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The Reveal of Psychic Wholeness in Shobha De's "*Sultry Days*"

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Abstract: ***This paper explores how Shobha De's writings make a concerted effort to correct antiquated ideas and replace them with new ones that would not tolerate the denigration of women but would instead elevate them as an independent creature. Women now are starting to declare their independence in real ways. Sultry Days is, thus, an existential fight of a sensitive soul against the repressive dual standards and condescending attitude adopted by the male chauvinistic society, which shapes its regulations indenting to make women always feel subservient to males. 'New Women' who are economically, emotionally, and sexually free to pursue their own goals and interests because to De's portrayal of complex female characters that are both powerful and fragile. Rather of begging for pity or lamenting her plight, Nisha works to carve out a niche for herself within the established order and is even willing to test out the many permutations of a life lived on her own terms. Her idea of liberty is neither political or economic, but rather the liberty to think and behave as one pleases. Besides highlighting women's plight, De's true and admirable goal is to steer mankind toward enlightenment by emphasizing the need of upholding moral principles.***
Keywords: Psychic Wholeness, Chauvinistic Society, Complex Female Characters , Feminism, Shobha De's 'Sultry Days'.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indian author and commentator Shobha De was born on January 7, 1948. She has been called the "Jackie Collins of India" for the way she writes about hedonistic socialites and sex in her novels. Shobha De seeks to investigate the deep truths of the urban female psyche, reflecting the sociopolitical and cultural reality. In "Shobha De's Small Betrayals: An Exploration of Realism and Romance," Amar Nath Prasad states, "Shobha De's forte is the interpretation and elucidation of the interior world diving deep into the fathomless depths of the mind and digging out the pearls and gems hidden under the surface" (De 143). The protagonist in De's books through a process of self-discovery in which he or she finds meaning while encountering the revolting absurdity and emptiness of life.

The events of Sultry Days begin when Nisha is introduced to Deb, who prefers to be addressed as God, in the campus cafeteria. "A sort of infatuation towards him that simultaneously attracted and repelled" (De 2), Nisha is drawn to him despite his unattractive behavior and looks, which would make her an exception among typical females. Deb and Nisha, our two main characters, came from different social classes. Deb (the deity) is middle class, whereas Nisha (the goddess) is higher class. Having a friend like Deb opens Nisha's eyes to the harsh truths of the world.

Since she doesn't feel loved by her family, her mind fills that void with false beliefs, and she begins to look for affection elsewhere. Nisha goes out of her way to purchase expensive presents for Deb because she enjoys satisfying his extravagant whims. My feeling of community was strengthened by it" (De 22). Her statements drive home the point that, like any woman, she values emotional rather than financial satisfactions. Deb and Nisha remain close even after they graduate from college because of their shared love of the arts and journalism while Nisha is drawn to the world of advertising.

After finishing college, Nisha chooses to work in a mediocre advertising firm, where she is exposed to a wide range of high-profile individuals, including businesspeople, models, politicians, sycophants, and fixers. As she gets to know them, she begins to see the truth about their shallow lives, their hypocrisy, and their inability to provide for themselves as individuals. The current culture of celebrity worship and the allure of fame and fortune is brought home to the reader. In a moment of cathartic confession, she admits her predicament: "We (her family) lived our lives in near-isolation, the conversation rarely going beyond mundane pleasantries."The estrangement amongst family members is shown in the number (De 346). Her subconscious has a hard time surviving without emotional connection, and this lack of intimacy makes her feel like an outsider, which drives her to cut ties with her family. Since it undermines traditional gender roles and societal norms, premarital sexual activity is condemned as a social evil. When it comes to women's issues, R. S. Pathak believes that the suppression of women's sexuality in patriarchal society is at the root of the problem.(De 146)

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Nisha's need for acceptance and solace has led her to avoid feeling the turmoil and remorse associated with her moral transgression. De never defends the protagonist's immoral behavior but instead emphasizes the emotional need for love and care that women have. For her, being named God's daughter is a welcome break from her isolation and a sign that she finally fits in somewhere. Deb's insatiable need for wealth motivates him to take shortcuts, which boost his popularity and earning potential. Because of his excessive desire for wealth, he has compromised his journalistic integrity by working with Yashwantbhai. Deb is able to shed his communist label as a result of societal and economic shifts. Nisha is sad to admit that he has died on the inside due to his success in the worldly world. According to the article "Subjectivity, Class and Feminism in Shobha De's Sultry Days," written by Anita Myles, "Shobha De believes in creating a true-life image of coetaneous society. Her depiction of people successfully crossing social classes is an accurate reflection of modern urban culture (De 57). God eventually stops coming to Nisha and bothering her about money, but she always expects him to return. It's hard for her to keep her distance from Deb, even though she knows he's just a regular wanderer who doesn't care about her. She is quite earnest in her warning to him about the dangers of sycophants and their hypocrisy. Nisha is so far ahead of the curve that she actually warns Deb to "...be cautious. You can turn that pen into a knife. (De 169) Nisha's aim after her breakup with Deb is altruistic and transcends her introverted nature. By embracing human values, rather than rejecting the self, she investigates the potential for a new identity. She feels compelled to expose the corrupt dealings of Yashwantbhai in an essay. Because of this, he's so angry that he's sending hired goons to threaten her. Deb is concerned for her safety as a result of this, so he suggests that she keep her distance. Nisha's will and bravery shine through when she asks whether he means to threaten her. He retorts, "You just so happen to be his mark today." I'm a buddy who wants to caution you to take precautions. (De 345) Because of this development, Nisha says, "I felt at ease with God perhaps for the first time in our relationship" (De 253). Her adoration for Deb gives her new life. This is how she wins his heart. Nisha, who formerly worshiped Deb as a god, comes to terms with the fact that Deb is only human when he is shot. What she says is:

“Obviously, this guy wasn't the Almighty. Like the rest of us, he was weak, feeble, and powerless (De 361). These remarks show that she has come to respect Deb as a person rather than idolize her. Nisha is able to take her alienation and loneliness in stride, while Deb, on the other hand, gets neurotically irritable and uses his solitude as a crutch. When Nisha learns about Deb's dire predicament, she is devastated. While humiliating herself for the sake of feeding the starving and homeless Deb, she manages to keep her dignity intact. Deb gives up his own life for Nisha's sake. But she is very regretful and discouraged, and she sticks by his side to keep his spirits up.”

And when she adds, "I was longing to hold this impossible man in my arms and whisper to him, 'Dear God...be mine,'" she's expressing a deep and abiding affection for him.(De 370). Deb's condition continued to worsen. No one was there at his bedside when he passed away. And she thinks to herself, "God had gone off... without saying goodbye to anyone." Had a dog's death. or divinely..."(De 374) Nisha's stronger inner strength inspires Deb and makes his dying pleasant, but his own emancipated ideas and deeds ultimately lead to his own demise. Deb's pursuit of monetary success was ultimately nothing more than a fruitless chase for transient fame. Nisha is able to teach Deb morals and ethics. A healthy sense of identity can be developed only through tapping into one's latent abilities. Therefore, it is clear that only by looking inside can one find true fulfilment. Deb's life ends hopelessly, and he succumbs to a dog's death. Nisha cannot find anybody in the area of his dying bed. ‘No one else was in the area.’ Despite being haunted by her feelings for Deb, (De 361), Nisha will most likely pick up the pieces of her life and start again. Deemphasizes that Nisha is a flesh-and-blood person who triumphs over adversity thanks to her wonderful grace. Nisha's unwavering courage gives new meaning to the values of feminine renunciation and self-sacrifice. After Deb's death, Nisha undergoes a metamorphosis, redeeming herself from base, everyday ideals and taking on the mantle of life's inherent grandeur and goodness, strength, and perseverance. She doesn't let adversity dampen her spirit and keeps pushing forward with her optimistic outlook, reinforcing the idea that women exist to enrich society.

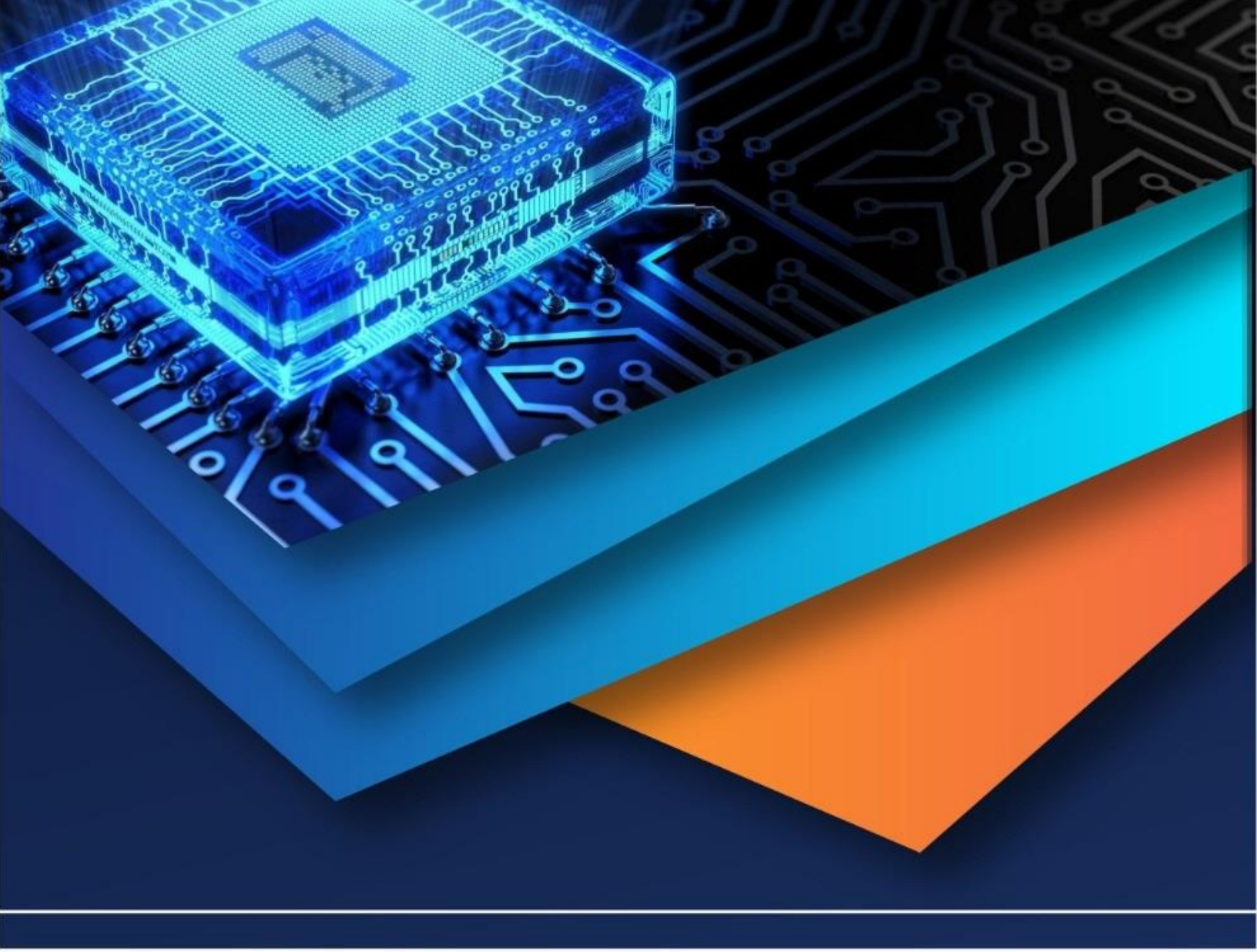
II. CONCLUSION

Shobha De illustrates how the heroic qualities one has in spite of adversity give one's life meaning. Nisha struggles with outdated cultural norms, seeking freedom from them by self-sacrifice and introspection. Her mother's spiritual support and her unwavering commitment to human ideals in the face of consumerism and deprivation are inspiring. Therefore, Nisha is a self-aware individual who actively seeks psychological and social liberation. To put it another way, De chronicles the mad ramblings of a fragmented identity on the road to reunion. Her works are notable for their emphasis on the heroism of the individual in the face of adversity. The 'self', in her view, is superior. As a result, De's protagonists and antagonists are judged not on their physical virginity but on the goodness of their hearts. De uses Nisha to stress the need of a woman having a strong sense of self-reliance, reason, and self-awareness; she also emphasizes the importance of having trust in one's inner power and realizing that true transformation comes from inside.

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