

A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN THE NOVEL OF ANITA NAIR

Shashi Singh¹ Dr. Shilpi Bhattacharya²

Research Scholar¹ Professor²

Department of Arts and Humanities ^{1, 2}

Kalinga University, Naya Raipur (C.G.)

Abstract: Poetry and novels written by feminist women authors continue to promote the rights of women. Anita Nair is an award-winning poet and fiction writer from India. She had a natural talent for writing and the courage to pursue it in any situation, no matter how difficult it seemed. Nair understands the many roles that women play in their lives, and it is evident in her work as well. She writes with energy and ease, and the results are stunning. For as long as there have been post-colonial feminist writers, they have had to deal with the heavy load of dealing with centuries of misinterpretations of cultures and religions. The role of women and their economic and social reliance are at the center of this dilemma. In a postcolonial society, women's emancipation becomes more difficult the more traditional it is.

Introduction

Every college and university has a large number of students enrolled in English literature, making it one of the most visible majors. As a result of this field's broad extent, some individuals are unsure of what English literature is all about. The extent of English literature in education and the workplace is examined in this article. The more straightforward response to this question is that it pertains to all English-language literature, not simply those written in the United Kingdom. It gets more difficult

to define what literature is. In general usage, literature includes novels, poetry, and even dramas. However, the definition of literature itself is open to debate. Open-minded international students may regard screenplays, nonfiction, and even song lyrics to be literary works because of the broad definition of "literature." However, the focus of most English literature programmes in schools will be on more traditional forms of literature. Poetry and prose fiction, as well as drama and more contentious genres of "literature," will be covered in varied

degrees in a standard English literature major.

For women, feminism is a movement that advocates for equal rights and opportunities for both genders. Indian English literature have dealt extensively with feminism, which has been characterised as a civilising, fiscal, and biased movement that aims to establish sanctioned protectors and ultimate egalitarianism for women. A humble challenge to evaluate the genuine social circumstances as intense as women's neurotic tendencies has been employed in Indian writing to use feminism as a humble task. Feminism is a topic that modern Indian English novelists write about for the general public since it is both interesting and important to their target audience. Feminism has been a topic of discussion around the world, and India will be no exception. Anita Nair, despite the fact that other female novelists are more known for their style and approach to fiction, has risen to the top of Indian literature. She has a distinct style, character portrayal and emphasis on women's rights and duties. She describes their social sufferings in realistic detail. Domestic aspects like slow Sunday dinners, a family argument, and the sights, sounds

and smells of a crowded train station are particularly well-done by Anita Nair. Her novels have been described as "novellas in parts," and it appears that she is more skilled at putting together a collection of short stories than she is at writing a novel.

Anita Nair is a well-known Indian writer. She is continuously concerned about the issues that women face in our society. With "The Better Man," her debut novel, she established herself as one of India's most self-conscious novelists, and with her second book, "Ladies Coupe," she had a huge commercial success. On the subject of patriarchy and inequality in relationships, Anita Nair deals with "Ladies Coupe." Her novel raises questions about the role of woman in contemporary postcolonial India. As a result of the patriarchal social structure in Nair's India, women are subjected to sex role stereotyping and oppression. The character Karapgam, created by Anita Nair, serves as a shining example of women's empowerment. When she says anything like that, she's a brave woman who's breaking the rules of patriarchy. No one, not even my family, cares to me. I am who I am. My right to live my life the way I want it is as valid as anyone else's. Tell me didn't we as

young girls wear colourful clothes and jewellery and bottu? It doesn't matter if she's married or not, or if her husband is still alive or not.

In *Mistress*, Anita Nair depicts female characters that are poor. As a female character, she depicts her as a pathetic creature. Women in the narrative are regularly exposed to acts of violence. She expresses the current condition of women in society through her facial gestures. She's a master of the art, and it show. When it comes to human psyche, she goes deep. Readers may think the character is one of their neighbors or a friend since she invokes events that are pulled from everyday life.

Nair's *Mistress* explores the shifting roles of husband and wife in modern society. Her definition of a free woman goes beyond economic and social independence; instead, it emphasises a woman's positive mental and emotional outlook and well-being. The novel explores a variety of subjects, including art and adultery, the thrill of newfound love and the boredom of traditional partnerships, as well as the squalor and ugliness of love, abuse, dashed hopes, violence, and dark family secrets. Across the boundaries of religion, marriage,

legitimacy, violence and conventions, infatuation and fixation are explored in this story. Pre- and post-marital sex are also covered thoroughly in this book. Every relationship that develops has a whiff of doom linked to it, much like the shallowness of existence for the main characters in *Mistress'* river Nila, which never seems to have enough water.

According to an interview with Anita Nair, feminism in India is about recognizing and nurturing one's own feminine identity and being able to express it fully. According to her, it's an uphill battle for women of all ages to find their own sense of self. There may always be a conflict between her personal development and her family responsibilities, as she puts it:

it has easy to be a contemporary Indian woman. For one thing, she knows her rights and the importance of having a unique identity. Contrary to popular belief, however, she is required by tradition to remain focused on her roles as a mother and a wife. How does she cope? What exactly does she do? A good Indian woman, as she has always been taught, would turn to the scriptures for guidance. But what does she discover once she arrives there? Is she to be

Sita, modest and chaste for the world to see, or a Radha, willing to give sexual pleasure to her lover Krishna in bed, or be like Kunti, a diplomat when it comes to handle difficult relatives, or show Draupadi's flair for managing, not even in the scriptures can you find a parallel for superwomen the contemporary Indian woman is expected to be...

The Better Man, Anita Nair's debut novel, depicts women's helplessness. She wants to demonstrate how women are always exposed to violence. The Better Man's female characters are shown as submissive and second sex by the novelist. They're on a mission to find their own independence and self-identity. She teaches a woman about the importance of individual freedoms. There is a lot of violence in the novel's characters' life. Mukundan writes in a letter:

I've been told that unless I pay him a bribe, he won't do anything about it. To me, as a responsible citizen who has payed his taxes on time for many years, it is unjust and morally wrong to penalise him for doing so. And the worst kind of harassment.

In her works, Anita Nair has explored the issue of violence against women and children. In a culture where men have the

majority of power, women face discrimination and exploitation. She shows in her major novels how domestic violence occurs in a male-dominated society through her depiction of it. To commemorate the violence committed against women and children in her works such as Ladies Coupe, The Better Man, Cut Like Wound, Chain Of Custody, and Mistress.

SIX WOMEN CHARACTERS

A Ladies Coupe train traveling six women is the setting for the stories told by Anita Nair. An important theme of the play is the deterioration of social conventions and the resulting need for self-freedom. Akhilandeswari alias Akhila forty-five, single and working as a clerk, has been brought up in a conservative family of Tamil Brahmins. After the death of her father, Akhila bears the burden of her family. When Akhila's older siblings get married and have children, it's easy for them to think about her. As a result, she has never been able to live a normal life or assume a distinctive identity. When Akhila was growing up, she felt like she was always an extension of someone else's identity: "daughter," "sister," "aunt," and so on" (P.201-202). It is on this journey to Kanyakumari that Akhila comes

into contact with five different women: Janaki Prabhakar, Prabha Devi, Margaret Paulraj, Sheela Vasudevan, and Marikolunthu. Even though they've never met before, they share their personal experiences. Despite their differences in age, education, and cultural background, the plight of Indian women in a patriarchal society runs through all of their stories.

Janaki, the oldest of the six women in the Coupe, grows up in the traditional family of being groomed into an obedient daughter, a loyal wife and a doting mother. She has been cared for by men her entire life. There was my father and brother, then my husband. My son will pick up where my husband left off when he's gone, since he'll be here to carry on his father's legacy. As a result of her fragility, a woman like me is easily broken. To be treated like a princess, our men go above and beyond (P.22-23). She's someone who's always had a man watching over her back. After her father, brother, husband, and son, she would be the last person to be looked after in that order of importance. To be a devoted wife and mother is futile, she realizes, and the necessity to assert one's own identity and

independence to lead a self-determined life is critical to the well-being of one's life.

Sheela, a 14-year-old girl, is the youngest of the six and discusses the sexual exploitation of female children by men. "One Sunday afternoon when Sheela went to their house, racing in from the heat with a line of sweat beading her top lip," Nazar's father Nazar touched Sheela inappropriately. Sheela felt guilty and hurt. Nazar had reached forward and wiped it with the forefinger of his right hand before he did so. Her skin was tingling for a long time after he put his finger there" (P.66). In Hasina and her mother's eyes, Nazar witnessed the pain Nazar had caused them (P.66). In order to protect herself, Sheela made the wise decision that "She would never go to Hasina's house again." (P.66) After that incident. Nair has used this figure to highlight the sexism and misogyny of men toward women.

There's a chemistry teacher named Margaret Shanti in the Ladies Coupe who's in an unhappy marriage to her school's principal, Ebenezer Paulraj. Self-obsessed and uninterested in his wife, he has an intense focus on himself. Because she is terrified of the reaction of the rest of society, Margaret refuses to divorce him. To exact her

revenge, she will force-feed him fatty fare, causing him to fall and become dull.

It is said of Prabha Devi that "her ideas were light and gentle" and that "she walked with small mincing steps, her head constantly down, suppliant; womanly" are all attributes that describe this brilliant woman (P.170). After her marriage, her life swished past in the blur of insignificant days till one day a week after her fortieth birthday. She came to this realisation while trying to balance being a decent wife, good daughter-in-law, and a good mother. After forgetting how to be herself, Prabha Devi learns to create a balance between what she wants to be and what she is expected to be by taking a quick glance at a swimming pool.

Of all stories, Marikolunthu's is the most heartbreaking: a 31-year-old unmarried mother who becomes the victim of a man's lust because she cannot afford to break traditional social and moral rules. She now has an illegitimate child to care for. She's been raped, sexually harassed, and physically abused. Restless, warped, and bitter were my feelings at the time." There were moments when I felt a quickening in the vacuum that was within of me now when I thought back to the past" (P.266).

Akhila's encounter with the five women in the Ladies Coupe helped her recognise that she had given society an unnecessarily powerful role in her personal life. Akhila found the solution to her most pressing issue, 'Can a woman stay single and be happy, or does a woman require a guy to feel complete?' through the tales of these women. As a result, she comes to the conclusion that she re-connects with the gay man she was in love with but was afraid to embrace because of expectations of society.

Conclusion

Ladies Coupe challenges the status of women in a traditional-bound social system that sees women only as obedient daughters, docile wife, and mothers. They oppose these roles and assert personal dignity and freedom for themselves in post-colonial India. It's up to individuals to pen down their most basic physical and emotional needs, and then behave in an appropriate manner to meet them. Train travel symbolizes a getaway from one's past, one that will help one discover one's own sense of worth and dignity in the present day. Self-discovery is the goal. In Akhila's adult life, she's been haunted by a question. Throughout the narrative, she asks the same question to the

five women she encounters. To better understand the issues that women experience in their relationships with men as well as with their own mother features prominently throughout this tale set in modern-day India. Through Anita Nair's "Ladies Coupe," we see the importance of realising one's own worth. Although Anita Nair is not a feminist, her stories portray the feelings and thoughts of a woman, and how a woman deals with her own issues.

Feminism is the acknowledgment of the dominance of men over women and the efforts of women to abolish male privilege. Theory, method, and practise are all part of the effort to "change human relations.

– Cynthia Orozco.

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