

Depiction of Women and their condition in Amulya Malladi's Novels

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Abstract

Today, Indian English Fiction is a significant part of the global literary canon, and female Indian novelists have earned international recognition on par with their male contemporaries. They added a fresh perspective to Indian writing. Ruth Pravar Jbabwala, Kamala Markandaya, Santa Rama Rau, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Shobha De, Bharati Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, Gita Hariharan, Namita Gokhale, Anita Nair, Manju Kapoor, and many more are only few of the prominent Indian women authors. The items in this list are not all there are. Amulya Malladi is a brand-new, formidable figure in modern Indian English fiction. Borders, migration, 'illegal' immigration, repatriation, exile, refugees, assimilation, multiculturalism, and hybridity are only some of the topics and discourses that her works explore.

Keywords: exile, assimilation, refugees, multiculturalism

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Five full-length books have been written by Malladi. She attended Osmania University, Hyderabad, where she earned a bachelor's degree in engineering after growing up in India. She attended The University of Memphis in Tennessee, USA, and graduated with a master's degree in journalism. Amulya, her husband, and their two boys recently relocated from the United States to Copenhagen, Denmark.

In the novel A Breath of Fresh Air, the protagonist, Anjali, spends the evening of December 3, 1984, in the Bhopal, India, railway station, waiting to be picked up by her army officer husband. Author Amulya Malladi's debut novel, "A Breath of Fresh Air," centres on the Bhopal gas catastrophe of 1984, which killed 3,800 people and left thousands more permanently crippled. Her entire life has been upended in a single second. When a massive gas leak poisons the city's air, her annoyance at his tardiness turns to dread. Miraculously, Anjali makes it through. Although her marriage does not. Anjali, a bright and effective educator, just remarried Sandeep, a supportive and settled professor. The health of their little kid is deteriorating,

and without that, their lives would be ideal. When Anjali's first husband unexpectedly reenters her life, she is catapulted back to the difficult times of their marriage. The reappearance of her first spouse revives all of her fears. To Anjali, the passage of time and the strength of her convictions had made her feel at peace with her divorce and her place in the world. Anjali's ambivalent experiences as a wife, an ex-wife, a professional woman, and a mother shed light on the intriguing dichotomy of the modern Indian woman and the tough decisions all women must make, all set against a backdrop as exotic as it is foreign. In addition to detailing the events leading up to and including the gas explosion at the Union Carbide facility in India, *A Breath of Fresh Air* also tells the narrative of how this tragedy affected one little girl and helped open her eyes to the harsh realities of life.

In Malladi's second novel, *The Mango Season*, a young Indian woman must choose between following her heart and honouring her family's customs during the height of the country's mango harvest. Priya Rao left India at the age of 20 to attend college in the United States, and she has never returned. When she finally returns seven years later, she tells her family that she is engaged to Nick Collins, a kind and loving American. Priya finds it very difficult to adjust to life in India once again. Mangoes were a summer staple when she was a child; specifically, ripe, sweet mangoes whose fragrant juices trickled down your mouth, hands, and neck. However, she seems to be experiencing an Indian summer for the first time after all these years. Her parents had been adamant that she be married to a "good Indian lad." An unexpected revelation knocks Priya off balance just as she begins to worry about telling her family that she is engaged to an American. She must now decide whether or not to stay with Nick, the love of her life, or with her family. *The Mango Season* is a wonderful journey into the essence of modern India and of a lady on the cusp of a major transformation. Many of the challenges of contemporary Indian culture are reflected in Amulya Malladi. Priya, a Westerner who has relocated back to India, brings a newfound clarity and brightness to her observations of her adopted homeland. Priya is disgusted by the indifference and the poor value placed on women, but she finds it hard to believe that her own family is just as guilty of this as the stereotypical Indian families she reads about in the news. Priya is devoted to her loved ones, nevertheless. She is not scared to confront her grandfather about the racist and bigoted sentiments she has observed in him. She fights for what she thinks is right, but her love for her grandfather is irresistible.

Serving Crazy with Curry, the third novel by Amulya Malladi, is about a young lady who takes her own life. Readers are given access to Devi Veturi's head as she lives with her eccentric family in the heart of California's famed Silicon Valley and contemplates, plans, and eventually attempts suicide. But her mother, the one person Devi least wants to see, comes to her rescue, making Devi's efforts to "end it all" futile. Devi, who has been quarantined and must stay with her parents till she heals, refuses to talk and spends her time in the kitchen instead. Her family can't get enough of Devi's impromptu culinary masterpieces, and they're all experiencing life changes as unexpected as the ones she makes every night. Then, out of the blue, an unknown person shows up. It seems like Devi has been keeping a secret from her close-knit family. Though the secret will reveal some shocking realities, it will also bring them closer together in ways they could never have imagined. A woman's fight to be accepted by her family and by herself is shown in this novel that is a rich stew of comedy, tenderness, and characters that spring off the page. Malladi's tale has all the makings of a Hollywood family drama, complete with a jealous younger sister, a doting father, a nagging mother, a grandmother, and a decent son-in-law.

Song of the Cuckoo Bird, Amulya Malladi's enthralling fourth novel, is the narrative of one woman's life in contemporary India and a reflection on the advancement of women in India over the past forty years. It's a fascinating and thought-provoking read. The inmates of an ashram known as Tella Meda, or "The House with the White Roof," are the focus of the epic narrative known as "Song of the Cuckoo Bird." The residents are homeless and extremely low-income. Kokila, one of the protagonists, is named after the cuckoo bird of the same name. At the time of her marriage in age 11, Kokila, an orphan, is taken to live at Tella Meda. In spite of being granted permission to live with her husband, she rejects him and vows she would never leave Tella Meda. Kokila, though, has fallen in love with Vidura, the son of her carer; Vidura, like most of Tella Meda's other residents, will soon depart and disappear. This book recalls key events in India and how they have affected the people who live in Tella Meda, while also being a wonderful story about an eccentric family.

This eerie story may be seen as a generational drama set in a single extraordinary house in Southern India, where the hopeless — people with no family, no caste ties, and no future — find each other and cling on to their dreams against all

odds. Kokila made a decision there that would change the course of her life forever. Kokila's decision to stay in Tella Meda and be mentored by the young and gorgeous guru Charvi instead of leaving to become a respectable lady, a bride, and a mother, was motivated by her youthful enthusiasm and fear. Through the years, Kokila has frequently wondered if she made the right decision as she has struggled to find her place in a society where free spirits like her are often overlooked. Kokila, having rejected the traditional life that could have been hers, is now forced to make her home in Tella Meda with other powerful and terribly damaged women who are also social outcasts. They're her pals one minute and foes the next, but always family.

Amulya's sixth novel, *The Sound of Language*, is a compelling account of a young Afghan woman's struggle to find her footing in her new home in Denmark. The narrative Malladi tells of two hurt people plagued by discrimination feels genuine. The writing in *The Sound of Language* is excellent, being both concise and expressive. The protagonist, Raihana, is an Afghan immigrant who arrives in Denmark in the months before 9/11. Raihana flees the chaos and heartache of war-torn Kabul by moving in with distant relatives in the strange, chilly, wet land of Denmark. She is making a courageous effort to create a new life for herself, while trying not to think about her husband, who was taken prisoner by the Taliban. As soon as she arrives, Raihana enrolls in a Danish language class, where she struggles to understand the language she believes sounds like a swarm of bees. To perfect her oratory, Raihana takes an apprenticeship with Gunnar, a recent widower who seems to be retreating from the world around him, even abandoning the bee colonies he and his late wife had worked so hard to maintain. Despite the criticism of their friends and family, Raihana and Gunnar develop an unexpected romance throughout the course of the bee season. In the words of Amulya, this is not a love tale. This is the story of an unusual relationship between two people who don't share a common language but manage to get along anyhow. This is a tale about a Danish immigrant family. Finally, this is a tale of bravery and of going against the grain of one's culture and society in order to discover the ultimate prize: joy. In the beautifully written story, "*The Sound of Language*," we see the metamorphosis of two lonely souls: an Afghan immigrant and a Danish widower. They overcome their language barrier to share a bond that leads them into dangerous territory.

This is the story of an unusual relationship between two people who don't share a common language but manage to get along anyhow. This is a tale about a Danish immigrant family. Finally, this is a tale of bravery and of going against the grain of one's culture and societal norms in order to discover the ultimate prize: happiness. However, as the violence Raihana had hoped to have left behind in Afghanistan resurfaces, she and Gunnar are both forced to confront the ghosts of the past as they move on into an uncertain future. One way to look at this moving tale of a young Afghani lady making a new life for herself in Denmark is as the narrative of two wounded individuals struggling against discrimination. Authenticity may be felt in its tone.

The five books written by Amulya Malladi share a common thread and expansive worldview. Readers and critics alike praised Malladi's skills as a storyteller. Despite the length of her works, she always manages to make a point. Her upbringing, areas of interest, and apparent passions are all consistent with modern life. She understands the rhythm of the modern metropolis and, aided by considerable ability, manages to spin tales out of seemingly unrelated elements that virtually everybody can get behind.

Although Amulya Malladi's stories are based on stereotypical ideas of gender, loyalty, and the family, the author manages to draw us in with characters that defy these expectations. Chitra Divakaruni, speaking of *A Breath of Fresh Air*, remarked, "That is no mean feat for a first-time novelist." Divakaruni avoided sentimentality and melodrama in her treatment of emotional content. The author's restraint is reminiscent of Anita Desai, according to Susan Kurosawa. She writes objectively, yet poignantly, about love and fate in contemporary India; she elevates the mundane minutiae of family tragedy to the level of clear-eyed, well-crafted art. As Mindi Dickstein puts it, "Malladi writes with a steady, sure hand; gathering facts nonchalantly, she takes the reader unaware with the depth of her knowledge into love and sorrow."

Amulya Malladi has a straightforward, easygoing style of writing. Stories of love, betrayal, jealousy, remorse, and forgiveness are told by Malladi in straightforward words. Some of her books provide readers a view into a different culture, which is fascinating, and all of them include people with whom we can identify since they face challenges and

emotions that are common to us all. Her works convey universal truths while also providing deep understanding of Indian culture and psyche. Her eloquent writing style allows her to vividly depict the lives of her characters and the places they inhabit, and she often chooses to focus on only one subject or one geographical area in each of her books.

Without being deferential or condescending, Malladi brings his subjects to life through straightforward, straightforward English. Malladi provides insight into modern Indian family life, complete with its rituals, conventions, and hierarchies, in works like *The Mango Season*. Her depiction of India in her works is so vivid, it's almost like looking at a painting. She weaves stories about the undeniable strength of love and sheds light on the plight of non-resident Indians caught between the values of their home country and the one they've embraced. Although many books are celebrated for either their plot or their characters, Amulya Malladi's work is lauded for both. Some of her works, written by a prominent multicultural voice, also feature nostalgic ex-pats and are highly tinted with immigrant identity agony and generational struggle. However, Malladi's picture of Indian immigrants in America is refreshingly honest.

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