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Women in the naxalbari movement in West Bengal

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Abstract:

This essay's goal is to examine how women fit into the Naxalbari movement by examining how one woman defies patriarchal authority and forges a niche for herself in a movement that is dominated by men: A book published in 1989 is a prime example of Indian English literature's Naxalbari movement. The first peasant revolt in India in twenty years began in the little village of Naxalbari, which is located in the Darjeeling region of West Bengal. The Naxalbari movement took place from 1965 to 1975. The portrayal of women and their experiences in the writings on the movement in Indian English literature have not yet been explored, despite the fact that there have been several scholarly works on the movement.

*In order to fill this vacuum, the paper examines the movement from a feminist perspective using one of the representative writings. While historical records demonstrate how women were front-line fighters throughout the movement's early stages before being sidelined as it grew, no movement chronicle acknowledges the role or contributions of women during this time. This study explores the problematic and conflicting representation of women in the text of the book *Naxalites*. Specifically, it does so by presenting a female character who tries to alter the movement's whole course in order to make it more enduring. Therefore, by offering a substitute inside the movement's folds, the study attempts to understand women as a subversive force within the movement that represents the critical voice against the patriarchal framework.*

KEYWORDS: *women, movement, patriarchy, female identity*

INTRODUCTION:

This essay's goal is to examine how women participated in the Naxalbari movement [1965–1975] by using a Naxalites representation work from Indian English literature. Khwaja Ahmed Abbas's book. This dissertation examines the remarkable involvement of women in the Naxalbari movement, notwithstanding the patriarchal structure that attempted to marginalize women within the organization. Numerous analyses of the movement place emphasis on how women's involvement in it allowed them to become somewhat freed from the constraints of patriarchal society. However, the

significance of women at the movement's heart is not acknowledged in any of the movement's histories.

In order to highlight the marginalized role that women had in the struggle and to recognize its trident foundation, the study has included very few accounts of surviving Naxal women. Despite their marginalized status, women undoubtedly contributed significantly to the movement. This essay aims to examine how the novel *The Naxalites*, via the character of AJITHA, addresses this troubling and conflicting position of women. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to examine women as subversive forces inside the movement who speak out against the patriarchal structure.

Women in the Movement:

The movement started in the West Bengali district of Darjeeling in a little hamlet called Naxalbari. The first recorded action of the movement took place in 1967, following the Tarai Krishak Sabha, and was led by the farmers, sharecroppers, and landless agricultural laborers of one of the Naxalbari villages. They were mostly against the tyrannical landowner Buddhi man Trike. The farmers in the region revolted against him when he killed Bigal Kishan (Das, 2014, p. 50). They blocked the police from approaching the villages of Naxalbari, Khorasani, and Phansidewa while yelling the slogan "land to the tillers."

The state sent several police officers to the region in response to the protests of the people (Basu, 1979, 1982). Days later, the local peasants' hostility toward the authorities grew, culminating in an armed conflict on May 24, 1967 (Ray, 1993; S. Banerjee, 2009; Dasgupta, 1974). The people utilized their bows and arrows to stop the police from entering the village of Naxalbari when they were using force (Chakravarti, 2017). There were two deaths in the violent altercation: "On May 24, the peasants resisted the police group that went to a village to capture them, equipped with bows and arrows. and Sonam Wangde, a female police officer, was slain (Sen, 1982, p. 217).

Conversely, a pregnant protestor who was a part of the group was slain by the police (S. Banerjee, 2009). Following the lady's death, Dhaneswari Devi, a different woman, led the Naxalbari people in a march against the government.⁴ Sen states, "The police party fired eighteen rounds killing the peasants, who included seven women and three infants, the following day [May 25]." (1982, pp. 217-218). Abhijeet Das (2014) describes the beginning of the movement in his memoir: "ten women and a child were killed when police opened fire on a group of women who were gathering to spread the message of the land distribution movement."

The kid, who was on her back in a sling, was killed when one of the bullets entered Dhaneswari's breast (p. 51). While historians and sociologists cannot agree on whether the women were armed or not, every report mentions that firearms were fired during the women's meeting. May 25th is a national holiday celebrated up to this day. Notwithstanding differing accounts of how the movement got started, one thing is always true: women played a significant role and were there at the

movement's inception. First of all, a lady called Dhaneswari Devi led a march or other gathering that the ladies of the village formed in response to her death.

Second, the deaths of women and children in this brutal conflict served as a spur for the revolution to expand across Bengal's towns, cities, and colleges. The movement became a fight against the middle class-dominated class system as it moved from North Bengal's rural to the city.⁵ Studies show that middle-class college and university students were the movement's main recruits as it moved to the cities (Gupta, 2007). The movement became equally popular among women and men among young people from the middle class, and many women joined it. According to Krishna Bandopadhyay (2001), the movement helped women break free from patriarchal societal norms.

Bandopadhyay is a reference to Seema, an activist and close friend of the revolutionary narrator, who describes how she was able to leave her orthodox aristocratic family and live freely without a male guardian because of her contacts and stays in the rural areas during the struggle. Mallarika Sinha Roy (2007) has documented the recollections of several women involved in the Naxalbari movement in her work "Magic Moments of Struggle: Women's Memory of the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal (1967-75)."

Their experiences at this time allowed them to go beyond their social bounds and deal with a variety of challenges in their personal lives. "I think the experience of those years...even if I live to be a hundred...will remain most significant to me as long as I live...it's the world that you get to see in its very naked form," recalls Naxalite, a woman with an upper-middle-class upbringing and a university degree (M.S. Roy, 2007, p. 214).

Thus, the stories of women, as found in Srila Roy's work, demonstrate that the movement had also ingrained in them the dream of establishing a gender-free society where they would not be constrained by patriarchy or contemporary notions of femininity and could carve out their own identities (S. Roy, 2001). This goes beyond the movement's larger vision and goals.

Methodology:

A Different Interpretation of the Naxalbari Movement and How It Is Shown in the Lowlands
A more thorough examination of the movement shows that gender discrimination was evident in its basic design. The patriarchal traits that characterized Bengali middle-class life in the 20th century permeated the urbanized Naxalbari movement as the majority of its participants were middle-class descendants⁶ (Sarkar, 2021). Women were marginalized as a result of this on several levels.

This study examines the marginalized stories of women, drawing on Kamla Bhasin's theory that the institutionalization of patriarchy extends beyond the household and manifests as an uneven power structure in society where men continue to hold positions of superiority (Bhasin, 2000, pp. 88–91). The Naxalbari movement is not an exception to the rule that most mainstream historical portrayals of movements focus on the experiences of males since they are perceived as universal and

push women to the side.

My understanding of the gender disparity inside the movement is driven by this issue. As stated by Lalita et al. (1989, p. 20), "women are regarded to contribute something that existed without them" in the history of most movements, and the Naxalbari movement is no exception. According to Lalita et al. (1989), this kind of contributing history "not only marginalizes women but also mythologizes them according to the male-centered world," failing to address the many issues (p. 15). "An intervention... an assertion that women have a history [different from the mainstream male-dominated history] although that history has been distorted" is what women's history is in this context (Lalita et al., 1989, p. 18).⁷

Such an androcentric narrative, in which women's experiences are either marginalized or reduced to supporting roles, is not unique to the Naxalbari movement. The few accounts of living Naxal militants, penned by distinguished academics such as Mallarika Sinha Roy, Srila Roy, and Krishna Bandopadhyay, present a distinct perspective on the history of the movement from the perspective of women. This article uses a literary piece that portrays the movement from a female perspective, which adds to this gendered history.

The conventional pattern of scholarly readings within Indian English literature, which focuses predominantly on men's experiences within and portrayals of the Naxalbari movement, may be avoided by reading this book via the perspective of gendered history. Even while the English translations of Mahasweta Devi's fictions on the movement highlight the perspectives of female activists and survivors, the internal gender hierarchy that leads to women's marginalization inside the movement is mostly missing from the literary discourse on the movement. It is essential to interpret *The Lowland* through the prism of gendered history in light of these omissions. Therefore, I contend that Jhumpa Lahiri uses a feminist perspective to examine the movement and its popular depiction in *The Lowland* in order to provide a gendered history that challenges conventional wisdom.

Examining the Movement from the Perspective of Gender History Finding the patriarchal aspects of the movement that led to women's marginalization is essential to understanding the movement and how it is represented in the text through the prism of gendered history. Members of the movement unintentionally contributed to the patriarchal construction of the movement because they were unable to see it coming. Patriliney is the first aspect of the movement that is clearly patriarchal. In this regard, Nivedita Menon (2012) contends that gender prejudice frequently trumps the importance of age and its correlation with authoritative roles.

According to Menon (2012), p. 32, "power [is] distributed along gender and age hierarchies, but with adult men trumping older women" in a patriarchal culture. Because of this, even when elder women are present, property and power in the family are passed down from father to son. The son-in-law inherits the land if there isn't a son (Menon, 2012, pp. 32–34). This patriliney is evident both

inside and beyond the family. Men dominated practically all positions of authority and decision-making in the nationalist movements prior to independence. Even after independence, males dominated the positions of authority in the legal and economic spheres; women were rarely included in committees that made decisions.

This also applied to the Naxalbari movement; the prejudice against women stemmed from the fact that most of the important positions in the movement were occupied by males, either directly or through the core committee of the newly established political party. This is consistent with Kamla Bhasin's (2000) claim that patriarchy is institutionalized when it spreads outside of the home and becomes the standard in society. Regarding the movement, the leaders were likewise unable to go past patrilineality. Regarding this, Mallarika Sinha Roy (2009) has observed that the Naxalite leadership has typically seen women's involvement in the struggle as supporting rather than front-ranking revolutionary militancy, with their participation receiving just a passing mention in academic histories (pp. 209-210).

As a result, the movement was also affected by the institutionalization of the patriarchy that dominated society at large. Similar themes may be seen in the account of Supriya, a female Naxal activist, in Srila Roy's research. Supriya describes how women were only allowed to play the roles of healers and informants. Generally speaking, female cadres were hired for tech kaaj (technical work), which mostly involved courier work involving the transportation of documents, weapons, and information. Very few were hired for organizational tasks like forming squads, recruiting members for the party, and campaigning. Fewer women were in local committees and none held senior leadership positions. Roy (2001), pages 191–192

Since they were seen too frail to engage in these activities, they were prohibited from running for office or building barricades. Thus, their responsibilities were restricted to acting as messengers and informants (S. Roy, 2007; Bandopadhyay, 2001; S. Roy, 2001). Therefore, the movement adopted patriarchal ideas and restricted its female allies to supporting roles, just as the greater society where women were relegated to supporting roles of their male counterparts. Women were not given leadership roles or given any positions in the central committee. Women's problems were not included in the aims because of patrilineality.

An analysis of the movement's goals, as determined by the All-India Coordination Committee, shows that the patriarchal nature of Indian culture prevented the movement from addressing women's issues. The movement's founders failed to take into account the challenges faced by women in the home and in society at large. Despite the movement's goal of establishing social equality, it is clear that women's problems were institutionally declared to be secondary. The authorities of this society paid little attention to the unfair treatment of women. The organization's leaders believed that upending the feudal system and altering the class hierarchy will inevitably

improve the status of women (Bandopadhyay, 2001).

This was only the result of a failure to understand the constraints placed on women by patriarchy. They were unable to comprehend that a battle focused elsewhere does not automatically lead to a "qualitative change for women." Feudal bonds do not only bind women. (Lalita et al., 1989, p. 21). Therefore, the movement never sought to alter the heteronormative patriarchal system in any way. Following the sexual division of labor, in which men and women were assigned work according to their gender, came the third patriarchal attribute identified by the movement. Both men and women completed every work throughout the movement's early stages (Bandopadhyay, 2001; Chakravarty, 2017).

The movement gained popularity as a result of the women who fought in the first row and became martyrs. However, when the movement gained traction, women were only given tech-kaaj8 (courier service and nurse for injured male comrades) responsibilities. The sexual division of work is followed by the identification of healing with women. The patriarchal idea states that women are expected to be natural nurturers and caregivers: "Most women choose to work in nursing and teaching, especially at lower levels. Because teaching and nursing are perceived as continuations of the caring labor that women perform at home, these professions are becoming more feminine (Menon, 2012, pp. 11–12).

Sexism was not an exception for the movement that professed to reject all traditional beliefs and practices. Speaking passionately about the nurturing and caring responsibilities placed on women, Krishna Bandopadhyay says, "We women activists completed a nursing training course in Medical College...I wonder now if the basic tenet of this training was that women would tend to the wounds of their male companions in order to restore them to combat readiness (Bandopadhyay, 2001, pp. 4-9). Therefore, the job assigned to women was an extension of the home tasks, or ghor. Therefore, a movement that purported to establish an equal society was unable to see the prejudice that this patriarchal worldview caused to be applied to women.

As a result, it upheld the same patriarchal idea and gave women the responsibility for providing care and nurturing. The political party's philosophy upholds the marginalized status of women in the movement. Because patrilineality predominated, women were not allowed to assume any positions of authority in groups that made decisions. This resulted in the disregard for the issues faced by women inside the movement, which is the fourth patriarchal trait. As with the lack of women's goals, the decision-making committee's lack of female representation meant that the women's contributions and issues they faced were unacknowledged by the core group.

Women are marginalized in the mouthpiece publications of the Naxalbari movement, such as *Deshabrati* and *Liberation*, where there is barely any mention of their involvement in the events. In these periodicals, one has to search for the names of female Naxal activists. The remaining Naxal

women's contributions to the revolution are barely mentioned in any of their memoirs. Deepa, an educated Naxalite lady, talks about the difficulty in finding shelter homes for female activists in the area of women's safety. She describes how women's issues were never discussed in meetings and that instead, they were expected to handle their own difficulties (M.S. Roy, 2007, pp. 220-222).

"[Among] Our men comrades...some had different ideas about women... even though they showed a progressive attitude towards women outwardly, they believed in quite different ideas," said a second Birbhum district lady, subtly alluding to sexual overtures made by male allies (M.S. Roy, 2009, p. 221). Seldom were these female comrades' issues brought up at any party procedures. Moreover, none of the mouthpiece publications that detailed the issues, assignments, and accomplishments of the Naxal members mentioned their experiences. According to Lalita et al. (1989), p. 24, the narratives therefore demonstrate that, like the Telangana and Tebhagha movements, "women did have special difficulties which the organization was not able to deal with" in the Naxalbari movement.

The main reason for this was because the core committee members—all of whom were men—did not see these problems as critically essential. As a result, they were unable to find a long-term solution and politicize these problems. Rather, as the stories illustrate, the movement's leaders made these problems seem insignificant by expressing empathy for the women who were harmed. Moreover, the leaders discouraged women from gaining leadership positions, creating squads, or recruiting new members of the group. They were unaware that these issues would not be resolved if they were left unattended, unpoliticized, and with "its dimensions rationally encountered, its contradictions analyzed" (Lalita et al., 1989, p. 25).

Lastly, the restrictions placed on the widows of the comrades by the political widowhood system (M.S. Roy, 2007) determine how much personal freedom women in the organization are allowed. The movement's leaders' restrictions on the widows are an example of paternalism. "Paternalism, or more accurately paternalistic dominance, describes the relationship of a dominant group, considered superior, to a subordinate group, considered inferior, in which the dominance is mitigated by reciprocal obligations and rights," according to Gerda Lerner's opinion (Lerner, 1987, p. 239). The top male members of the party mostly dictated the activists' personal decisions (S. Roy, 2001).

In terms of second weddings, the party could never consent to a Naxalite widow being remarried to a non-activist. In her work "The Everyday Life of Revolution: Gender, Violence and Memory," Srila Roy (2001) discusses it. Women found it difficult to get acceptance for their future relationships since political widowhood carries with it a public ownership of the female body. Ironically, the movement's radical redefining of marriage left the categories "wives" and "widows" essentially obsolete. However, women were forced to fulfill real and symbolic responsibilities as

spouses and widows, as well as expectations of femininity in the political sphere. Page 192 This excerpt illustrates how the organization was diminished and how the paternalistic impulse influenced the personal decisions made by women activists.

These historical accounts show that the movement served as a vehicle for the personal freedom of certain women as well as a promise of a society free of gender roles. Nevertheless, the significance of gender equality for women was not emphasized by this dissident movement that attempted to establish an equal society. The many accounts of women's experiences show that the Naxalbari movement was not without its restrictions. It had its own rules about women's rights and how they should be treated. Therefore, even though women were heavily involved in the movement's early stages, as it grew in popularity, they progressively retreated to the periphery.

Women as Tools for Men in the Movement:

This essay examines Udayan's personality and his bond with Gauri to pinpoint the patriarchal elements that permeated the movement. Accordingly, research has focused on "the cultural archive of middle class intellectual Bengali patriarchy" (De, 2021), and I use this research to look at how middle class Bengali patriarchy is ingrained in the movement. This study aims to explore the gendered history of the movement by identifying women's secondary roles and presenting their perspectives from being excluded from decision-making and limited to certain jobs.

Gauri was involved in the movement through her husband, as the text demonstrates: "He started to ask her to do certain things." Thus, she consented to support him and feel a part of it (Lahiri, 2013, p. 356). Her primary motivation for her limited participation in the movement was her love for Udayan. Nonetheless, Gauri's restricted function as an informant mirrors the one most women in the movement are assigned. "Courier work remained the predominant form of political labor that women performed during this andolan... They actively deployed the female body in order to exploit the cultural meanings that this body signifies," according to Srila Roy (2001) in her article "The Everyday Life of Revolution" (p. 191).

A brief incident in which Gauri provides information to Chandra, a worker at a tailor's shop, allows readers to witness Gauri's first assignment as an informant: "Chandra used the curtain to conceal in the pretense of taking her measurements and tucked it [the note which Gauri gave] inside her own blouse, underneath her brassiere" (Lahiri, 2014, p. 357). Although the movement's leaders did not view this kind of exploitation of women's bodies as objectionable, this brief instance demonstrates how women exploited their bodies and social identities for the revolution. Therefore, biological essentialism (De Beauvoir, 1972) was equally pervasive in the movement where women were given duties based on their bodies and the cultural meanings they carried, or based on the division of gender roles.

Thus, the movement decided to operate inside the patriarchal framework rather than

acknowledging gender discrimination. The study illustrates, via Gauri's perspective, how comprehensive action plans are withheld from women, preventing them from realizing the significance of their roles (Bandyopadhyay, 2001; S. Roy, 2001; M.S. Roy, 2007). Gauri was given a list of chores, but she was never informed of their purpose or outcome. According to Lahiri (2013), when she questioned Udayan, he refused to tell her, claiming that this was how she was being most helpful and that it was best for her to remain in the dark. In addition to demonstrating his paternalism for Gauri, Udayan's comment highlights the general guardianship and protective attitude of powerful men toward women.

It gave him the right to carry out the work without asking Gauri's permission, as well as to keep the consequences and reasons for her actions hidden. The study uncovers relevant questions that Gauri had while completing the chores assigned to her by Udayan, via the prism of gendered history that highlights the thinking of the female protagonists to interpret their suppressed voices (De Beauvoir). "It was like performing in a brief play, with fellow actors who never identified themselves, simple lines and actions that were scripted, controlled," the actress said, feeling saddened by her lack of knowledge about her actions (Lahiri, 2013, p. 357). As a result, from Gauri's perspective, she was reduced to a tool in the movement where her actions were never disclosed to her.

In addition, Udayan misled Gauri by enlisting her in a murderous scheme. Udayan instructed Gauri to keep an eye on a policeman so that some of her colleagues might be safely hidden by using Gauri's gender identity (Lahiri, 2013, pp. 358-359). Udayan gave her instructions to accept a position as a private tutor in a certain home in order to maintain track of the police officer and his patrols. After doing what he said and giving Udayan all the details, Gauri discovered that she had been duped into becoming an informant in an attempt to kill the police officer.

So she never knew the whole truth about the procedure. This episode is similar to the historical segment that described how patriarchy was institutionalized. (Bhasin, 2000) in the movement where males occupied the principal roles in every undertaking. When feminism is applied to the movement, it becomes clear that these operational methods alienated and degraded women like Gauri to little more than tools in the hands of their male colleagues. Political Widowhood's Chains The organization's senior members placed unique constraints on women, especially widows, as a result of the institutional sexism and paternalism that controlled the movement. The in-laws of Gauri did not approve of her choice to wed Subhash and go to the US.

Gauri's choice was met with criticism and accusations of selfishness, even from Udayan's allies. As Srila Roy had contended, even if the movement disapproved of marriage's customs and ceremonies, its adherents were unable to break free from these traditions. Thus, the leaders saw her union with Subhash as a betrayal of the cause and Udayan, saying, "The party had also opposed it."

Like her in-laws, they believed that her second marriage was unchaste and that she should honor Udayan's legacy and martyrdom (Lahiri, 2013, p. 152). As the narrative progresses, the Naxal members argue that Gauri's decision was flawed mostly because she chose to take control of her own life.

Instead of allowing the Naxal party to be her protector, she made the decision to create the life she wanted for herself. This occurrence serves as more evidence that the movement's leaders—the most of whom were men—considered themselves to be the protectors of their deceased colleagues' spouses, institutionalizing paternalism. They did not anticipate that Gauri would select a new life partner without seeking their input or consent. The leaders anticipated that she would continue to work as an informant, live in isolation, lament the loss of her spouse, and finally get married again with their blessing. Even though the movement's goals were to establish a free state and alter social order, Gauri was shunned by its members since they did not respect her personal choice.

Their decision was prompted mostly by her refusal to accept and dispute the Naxal members' duty as guardians, in addition to her decision to wed outside of the Naxalite community. Gauri decides to forge an identity that is wholly apart from the movement since she thinks there is no way to overcome the patriarchal structure inside it.

Patriarchy among the Members of the Movement:

Beyond the historical accounts, the marginalization of women within the movement is revealed via a textual study of Lahiri's novel *The Lowland* and her heroine Gauri via the perspective of feminism. This book challenges the official historical accounts by highlighting the movement's gendered past. Jhumpa Lahiri's book *The Lowland* explores the Naxalbari movement's operations in metropolitan Bengal and how they affected the city's middle-class households. The novel "reconstitutes a gendered history of the movement in which women's story of engagement is...removed and erased," according to literary critic Moussa Pourya Asl (Pourya Asl, 2018, p. 103).

An indicator of a person's thinking and a means of deciphering their patriarchal perspective is the way that movement members view their relationships with their spouses or family. So, the first step in trying to use the text to reveal the gendered history of the movement is to break down the patriarchal structure that describes the marriage between the movement's protagonist, Udayan, and his wife, Gauri. Udayan came from an upper-class Bengali household; his mother was a homemaker whose main responsibility was taking care of the family, while his father worked as a clerical worker for the government (Lahiri, 2012).

This typical middle-class Bengali household's family structure highlights the systemic gendered segregation of work (Menon, 2012). The mother took care of the family while Udayan's father worked as the breadwinner, reinforcing the ghor and bahir dichotomy that exists in Bengali

middle-class households (Chatterjee, 2010, p. 163). Bengali words for home, or *ghor*, refer to the place where women were supposed to be at home, whereas *bahir* denotes the outside world, or man's realm. The family structure is similar to Christine Delphy's theory of marriage as a labor contract, wherein women continue to perform home tasks, which are frequently viewed as unproductive work, in contrast to males who perform productive work (Delphy, 1984).

This labor contract treats home duties (unproductive work) as the domain of women and *ghor* (productive work) as the domain of men when it is connected to the ideas of *ghor* and *bahir*. Udayan got to know Gauri, his friend's younger sister, while he was a college student. She is shown in the book as a young girl with her brother as her only acquaintance as she pursues a bachelor's degree in philosophy. Prior to falling in love with Udayan, Gauri "kept herself to books" and "did not want family, marriage" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 97). Thus, Gauri tried to avoid marriage altogether since she had always intended to violate the sexual division of labor.

Gauri's character development highlights the patriarchal nature of the Naxalbari movement by showing how she went from being a damsel in love with Udayan to becoming a simple pawn in it (at Udayan's hands). This highlights the experiences of women that had previously gone unnoticed. The author identifies the inherent patriarchal tension in marriage and family through this interaction, demonstrating how it impacted the movement. Despite giving the impression that he supported equality and personal freedom, Udayan did not treat his wife like a unique person with her own opinions.

Similar to the majority of middle-class households, Udayan and Gauri had a paternalist relationship in which he served as her guardian. Within families, paternalism may be seen in the way that the head of the family and other family members treat each other with mutual dominance and submission in marriage partnerships (Lerner, 1987; N. Desai, 1977; Menon, 2001, 2012). Thus, Udayan, the spouse, assumed accountability for Gauri's material, societal, and health welfare. He got total control over Gauri's identity, movement, and sexuality in return. Their first official date is depicted in the picture as "Udayan shielding Gauri from the sun and the crowd with his hands and his shadow" (Lahiri, 2013), which represents their whole relationship. It is further confirmed by his unusual choice to move in with his parents due to the cash-crunch (Lahiri, 2013).

Paternalistically, Udayan believed he was entitled to decide what was best for them both. In addition, Udayan undoubtedly followed the sexual division of work, much like his parents. Lahiri observes that although Udayan had desired a revolution, he had anticipated to be served at home; his main involvement in meals consisted of waiting for Gauri or her mother-in-law to place a dish in front of him (Lahiri, 2014, p. 151). This proves that Udayan followed the rigid division of gender roles, according to which the woman takes care of home duties and the male of the house is in charge of providing for the family's needs.

According to Menon (2012), only the biological process of pregnancy itself is unique; males are equally capable of performing all other household tasks performed by women, such as cleaning, cooking, and other tasks that fall under the category of domestic labor. Yet, this labor is referred to as "women's work" (p. 11). Therefore, it was expected of the women to prioritize their families. "Whether it is their choice of career or their choice to participate in politics, women are to limit themselves to their primary responsibility of family," stated Menon (2012) on page 13–14, implied that her work, if she had one, was always secondary. As was customary, Udayan supported the family financially by working as a teacher and not helping with the traditionally feminine tasks of housework.

Accordingly, Udayan did not behave any differently from the Bengali middle class as a whole in the 20th century, which classified labor according to biological essentialism (De Beauvoir, 1972). He campaigned against the class system and tried to reform society, but he neglected to acknowledge or politicize gender discrimination. Nonetheless, Gauri's life underwent tremendous transformation following her marriage to Udayan. Gauri could "hardly move out of the house" after being married (Lahiri, 2013, p. 231). This was due to the fact that, in order to uphold the division of gender roles, she was forced to fulfill her "primary responsibility" (Menon, 2014, pp. 10–11) of domestic duties. After finishing all of her responsibilities at home, Gauri's main obligation was reduced to ghor: "In Udayan's family, Gauri could leave the house only twice a week for her college" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 233).

As a result, she saw that her priorities had reversed. Her college studies, which had previously been her top priorities, took a backseat. Despite Udayan's advice to his mother not to assign Gauri a regular job, his lack of engagement in household duties meant that he was unable to provide for her. Gauri received no promise from Udayan other than "patience" (Lahiri, 2013, p. 121). when the historical records made clear, the movement's adherents believed that when societal structures changed, gender disparity would naturally shift as well. Udayan was not an outlier either. Because of his affluence, he saw no issue with the gender hierarchy that pervaded his family and society. The article emphasizes that Udayan's theories were limited to class disparities, despite his commitment to critically examine societal injustices. The essay illustrates how members of the movement harbored unconscious patriarchy through the persona of Udayan. Members of the movement introduced these sexist characteristics into the movement without realizing it and still unknowingly contributing to the patriarchal framework.

Conclusion:

In order to uncover women's experiences in the movement that had been largely overlooked in academic studies of Indian English literature, I have offered an alternate narrative of the movement through a parallel analysis of *The Lowland* and the gendered historical narratives. As a

result, the study helps to provide an alternative interpretation of the movement. Gauri's connection to the Naxalbari uprising raises questions about women's unnecessary role in the struggle. Her expulsion from the group due to her choice to be married again confirms that, like in the greater patriarchal culture, women were not allowed to voice their own opinions even within the movement. As a result, the movement served as a slave to the autonomous identities of women. Gauri could only choose how to define her identity after escaping the aforementioned bondage. Due to her inability to receive respect or understanding from Udayan's allies, Gauri completely separates herself from the movement in order to forge her own identity. As a result, any effort to alter the members' customary patriarchal mindset was, at most, hesitant.

The majority of the time, the women in the movement opted to completely leave it by distancing themselves and creating their own identities since they were unable to break free from the tight hold of patriarchal dominance inside it. The paper attests to the ways in which patriarchal traits marginalized women and their positions. The movement was deemed wonderful and memorable by several women (M.S. Roy, 2007); nonetheless, this examination of the movement's gendered history through a textual analysis of Gauri's actions validates its patriarchal framework. Thus, by placing the movement inside literary studies, the article not only supports the gendered narratives that already exist about it, but it also creates room for more in-depth examination of the movement's gendered past.

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