniti describes even the love making between the two women is “both sacred and secular”: “When we make love /you and I /are both sacred and secular” (“In That Particular Temple”). Suniti’s inclination for her free celebration of lesbian desire is also appreciated by Vijayasree: “Namjoshi’s poems too celebrate the freedom of lesbian erotic feeling, and affirm lesbian relationships actual, physical and sexual” (Vijayasree 59). She oppurtunes in the poem “Courtship” again to reveal the carnal desire in it, claiming woman to be as equal as man and she too has desires. The garden’s showered “sunshine” and “flower” provokes and arouses her to express her love and waits at the gate to convey:

There’s sunshine in the garden.
There are flowers in the hall.
At your gate a lovesick beast
Is breaking down the wall. (“Courtship”)

Observing such un-masked expression of her, Kanwar Singh says, “Suniti’s stance is outright feminist. She cannot ignore her body. She cannot repress her desire. She wants to speak out as and what she feels.” (Singh 81)

Suniti’s love for a woman’s body is transparent in her poems, as in “Homage to Circe”, where she takes the opportunity of enjoying her own female body. The ‘happy smile’ of her woman friend fascinates her. She celebrates womanhood and her open smile. Freudian psychology narrates that opposite sex attracts the other. But, in Suniti’s case, it fails. Suniti is attracted with a woman’s body and beauty:

she would catch crayfish, take me to pool
where crabs hid, pluck berries,
and gaze longingly at my blue eyes.
It was not that I did not love,

or could not love:

I was often kind, and I envied

her happy smile. (“Homage to Circe”)

She feels no marginalization and no restrictions in her life with her lesbian friend and she feels her companionship with a non-thwarting woman (unlike man’s impositions), so soothing and peaceful that she can visualise dream in life and so, she philosophizes on woman’s body; bellies, breasts, hair, and lips that purports strength to march ahead as she narrates:

We can

.....

I

you can —press dreams and theories, bellies, breasts, hair, hips, lips; and words;
all plaited now, until tomorrow” (*Because of India*.12 - 15).

Suniti, again in the poem, “The Jackass and the Lady”, exposes the woman body while spending time with her girlfriend Hanscombe very openly:

The curve of your breast is like the curve
of a wave: look, held, caught each instant
Caught, the wave tipping over and we in our bower,
the two of us sheltered, my hands on your thighs,
your body, your back, my mouth on your mouth.
and in the hollows of your jaws and your head
nuzzling my breasts.

Like Kamala Das, Suniti too seems to be reflecting what Helene Cixous exhorts in *Laugh of The Medusa*, “You don’t build walls around yourself, you don’t forego pleasure as “wisely” as he” (881). Seeing Suniti’s bold step, Kanwar Dinesh Singh says, “Suniti’s stance is outright feminist. She cannot ignore her body. She cannot repress her desire. She wants to speak out as and what she feels” (Singh 81). Suniti has no inhibitions while expressing her physical passion and without taking any other characterisation to represent her desire, she dauntlessly declares her desire as expressed in many of her poems like “The Jackass and the Lady”, “Well let us Slip the Mask”, “In that Particular Temple”, “Narrative Distance”, and in “Because of India” etc.

Thus, Suniti Namjoshi, the free bird strives to free women in the patriarchal societies through her poetry in many ways. She sometimes satirises man for dominating woman; remodels the age-old myths to women-centric tales; creates awareness in the women and the society about the women power. She challenges equality and freedom of women with her bold uninhibited expression of woman’s desire and body; she claims woman is not a sub-human but, a human species and has full rights to lead her life by her own choice; and above all other things, she herself has become a great example of freedom for woman, herself being free from the “prison bars” of the “policeman” and his “stop” command, quitting the heterosexual relation, declares publicly her lesbian adoption through her poetry.

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