



Final Solution's Mallika, Zindaginama's Jameela and Ice-Candy Man's Amma: Comparing Them Through Resistance Theory

Ms. Hardeep Kaur

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab, India

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Abstract— This paper investigates three female characters from Partition literature, focusing on their resistance strategies: Mallika from Manik Bandopadhyay's *Final Solution*, Jameela from Krishna Sobti's *Zindaginama*, and Amma from Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man*. It attempts to delineate the patriarchy and social rejection that these women are put through by looking at them through the lens of resistance theory, more specifically, postcolonial and feminist lenses. The characters face extreme hurdles, but these form of agency like Mallika's violent rebellion, Jameela's quiet endurance, and Amma's moral defiance, show that everyone can yield different answers to the same challenge. These responses outline a reality in which women are not static figures that historical trauma shatters, but perform dynamic acts of resistance that situationally emerge.



Keywords— Mallika, Jameela, Amma, Manik Bandopadhyay, Bapsi Sidhwa, Krishna Sobti, Resistance Theory

INTRODUCTION

It is quite evident that, women in Partition literature are depicted as passive victims, facing violence, displacement and social marginalisation. But women in Partition stories are not all passive victims. Mallika in Manik Bandopadhyay's *Final Solution*, Jameela in Krishna Sobti's *Zindaginama* and Amma in Bapsi Sidhwa's *Ice-Candy Man* assert their agency in different ways.

Each of these women resists patriarchy, but the forms of their resistance are determined by their circumstances. Mallika resists in a violent and overt way, Jameela resists in a more covert but no less persistent way, Amma resists in an ethical and caring way. They are all part of what Michel Foucault (1978) has described as the inescapable logic of resistance inherent in any power structure: "Where there is power, there is resistance." Similarly, Frantz Fanon (1961) has argued that in extreme situations of oppression, there can be radical defiance, such as we see in the case of Mallika.

By considering these three characters in the light of resistance theory, this paper will look at how they respond to patriarchy, societal rejection and the trauma of Partition. Their responses to oppression show that resistance is not always about confrontation, it can also be about survival, dignity and moral integrity.

Defying Patriarchy: Different Paths to Resistance

Mallika: Defiance Through Violence

It can be seen that Mallika responds swiftly and decisively, refusing to be handled as a commodity by way of Pramatha. In an act of overall defiance, she kills him, not out of malice or impulse, but as a deliberate declaration in opposition to the patriarchal machine that sees women as a gadgets or a commodity of exchange.

Fanon (1961) wrote that violence could be necessary for the sake of reclaiming one's humanity in oppressive conditions, and so Mallika's act of killing Pramatha is in line with this notion, she refuses to be a victim, and instead asserts her agency through violence. As Sharmila Sharma (2020)

observes, "Women in Partition literature are often shown as enduring suffering, but Mallika breaks this mould by taking control of her own fate."

This is radical resistance, absolute resistance. There is no middle ground for Mallika, she either submits or she fights back, and she fights back violently. But this violent resistance isolates her. Unlike Jameela and Amma, who operate within the structures of society, Mallika's defiance cuts her off completely from the world.

Jameela: Silent but Strong Resistance

Jameela's rebellion is less audacious but not less effective. As a Muslim woman in post-Partition India, she faces discrimination on the basis of her gender as well as her religion. Society tries to stigmatize her as a "fallen woman," but she refuses to accept it. Rather than rebel openly, she resists by retaining her dignity and refusing to conform to expectations that would erase her sense of worth.

Gayatri Spivak (1988) makes a similar point when she says that within dominant structures "the subaltern cannot speak." Yet, Jameela manages to make her presence felt, not through shouting but through endurance. Similarly, Urvashi Butalia (1998) adds that "women's silence in Partition narratives is not an absence of agency but a strategic negotiation of power." Jameela is that embodiment. She may not challenge society outright but she does not wish to disappear within it.

Unlike Mallika, who rebels against the system in violent opposition, Jameela remains within it, working within its confines, but also defining her own identity, and her resistance is not about destroying the system, but about surviving it on her own terms.

Amma: Resistance Through Moral Strength

Amma's resistance, then, is a different kind again a kind of care and ethical defiance. Unlike Mallika, who strikes back, and Jameela, who endures, Amma resists by protecting others. In the face of Partition's violence, she refuses to let violence define her.

"Caring can be a political act," writes Joan Tronto (1993), "To care is to resist dehumanization." Amma proves it. She does not take up arms. She does not pretend to blend in with a system that seeks to oppress her. Instead, she fights back by retaining her humanity and protecting others from violence.

Hannah Arendt (1970) calls this a "moral responsibility". Amma does not withdraw from society like Mallika, she does not merely endure like Jameela. Rather she remains in the midst of the storm as a moral presence. This is what makes her resistance different, it is neither confrontation nor submission but the preserving of human dignity in the midst of destruction.

Breaking Away from Societal Norms

They each resist in their own way, but all three reject the roles that are laid upon them.

- Mallika rejects social convention in the most literal sense, by murdering her oppressor. This echoes Shulamith Firestone's (1970) assertion that "patriarchy cannot be reformed; it must be dismantled." Mallika does not negotiate with the system, she destroys it.

- Jameela resists through silent defiance. I would use Spivak's (1988) concept of subaltern resistance here, Jameela does not take society's judgment as final, she creates her own life in spite of rejection.

- Amma resists through remaining true to her ethical principles. As Tronto (1993) argues, caring is a radical act in an oppressive context. Amma does not allow herself to become desensitized, she rebels through compassion.

Psychological and Social Consequences of Resistance

But resistance has costs. Mallika's radical defiance leaves her alienated, she's free of patriarchal control, but she has nowhere to go in the world now. Jameela, more accommodating, is also an outsider, never quite accepted by her community. Amma remains within society but bears the emotional scars of witnessing violence without committing it.

The most fraught resistance, psychologically, belongs to Mallika. Her killing of Pramatha is not only a moment of empowerment but also a moment of rupture, she crosses a line that will forever tear her away from the world she knew. Jameela's endurance also requires a great deal of emotional strength, as she struggles to keep herself from being erased. Amma's resilience, too, while anchored in morality, comes at a great cost, as she must bear witness to the horrors of Partition while shielding those around her.

CONCLUSION

By presenting women as defiant in different ways, Mallika's defiance is violent and radical, Jameela's is quiet and determined, and Amma's is ethical and caring, these stories demonstrate that defiance is multifaceted, it can range from direct rebellion to patient survival to protective defiance.

As Butalia (1998) puts it, "Women's stories of Partition are not just stories of suffering; they are stories of survival and defiance." These three characters are living embodiments of that. They are not merely victims of history; they are agents of resistance, not defined by the trauma they suffer.

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