
DESCRIPTION OF IMPRISONMENT AND CAPTIVITY IN ANITA NAIR'S LADIES COUPE

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Abstract

Indian Writing in English today has come to occupy a respectable position and the credit for it goes to a good number of women writers whose writings have brought to light the various aspects left untouched and ignored by their male counterparts widely considered as feminist writers, they describe not only their family fluids and their inferior status but they also depict the sores in their souls and their agonies as individuals. Anita Nair is one of the most confident woman novelists in exploring the torturous sensibilities, the troubled spirits and trapped situations of women in strict societal patterns. Anita Nair conveys her protagonists' dilemmas with freshness and charm. Anita Nair's second novel *Ladies Coupe* has turned out to be a great success. It is the story of a woman's search for strength and independence and is about women's conditions in a male-dominated society, narrated with great insight, solidarity, and humor. The research paper entitled "Description of Imprisonment and Captivity in the Anita Nair's novel Ladies Coupe" is an attempt to focus upon for the writers perspective especially as a woman, has been highlighting feminine issues.

Key Words: Emerging, solidarity, self-identity, feminine.

Introduction

Nair deals with the various problems of women and takes up all those issues that most women would not dare to voice in public. Some of the issues that she so skilfully deals with are gender bias, desire the 'male-made' society, breaking the patriarchal order much more. All Women face similar problems all around. However, things are especially difficult for those coming from the lower stratum of society. Those coming from the upper class and those financially independent certainly find things easier. A woman in spite of all her talents and skills has to work twice as hard to prove her identification and in spite of all her struggle and endeavor is in the least appreciated.

Ladies Coupe is a novel in parts in which the lives and experience of six women are welded together by the novelist, with Akila as a magnet in the center. Each chapter of the novel is devoted to the story of one woman.

Akila is placed in a situation of unfamiliarity and dislocation, precisely because her struggle for identity to come out more clearly. To achieve this, Nair creates a space where disparate identities meet, clash and grapple with each other in situations or relations of domination and subordination.

Akira realizes that she has wasted life all these sixteen years as she juggled with her career and family. In fact, she is the only unmarried person in her office where twenty-four people work. The deprivations of her life impinge strongly on her psyche. Marriage, motherhood and child-rearing, she recognizes as holding out possibilities. It gives a reason to live, she thinks. She becomes aware of the fact that she has been living life "without dreams". Akila didn't want a husband. She didn't want to be a mere extension again. Akila's childhood friend Karpagam, a feminist tells her that she can live alone in the world after the death of her husband and encourages Akila telling her she would not feel lonely.

Janaki, a pampered wife and confused mother who got married at the age of eighteen and had led forty years of comfortable married life. When Akila sees Janaki and her husband she gets the idea, "A woman can't be live alone. A woman can't cope alone"(LC 39). She reverses to the victim position two and is tormented by the question "Whither goest thou?"(LC39) Akila is very perplexed about whether she is going in the right direction. With Janaki's revelation, Akila begins to make a search of her own 'self and her memories take her to her childhood experiences to reconstruct the life of her mother.

Margaret's story is the story of a woman who learns her own strategies to get her dreams true. Margaret's husband, Ebenezer Paulraj, is an example of male dominance. He exercises Margaret into a position of subservient silence, making her out to be an unnoticed and ordinary girl. A girl, with a sparkling academic career and a warm and exciting personality, is reduced to an average girl. His subtle cruelty to the children in his school gets repeated with his wife too. Once he was infatuated with the girlish characteristics of Margaret. It was visible even at their first meet. To preserve the girlish charm in her, when she happily announced her pregnancy, he insisted on to abort the baby, Margaret's felt confusion, fury, distress, ache, and decadence. She identifies herself with golden fish. Ebenezer's love for food and sex becomes a tool for Margaret. She starts pampering Ebenezer with sex and food he likes the most in his life. The result he becomes fat, loses his egotism and needs her more and more. She once controlled by him earlier, now holds him completely in her hands. She starts to take him and the day she realizes her hatred towards him, she feels liberated from some unknown command: I Mouthed the words: I HATE HIM. I HATE MY HUSBAND PAULRAJ. I HATE HIM. HATE HIM.

(LC). A unique way adapted by Margaret helps her to go back into society, changes her parents' outlook and attitude of her husband. The strategy finding and attacking the failing of the rival to win him is creatively handled by Anita Nair. The heavy despair of Margaret, her silenced voice, her physical and mental sufferings, and the attempt she takes to make her tough are the places where Anita Nair proves to be a prominent writer of Indian writing in English.

Akila's next companion is Prabha Devi. She has led her life in comfort and luxury as a daughter and daughter-in-law. Her visit to New York makes her conscious of her own beauty, her own dreams, and her freedom. Akila is impressed by the confidence and renewed interest of Prabha Devi to construct her own life. Akila gets a better perception of life from Prabha Devi's confession. She learns that one's freedom is in one's own hands and not in the hands of others.

Sheela is a fourteen-year-old girl who is of a different generation to Janaki's, but she possesses a mental maturity that quite surpasses her age. She describes the death of her maternal grandmother due to cancer. The matriarch turns mad, eats all the food left in the house and speaks her mind. She accepts her grandmother's death with the air of a person who has seen it all and done it all.

Marikolunthu is subjugated to the pinnacle of victimization. She is raped and becomes the mother of an illegal son. She represents the lower class of Indian society and is thwarted by a series of disappointments. Her life is very pathetic and miserable. She transforms into a mature lady by accepting her son, Muthu. She is the realistic picture of the humble and miserable peasant woman upon whom male oppression is continually forced and allowed to go on, unquestioned by all.

Karpagam, a childhood friend of Akila, is pertinent as a very modern and unconventional woman. She lives according to her wishes and instincts. Although she is a widow, defies all norms to be followed by the widows and Adams herself with colored clothes and jewelry

Conclusion

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* brings into focus the issue of self-discovery. Nair is not a feminist; *Ladies Coupe* is one such novel which deals with a woman's quest for strength and self-discovery. At the end of the novel, we realize every person possess some fine qualities and inner vigor which even they are unaware of. It is only in the face of certain toward incident or conditions into which they are thrown that these traits begin to surface. Further, these qualities receive a finer border and luster only when faced with predicaments. Six women find themselves together in a *Ladies Coupe*, traveling each for her own purpose. This *Ladies Coupe* becomes a comfort zone where each one begins voicing their tale and in the process is both reassured and persuaded of greater things.

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