

Interrogating the Muteness in Lavanya Sankaran's *The Hope Factory*

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Abstract

Indian women authors who write in English represent the realities of India in the current Indian literary scene. They have a lot of duties in the literary community. As researchers in anthropology sociologists, novelists, essayists, and travel writers, they carry out their duties with remarkable skill and then assume worldwide responsibility for promoting peace in their capacity as ambassadors. Additionally, they have created the odd contradiction of reading and appreciating how skillfully they address the problems of sexual harassment of women in post-colonial and postmodern contexts, including rape and the exploitation of Indian women in modern society. The autobiography of *The Red Carpet* novelist Lavanya Sankaran describes her journey from an ordinary lady to a writer. She desired to tell tales in which she would be able to identify the characters.

Keywords: Struggle, Poverty, Domestic, Education, Industrialized.

Lavanya Sankaran's excellent debut novel *The Hope Factory* uses the bustling, more technologically advanced metropolis as a crowded background for her minimalist yet effective prose telling the lives of two completely distinct families. Previously, Lavanya Sankaran wrote a collection of short stories called *The Red Carpet*. Anand K Murthy is a prominent guy at *The Hope Factory* who has a wife and a promising future but is under pressure. That requires money and land, both of which are scarce in India. On the other hand, Kamala, Anand's maid has very little. Even worse, her son hangs around with troublesome people, and her marriage crumbles. There is sufficient dramatic tension in the parallel tales of how these two different families get along and if they succeed.

Lavanya Sankaran's *The Hope Factory* (2013) interweaves two stories. One tells the tale of a manufacturing owner in Bangalore who is trying hard to break into the global capitalist market. The second tells the tale of a single mother who is struggling and works as one of his household's maids on a daily basis. Although such a division appears to subtly support the gendered vocabulary of globalization theory, which describes markets as 'penetrated' and 'dominated,' using domestic fiction generally associated with female readers and characters to examine globalization inevitably calls into question more traditional, masculinist methods. Many discussions on globalization, as J.K. Gibson-Graham notes, overlook the fact that there is no clear

distinction between life and work or between the economy and interpersonal ties. However, as Sankaran's novel demonstrates, our experiences with and perspectives on globalization influence our most private moments, and decisions, like who to marry, have an impact on the wider globe. Because domestic fiction insists on gendered intimacy and particularity, I argue that works like Sankaran's challenge notions of world literature. However, they also run the potential of becoming global literature with "a problem-oriented monocultural aesthetic agenda that evokes transnational engagement." (10)

Contemporary international literature presents a paradoxical position for Lavanya Sankaran's two fiction works, *The Hope Factory* (2013) and *The Red Carpet* (2005). The short story collection *The Red Carpet* received much acclaim when it was released internationally. It was named Best of First Fiction by *Poets & Writers* magazine and garnered positive reviews from booksellers at Borders and Barnes & Noble, as well as endorsements from *India Today* and *The Washington Post*. Translations into French, German, and Italian highlighted Sankaran's debut's global impact. By having her short tales published in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Atlantic*, she had already found her voice. With praise from the public, business community, and critics alike, Sankaran appeared destined for international recognition. Her cosmopolitan persona and professional background as an international finance professional, which involved frequent travel between the US and India, looked perfectly in line with our twenty-first-century views.

The battle of a man and woman is the primary theme of the novel, *The Hope Factory*. For her own life and the future of her son Narayan, Kamala has battled. She was a person of dedication. She battled both psychologically and physically to make ends meet so that Narayan could go to school. She was certain that she shouldn't let her dignity slip. She wants to avoid coming out as needy. Even her brother is not the person she wants to beg for money from. Despite her poverty, she didn't want her brother to see her impoverished. She intended to spend her life with her kid independently of other people till the very conclusion of this book. Everyone has expectations of other people. However, Kamala had no expectations from anyone in this situation. Kamala discovered joy in the small things in life. Even though her room was small, she immediately recognized her delight in it when she first saw it in the courtyard. Kamala made the decision to sell her jewelry to get money. She never begs for money because of this dire circumstance.

Kamala's life was severely disrupted when her owner Vidya blamed her son Narayan for snatching her jewels. She finds it intolerable that people think her son Narayan is a robber. It ended Kamala's years-long quiet, which she had maintained. She's never been the same since that fury. She lost her job as a result of her rage. It has been demonstrated that Kamala valued parenting over her career. She started her own business after losing her job, which involved cooking for working women, and she was an expert at it. That job did not pay enough, though, and Kamala was very content with it. Despite losing everything, she never gave up hope. That has been demonstrated by Kamala's character from the outset of this novel. She left her hometown and embarked on her career as a domestic helper with that same hope. She carried on with her household duties in the hopes of her son's prosperous future. Narayan, Kamala's child, is everything to her. When Kamala moved out of her brother's village home, she started her battle. She then tried very hard to enjoy her life with her young boy. She endured much social suffering as a single mother. She has no desire to lead an opulent life. She didn't require a large home. Rather than that, her primary goal was to ensure that her son Narayan had a quality education and could speak English with ease.

Kamala is Anand's household. Her residence was located at the main diversions off the main road. The landlord lived in the biggest, which had four rooms. Kamala had the tiniest single room. She resided there with her adolescent son Narayan. Because of her financial situation, she enrolled her son Narayan in the government school even though she preferred for him to attend an English-

language school. However, Narayan had been out hawking the newspapers and magazines all day. And he stopped at the major road's traffic lights. Narayan said to Kamala that,

The agent for the area gives us a full ten percent for selling magazines and for some, even fifteen, twenty percent. And Amma, I am really good at this; even the policeman said so. After just two hours I was selling as much as the senior boys who have been doing this for a long time. (THF 18)

When Kamala learned about Narayan's desire for money, she had an epiphany: if she allowed him to be lured by money, she would betray him and he would detest his studies right away and end up making a living selling magazines. There wouldn't be an office, a school, or English. She took a little break. She smiled at the light in Narayan's eye and gave back her hesitancy. Kamala received a missive. She expected that Narayan would read the letter aloud to her. Kamala's brother was the sender of the letter. Then Kamala had a similar sense of fear as she surveyed her modest home.

After losing her husband, Kamala began working as a domestic worker. She resided in the homes where she worked with her infant son, Narayan. She was employed as a stay-in maid full-time. The older her son got, the more everything altered. He has always strayed throughout the entire home. Narayan was too tiny to realize that their greatest residence wasn't their own. He was not allowed to run around the house, he was not allowed to touch delicate objects, and he was not allowed to reach for the fruits that were set out on the table. Kamala is unable to make certain plans for her little son Narayan. Her employers asked her: "Could he not stay with grandparents in the village?" (THF 141). Kamala made the decision to avoid encountering the same query at work. She believed that owning a home was something she should do now. She had continued her agitated quest. She would realize right away that the little room was meant for her. In it, she glimpsed her future.

Kamala was widowed and alone twelve years prior due to events in her early life. She went to her brother for assistance, a hungry mother of a baby boy. In the hut of their late mother, Kamala's brother and his spouse were residing. Her brother too had trouble making ends meet; he was by no means the proud owner of several acres. He was not pleased with his sister's mess. She decided to go to the large metropolis and look for work. Despite lacking money, Kamala possesses physical strength. She desired to either return to her hometown with courage and dignity or not return at all. Kamala was then hired on as a domestic worker, a position she had held for the preceding ten years. She was putting a lot of effort into raising her son honorably. Being a single mother, she took great pride in her accomplishments.

And do you have somewhere to leave it while you work? Someone who can look after it for you, this baby? Have you no sense at all? Should you not have told me about this earlier? Who will hire you with a babe in your arms? (THF 181)

Anand's struggle is depicted on the flip half of this novel, *The Hope Factory*. He was a prosperous merchant. However, he was unable to keep his marital life peaceful. Anand was having mental difficulties with his business. For Anand, everything in his work life was routine. The issue arose when he bought the acreage for Cauvery Auto, his firm. He was under mental stress because of Gowdaru Saar, a leader in Vijayan's party. He is at odds with his father-in-law Harry Chinnappa in the meantime. A disagreement arises between Anand and his spouse Vidya as a result of this issue. Then, Anand and Vidya were unable to communicate with each other. Harry Chinnappa's influential political allies work behind the scenes to sabotage and muddle the land broker's discussions when Anand protests. Cauvery is so highly leveraged that the failure of the property acquisition would mean irreversible catastrophe for Anand and everyone who depends on him, including Narayan, whose private school education Anand is funding, as well as his wife, kids, and staff. In the meantime, Kamala and her son Narayan may soon be homeless since the modest rental they now live in has recently been sold to developers.

It is an honor to be a member of his party. Like you, I too have a duty, it is our duty to elect the best. For years, we have suffered with bad leaders. Now, finally, we have someone who we can respect. Who we can trust? An educated man. A good man. If we do not, do everything we can to see him elected, would we not have failed in our duty? What use is it for me to talk of my love of my people and my village, if I do not guide them properly...? (THF 271)

While making plans for her son's future, Kamala tries to keep this transition and the weight of new responsibilities hidden from him. Anand was under a lot of stress from everything. His children were his sole source of enjoyment. He used to spend a lot of time with his children even though he was preoccupied with his career. Even in the face of difficulties in his business, Anand never gives up. Anand and Kamala shared a similar disposition. Their families were important to them both. They just take care of their children; they don't take care of themselves. Because of her son Narayan, Kamala lost her job. She has demonstrated three times that her son is more important to her than her career. She first quit her work as a construction worker for Narayan. After that, she quit her job and began working as a domestic helper. It was her third time quitting her work to care for her son. However, Anand managed his family and company concurrently. Even though Anand and Kamala are both working really hard to achieve their goals, the gap between them highlights how different their worlds are from one another. As they attempt to move their everyday lives to the next realm, their characters follow similar paths.

Lavanya Sankaran describes Anand and Kamala as blessed in this novel. Thangam is moonlighting as a pin-money Ponzi scheme operator, while Shanta, Anand's maid, gets beaten and her money pilfered by her husband. Both of the characters in this book get happy endings in the conclusion. Enough dramatic tension is created by the parallel stories about the success or failure of these two very different families to keep the reader interested until the very end.

The optimism of Anand and Kamala is depicted throughout the whole of the novel. In the book *The Hope Factory*, these two characters have gone through a lot of hardship and failure. However, they never give up hope. Their failures left them with little hope. Despite his struggles in obtaining property for his company's expansion, Anand hoped to purchase the site and construct a new facility for Cauvery Auto. Anand successfully launched his new business with that goal. The novel's last chapter marks the conclusion of Anand's fight. Kamala has nothing at the start of this book. Her hope is her only real wealth. Even though Kamala's new work was not paying her enough, she still had some hope for the future. Thus, the sense of hope that Anand and Kamala have is symbolized by the title of the work, *The Hope Factory*.

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