



THE DISCOURSE OF MAN AND WOMEN RELATIONSHIP IN CHRISTINA ROSSETTI'S GOBLIN MARKET

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The fundamental differences between men and women make their relationship so complicated; ironically they both depend on each other. They are equal in the eyes of God too. They both will have different personalities and different attitude. Each one needs a companion. The right soul mate decides other one's future. Its really about meeting the right person. A woman is in need of a male companion, as her Father, Brother, Lover or Husband. Likewise a Man also needs a female supporting hand as his Mother, Sister, Lover or Wife. Both cannot able to live the life without the support of the other one. Physically a man is stronger than a woman and mentally she is stronger than him.

Neither man nor woman is perfect or complete without the other.
Thus, no marriage or family, no ward or stake is likely to reach its
Full potential until husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, men and
Women work together in unity of purpose, respecting and relying
Upon each other's strengths. (Web Dew).

Man and Woman relationship should be based upon a deep connection that gradually develops over time spent together in understanding each other through Words and emotions. Understanding comes from the trust. And that trust will lead both those individuals to commonly share their bonding through Love.

Love, just like any emotion, multiplies and makes the relationship to grow stronger and sweeter over the age. When it comes to falling in love, Men and Women are not the same. She cares him and he compliments her. She hides romantic feelings and expresses her emotions, whereas, he hides emotions and expresses his romantic feelings.

Many Women relationship will have love, sex, fights, misunderstandings, Doubts, Possessiveness and lot of emotions. A love is a mixture of all of the above mentioned attributes. Man Woman relationship started in the primitive age and stills it continues. Love exists in all ages. Some men seek woman for the sexual pleasure and it was not out of love. Women have been treated as an object in the eyes of men. According to the society women are considered to be a weaker sex.

Woman writers are always interested to talk about feminism. Victorian age appears to be a time in which the Women body was severely disciplined. They had faith in religion and followed moral behaviour. Religiosity was in the female sphere and the Nonconformist churches offered new roles that women eagerly entered. The greatest social difficulty in England is the relationship between men and women. In Victorian era Women focused on taking care of the family, the husband, the children, and the household. Gender role of Victorian era were in favour of men. Women were shy, weak, and emotional compared to men. She was supposed to be pure and quiet. Feelings such as anger or impatience were never expected out of them. She was never aggressive. The concept of ideal women was extremely important.

In marriage, the rights of the women were legally given to her husband. Victorian Wives became a property to their husbands, giving them rights to what their bodies produced. Their marriage gave men a ownership over her body. Women were banned not only from sexual pleasure but also from textual pleasure. Under such circumstances one cannot expect a female Victorian writer to give a desired writing especially to sexual ones. But Christina Rossetti used sexual matters through metaphor and symbols based on flowers, animals, fruits in her long narrative poem "Goblin Market".



Christina Georgina Rossetti (1830-1894) was a Victorian Poet. She was the youngest child. Her father, the Italian poet and political exile Gabriele Rossetti. Her poetry gave delight and pleasure to the readers. She wrote a variety of romantic, devotional and children's poem. She was the author of numerous books of poetry, including *Goblin Market* and other poems (1862), *The prince's progress* (1866), *A pageant* (1881), and *The Face of the Deep* (1882). Poetry is not such an easy task to write. A Poet should be clear with the diction. As Kalam said poetry comes from the happiness or the sad moments.

“Poetry comes from the highest
Happiness or the deepest sorrow” (web Kalam).

Rossetti as having the greater lyric gift, with her poetry displaying a perfection of diction, tone and form under the utter simplicity. Her poems revolve around the central theme about tragic love, gender and sexuality, Acceptance of death, Renunciation of desire, Divine love, The sublime and religious doubt. She was known for her Narrative Poem. *Goblin market* is the long and most famous poem. The poem is widely seen as allegory about reinforce its moral messages. The poem does not have strict rhyme or meter scheme and also they do not stick to a strict pattern. When the intense emotion is present, the verse becomes more erratic, such as when all of the goblins' fruits are listed.

“*Goblin Market*”, tells the story of two innocent sisters Lizzie and Laura. The poem pictures two women who are distracted by the Goblins. They try to pull the women from their safe domesticity. Christina's sexual essence heightens the relationship between the Male Goblins and Female maidens. “*Goblin Market*” is a woman's world. Where one never meets any Male characters except Goblins. The only sign that man exist at all comes at the very end of the poem.

Goblins are weird and masculine creatures. They stand to be the half man and half animal creatures.

“Now Goblins are cruel, wicked, and bad-hearted

They make no beautiful things, but they make many clever ones” (Web Tolkien).

As Tolkien described about Goblins in his book “*The Hobbit*”, they are very cruel in nature. Goblin is a eccentric creature from European folklore, first attested in stories from the Middle Ages. They are almost small, outright and greedy especially for Gold and Jewelry. They often have magical abilities similar to fairy or Demon. They all have body parts like different animals. Those animals came from places far from England. Each Goblin is Unique. Even their voices sounds like different animals.

“Voice of doves cooling all together

They sounded kid and full of Loves” (77-78).

Goblins tempt innocent young girls with their luscious fruit. The fruit sucks the life out of the Women, and when women suck the juice from the fruit, so that Goblins can easily seduce the women. There is no rest for the ears of maidens in the *Goblin Market*. Unmarried women are the ones who hear the cry of the Goblin. Goblins seem to be the representation of Devil. Their attempt of tempting reminds ‘Satan’ in *Paradise Lost*.

“Of man's first disobedience and the fruit

Of that forbidden Tree, who mortal taste

Brought Death into the world and all our woe” (Milton, *PL* book I, 1-3).

Here the fruit forbidden remains about the forbidden tree in *Paradise Lost*. Eve takes the fruits from that forbidden tree likewise, Laura have the fruit forbidden which takes her to commit sin and she becomes a sinner. Laura and Lizzie are the two sisters whom the author talked about. Laura is the one who was seduced by the Goblin men. Early in the poem, Laura warns that she and Lizzie must not eat their fruits because they don't know from which soil they took the fruit. Later Laura forgets about her advice what she told to Lizzie. Laura bows her head to listen to their cry. She cannot resist temptation, and was tempted. Lizzie informs Laura not to listen to their cry,

“No, said Lizzie; “No, No, No;

Their offers should not charm us,

Their evil gifts would harm us” (64-66)



Laura gorges herself on the sweet fruit at the goblin market. Laura stands in the position of the Eve, whose innocence draws a line for Satan. Here eating the fruit is equal to have sex. Laura's temptation to eat the goblins fruit as a metaphor for sex. Laura says that, "The Goblins sounds kind and full of love"(79). Their voice sounds as sweet as the fruits look. They all sounds like the animals they resemble. Goblins tempted Laura, and make her have their fruit. Once if girls have their fruit then they can't hear or see the Goblins again. So Laura no longer see or hear the goblins.

Sisterhood plays a major role in Victorian Era. Christina dedicated this poem to her sister Maria Rossetti. This poem shows how sisterhood and friendship offered a protective and supportive bond. Where the relationship helps them to defeat the evil power of Goblins. Lizzie is a maternal hero who saves her sister's life. She takes the motherly role and nurtures Laura back to good health. She saves Laura due to their sisterly bond. The support they have on each other reflects the idea that sisterhood is equally important for women in the Victorian period because of its protective and supportive qualities.

"For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather:
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray" (562-565).

Sisterhood offer women an alternative to the male dominant society, as well as support from their own gender. Laura and Lizzie represent this type of maternal friendship that existed in Nineteenth Century. Christina describes Laura and Lizzie's Relationship as,

"Like Two blossoms on one stem
Like two flakes new fall'n snow
Like two wands of ivory" (185-187).

The poet compares the sisters with lots of different things "two blossoms in one stem"(185), "fallen snow"(186), "wands of ivory"(187), "awful kings"(188) as they cuddle up together. When the girls falls into sleep everything was silent around them. Moon and stars gazed at them and wind sang to them lullaby.

From these lines one can understand the closeness of the sisters. Here is the part that is most often quoted to establish Christina's possibility as a Lesbian,

Golden head by Golden head,
Like two pigeons in one nest
Folded in each other's wings,
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast
Locked together in one nest (181-198).

From these lines one can able to see the lesbian kind of relationship. This poem has the marks of Homosexual elements. They sleep all cuddle up "cheek to cheek"(197) , "breast to breast" (198). Here the girls have been compared with pigeon because, which will always stick to one partner. So they compared with pigeons in one nest. The another part depicts Lesbian encounter, when the second sister returns from the Goblin's place.

"Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeezed from the goblin fruit for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew
Eat me, drink me, love me" (468-471).

They both hugged each other and kissed, "she kiss'd and kiss'd her with a hungry mouth"(492). There is no direct evidence that Christina was sexually involved with another woman. She has been called a "queer virgin" and "gay mystic"(web Cherry). Above quoted lines make the readers believe that she may be a Lesbian. "Goblin Market" can be read as an innocent childhood nursery rhyme, warning about the dangers of sex, moral for child readers, likely to the traditional Victorian value that one should resist temptation. Lizzie stands as a Christ figure, who fell



prey to the Goblins in the way that Laura did. Laura reflects on Jeanie, When she realizes, she can no longer hear the cry of goblins.

“She thought of Jeanie in her grave”
Who taught of Jeanie in her grave?
But who for joys brides hopes to have
Fell sick and died”(312-315).

Jeanie is a victim and she is a kind of warning to other girls. Jeanie did not have a sister like Lizzie. So that she lost her life. Her sisterhood bond stands till the end of the poem. Both Laura and Lizzie Became wives,

“Days, weeks, months and years
Afterwards, when both were wives
With children of their own” (543-545).

Like all mother, they worry about their kids. Laura tells their kids all about her own youth and how she is haunted and how Lizzie’s Heroism, helped her to save Laura’s life. As Laura repeats the story to her children, she tells them about the moral is that sisters should stick together, sisters save each other and strengthen each other.

“Goblin Market” represents the female gender as something to be celebrated rather than pushed into a corner with the assumption that she has no power in comparison to the man. Here the role of the Men and Women are different. While the girls are lovely and pure, the Goblins are ugly and soiled. Goblins in the poem are shown to be weird. Men in the poem are shown to be deviants, until Laura and Lizzie want to become mothers. There is no romantic love described between Laura and Lizzie’s husband, instead there is an enduring love and share between the Two women themselves. The poem is focused on the life of the female and her struggle and temptation. It is a fairy tale, an allegory of sin and redemption and feminist tribute to the powers and bonds of sisterly love.

In conclusion, Laura is saved from Jeanie’s fate – a barren grave, having achieved neither the status of wife or mother. She is saved by the heroism of her sister. Lizzie, the true heroine of the poem, is the very model of restraint and modesty. Lizzie maintains the standard of femininity established earlier in the poem and also refuses to let her body be sullied. Goblin Men attitude showed the mentality of Victorian men, who thrives to steal the virginity of women. Christina’s poems Goblin Market clearly portrays the mentality and attitude of Victorian men and women.

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