

## DAISPORIC WRITING IN SUNITI NAMJOSHI'S SELECTED WORKS

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### ABSTRACT

*Suniti Namjoshi is a creative writer and a rising star on the horizon of Indian English fiction. She is one of the "new" Indian women authors in English from Maharashtra. She has been active in the literary world for almost fifty years. She has created fables and dystopias, novels and short stories, fantasies, satire with a feminist bent, and practically every genre except drama and epic, both solo and collaboratively. She has travelled all over the world to investigate the cultural foregrounding of various countries and has written feminist and Diasporic cultural narratives. Suniti Namjoshi, like Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Kavita Dasvani, Anjanna Appachana, Sunetra Gupta, and Anita Rau Badami, is a major Indian Diaspora writer in the current literary world. Only the cultural Cartography in Diasporic of her novel has been studied by the researcher. Her fables, short stories, and novels such as "Feminist Fables (1981), The Conversation of Cow(1985), The Blue Donkey Fables(1988) etc" have all been included in the proposed research project. In addition, the researcher has looked at the various cultural influences that have an impact on her fiction, which is a complex mix of Eastern and Western ideas. The purpose of this study is to conduct a modest and cohesive examination of Suniti Namjoshi's literature in order to improve readers' comprehension of her as a notable Indian Diaspora writer. She also studies power politics, sexual politics, women's marginalisation, and the search for identity. She champions lesbian identity and feminist awareness. Her national and international reputation need more investigation.*

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**Keywords:** Indian Diaspora, Suniti Namjoshi, Novels, English Literature.

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### Introduction

Indian women novelists in English, both native and Diasporic, insiders and outsiders, are key components of the current Indian English fiction fabric. The advent of female novelists on the literary horizon prior to the rise of the novel is a significant development in Indian English literature. More than thirty Indian women novelists and a dozen English short story authors are enhancing the field of Indian English literature. *Nina Sibal, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Rani Dharker, Radhika Jha, Sunny Singh, Shobha De, Kamalini Sengupta, Nirmala Aravind, Deepa Shah, Cauvery Madhavan, and Suniti Namjoshi* are just a few examples of female writers. Although some are Diasporic, they are all firmly planted in Indian soil. Their literary manifestations are foregrounded by their female experiences, and their feminine flare is determined by Indian cultural determinants. The current study is an attempt to analyse a selection of Suniti Namjoshi's novels. Suniti Namjoshi hails from Maharashtra and is one of the "new" Indian women novelists in English. She is a major Diasporic writer in Indian English literature, alongside Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai. Her reputation as an Indian diaspora writer based in the United Kingdom has been tarnished because she professes to be lesbian and preaches a vision of a lesbian utopia in her work. Suniti Namjoshi is a fantastic example of how the advent of "new" women writers in Indian English literature has enabled a more diversified expression. A woman writer must deal with difficulties such as how to represent oneself and others, the search for identity, and cultural barriers. "I am not a novelist," Namjoshi admits about her situation. "I'm a fabulist."

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Namjoshi is better known as a fiction writer than a poet, despite having published eight volumes of poetry characterised by sparkling wit, word play, and innovative power. In India, Canada, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, she has published poems, tales, articles, and reviews in anthologies and periodicals. The scholar, however, has focused her research on Namjoshi's fables and novels:

- Feminist Fables (1981)
- The Conversations of Cow (1985)
- The Blue Donkey Fables (1988)
- The Mothers of Maya Diip (1989)
- Saint Suniti and the Dragon (1994)
- Building Babel (1996)
- Goja: An Autobiographical Myth (2000)
- The Aditi Stories (2000)
- Sycorax: New fables and Poems (2006)

She uses fables to explore patriarchy and male dominance in her literary novels *Feminist Fables* and *The Conversations of Cow*. She investigates a new formal technique for animating animals and birds that incorporates revolutionary material in order to provide new perspectives and reveal the patriarchy's closed framework. She strives to incorporate fables, fantasy, mythologies, and science fiction into her work in order to challenge preconceived notions. We'll go over these briefly afterwards.

Suniti Namjoshi has been engaged on the literary scene for more than half a century and has emerged as a blossoming light on the horizon of Indian English fiction. She has written fables and dystopias, novels and short tales, fantasies, satire, children's literature with a feminist bent, and practically every genre except drama and epic, both solo and collaboratively. She has travelled all over the world to investigate the cultural foregrounding of various countries and has written feminist and Diasporic cultural narratives.

Namjoshi's literature incorporates a variety of opinions and perspectives; as a result, the researcher offers to investigate the various cultural factors that influence her work, which is a complicated blend of Eastern and Western ideals. It also aims to delve into the inner workings of characters' thoughts and the social context in which they live, as well as provide complete views on cultural, political, and social issues. In Suniti Namjoshi's select works that exhibit "Trajectories of Cultural Cartography in Diasporic", the researcher has focused on the theoretical framework of feminism, feminist consciousness, gay and lesbian theory, and queer theory.

The researcher has also conducted a thorough examination of all of these topics in Suniti Namjoshi's selected works in order to bring attention to the situation of women in contemporary India. The purpose of this study is to try a modest and cohesive analysis of Suniti Namjoshi's literature in order to help readers better comprehend her as an important contemporary female Indian writer.

### **Suniti Namjoshi's Selected Works**

Suniti Namjoshi's "*Feminist Fables*" will be critiqued from a feminist standpoint by the researcher. *Feminist Fables* is a collection of 89 fables that deal with women's issues from a feminist viewpoint. The fables all follow the Indian storytelling tradition. They deal with social morality issues both didactically and satirically. Suniti Namjoshi is a radical feminist, as seen by her book *Feminist Fables*, which details her feminist agenda. "The concerns highlighted in these fables are of course basic to the human condition," says C. Vijayasree, "and these thread their way through this book and are examined now with an eye for the humorous, for the absurd, now with a sense of deep grief and longing."

Namjoshi strives to bring attention to how patriarchy marginalises women and urges them to fight for self-identity. "They were a way of investigating feminist ideas and their consequences for the patterns I had learned from the mainstream literary tradition," she writes in *Because of India* (Namjoshi 79). In her fables, she displays her three layers of marginalisation: "Asian perspective," "foreign perspective," and "lesbian perspective." "*The Princess, The Lesson, The Anthropoi, The Happy Ending, The Little Prince, Blood, The Hare and the Turtle, and The Tale of Two Brothers*" are among her fables that illustrate that gender disparity is a societal construct rather than a biological one.

Feminist Fables delves into a woman's self-definition and self-affirmation. They also explain feminist principles and the three phases identified by Elaine Showalter: "feminine," "feminist," and "female." The first phase depicts women's subordination to male dominance, the second the resistance, and the third the search for female identity. "What Suniti succeeds in doing in the nearly 100 short pieces that make up her collection of Feminist Fables is to subvert the fable form, making her pieces less the expression of preconceived dogma than the occasion for provocation and questioning," Sherry Simon says of Namjoshi's contribution to the feminist cause (Simon 264). Suniti Namjoshi examines women's marginalisation in patriarchal culture and encourages them to fight for self-determination and autonomy. She exposes the social, sexual, and psychological exploitation of women.

To promote feminist philosophy, Namjoshi's animal characters in "*The Blue Donkey Fables*" highlight the gendered violence and patriarchal didacticism contained in conventional fables. Feminists such as Suniti Namjoshi have denounced gender discrimination as a strategy for male dominance and the marginalisation of women. The patriarchy, she believes, is responsible for incubating gendered conceptions about women's class through systematically constructed systems. Her female counterparts yearn for self- and experience-authenticity. They are perplexed and helpless as a result of their second-class and subhuman condition.

"*The Conversations of Cow*" is a novel, political satire, science fiction, and lengthy tale or fantasy about an Indian pupil whose master appears to her in the appearance of a cow. Namjoshi's lesbian identity is established in the novel, which examines her feminist consciousness and a lesbian feminist paradise. Namjoshi is anxious about her identity as an Indian lesbian migrant to the patriarchy's white heteronormative sexist civilization in the West. Because lesbians are frequently considered as unnatural and aberrant individuals in patriarchal society, her search for identity is urgent. She also had a lot of troubles in Western countries because she declared her lesbian identity. Maggie Ann Bowers shares her thoughts:

"Suniti starts on a quest to find her true identity in *The Conversations of Cow*, a spoof of a quest story. The quest's epiphany leads to a better knowledge of identity, but one that rejects the idea of a single fixed identity, and hence the quest's singular goal. Suniti goes through a series of learning experiences, each dispelling or introducing an aspect of identity by a goddess who appears in many forms but who appears predominantly as a Brahmin cow, called Cow, and through them comes to an epiphany concerning her identity, allowing her to find a method of living in relation to others (Bowers 55-56)". Suniti tries to discover who she really is. She needs to figure out how to resist by realising that identity is entirely fluid, so that interaction between two people can be mutually influential rather than a battle for dominance. The first lesson involves a Western homosexual cow in Canada, where the Anglo cows have an orientalist mentality. Suniti realises she has no control over her own identity. This incident can be interpreted as an example of orientalism in Canadian culture. Suniti is renamed "Sue" by the cows, who are very interested in India. In their own way, the cows create an imaginative image of India.

Suniti, the heroine and a feminist lesbian, embarks on a voyage of self-discovery with Bhadravati, an Indian lesbian cow, in this novel. Bhadravati's transformations into a lady, a white guy, and a Hindu goddess are also discussed in the story. Suniti begins writing down her genuine dialogues with the cow and her various personas at the conclusion.

I return her smile. „You know, I'm going to jot down everything.

What? Her scribe Suniti faithfully recording "The Conversations of Cow?" (CC 125)

She favours the centrality of women's relationships with other women in *The Mother of Maya Diip* because of its subversive potential. To reveal patriarchal discourse, she appears to prefer separatist to foreground sexual politics and misogyny in classic fables and myths. By revealing spaces, she challenges the wisdom of stable genres and essentialized narrative traditions. She defies literary conventions by employing a variety of costly strategies. She does, however, argue that complete "sisterhood" is a far-fetched and unattainable fantasy. She believes that dominating cultures, racist, patriarchal, homophobic, and heterosexist beliefs are inevitably self-perpetuating. Namjoshi looks for multiple possibilities and uncovers hierarchical dichotomies of oppressor and oppressed, powerful and powerless male and female positions, as well as several counter-positions within and outside of patriarchy's hierarchical structure and its reproduction in matriarchy.

In *Saint Suniti and the Dragon*, she attempts to understand the nature of evil in the universe, while in *Solidarity Fables*, she highlights the prevalence of hierarchy, race, class, and gender disparities within feminist groups and communities. Elitist feminists have been chastised for showing little concern

for lower-class white women and third-world women in general. Namjoshi represents the pseudo-feminists who are uninterested in genuine feminists. Namjoshi shows the history of their marginalisation in his story, *Subsequent History*. She cautions against succumbing to the temptation of hierarchical systems, citing the rare history of the feminist movement. Despite the demand for a separate 'space' for women, Namjoshi expresses her scepticism about its viability, citing the complexity of social experience and sexual orientation that varies by class and ethnicity. She calls attention to the economic facts and social attitudes at play. She does, however, advocate for a union of individualist and collectivist relationships in order to achieve the goal of female bonding.

In her novel *Building Babel*, Namjoshi depicts these civilizations. She claims that there are no definitive solutions or answers to the situation of women. She suggests that one of the choices is to search the internet for one, if there is one. Namjoshi uses this strategy to reject stereotypes of gender, class, and race. She takes myths and stories and turns them inside out. She makes up fantasies and then goes online. She tries lesbian first, then swaps roles, and then dismantles men from the "all-women's" environment, but none of them can provide genuine answers. She strives to deconstruct language while dismantling culture constructs, and then decides to optimise and utilise all the ambiguities and metaphorical nature of human language in order to find answers to perennial problems concerning women's status.

### Conclusion

Suniti Namjoshi's body of work motivates women to live and dream like women, according to this study. It gives them a sense of dignity and self-identity. Her abrasive work highlights the importance of women realising that their lives, worlds, and relationships with women are all valid. They must remember that their hardships are the outcome of an arbitral debate. They should have complete faith in their own skill, strength, and potential to change their lives. Her characters struggle to understand the concept of a post-structural self and self-identity, and her themes of gender and sexual orientation are informed by her involvement in the gay and lesbian movement in the United Kingdom in the 1970s. Her imagery is inspired by nature and fantasy, and it addresses challenging current problems such as race and gender. Namjoshi combines community and individuality, Western feminism and Eastern community to argue that "the common good and individual needs are the foundations of a better society."

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