



## REINTERPRETING FEMINIST NARRATIVES: THE ROLE OF BIBLICAL WOMEN IN HISTORICAL REVISIONS

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### Abstract

From the advent of first-wave feminism, the Bible has significantly influenced the ideological landscape of the entire globe. This research paper examines with an ideal endeavor to unearth the past of biblical women & represent them with new voices and perspectives. Utilizing the method of postmodern metafiction articulated by scholars such as Patricia Waugh and Linda Hutcheon, alongside the feminist hermeneutics of scholars like Fiorenza, this paper argues that the creation of alternative historical narratives through metafiction represents feminist interventions within the realm of classical literature. The paper delves into the intricate politics surrounding the reimagining of biblical women, aiming to resurrect the voices and perspectives often marginalized within the androcentric representations prevalent in the Bible. Focusing on literary works such as *The Names of Women* by Jeet Thayil, *Queenmaker* by India Edghill, and *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant, this study explores how the retelling of women's stories serves as a form of entrepreneurial endeavor, strategically investing in feminist revisions within contemporary contexts.

**Keywords:** Feminist Fiction, Biblical Women, Politics, Representation

### Introduction

Biblical women, predominantly depicted through patriarchal lenses, often find their voices suppressed within traditional boundaries with limited narratives. Through this genre of biblical fiction, women authors carve out a new narrative space, blending elements of fiction, literature, and biblical themes. This alternative space offers liberation from the constraints of patriarchal interpretations and serves as a platform for reinterpreting in providing new roles for women and agency within historical contexts.

An active engagement in this process with reimagination and rewriting biblical women, authors have contributed to the emergence of a counter-culture that excavates women from the depths of patriarchal history. A transformative dialogue unfolds by creating and disseminating these alternative narratives, challenging established power dynamics as it also paves the way for a more inclusive and nuanced understanding of women's experiences within religious and literary traditions.

In James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*<sup>1</sup>, the protagonist Stephen Dedalus famously asserts, "What's past is prologue," underscores the enduring influence of historical legacies. This has a strong impact on our present realities, including societal norms, cultural practices, and ideological frameworks. Similarly, the contemporary status of women is deeply intertwined with the historical forces of patriarchy and entrenched societal norms. This paper posits that unearthing the histories of women from the depths of patriarchal tradition constitutes a profoundly political act as it also engenders a narrative of resistance and subversion against prevailing power structures.

This paper dwells on the theoretical frameworks of postmodern metafiction articulated by scholars such as Patricia Waugh and Linda Hutcheon. The feminist hermeneutics scholars like Fiorenza and their perspective on creation of alternative historical narratives through metafiction represents a feminist intervention within the realm of literature has been done most effectively in this paper. Metafictional narratives challenge the conventional historical accounts that often marginalize or silence women's voices by situating women within parallel historical contexts. Moreover,

<sup>1</sup>Joyce, James. *Ulysses*.



these narratives serve as acts of resistance against the patriarchal hegemony that has historically constrained women's agency and autonomy.

By analyzing literary texts and employing metafictional techniques, this paper explores on the aspects of reimagining and recentering of women within historical narratives which disrupt established power dynamics. This could also foster a more inclusive and empowering representation of female and their experiences.

By excavating and amplifying women's voices from the past, metafictional works contribute in constructing a counter-history that acknowledges and celebrates the diverse contributions of women to society. This paper contends that metafictional reimagining's of history serve as potent vehicles for feminist critiques in advancing gender equality within literature and beyond.

### *Literature review*

#### *Biblical women and representations*

<sup>2</sup>had done research on the female aspects, dimensions and orientations in Bible. This study evaluates the female role and contributions in Bible with Ratzinger evaluation and critical outlook. This also provides new impetus and thinking on church and its formulation of Mother Mary and her representations. This analysis does provide a parallel and effective interpretation of female representation and contributions in Bible along with male counterparts. There is a need to understand salvation history which provides new thoughts on female contributions to bible and it emerges from Adam and eve orientations and the dictation of God and his prophecy. These could be seen evident in the following lines as:

“In the Old Testament, alongside the line from Adam through the Patriarchs down to the Servant of God, there appears another line from Eve through the Matriarchs to figures like Deborah, Esther, Ruth and finally to the personified Divine Wisdom... The line from Adam receives its full meaning in Christ. Similarly, the significance of the female line in its inseparable interaction with the Christological mystery is revealed in Mary and in the symbolism applied to the Church” .<sup>3</sup>

The Holy Spirit had given shape and origin for Adam as it has come down to other holy women like Deborah, Esther, and Ruth who were holy and inspirational. It is also evident that Mary and her maternal outlook of Christianity and its representations – with new outlook, thinking and perspectives have never been studied or evaluated as this research is an attempt on it.

The role of Mary and her contributions are evaluated in the following lines as:

“In a certain respect Mariology ties the knot joining Old and New [Testaments]. Mariology cannot be found apart from its union with the prophetic theology of the bridal people of God.... If Christ brings the marked distinction and break from the Old Testament, in the novelty of his words, his life, his passion, his cross, and his resurrection, Mary, through her silence and faith, incarnates the continuity” <sup>4</sup>

Mary is an effective combination and unique assimilation of old and new testaments as she gives progressive pathways and confirmative outlooks for the modern society. She in a sense provides sublimeness, humility, compassion and kindness to all which has unified global societies. It is really unfortunate to note that this note

<sup>2</sup> McKenna, M.F., 2020. The Female Line in the Bible. Ratzinger's Deepening of the Church's Understanding of Tradition and Mary. *Religions*, 11(6), p.310

<sup>3</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. 1988c. The Sign of the Woman. In *Mary: God's Yes to Man: John Paul's Encyclical Letter Redemptoris Mater*. Translated by Lothar Krauth. San Francisco: Ignatius

<sup>4</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. 1983. *Daughter Zion: Meditations on the Church's Marian Belief*. Translated by John M. McDermott. San Francisco: Ignatius. First published 1977.



worthy contributions of Mary & her feministic maternal orientations have not been studied or evaluated as this research is an attempt to explore and identify the unique contributions of women and their role in Bible.

The origins of feminine interpretations and origin of women has been clearly described in the Bible in the following lines as:

“God, who creates and conserves all things by his word (see Jn 1:3), provides constant evidence of himself in created realities (see Rom 1:19–20). Furthermore, wishing to open up the way to heavenly salvation, he manifested himself to our first parents from the very beginning. After the fall, he buoyed them up with the hope of salvation, by promising redemption (see Gen 3:15); and he has never ceased to take care of the human race, in order to give eternal life to all those who seek salvation by preserving in doing good (see Rom2:6–7). In his own time, God called Abraham and made him into a great nation (see Gen12:2). After the era of the patriarchs, he taught that this nation, through Moses and the prophets, to recognize him as the only living and true God, as a provident Father and just judge. He taught them, too to look for the promise of a Saviour. And so, throughout the ages, he prepared the way for the Gospel. After God had spoken many times and in various ways through the prophets, “in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son” (Heb 1:1–2)<sup>5</sup>

The history of genesis has been clearly given above as God had spoken through various prophets and finally he spoke as son. This also clearly states that the masculine interpretations of the bible have been adequately researched and the feminine aspects and contributions have not been researched as this research is an attempt on it.

### *Sophia as logos*

The masculine aspects of Bible has been given as Christ, the father and spirit and the feminine aspects have been represented with Sophia which has been characterized as logos.

From the perspective of the New Testament, wisdom refers, on the one hand, to the Son as the Word, in whom God creates, and, on the other, to the creature, the true Israel, who is personified in the humble maid whose entire existence is characterized by the attitude of the *Fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*. On the other hand, wisdom refers to the Son as the Word, in whom God creates. Sophia alludes to the Logos, the Word who lays out shrewdness, and furthermore to the womanly response which gets astuteness and carries it to completion<sup>6</sup>

Zombies & Pride and Prejudice Grahame Smith Rushefsky, M.L., 2024 had done research on female monsters and their representations in English literature. This study is evaluative as it determines the role of Zombies and female monsters in Grahame smith novels. It is also evident that recent researches have not been attempted on female representations in biblical context and its implications on modern societies and their outlook. As these dimensions and issues have not been studied or evaluated this research is the first attempt in this direction which could provide new directives, perspectives and thinking.

Expósito de Vicente, C., 2024 had evaluated on the role and prevalence of feminine myths in bible and its implications.

[. . .] “Herodias [. . .] was married to Herod [Philip], the son of Herod the Great, who was born of Mariamne, the daughter of Simon the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome; after whose birth Herodias took upon her to confound the

<sup>5</sup> Flannery, Austin, ed. 1996 “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*”, November 18, 1965. In *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*. nos. 3 and 4. Dublin: Dominican Publications.

<sup>6</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. 1987. *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*. Translated by Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. San Francisco: Ignatius



laws of our country, and divorced herself from her husband while he was alive, and was married to Herod [Antipas], her husband's brother by the father's side; he was tetrarch of Galilee; but her daughter Salome was married to Philip, the son of Herod, and tetrarch of Trachonitis". (Ant., XVIII, V, 136).

Although the above quote has a passing reference on women and their part in Bible – we do not find specific research studies on feminine contributions of women and their role in bible and its modern relevance. As these researches have not been done this research is an attempt for the first time in this direction which could give new thoughts and interpretations on feminine contributions in Bible. So this research is the first attempt in this direction as an evaluative study and this study is also an attempt to reduce the research gaps which are now evident and clear.

### Excavating Women's Histories: A Political Undertaking

This section is a Revision on the narrative surrounding women which carries profound political implications. When individuals dare to extricate women from their entrenched patriarchal confines, allowing them to articulate their narratives, such an act of subversion necessitates a profound process of unlearning and relearning within the established dynamics of power. Patricia Waugh expounds upon these complexities which inherent in recounting the stories of women from history, suggesting that such endeavors have the potential to construct a counter-narrative. This process enables us to scrutinize and challenge the existing hierarchical structures that dictate what is foregrounded and backgrounded, emphasized and suppressed, centralized and marginalized. Thus these profound new representations do shape the distinct character of our societal norms and values.

This study seeks to find how women are engaged with literature to reinterpret and reimagine depictions of female figures in the Bible. Rewriting biblical women within textual spaces can be perceived as an aftermath of the postmodernist movement. Here in the traditional narratives are subjected to critical interrogation and revision. By undertaking this endeavor, women seek to reclaim agency over their representations, offering alternative perspectives that can challenge conventional interpretations and highlight the multifaceted nature of female identity.

Indeed, reimagining biblical women through literary reinterpretation is a testament to the enduring power of storytelling as a tool for social and cultural transformation. By reshaping the narratives surrounding female figures within sacred texts, women could endeavor to challenge and dismantle the patriarchal structures that have historically confined and marginalized them,, thereby fostering a more inclusive and egalitarian society.

Postmodernism is a sway across the globe to re-align and re-shape the established ideologies of power relations, including patriarchy. It showcases the possibilities as it questions and re-reflects the meta-narratives. Jean Francois Lyotard's seminal work, *The Postmodern Condition*<sup>7</sup>, opens new ways of interpreting texts, especially the Meta narrative Analysis. According to his discourse on disseminating knowledge, there is no concept like a Meta narrative<sup>8</sup>. Debunking metanarratives is also a part of post-modern conditions in literature.

In modern literature, what we typically refer to as postmodernism is marked by blatant paradoxical intertextuality and extreme self-reflection. In fiction, metafiction could be compared to postmodernism.<sup>9</sup> It is evident how difficult it is to define this problematic era precisely & such an situation is frequently taken for granted without inquiry. There is a need to ensure accuracy and coherence which could be done with an inclusion of one more item in this definition: an equally egocentric aspect of the past. The 1980 Venice Biennale's subject, which articulated on "The Presence of the Past", was the architectural equivalent of postmodernism<sup>10</sup>. Today, what we generally call

<sup>7</sup>Lyotard, Jean Francois. *The Postmodern Condition*. University of Minnesota, 1997.

<sup>8</sup>Lyotard, *The Post modern Condition*

<sup>9</sup>Hucheson, Linda. *Histeriographic Metafiction*, 1

<sup>10</sup>"1980 in Parallax: Provincialising Post-Modern Architecture – Jencks Foundation." – *Jencks Foundation*, [www.jencksfoundation.org/explore/text/provincialising-post-modern-architecture](http://www.jencksfoundation.org/explore/text/provincialising-post-modern-architecture). Accessed 11 July 2024.



postmodernism in literature is typically deep self-reflection, and bluntly humorous intertextuality which portrays this style. When used in fiction, the term postmodernism should be only be used to characterize fictional works that could echo historical and metafictional situations and circumstances only.

### Mapping The Bible and Literature

This paper introduced postmodern condition in literature as it also allows a deconstruction of meta narratives into small narratives, which are inter textual, self-reflexive and parody in the previous section. This paper would also contextualize the emergence of Biblical fiction in the broad historical fiction genre in this section.

In Biblical historical fiction, the authors take the plot, story, events and characters from the Bible to break and provide meta narrative representation which could assimilate small segments with the agency of self-reflexivity. From time immemorial we could see Bible and its supremacy among all ideologies as the Meta narrative of the west. This literary masterpiece has its strong powerful relation with English literature which remains as a an affectionate reflective bond. From the ancient period onwards, biblical stories and characters find a place in English literature. Allegra Villareal's study on *An Open Companion to Early British Literature* argues the old English poem *Judith* describes the biblical character of Judith. In Newell Codex<sup>11</sup>, a manuscript dated approximately 975–1025, the heroic poem *Beowulf* we could find biblical references and quotes also.

The Old English poem *Holofernes*— describes Judith story recorded in the Book of Judith, which is still included in the Catholic and Orthodox Christian Bibles. The story's sermon was written in prose by the notable Anglo-Saxon writer and abbot, Ælfric of Eynsham, in late 10th century. Judith's story has been altered and contextualized in an Anglo-Saxon context. This poem could address Anglo-Saxon audience because it also provided many political and geographical aspects on Hebrew civilization..<sup>12</sup>

Richard E. Crook, in his study titled “Influence of the Bible on English Literature”, draws literary examples from English literature such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* texts. According to Crook, ‘three writers—Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare—have one thing in common: they were all at the forefront of the Puritan movement, which was the first literary and moral outcome of the English people's widespread familiarity with the Bible. One way to gauge how biblical ideas and images permeated popular culture in a century was to contrast Dryden's *Absalom* with *The Faery Queen* on opposite sides of the chasm’<sup>13</sup>.

The Bible has a significant influence on English literature across all ages. In the nineteenth century, romantic poets were also influenced by plots given in Bible. According to Crook, Byron and Shelly are two significant figures.

Byron's grasp of the Hebrew Bible could be seen reflected in his works.<sup>14</sup> Hebrew Scriptures can be found throughout the romantic age of literature, which has been represented in various literary contributions also.

A fresh source of influence could be seen with Shelley. The French Revolution had a certain quality that led to the development of an "apocalyptic" perspective of history. Hugo, along with Shelley, Carlyle, and Thiers, accepts without questioning the treatment of the Hebrew prophet who turns one small tribe into the rod of God's wrath and another into the footstool of the Chosen. Shelley's formal goal in *Hellas* is to follow the Persaeian approach; nonetheless, readers will notice the Old Testament note far more than in Byron's *Cain* or *Samson Agonistes*.

Shelley assumes a prophetic role like Amos and Isaiah to convict the transgressions during the nineteenth century. It could be seen that Shelley is a child in his poems and as a person. His imprecise Pantheism did not align with the intense perception of societal immorality, rendering prophets and psalmists as they were mouthpieces of misguided people. As Crook observes, “Thomas Carlyle is, with perhaps the exception of Bunyan, the most biblical of English authors. Froude quotes his remark that, despite changed lights and faded supernaturalism, the Hebrew Scriptures still seemed to him the truest key to the secrets of the meaning of life and the destiny of man”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> London, British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius A. XV

<sup>12</sup>Greenblatt, 109

<sup>13</sup> Crook, 283

<sup>14</sup> ibid

<sup>15</sup>Crook, 184



The never-ending stream of subpar religious writing has been pondered as no compilation of a volume of literary side trips from the Bible could have been done. These literary contributions on Bible could have been similar to Newman's remarks on *Moses*, George Eliot's *The Legend of Jubal*, and Browning's *The Strange Medical Experience of Karshish* and *A Death in the Desert*.

### **Biblical fiction**

Biblical retellings always emerged as the newer and classical revision of the Bible. Every retelling indicates different meanings and perspectives which could be reinterpreted as meta-narrative of scriptures in many ways. As Exum asserts, Retellings are interpretations of texts, and as such, they provide unique cultural and religious insights & perspectives on the texts they represent. Hence, Biblical retellings do not merely narrate an old story from a fresh perspective but effectively interpret the faulty lines of the accepted narrative<sup>16</sup>. These retellings do not minimize the Holy Scripture's sanctity but they tend to emphasize on the unequal relationship between a meta-narrative and a micro-narrative. The micro-narratives suggest the constant shifting of power in a post-modern society, invoking Lyotard's idea of questioning the meta-narrative. Historical truth, objectivity, facts, events and knowledge could be given fresh air in these revisions. Hence, many Biblical retellings reassess what Biblical representations ignored in the past. The constructed history of the past is interconnected with the new emergence of Biblical retellings. All discourses are a dialogue with the past & all literature is intertextuality and intermixed in its sense and directives.

### **Bible, Fiction and Women- A Flux of Liberating Investments**

Gender, education and socio cultural issues do influence writers of biblical fiction. Gender orientation has a strong impact on writing style, representations and manifestations.

There is a shift in the perspectives of biblical fiction from common power structures to vulnerable themes, such as tropes of liberation in the representation of women which could be seen in women writers. According to the theoretical approach of Fiorenza, Biblical fiction on women accentuates the possibilities of hermeneutics with creative imagination<sup>17</sup>. It is a cavity that produces parallel readings of the story from the collective live experiences of women. It is an extension of the liberationist reading of the Bible<sup>18</sup>. Anita Diamond's *The Red Tent* (1997) is a literary work in this field and is one of the best examples of this dynamic perspective. A feminist interpretation of *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant thoroughly investigates women's experiences, agency, and power in a patriarchal society. The narrative, set in biblical times, centers on Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, and her interactions with her mom and other women in her society.

Reclaiming women's voices and narratives is a major theme in Biblical rewriting. Women are frequently marginalised, and their stories are often overshadowed by men in biblical tradition. *The Red Tent* challenges this patriarchal story by empowering women to take charge of their lives and take decisions. The red tent, where women congregate to support one another during menstruation and other times of need, symbolizes women's empowerment and unity. The book also examines the complexity in female relationships, such as friendships, sisterhood, and mother-daughter interactions, from Dinah's point of view. These ties are portrayed as sources of resilience and strength in the face of injustice and misfortune. The Red Tent was used in Israeli society for women during their pregnancy and menstrual days. Anita takes this as a metaphor to showcase the tents of revolution.

The Red Tent also showcases women who rebel against society's standards and claim their freedom, questions conventional gender roles and expectations. Characters like Dinah and her moms choose to modify their paths and express their autonomy rather than fit into the passive, submissive roles that patriarchal society has assigned them. In general, *The Red Tent* presents a feminist retelling of the biblical story, elevating the perspectives and experiences of women while honoring their solidarity, fortitude, and bravery during patriarchal oppressive encounters.

<sup>16</sup>Jorunn Okland, "Liberationist readings of the Bible" (261-272)

<sup>17</sup>Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Rowland, *Liberationist Reading of the Bible*, 14





*Queen maker* is another text which modern women invest for the liberation of biblical women. In this the novel Queen Michal's story is recalled as she represents as the daughter of Saul and the first wife of David, whom God and barren cursed. When India Edghill takes her from the androcentric texture and liberates her to narrate her story in the novel, the representation of agency is quite different. Michal becomes an agent of change, as she is an influencer for other women in the palace to assert their identity before men and their power structures. Her identity in the Bible just holds on her father and her husband, which is never possible with modern times.<sup>19</sup> But in the retelling, she is getting the identity of a woman who transcends the borders of power, as she affirms her agency by rejecting the patriarchal norms.

In India, Edghill's *Queenmaker* story takes place in ancient Israel and is a reworking of the biblical tale of Queen Michal. Feminist interpretations of this book portray a deep examination of female agency and empowerment. The protagonist of the story, Queen Michal, is a fascinating figure who successfully negotiates the patriarchal boundaries in David's court. The book questions gender stereotypes and emphasises how women could take charge of their lives. They could claim independence through Michal's choices and actions. In addition, *Queenmaker* explores the intricacies of female friendships and solidarity, emphasizing the value of sisterhood and assistance to one another during patriarchal persecution.

*Names of the Women* (2021) is Thayil's first feminist writing which essentially introduces the Indian perspective to the contemporary Biblical retelling tradition. In this work, Thayil allows all women in the New Testament to spark their stories, as he gives them new names and identities. Thayil's works more often explore on marginalized or unconventional characters and their struggles. His writing delves into society's gritty and dark underbelly, exposing the realities of drug addiction, sex work, and complexities of human relationships. He handles these aspects with a raw and unflinching approach, challenging societal norms and expectations. Jeet Thayil has significantly contributed to the modern art landscape as he is inherently critical, sarcastic, and oppositional<sup>20</sup>. In his fourth book, *Names of the Women*, he focuses on the women who were left out or marginalised from the New Testament and during the early days of Christianity. The mistreatment of women is not simply political, as patriarchy is the fundamental foundation for Christian institution and their socio cultural representations.

In her study on political employment of Jeet's work, Ann Maria<sup>21</sup>, writes that inequality is a misinterpretation of Jesus' teachings. Thayil upheld this view as there was mistreatment of women from the gospel, which has been corrected through his writings. This also provides new insights on injustice of political systems. He updates the Four Gospels by proposing to rewrite that history in which the disciples are women and thus are subjects of the Gospel.

Perhaps unintentionally, this narrative provides new insights & credibility to those who believe that Christianity had originated as a reformist movement inside Judaism.

Thayil's women are minor characters from the gospel narrative except Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene. All other women were invisible in the traditional patriarchal society of Jesus. They do not have an identity of their own, and even in the Gospels, as they are used to accentuate these male characters and events from a male point of view. Women retelling the story of Christ's life, death, and resurrection makes it explicit & clear : Women were constantly present in early Christianity from the time of Christ's birth until his crucifixion and resurrection, but they were not represented enough. Eyewitnesses, the Gospel accounts are there to confirm this which is known to us.

<sup>19</sup>McCabe, Elizabeth A., ed. *Women in the biblical world: a survey of Old and New Testament*

*perspectives*. Vol. 1.

<sup>20</sup>King, Bruce. "Names of the women: by Jeet Thayil, London, Jonathan Cape, 2021, 184 pp.£ 15.99 (hardback), ISBN 9781787332928." (2022): 141-142.

<sup>21</sup>Davis, Ann. "Reimagining Biblical Women: Deconstructing Patriarchal Power Relations in Jeet Thayil's 'Names of the Women' through a Feminist Lens", 295.



In Jeet Thayil's novel *Names of the Women*<sup>22</sup> the lives of women who followed Jesus in his crucifixion are narrated. All reviews on *Names of the Women* generally assert Thayil's feminist approach and perspective. He gives voice to Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and her sisters Martha, Lydia, Susanna, Assia, Salome, Herodias, Ariamma the Cannennite, Shoshamma, and Juana. Marcel's<sup>23</sup> argues that Thayil's narrative examines the New Testament's female characters that have been historically marginalized and misrepresented<sup>24</sup>. These women were hidden in gospel narratives once. So, this text can be considered as the source for producing a new scholarship on the gospel from women's perspectives. The systemic misogyny that has marginalized and misrepresented the female figures in the New Testament has been the domain of Thayil's novel.

## Conclusion

Biblical fiction provides space, for dynamic new interpretations of women's experiences with it. Allowing women to speak their stories is a new investment in literature for liberation in feministic tradition with a modern outlook. These interpretations could provide new understanding on the issues of women in our socio economic and cultural contexts. Women are still emphasize strongly on inclusion in power structures and decision-making strategies. There is a need to bring this modern women to the centre, as we need to re-read and re-tell history from vulnerable and marginalized point of view. Hence, the centre is transformed in to live experiences of women, who all share a common vulnerability across the globe and time which is communicated.

Solutions and strategies for women empowerment: Biblistic perspectives 2030

In conclusion, this paper suggests a few models from the Bible to accentuate women's power. One example is the wife of Lot, who dares to look back to the city when they left that place. Only she has a sensitivity to look back on the suffering community, which was a part of her life once. This paper suggests that the power to look back to the past is mandatory as we must encourage it among women. According to Andrean Rich, revision is looking back to the past with renewed eyes which can give new modified insights and approaches.

One of the most significant feminist poets of the 20th century, Adrienne Rich, authored an essay titled "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision" in 1971<sup>25</sup>. The statement "Re-vision - the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entertaining an old text from a new critical direction - is for women more than a chapter of cultural history: it is an act of survival"<sup>26</sup> was a potent call for a re-visioning of the past and an emphatic declaration of the importance of such an endeavor for women. Rich's ambition for the undertaking was beyond just rewriting myth, as it provided new impetus and futuristic directives also<sup>27</sup>; "An old text from a new critical direction... a radical critique of literature" describes it as a distinct literary endeavor.

In conclusion, this paper invites women from all walks of life to embrace the opportunity to contribute their voices and narratives within their diverse contexts and backgrounds that shape their experiences. It is imperative to create spaces where women can authenticate their stories, enabling them to reclaim agency and assert their presence within the overarching framework of power relations. Like the biblical figures of Judith, Jabel, Esther, Ruth, and the countless matriarchs, women can wield their nurturing sensibilities with power to catalyze significant shifts in the trajectories of history.

<sup>22</sup>Thayil, Jeet. *Names of the Women*. 2021

<sup>23</sup>Theroux, Marcel. "Names of the Women by Jeet Thayil Review – Bible Stories Reclaimed." *The Guardian*, March 24, 2021. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/mar/24/names-of-the-women-by-jeet-thayil-review-bible-stories-reclaimed>.

<sup>24</sup>Davis, Ann, Abhaya NB"Reimagining Biblical Women: Deconstructing Patriarchal Power Relations in Jeet Thayil's 'Names of the Women' through a Feminist Lens", 295.

<sup>25</sup>On Lies, Secrets and Silence, pp. 39–64

<sup>26</sup> Charlesworth Gelpi and Gelpi 1993: 167

<sup>27</sup>Zajko 2007: 401





By empowering women to speak and allowing them to assert their rightful place within the hegemonic structures of power, this society can tap a wealth of diverse perspectives and insights. Embracing the multifaceted contributions of women fosters a more inclusive and equitable societal landscape that acknowledges and values the myriad experiences and narratives of its female counterparts. Just as the matriarchs of the Bible played pivotal roles in shaping their communities and influencing the course of history, contemporary women possess the potential to enact transformative change through their voices and actions.

This paper advocates recognizing and amplifying women's voices to challenge entrenched power dynamics and foster more incredible inclusive social progress. By embracing the stories and experiences of women from diverse backgrounds, societies can move towards a more just and equitable future, one in which the contributions of all individuals are celebrated and valued. Through women's collective empowerment, we can aspire to create a more inclusive and compassionate world for generations to come.

Final message:

Let us remember femininity is about communion, companionship, and co-creativity, which are the core elements of rationality. Let us celebrate our femininity to nourish this world for a better tomorrow, where we all consider each other complimentary equals created by God.

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