

Harish speak about it.
when she comments



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Harish is well aware of the power of gaze and uses it in different ways to make Virmati submissive.

He does not let her appreciate anything and speak about it. When she comments about a picture depicting the unity of Hindu, Muslim and Christian community, Harish scolds her. When she fails to find any beauty in the graves by the hill side of Nahan, he points it out to her and forces her to accept that they are beautiful. Literally, he forces her to abandon her gaze and substitute his gaze in its place. Kapur points out to this fact, “ Virmati followed. Was it charming? She supposed it was.

He usually had an eye for the charming, beautiful, lovely, quaint, picturesque. She tried to see through his eyes when he pointed things out to her. After all these years she was getting quiet good at the exercise.” (Kapur, 190) Virmati’s life in Harish’s house as a co-wife with Ganga, the first wife is beyond description. Ganga’s gaze reveals her feelings to Virmati. “ When Ganga saw her, she would turn her face away, or what was worse, would stare intensely at her, her eyes moist, her lips trembling, her big red bindi flashing accusingly.

“(Kapur, 219) When Virmati conceives, Kishori Devi, her mother-in-law, becomes so worried about the evil eye. When Virmati has an abortion, she thinks of the malevolent gaze of Ganga. Much later, because of partition and the accompanied communal violence, Harish sends Ganga and the children with his mother to his native village.

Virmati gets a chance to live alone with her husband. When the tension subsides, Ganga tries to come back, but Virmati asserts herself and makes

her stay permanently in the village. Her assertion of her rights could be understood from her gaze. In the absence of Ganga, she gazes at Ganga's clothes, "Virmati stood before Ganga's open cupboard.

Just seeing those saris made her sick. Each one of them reminded her of the woman, with her round face, round bindi and black kaajal-lined eyes staring fixedly at her with loathing." (Kapur, 276) The saris represent Ganga and Virmati's throwing away the saris from the house, donating them to the refugees without discussing about the issue with Harish or Ganga, shows her self-assertion and the symbolic ousting of Ganga. So, this final gaze acts as an indicator of what would have happened further in the life of Virmati.

As Kapur points out in the Epilogue, Ganga is finally and completely ousted from Harish's house, though not from his life.