

Examining the role of Marriage and Female Quest for freedom in the novella *Lamps in the Whirlpool* by Rajam Krishnan

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This paper aims to examine the role of marriage in constructing women's identities and their quest for freedom in Rajam Krishnan's novella *Lamps in the Whirlpool*. The story deals with the life of a woman who gets married into an orthodox Brahmanical family, where she is subjected to face the challenges of a traditional marriage life imposed with cultural expectations and gendered power relations. The study analyzes how marriage becomes an institution of limitation that restricts the protagonist's individuality and ambitions. From a feminist perspective, this paper examines how societal norms surrounding marriage serve to control women's identities and actions, using cultural and religious justification to reinforce these expectations. Through this novella, Krishnan presents the societal pressures that define women's duties as obedient wives and mothers, frequently resulting in a loss of personal independence. Though the protagonist does her duties as an ideal wife and mother, she finds herself restricted in a cage called marriage which is controlled by cultural and religious ideals. Krishnan questions marriage's "sacred bond," demonstrating how it has become a source of power imbalance, limiting women's identities and freedoms. The study also looks at the novella's symbolic use of a lamp and whirlpool, which represent both society's expectations and the protagonist's sense of imprisonment. Krishnan recommends a rethinking of societal norms surrounding marriage and highlights the role of female liberty in the pursuit of freedom.

Keywords: Marriage, freedom, identity, tradition, power