

FEMINISTIC OUTLOOK IN ANITA NAIR'S "LADIES COUPE"

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ABSTRACT

Today the world of English literature has become very vast. Literature is nothing but an art, an understanding, love, affection and it is the reflection of life. The field of literature has main divisions; they are prose, poetry, drama, novel, fiction and criticism. Some famous personalities like Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, James Joyce, and Thomas Hardy were still remembered for their eternal works in the field of literature. They are mainly known for their unique style in writing fiction. The readers of today may find their outlook stern and grim. But, however they were very much admired in their own time.

Not only the British novelists helped in growth of fiction but also some of the Indian novelists have also contributed their writings in the field of fiction. They were also known as Indo- Anglican novelists. Some of them are R.K.Narayan, MulkRajAnand, ManoharMalgonkar, RajaRao, NayantaraSahgal, AnitaDesai, and KamalaMarkandaya, Shashi Deshpande, Bharathi Mukherjee, Manju Kapur and Anita Nair. Among the women novelists Anita Nair's approach to literature through fiction inspired me to do this research study.

KEYWORDS: Novelists, Shashi Deshapande, Arundhati Roy

INTRODUCTION

Women novelists have also shown their extra ordinary caliber and immutable imprint in the realm of Indian fictions in English. They have shown their mettle in every field and in some respects. Far better than the male. The novelists of the post independence period, who highlighted the causes of women, are Anita Desai, Rama Mehta, Shashi Deshapande and Arundhati Roy etc. Their main focus was on the undesirable dominance of men over women.

Anita Nair occupies a prominent place as a novelist in Indian Literature. In her novels, she depicts all kinds of characters and explains how her characters are alienated from one another and from society. Her concentration is exclusively on the women's feeling and thoughts, and their search for self – identity. Anita Nair had a staunch belief that someday the world would want to hear what she had to say. (Never minding the rejection slips that came in so regularly). It began with a poem 'Happenings in the London Underground' being included in an anthology brought out by the Poetry Society of India in 1992. Stories and middles started appearing in print. Her fiction was broadcast on the radio on numerous occasions. In addition, she began to contribute regularly to the Times of India.

Anita Nair's major themes are of social treatment, human relationships, particularly that of man and woman, their loneliness and lack of communication. (Nair's attempt to explore the psyche of her characters in the endless pages of her novels with woman as her principal focus motivated the research to take up one of her novels, The Ladies Coupe, for analysis.) Feminism is one of the most prevalent themes of Nair; an in depth study of her novels proves that she is mainly inclined to probe the woman's psyche. In her novels, the reader is brought face to face with the legitimate longings,

dreams, hopes, fears, disappointments and the traumatic experience that have been faced by a lot of women.

In the flood of "women's writing", that depicts women as battered, bartered and abandoned on the shoals of low self worth, Anita Nair's second novel rides triumphantly against the tide. The novel "**The Ladies Coupe**"(2001) is a portrayal of the personality of a woman, whose feelings and thoughts are laid bare from a psychological perspective. In Ladies Coupe, Nair has resorted to one of the oldest ploys.

Nair's characters too are singularly life affirming. Though they do not confess their life stories publicly to each other while sitting in what used to be a regular feature of rail journeys, the "ladies compartment" or coupe of the title, the manner in which she has them sharing their experiences with the protagonist, Akhila or Akhilandeswari, as she becomes towards the end, assuming her full potential as a woman, quite often sounds like a female version of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Akhila has never done anything for herself as she has been working her butt off to support her father-less family. She has been so busy that she had no time to even contemplate marriage. When finally she does like a person, she finds him too young for her. Her life takes a turn when she decides to take a break, alone, and finds herself traveling in this Ladies Coupe. All the experiences of her travel mates change the way she thinks and she sheds her old self and transforms into a new confident person. The main premise seemed to be the fact that a woman needs company... but not with all the strings attached. Which is perfectly all right... she needs her freedom too.

It talks about all the things we normally consider as taboo but actually, they already exist in Society. Though wrapped under layers of tradition... that is when one gets to see the Hypocrisy of society. Most of the incidents in the book are ones we have come across... but here it is more of in-your-face stuff and one cannot escape the details. This makes more sensitive to the subject. It is very well written in this aspect. The ending one can be sure that it will bring about a different reaction from every reader. There are bound to be differences of opinion here. "As far as I am concerned. Akhila got what she deserved," says Nair. She has taken charge of her life and gets what she has been missing out. It shows one that in life it is never too late for taking charge of things. So maybe here is the positive aspect after all.

Feminism is by no means a monolithic term. If one seek a common strand in a number of its varieties, it is the critique of the patriarchal modes of thinking which aims at the domination of the male and the subordination of the female. This patriarchal ideology teaches women to internalize this concept in the process of their socialization. It brings to fore the concepts of gender, which are manufactured. On reading Simone de Beauvoir there came a thought view that the history of humanity is a history of systematic attempts to silence the female. She states, One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... which is described as feminine.

In the beginning... Some years ago I was buying a ticket and I found this special ladies line clubbed with the handicapped and senior citizens. I was a little disturbed by the blatant inequality and I wanted to write about it. You either discuss it or write essays. In my case, whenever things perplex me, I write fiction. -- Anita Nair

In contrast to persistent orientalist constructions of the Indian woman as a passive victim, women writers from the Indian subcontinent have written prolifically and movingly of women negotiating and resisting the multiple patriarchies that determine and shape their lives in diverse colonial, postcolonial, and diasporic situations. A woman should be attractive, but at the same time not too headstrong which can be seen as unattractive. A woman should be a goddess for the men to worship, but still have some grotesque sides within her in order to show human characteristics.

Anita Nair the writer and lover of human thoughts portray her characters in a more feminine way. She is not confined to the ideas of man. Her view on characters are something different from all the other writers. In one of her interview with the author, the novelist shared her ideas on the themes which shows very clearly that watching and reading people is the beat hobbt adhered by the novelist. Almost all her fictions are the experien the novelist faced or heard in passing through it.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus the novelist clearly reveals that 'Ladies Coupe is the finer work of her that make each and every woman come and go in one point of time. Also the woman perception on men and matters are casual and committed. Almost all the men depicted by the novelist in 'Ladies Coupe' are either pervert or pre-occupied.

REFERENCE

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