identity has been internalised. These memories shape her self-narration - what Cohn describes as "the articulation of inarticulate states of consciousness" (143-44). Meera recalls, "*class ma panch minit sudhi kali dholi nu koras gavayu*" [A chorus of black and white was sung for five minutes in the class] (Bhatt 12). Later, she wonders, "*Hu mara safed dagh bhuli jau chhu e barabar chhe? Shu mare yaad rakhvu joie ke hu badhathi alag chhu, kaik uni chhu*" [Is it ok that I forget about my white spots? Should I remember that I am different from others, that I am lacking?] (Bhatt 78).

Her diary becomes a space where internalised stigma resurfaces as doubt, shame, and self-interrogation. These reflections reveal how Meera's bodily difference dominates her emotional life and shapes her understanding of desire. The stigma she experienced as a child continues to haunt her adulthood, refracting even her intimate moments. When Vrunda admires her body and imagines sketching her nude, Meera responds, "*chitro black and white ma bananvva padshe*" [Sketch should be made in black and white] (Bhatt 41).

Her reply exposes how vitiligo has become inseparable from her self-image; she cannot imagine being seen outside the binary of her skin. As the diary progresses, Meera gradually understands that she is not Vrunda's desired partner. Vrunda's primary aspiration is motherhood, "*Meera, mara jivan nu ekmatr swapna chhe; ek sundar balak ni maa banvanu*" [Meera, the only dream of my life is to become a mother of a beautiful child] (Bhatt 41).

Although Vrunda is physically present in Meera's life during her stay in the hostel, she becomes emotionally distant, her desires aligned with heteronormative expectations rather than queer intimacy. On 13th January, Meera notes, "*Vrunda mari sathe chalti hati pan satat lagtu hatu e biji duniya ma chhe*" [Vrunda walked beside me but constantly seemed to be in another world] (Bhatt 28). Vrunda's growing connection with Dr Ajit brings her closer to her dream of motherhood and further away from Meera. Her departure to Bombay—ostensibly to visit her sister, but also to meet Dr Ajit—becomes a symbolic exit from Meera's life. Vrunda's choice reflects a turn towards societal validation and reproductive normativity, revealing how Meera's disability and queerness intersect to render her an unchosen partner.

In Vrunda's absence, Meera feels not merely loneliness but a profound

emotional void. Her entry on May 26th captures this desolation through fragmented imagery:

> Bhenkar toting nagnata
> Bakholbharelumaun
> Bhekhadezazumtiekalta
> Pith par vayuvarsadnavaghzarakhnakhuzarda.
> (A terrible and gigantic nakedness / A cavern filled with silence / A loneliness struggling on cliff. / scratches of cloves of striped hyena wind on my back) (Bhatt 96)

The rhetorical question - "*parntu aa Kavita j kem yad aavi?*" [But why is it *this* poem that comes to mind?] (Bhatt 96) reveals how Vrunda's departure has etched itself into Meera's emotional landscape. The poem becomes a metaphor for abandonment, silence, and the sense of unreciprocated desire. The poem evokes the emotional void left in Meera's life after Vrunda's departure. The rhetorical question itself signifies that Vrunda's abandoning had left grazes in Meera's life. In fact, when she gets the news of Vrunda's wedding to Dr Ajit, she is torn between social expectation and personal heartbreak. She writes, "*Janu chhu mare khush thavu joie. Vrunda ne jo yogya sathi mali jaay to ethi uttam shu! Thay chhe ekdam mann bhari ne radi lau, vahavi dau ganthai gayeli badhi lagnio.*" [I know—I should be happy. If Vrunda finds a deserving companion, what could be better than that? And still I feel like just crying my heart out, and washing away all the entangled feelings.] (Bhatt 98). Her words reveal the conflict between a sense of happiness for Vrunda and the pain of losing a beloved. The phrase '*ganthai gayeli lagnio*' underscores her deep feelings for Vrunda. Vrunda's wedding exposes Meera's internalised belief that she is unworthy of being chosen. This sense of unworthiness, highlighted by the phrase 'deserving companion,' intensifies when Ujaas later abandons her. She wonders, "*em pan hoy ke e aa kabarchitra sharir ne sahi sakyo n hoy*" [It might be possible that he is not able to hide this spotted body] (Bhatt 139).

Meera's self-doubt can be understood through Shildrick's theory of anomalous embodiment. Confrontation with a disabled body, Shildrick argues, generates anxiety because it unsettles fantasies of bodily autonomy (Shildrick

222). Here, Meera's disability, her spotted body, becomes not just a source of aesthetic anxiety for others but also a sign of social unintelligibility—her body disrupts heteronormative and able-bodied expectations, rendering her an unacceptable partner in the eyes of society. Here, the novella raises a significant question: Where does Meera's sense of unworthiness come from? Her disability, her queer identity or the intersection of both? As Quayson notes, disability often produces a form of invisibility not through absence but through being framed within stereotypes that efface a person's identity (17). Meera is visible, yet, unacknowledged-looked at but never embraced. In both relationships, she becomes a placeholder rather than a partner. After learning that Vrunda has left for Bombay to marry Dr Ajit, Meera writes, "*Ekla dukh ne to radiney halvu kari sakay, parntu sathosath apman na, asvikarna dankh hoy to! Kamani sahib n hata tyare Vrunda e mane svikari ane jyare Dr Ajit aavya etle?*" [One can ease the weight of solitary sorrow by weeping it out but when humiliation and the sting of rejection accompany it? In the absence of Kamanisir, Vrunda accepted me and when Dr Ajit came?] (Bhatt 101).

Her reflection reveals the deeper wound—not loneliness but humiliation. She asks, "*shu hu ena mate avejinu astitva hati?*" [Was I merely a substitute for her?] (Bhatt 101). The question crystallises her fear that she was never truly desired, only temporarily needed. Her relationship with Ujaas follows a similar trajectory. After their physical intimacy, she writes, "*Mari najar same aa samay balatkar na andharama paltato jato hato ne hu enama maro ujas shodhti rahi*" [This time was dissolving into the darkness of rape, and I kept searching for my light within it] (Bhatt 138). The metaphor of 'darkness of rape' indicates her sense of violation and emotional abandonment. She searches for '*ujaas*' (light) within an experience that leaves her feeling used and erased. Meera titles her experience of an intimate relationship with Ujaas as 'rape.' This resonates with Tom Shakespeare's observation that disabled women are disproportionately vulnerable to sexual coercion and are often perceived as lacking sexual agency or even full womanhood (Shakespeare 11-15).Meera's experience is not only dehumanising but also emblematic of how disabled female sexuality is rendered socially unintelligible. Her diary repeatedly returns to this trauma, revealing the depth of her emotional rupture.

> "*Em pan hoy ke e aa kabarchitra sharir ne sahi sakyo na hoy!...je rite ene mane chhodi, jane avkashma aathadto koi patang! ane jyare Tivariji aavya tyare je rite ene mane mara chappal sathe bathroom ma santava dhakeli!*"
>
> [It might be possible that he could not bear this patchy body! The way he left me—like a kite drifting in the sky! And when Tivariji arrived, he shoved me into the bathroom with my own slippers, as if to hide me!] (Bhatt 139).

The image of being discarded 'like a kite drifting in the sky' captures her sense of abandonment. On Tiwariji's arrival, Ujjas' act of hiding her in the bathroom confirms her social erasure. She writes, "*Ene mara jivan na sundar ne kachdi nakhyu, chuthi nakhyu. Dhodhmar kamnaona dhadhuda niche mara astitvano chhekayelo musaddo bhinjai ne ducho vali gayo chhe*." [He crushed the beauty of my life, rumpled it. Beneath his torrential desire, the treatise of my existence is soaked and smeared.] (Bhatt 133)

The metaphor of her "existence soaked and smeared" under Ujaas' desire reveals how intimacy becomes a site of erasure rather than affirmation. Across her entries, Meera returns to the same refrain: A body desired yet never accepted. Like Vrunda, Ujaas uses Meera to fulfil an emotional as well as physical need but cannot recognise her even as a friend. She asks, "*Enama mane mitra tarike svikarva jetli y himat nahati*?" [Could he not have the courage to accept me as a friend?] (Bhatt 139). Her question exposes the asymmetry of their relationship, where Meera fails to get any reciprocity. Vrunda too, uses Meera to fill an emotional void and abruptly abandons Meera once Dr Ajit enters her life. She not only shifts to the other room without informing Meera but also avoids any kind of communication with her. About this experience, Meera writes, "*Aaje nakki thai gayu ke Vrunda samany parichay no vyavharey rakhva mangti nathi*" [Today, it was decided that Vrunda did not even want to keep the general acquaintance] (Bhatt 84). Vrunda's action confirms how Meera's presence is tolerated only in the absence of more socially acceptable partners. Similarly, Meera describes her sexual encounter with Ujaas as an 'unfortunate accident' which traumatised her. She writes, "*hu takva mate havatiya marti hati ne e marama dhagdhagtu sisu redi rahyo*" [I was struggling to survive and he poured burning lead into me] (Bhatt 138).

Meera's use of metaphor—being filled with molten grief—articulates not just violence of the experience but also highlights the scars it leaves behind. It refers to the physical pain as wellas the emotional state of being sexually sued and then discarded. Her words reveal the trauma and also indicates the impossibility of locating her sexuality within normative range of desire.

In both relationships, Meera is denied what Loeser, Pini, and Crowley term "socially intelligible sexuality" (5). As McRuer and Wilkerson argue, legitimacy requires not only heteronormativity but also conformity to norms of able-bodiedness (8). Vrunda and Ujaas erase Meera's subjectivity by framing her body as an object of pity, utility, or revulsion—never an autonomous agent of desire.

Thus, Meera's disability and queerness intersect to render her simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible within social and intimate relationships. As Quayson notes, disability often produces a mode of visibility that effaces identity rather than affirms it (17). Meera is never permitted as the desired subject. Rather, she becomes a substitute or another in the lives of those she loves. Having understood Meera's fragmented subjectivity through societal denial, it becomes necessary to ask how Gujarati literary criticism has received this text and specifically what's their perspective about the concept of disability.

Critical Silences: Disability and Queer Erasure in Gujarati Literary Discourse

Having examined how Meera's narrative challenges normative constructs of desire and embodiment, this section turns to the critical reception of the novella within Gujarati literary discourse, where disability and queer desire are frequently misread or marginalised. In his article "Bhramnirasjanya Vedna ni Katha," Ramesh Dave writes:

> *Meera ek taraf kodh no abhishap jirve chhe…. janmajat sapdeli vedna e ena chintan ne ujjval karyu chhe. Suchit vedna ane vanchan manan na pariname kelvayeli teni sampgantano Parichay, tene malelo kodh no varso potani aagli pedhi ne n aapva te kevo aakro Sankalp seve chhe temathi male chhe… pote bhogvela abhishap thi pacchini pedhine bachhavva mate matrutva na sukh – santosh no bhoga apvani suchit mano bhumika nari*

> *vedna nu j vardan chhe.* [On the one hand, Meera bears the curse of vitiligo…the pain she is born with has brightened her thought process. Her knowledge developed due to her present pain and introspective reading is introduced by her firm determination of not passing her legacy of vitiligo to the future generation…To save the future generation from the curse she herself endured, her readiness to sacrifice the contentment of motherhood itself is a blessing of suffering and pain.] (Dave 147-48)

Here, Dave describes Meera as bearing '*kodh no abishap*' and frames her vitiligo as a tragic inheritance. He valorises her suffering and interprets her refusal to pursue motherhood as a noble act of self-sacrifice. Here the disability is mentioned[1] as a curse, and the entire approach is to project Meera's vitiligo as the real source of suffering she is passing through. Instead of interrogating the social norms that compel Meera to suppress her desires, he romanticises her self -denial as moral virtue. This framing erases Meera's agency and reinforces ableist expectations of disabled women as self–sacrificing.

In "Meera Yagnik ni diary vishe," Labhshankar Thakar does not engage with disability at all. Even when addressing Meera's queer desire, he dismisses it as irrelevant to critical analysis.

Ahi sajatiy sambandh na prasnago chhe ane vijatiy sambandh ni aghatak ghanta chhe. Pan aavi samagri te aa kruti ni visheshta chhe ane samiksha karti vakhte khas dhyan ma leva jevi babat te tevo maro abhipray nathi." [Here, we have incidents of homosexuality and also the shocking incident of heterosexuality. But this content is the distinctive feature of this work and a matter to pay attention to during critical analysis is definitely not my opinion] (Thakar 157).

His refusal to acknowledge queer intimacy reflects a heteronormative discomfort that sidelines both disability and queerness. Thakar's omission of disability reveals a broader critical tendency to overlook identities that fall outside the normative framework.

In "Samvednani Tikshna Dhar par Chalti Meera Yagnik Ni Dairy," Geeta Naik describes Meera as a princess imprisoned by the 'monster' of vitiligo.

She writes:

> *Kodh namna rakshase ekdandiya mahel ma ked kari lidheli kuvri jevi Meera Yagnik ni Avastha chhe. Kodhgrast deh thijaray chalet nathati, kunthit manodashane pan atikrami jati Meera chahva jevi chhe.* [The condition of Meera Yagnik is like the princess locked up in the solitary palace by the monster called vitiligo. Meera, who does not get affected by this vitiligo affected body, who overcomes this mental paralysis is someone to be loved.] (Naik 160)

This metaphor casts disability as captivity and positions Meera as a heroic figure who 'overcomes' her condition. Naik's metaphor reinforces the trope of disability as tragedy and positions Meera's worth in her ability to transcend her body.

An overview of the critical responses reveals that disability in Gujarati literary discourse is either overlooked entirely or portrayed as a source of suffering and curse. While *Meera Yagnik ni Diary* marks a significant entry point for lesbian relationships in Gujarati literature, disability—particularly in its intersection with sexuality—receives little to no critical engagement. Instead of recognising Meera's embodied resistance to normative ideals, critics either romanticise her suffering or ignore her subjectivity altogether, reflecting a broader tendency within Gujarati literary criticism to sideline complex identity narratives that challenge the conventional framework.

Overall, the essay studies the central contradictions presented in *Meera Yagnik ni Dairy*. While, this novella presents a subversive narrative by foregrounding the emotional interiority and desire of a disabled woman using diary as a form, it simultaneously establishes the same discourse that efface and invalidate her disabled female sexuality. Her relationships reveal how her subjectivity is validated through intimacy yet invalidated through mechanisms of substitution, erasure, and internalised stigma. The contradiction is twofold: the text expresses and denies desire, articulates and undermines agency; and Gujarati criticism reinforces this invalidation by overlooking disability or romanticising suffering. Together, these dynamics underscore the need for a disability- aware, queer – affirming critical framework in Gujarati literature.

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Feminist Writers of New Literatures in English: The Case of Indian Women Writers in English

Gauri Shankar Jha

Abstract

The so-called 'New Literatures in English' are not entirely new; they emerged from the historical processes of colonisation and other powerful global forces shaping the modern world. These literatures developed in former British colonies during and after colonial rule, marked by distinct cultural identities and, at times, a lingering colonial influence. Their roots can be traced to the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when English, Irish, and Scottish settlers in regions such as the Caribbean, Canada, and South Africa began producing 'overseas literature.' Over time, these writings transformed world literature, especially from the late fifteenth century onward, by introducing voices from colonised and enslaved communities who articulated their present realities, remembered pasts, and imagined futures—often in the language of the coloniser. Rich in genre and theme, they offer diverse, compelling, and often startling perspectives. This article examines the genesis and evolution of New Literatures in English, their contribution to world literature, and their role in shaping Indian Writing in English. It particularly foregrounds women writers, exploring how they assert their identities, narrate their histories, and envision new possibilities through literary expression.

Keywords: Colonization; Culture; Literature; Postcolonial; Multiculturalism

Introduction

The study of 'New Literatures in English' is concerned with colonial and postcolonial writing which emerged from the British colonies such as: parts of Africa, Australia, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Singapore, etc. It emerged from the process of colonisation and has a history of transforming world literature from the late fifteenth century onwards. It was the extensive influence of the coloniser's tongue, along with their culture and civilization, which compelled the colonised to adopt the foreign tongue and express their feelings and emotions, and, finally, a bulk of literature as a

treasure of their rich experience. The most remarkable argument is the voice of women writers in its enrichment.

Actually speaking, this new literature in English and its newness is available in the so-called overseas literature which appeared in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century when the settlers of English, Irish, Canada or South Africa started their experiment under this new umbrella of literature. Its first form was the outburst of the colonised: the voice of the common mass, that of joy and mirth, pleasure and displeasure, the political upheavals and the social turmoil. Its history speaks of its presence in the 1950s as West African literature, in the 1960s as East African Literature, in the 1970s as indigenous writing in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and in the 1980s as Black and Asian British Literature, and so on. All these literatures were shaped by experience of colonisation and its legacies. Not only that, all these literatures moved beyond the original colonial matrix to remake the forms and functions of English as a global language.

Here, our focus is centered on the women writers from all corners of the world, particularly, the Indian writers writing in English. For all women writers, the subject is the same: their concern is identical and hence their appeal and yearning is common. They raise their voice for their worth, their value as compared to their male counterpart and their social assignment. Both from the East and the West the flow of ideas and opinions pour in: from the West we have names like Jane Austen, Toni Morrison, Annie Ernaux, Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë, Anne Brontë, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Stephenie Meyer, J. K. Rowling, Margaret Atwood, Sylvia Plath, etc. On the other side, our Indian women writers, though less pronounced, have significant contribution in the making of feminist literature; we may quote the names of Anita Desai, Kamila Shamsie, Manju Kapur, Shashi Deshpande, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, Geetanjali Shree, Banu Mushtaq, etc. They have keen observation of all the world around and most of the time they emerge as a rebel and so their writings labelled as protest literature too.

New Literatures in English must be understood as a complex literary formation shaped by intertwined political, cultural, and historical processes across multiple regions of the world. Rather than being confined to colonial, anticolonial, or postcolonial frameworks, they reflect broader transcultural