

Unmuting Women's Bodies: A comparative study of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper' and Lalitambika Antharjanam's 'Revenge Goddess'

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Abstract

Women's writing challenge not only the patriarchal hegemony exerted over discourse but also received notions about the female. Masculine control over all forms of discourse has ensured the portrayal of women as duplicitous and untrustworthy. This is reinforced through myths, poetry, and even religious literature. When women started writing, she had to contend with societal customs that not only tried to mute her but also dictated what she could write about. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, the author of “The Yellow Wallpaper” and Lalitambika Antharjanam, the author of “Goddess of Revenge,” are two path breaking authors who refused to abide by these rules. They boldly wrote about subjects like female desire and bodily and psychological issues like post-partum depression; subjects considered taboo and shameful. This paper is a comparative study of two women writers who dared to cross boundaries and spoke about women's bodies and women's desires, thereby opening up new frontiers. This paper argues that by claiming authorship to these topics, these writers were in effect, wresting the right to their bodies and the prerogative to speak about it.

Key words: taboo, female sexuality, unmuting, puerperal mania, postpartum depression.