



PROJECTION OF MURKY LIFE OF WOMEN IN PATRIARCHY IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF ANITA NAIR, MANJU KAPUR AND ARUNDHATI ROY

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ABSTRACT

The present paper entitled "Projection of Murky life of Women in Patriarchy in the Select Novels of Anita Nair, Manju Kapur and Arundhati Roy" is an observant task for me. Tradition has always been a staunch tool in a patriarchal society to subjugate women. Anita Nair, is an connoisseur in projecting the nuptial issues of women in her novel always had an affinity towards writing and the courage to pursue it under all the situations. She relates to the many roles women play in their lives and it is reflected in her novel *Ladies Coupe*. Manju Kapur, Commonwealth Awardee has presented intriguing portrayal of a woman who represents the ecstasy and the agont of being married in her novel *A Married Woman*. Arundhati Roy, is a powerful exponent of feminism in her novel. An Indian author who is best known for her novel which won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1997. As a political activist involved in human rights she has depicted the life of women in patriarchal society vividly in her novel *The God of Small Things*. The focal point of my present paper is to infer the murky life of women in the select novels and explore the Weaknesses of women who are carefully studied and ruthlessly exploited by the most unscrupulous members of the the patriarchal society. Status of today's women is demonstrated as if they are liberated and taking part in all walks of life but in reality it reversal.

Keywords: connoisseur, nuptial, Patriarchal, Commonwealth, feminism.

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INTRODUCTION

Tagore said, "Women are the ornaments of society". Women in literature and in real life have struggled to be accepted as wholly human as men. Women's freedom movements, examine the quandary of identity-less woman. Betty Friedan narrates, "The problem is always being the Children's mommy or the minister's wife and never being myself" (Friedan, 2001:73). Based on some

nebulous norms their domestic enslavement more bluntly expressed as "Woman's place is in the home." This is no more evident than the violence to which a woman is subjected in her domestic setup. The society was male dominated and he ruled mainly by ethics and morals. As a traditional form, the status and social role of the women in every society, specific Indian society have been women are weaker than men. The social stratification of

women in-India however leaves them as a second rate citizen. Violence against woman is present in every society cutting boundaries of class, culture, education and age. Even though most societies proscribe violence against woman, the reality is that she is tortured physically, psychologically, sexually and economically, the right to equality, security dignity and self worth are denied to woman. At times the place where a woman seeks love, safety, security and shelter, becomes a place of terror and violence at the hands of somebody close to them whom they trust.

Women in India have been always topics of concern since ancient period. They are always revealed as an exact example of perfect homemakers. With their incomparable quality of the calmness of mind they easily handle even toughest situation as well. The Indian women are fully devoted to their families. The evolution of the status and social position of women in India has been a continuous process of ups and downs throughout history. This paper examines feministic issues on women's position in patriarchal society by investigating the select novels *Ladies Coupe'*, *A Married Woman* and *The God of Small Things* which presents the conditions of male supremacy, and the many ways in which its ideas were deployed to keep women oppressed. The presenter will also explore the intersection of marriage and women rights which has produced different meanings of patriarchy in India.

Discussion

In "Ladies Coupe", Anita Nair deals with the concept of patriarchy and signifies inequality in relationships. Her novel raises questions about the role of woman in contemporary postcolonial India. Nair's India suffers from a system of sex role stereotyping and oppression of woman that exist under patriarchal social organization. The woman characters in the novel "Ladies Coupe" seems to be the personifications of new women who have been trying to throw off the burden of inhibitions they have carried for ages. They go through the grueling experiences of domestic oppression at the hands of the repressive forces of society but finally they revolted against the oppressions and resolved to discover them and establish them in society.

The "Ladies Coupe's story is an attempt to show how, in life, suppression and oppression do not always come in recognizable forms, but often under the guise of love and protection". Anita Nair's "Ladies Coupe" traces the lives of six women as they travel in the ladies compartment. It is about a train journey taken by the chief protagonist, Akhila to search within herself for strength independence and answer to many questions that have disturbed her spinsterhood. In the ladies compartment she meets five other women. They are Janaki, Margaret Shanthi, Prabha Devi, Sheela, and Marikolunthu. As they are travelling, Akhila asks a problematic question to them": can a woman stay single and be happy?" To answer her question, everybody starts narrating their own story. Through their stories, Nair has sympathetically explained the woman's agonies, endurance, sufferings, anticipations, etc.

The protagonist Akhila in the novel "Ladies Coupe" is a forty five year old spinster, daughter, sister, aunt and the only provider of her family after the death of her father. When Akhila's father dies, all the responsibilities come to her shoulders. Due to her earning makes her younger brothers to pursue their education. Due to her financial support her younger brother Narayanan becomes a mechanic and Narsi becomes a teacher. Narsi decides to marry the college principal's daughter. But nobody in her family has considered about Akhila's marriage. When Narsi told the family that he was going to marry the principal's daughter, No one could find fault with his choice and there was nothing any one could Say expect perhaps don't you think you should wait for your elder sister to get Married before you think of a wife and a family? As her younger sister Padma grows up, her marriage is planned but no one seems to think that Akhila too has her needs. Though Akhila has done her duties, all that of a head, just because she is a woman. Amma expects Akhila to get permission from her brothers to go on an office tour as she says, "Perhaps you should ask your brothers permission first". When Akhila argues that she is their elder sister and why she should their permission, for that simply says "you might be older but you are a woman and they are the men of the family". Thus there rises patriarchal domination.

Again when Akhila has thought to live alone, her sister Padma reiterates her to ask permission from her brothers because they are the men of the family. Padma says "do you think the brothers will consent this? Do you think they'll let you live alone?" Thus everyone including Padma, Narsi, Narayanan are strongly rooted of a woman living alone. But finally Akhila wants to authorize herself. Hence, she breaks their restrictions by boarding the train to Kanyakumari to discover herself.

Margaret Shanti is another example of how women are dominated upon by male power. Her life goes through man physical, mental and spiritual crises. Margaret, a chemistry teacher once adored her husband, an obnoxious headmaster but grows to hate him later. She marries Ebenezar Paulraj at her own choice. Ebenezar Paulraj is dominating, mean and almost perverse. He is the nastiest example of male chauvinism in the novel. Initially, Margaret does not understand the deep rooted male egoism in Ebenezar Paulraj, as her extreme love for him has made her blind. From an ambitious and brilliant student who wants to chart out a career on her own, she becomes a submissive wife to Ebenezar. He wheels her completely. She is persuaded to do B.Ed through she wanted to do Ph.D.. He says "what's the point of working for a doctorate? Do your B.Ed so you can become a teacher and then we will always be together. Long hair doesn't suit you. Cut it off. You will look nicer with your hair in a blunt bob".she has to work wherever her husband works. A woman with brilliant academic career and a warm and vibrant personality, she is reduced to a silent spectator. He becomes more and more overbearing after he becomes the principal of a school. He begins to nag her and finds fault in her house keeping and looking. Due to Ebenezar's insistence, Margaret aborts her first pregnancy. This is an unending situation for Margaret. The more cruel attitude of Ebenezar is that he does not allow Margaret to apprise her pregnancy even to her parents. As Ebenezar is becoming more and more egoistic, domineering and hypocritical, Margaret is unconsciously compelled to teach him a lesson. She chooses flattery as the weapon to bring down

Ebenezar's self esteem. She flatters and flatters and feeds him with fatty food, till fat finds its home on him and turns him into a fat man, a quiet man, and an easy man who seek her help for every task.

A Married Woman, the Fiction of Manju Kapur "Involves a basic definition of feminism and what it means in the Indian context. It specifies the direction in which feminism in Indian English fiction has evolved and the kind of feminism Kapur adopts to scrutinize the problems besetting the Indian woman. It discusses why Western theories on feminism cannot be blindly applied to analyze feminist issues in India and how important it is for us to evolve our understanding of feminism to tackle problems unique to the Indian situation. The novel explores Astha's longing for a purpose in her life other than being a wife and mother against a vividly realized backdrop of Indian sectarian politics. It presents an interesting collage of the problems, insecurities and unrest faced by middle class woman and nation both at the verge of transition. The author presents a lesbian relationship between Astha and Pipeelika but in the end regularity norms are set in play to confine women's sexuality within the framework of heteronormativity-i.e. relationship that are monogamous, within marriage and often with opposite sex.

In her debut novel *The God of Small Things*, Arundhati Roy has presented a stunning tale of women who have been placed at margin of society. She rightly puts forth how women become victims of violence, exploitation, alienation and exile. The protagonist of novel is Ammu. The divorce with drunkard husband leaves her no option but to return to her parents with two children. A divorcee woman has no place and respect in the traditional family. Thus, the family members were hostile, neglectful and unfriendly to her and her children. She receives mental torture from the ladies of her family. In spite of all these sufferings she loves and cares her innocent children. She plans for their future, their education and perfection of manners. She becomes mother and father both for them. At this stage it is observed that mother in her character is predominated than a woman. When she meets untouchable Velutha, a Paravan after many years makes her take a fatal decision to "to love by night

the man her children loved by day." This couple is neglected and discarded by the orthodox society, found solace in union. The secret love meeting goes on for thirteen days until it is reported by Velutha's father to Mammachi. When this disastrous affair is revealed, Velutha is grabbed by police and killed on false case of rape. When Ammu went to police station to set the record straight against Velutha, at that time the police officer insulted her with remark that the "Kottayam police does not take statement from Veshyas (prostitutes) and their illegitimate children."(58). This brutal behavior of police shows that he used his power to marginalize Ammu. At the end of novel, Ammu is exiled from home by her family members. She is separated from her children and not allowed to visit Ayemenem. She desperately tries to seek good job in anonymous places. Tired, exhausted, sick and finally defeated she is found dead in a grimy room in Bharat Lodge in Aleppy at age of thirty one. In short Roy truly reflects the marginal Indian woman in her novel *The God of Small things*.

Conclusion

From the very beginning, girls and boys are expected to play their designated roles in the patriarchal society. Marriage is a patriarchal institution but as Millet affirms, "Patriarchy's chief institution is the family".(Millet, 1968:25) but in family sexual dominion is the powerful concept of control. A woman becomes faceless wife or mother within the marriage and lose her identity. Present day feminist thought seeks to destroy masculinist hierarchy but not sexual dualism. It is necessarily pro-woman but this doesn't mean it has to be anti-man. Men's perception towards women must be revitalized and this will act as a rebalancing factor between women and men of the social, economic and political power within a society. After the 1980's feminism emerges as a thought system, a point of view to reorganize world realities, and a step towards better human relationships.

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