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Representations of Widowhood: A Comparative Inspection of Cross Purpose, The House of Bernarda Alba and Reshmi Rumaal

The ideas of widow and widowhood have often been reminiscent of loneliness and endures the loss of a male partner. The patriarchal system that intends to control the female body and mind through social conditioning, categorizes widows as remainders – of relationships, wars, partitions, ethnicities and genocides. The connotation of being a left over not only debars widows of socio – economic utility and significance but also acknowledges them as a burden on society waiting to be removed. Contesting these rigid beliefs, the paper shall explore the idea of widowhood through Albert Camus' Cross Purpose (also known as The Misunderstanding), Federico Garcia Lorca's The House of Bernarda Alba, and Tripurari Sharma's Reshmi Rumaal. The analysis of these dramatic texts shall unveil the consequences, struggles, succumbing and defiance of confinements of widowhood. It will show how the text incorporates and enlists the action and (potential) performance of the same. Most importantly, the paper shall comprise of the moments of intermingling of these texts and how the nuances of widowhood associate, dissociate and interject across European cultures and Indian contexts. The purpose is to unlock the dramatic language of widowhood that is based on circumstantial/ advertent absence of a male figure in the larger cosmos of war, Nazi occupied France, control, and an imposed period of eight years of mourning exhibited in the texts respectively.