

Comparative Study on The Manifestation of Sociopsychological Pattern in The Evolution Of “Cinderella” And the Retellings Of “Sandrembi and Cheishra”

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Abstract

Raising concern on the sociopsychological impact on contemporary 21st century Meitei society, the study draws sharp attention on the unevolved internalized sociopsychological gender dynamics in the patriarchal Meitei society today, which is manifested in the retellings of the folktale “Sandrembi and Cheishra”. The mentioned narrative “Sandrembi and Cheishra” is Manipuri based and it is commonly held to have similar dwellings on the toxic relationship between a stepmother and stepsisters. The article captures the significant gap in the evolved feminist retellings of the European folktale “Cinderella” and the unevolved versions of “Sandrembi and Cheishra.” The interest of this study lies in the unaltered, primitive and static versions of the folktale “Sandrembi and Cheishra.” In consideration of the legendary “Cinderella” as a reference point, the attempted enquiry on the latest different versions of “Cinderella” exposes the transition of the western patriarchal system to a feminist conscious society. It points to a clear fact that the consciousness of the inclusivity of women in the western society stands firm in the contemporary western narrative. Conversely, in view of the retellings of “Sandrembi and Cheishra,” the article stresses on an observation that the versions of the folktale have remained static in a patriarchal dynamic, bearing no attempt to evolve its patriarchal narrative into a feminist one by adapting feminist virtues to the characters. Hence, this study brings special importance to a question formed against the perspective of the contemporary Meitei society towards women in the domestic settings, on its unaltered contemporary retellings of the narrative “Sandrembi and Cheishra.” The methodology of this study is primarily based on close reading and discourse analysis of the original folktales and its versions, so as to draw the contemporary Meitei societal perspective on women. Additionally, it makes use of Freudian psychoanalytic method and descriptive qualitative method in reviewing the secondary data to highlight the relevance of the affairs involved in the folktales and its retellings to the contemporary society. It registers the recurrent sociopsychological pattern in both the retellings of the two folktales and maintains a comparative study between the two folktales in identification of the significant gap between the evolution of western folk tales like “Cinderella” and the unaltered, unchanging patriarchal retellings of “Sandrembi and Cheishra” in the Meitei society.

Keywords: Folktale, feminism, retellings, evolution, sociopsychological paradigm