

# Cultural Background in Meena Alexander's Nampally Road

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### Abstract

*In the present age, the world seems to be given very little place to women in terms of freedom and security. The second most populous India is the seventh biggest homey in the world which has matured frequent socio-political dilemma of its individual. Meena Alexander's Nampally Road focuses on feminism and topics as disparate as political terrorism and cultural preservation. It is a multi-locational work of fiction that explores the identity of the protagonist. Mira while also discussing the challenges she faces as an immigrant. Although the story of this novel takes place in India; Indian culture is seen through the lens of western culture. Mira bid to transfer her observation from western literature to the legislative space. Her ideas represent a fusion of Indian and American culture. But this peace and tranquility of modern India is quickly overshadowed by the reputation of new urbanity and depraved governments. The destination of this commodity is to evaluate the issues related to the clash between women and culture.*

**Keywords:** Immigration, Self-Identity, Migration, Culture Identity, and Political Terrorism.

Mary Elizabeth Alexander born on 17 February 1951, to George and Mary Alexander, into a Syrian Christian family from Kerala, India. She changed her name as Meena Alexander, for her it was somewhat long and inappropriate for her writing career. Alexander lived in Allahabad and Kerala until she was five years old, when her family moved to Khartoum after her father acknowledged a post in the newly independent Sudan. She continuous to appointment her grandparents in Kerala, was trained at home on speaking and writing English, and completed high school in Khartoum at age 13. Alexander reminded to Erika Duncan of World Literature Today that she began inscription poetry as a child after she frustrated to mentally invent short stories in Malayalam but felt incapable to translate them into written English; without an capacity to write in Malayalam, she instead began writing her stories as poems. She pursued her PhD in British Romantic literature in 1973 at age 22 from University of Nottingham.

Alexander wrote two further books with poetry and prose: The Shock of Arrival: Reflections on Postcolonial Experience published

in 1996, and *Poetics of Dislocation* published in 2009. Alexander also distributed two novels, *Nampally Road* (1991), which was a Village Voice Literary Supplement Editor's Choice in 1991, and *Manhattan Music* (1997), as well as two academic studies: *The Poetic Self: Towards a Phenomenology of Romanticism* (1979), built on her exposition, and *Women in Romanticism: Mary Wollstonecraft, Dorothy Wordsworth and Mary Shelley* (1989). Meena Alexander passed away on November 21, 2018, in New York City, after a battle with cancer. Her death was mourned by readers, writers, and scholars around the world, who celebrated her life and legacy as a pioneering literary voice.

*Nampally Road* by Meena Alexander is a semi-autobiographical novel. This novel has ten chapters. Mira Kannadical is the protagonist of this novel. Mira was born in India a few years after independence and did not agree with her mother choosing an arranged marriage for her. She went to England as an undergraduate student and consumed some years there. Life in England was painful for Mira because she could not adapt to the fast-paced lifestyle of European people. She joined the student dance, but was hated for loud music and bright lights. She even tries to go out with different lovers on different evenings as is the western tradition. Europeans consider staying with the same lover for a longer period of time to be a long-term commitment or bond.

Mira wants to write poem to find a special identity for her. She wants to show what she is. She thought that she could give meaning to her life by writing some poems or some prose works. The author explains that Mira has a complex cross-cultural character because she is an Indian woman under colonial rule. When Mira got a job in Hyderabad, she accepted it with gratitude because she thought that going to India would give her an unexpected opportunity to define herself. Once she grew up in Hyderabad, she no longer felt like a bad women but a hardworking girl. However, her concentration increased stronger.

She can only live in certain nations. Mira is an absolute must to emulate William Wordsworth in life. Wordsworth was one of the English poets who read Mira carefully as part of his final year M.A. studies. She wrote some poems about nature, about interesting places that forced him to return again and again. She was a great poet and Mira remembered him. She loved Wordsworth because he understood the pain and desire from which he could not free himself. Mira seeks to transform the poet by achieving Wordsworth's simplicity.

When Mira settled in Hyderabad, she had little trouble adjusting to Indian civilization. At one point, Mira deliberately ate with her left hand, which surprised many Andretti who saw her. She started teaching English literature at Sona Nivas College, Hyderabad. The professor gave a lecture on Wordsworth and Mira became prevalent among the students of Sona Nivas. In her free time, Mira continues to try to write poetry. There was a small notebook hidden under her bed. Ramu laughs at Mira's creative efforts and says that no one deserves to be put down like the audience. Mira said that writing poetry is her life's mission. She was 25 years old and had no idea what she was writing about. Despite her Western education, she was deeply confused in her mind. She wants to become a poet to create a new identity for herself. Otherwise, her mother will dress in silk and gold and marry him off to a rich engineer or property owner. Mira felt strongly that she could not survive such a marriage. According to Mira, marriage is a personal matter and she will only marry when she is fully ready.

Mira was furious when she saw Rameeza Be for the first time inside the police station in Gowliguda. Rameeza's sari was blood. She crouched on the mud floor of the prison cell behind the wooden table. Mud covered his face. The flies fluttered away, but her eyes were still open. She was breathing heavily. Mira stared for a long time, hugging the cell phone bar. She leaned forward and put her hand through the prison hole and touched Rameeza's wet forehead. Her head hair was decorated on her cheek on a light mattress and accompanied by blood.

Someone immediately took Rameeza to Maitreyamma's house, where she was given a good rest and medical treatment. It was a long and difficult process, but Rameeza has recovered thanks to Maitreyamma's powerful herbal medicine. Ramu and Mira visit Rameeza at that house and Mira is deeply moved by her sad state. Thus, Mira finally found her identity. She realized that he was nothing but a simple Indian.

The plight of Rameeza Be is the difficulty of the entire nation and Mira's mission in life is to find an answer to give support to millions of Rameezas in India. Mira decided to return to India and live here permanently, becoming half Indian. Realizing that his mission in life was to serve her motherland, India, she became a complete Indian. Nampally Road reflects the painful voices of women's folk tales, the characters and plots may be changed, but the current of violence is so strong that justice seems far away. This novel not only focuses on the mind of the rape victim but also tries to promote Gayatri Spivak's ideas about the lower class. This shows the analysis of subtext and speech in presenting Rameeza's experience. The text shows the impossibility of describing the traumatic experience for rape victims and the writer's difficulty in presenting it in any factual or fictional narrative.

In the novel, an occasion involving the rape of Rameeza Be under police custody is described in the papers and information to the burning of a police station in Hyderabad. However, the event itself became a poetic target. There are dreams and omens that connect Rameeza Be to Durgabai and the protagonist Mira, a foreign woman trying to find herself. Another main character, her lover, is the most active activist in the civil liberties movement, but who is shocked by Mira's writing, and a Roman Catholic servant who wants to immigrate to Canada. The character of the novel is exotic.

Alexander creates a feminist space where characters are given a declaration. This novel vividly portrays modern India and one woman's struggle for peace. It nurtures and sustains friendship between women. This violence is depicted through the story of Rameeza Be, a small woman. This physical violence against innocent women creates psychological violence and fear in the minds of citizens. The main character, Meena Alexander, who shows her own transformation, finds it difficult to maintain a balance between the life she writes and the harsh realities that surround his. To reflect on the tragic incident of Rameeza about Mira's life force, glorify nationalism, and identity as a writer. Although she had a notebook under her bed, Mira began to feel that her drafts were unclear and incomplete.

However, Mira is optimistic and Durgabai takes steps to cure Rameeza Be. To witness the transformation of Mira Kannadical who loves peace and frugality, who joins the crowd to protest against injustice, reveals the writer's deep doubts and feelings of confusion about identity and meaning, and her efforts to change space, time, memory, and memory the real world. Thus, Alexander emphasized the status of women in the post-colonial context. In decolonized countries, women's lives are still dominated by patriarchy at home and in society at large. This is vividly expressed in his novel. The central theme of the novel revolves around identity, displacement and the struggle for independence in a post-colonial society.

The story is set in Hyderabad, India during a time of political turmoil in the late 1970s. One of the main themes in the novel is the search for identity. The main character, a young woman named Mira, is obsessed with her sense of belonging. Born to Indian parents but raised in America, Mira finds herself torn between two cultures. Struggling to reconcile her Indian heritage with her experience in the United States, she has a deep longing for a place that truly fits her and she can call home.

The novel also explores the theme of displacement. Mira experienced a sense of geographical and cultural migration. Moving from America to India, he finds himself in an unfamiliar country and culture. It explores the complexities of adapting to a new environment, language, customs, and

social expectations. This theme reflects the challenges immigrants face and their desire for a sense of roots.

The struggle for independence is an important theme in Nampally Road. The novel is set during a time of political upheaval in India, with protests and clashes between activists and the government. Mira is involved in student activism and fights for freedom and justice. Participation shows a desire to be part of a larger movement and make a difference in society. Overall, Nampally Road deals with identity, displacement and the struggle for independence. Through the experience of the protagonist, this novel raises questions about cultural identity, the complexity of belonging, and the struggle for social-political justice in a post-colonial society.

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