

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN ANITA NAIR'S *LADIES COUPE*

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Abstract:

*Traditionally, conflict is a major literary element of narrative or dramatic structure that creates challenges in a story by adding uncertainty to if the goal would be achieved. A narrative is not limited to a single conflict. While conflicts may not always resolve in narrative, the **resolution** of a conflict creates closure or fulfillment, which may or may not occur at a story's end. Conflict in literature refers to the different drives of the characters or forces involved. Conflict may be internal or external-that is, it may occur within a character's mind or between a character and exterior forces. This paper attempts to show the use of narrative conflict in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe and how it exterminated the patriarchal society to show the woman as a rebellious being at times of need.*

Key words: Anita Nair, feminism, conflict, narrative technique.

Introduction

Technique is a very important weapon for the writer to write his literary work or work of art successfully. Narrative technique is the means of producing a specific effect of a novel. With the employment of right technique only the writer would be able to convey his ideas to the readers. Technique acts as the middleman between life and art which helps the novelist in interpreting and transforming reality. This creation involves employment of several devices. It helps the readers to discover and travel among other selves, other identities and other variety of human adventures. It is the 'how' (technique) rather than the 'what' (subject) is instrumental in causing paradigm shifts, in founding literary schools and in originating major literary trends. Hence narrative technique is not just an ornament or super imposed element upon the content to give it additional value but the intrinsic quality of the subject matter itself. Anita Nair very well uses the narrative technique in her novel Ladies Coupe to portray the story in the minds of the readers and make them feel the reality of the harsh society through the eyes of the narrator. Anita Nair's narration is natural and convincing. She has done something unique in portraying the problems of modern Indian woman. Anita Nair is a popular Indian writer and contemporary Indian novelist and poetry who has written many novels like Ladies Coupe, Lessons in Forgetting, The Better Man and many more. She has portrayed in her novels the oppression of woman in a male dominated society. She makes an effort to show that if a human wants they can fight within themselves and come out from the zone of the disturbance level and disburse themselves to lead a comfortable life. She tries to show the women characters strong and make them fight within themselves and set themselves free from the intricacies of relationships and achieve their goals. She clearly sets example for each woman to recognize their own self-identity and self-actualization and fight for their rights. The theme of this paper is to show how Anita Nair uses the narrative technique in a plain way shimmering on the post modern woman and how to make them enable to deal with the complexity of relationships and give a lift to think for oneself. No society wonder how an individual lives, they only speak a mouth full of unnecessary logics which they think every women should follow. The narrative technique used in the novel by the narrator Akhila concentrates on the concept of inner self within the large society. The characters not only realized their inner self but also decided to

fight against the male dominance society. Anita Nair has taken an outstanding place with her style and narration. Although the narration is a plain one with simple language but Anita Nair has used in such a way that the readers can epitomize the truth of the society through the reading of the novel. She has been consciously yet consciously aware of the male superstructure which burdens gender. So in the present state of affairs, she conveys a striking concrete impression of authority which naturally proclaims a threat against patriarchy. She makes her passages concerned about the femininity and revolving around the masculine superstructure.

Objectives

The objective of the study of this paper is to detect the major styles and techniques used by Anita Nair in relation to her novel "Ladies Coupe" and to show how Anita Nair has used the narrative technique in a convincing way to establish her notion of gender. She has also used the narrative technique to fulfill the following objectives as mentioned below.

1. To consider freedom of women in Indian society and make women able to fight between oneself and society's fear and come out of it to live their life in their own way.
2. To revolt against the oppression for independence and equality in society.
3. To portray women as successful in their social life and individual life.
4. To express the theme of discharging their responsibilities and winning the conflict from oneself and society preserving their value and dignity.

Hypothesis

It attempts to show how Anita Nair has used the technique in her novel to mirror the truth of the society and make the readers understand the concept of the self within the society. It finds a way to gain freedom for women keeping their dignity in their family and society.

Methodology

The method I have used is analytical method with the help of primary sources and secondary sources.

Discussion

Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* has multi narrators. The main narrator is a third person. As the novel has used a third person narrator, it enables her to explain her perception on men and matters in an objective way. The main narrator is a middle aged spinster, Akhilandeswari. She is the narrator protagonist and in her lies the central consciousness of the novel. As the narrator narrates the story there is an alternation between the present and the past. The narration moves forward and backward in time and space. All the characters in the novel have come across the same experience that has taken place in the three periods of time: the past, the present and the future. And this enables us to dive a greater depth into the consciousness of the protagonist. This technique has been used in the novel in order to realize her objective of presenting a vivid picture of the protagonist's mind and its interaction with the other characters and the milieu. Hence the stream of consciousness is the work of mind and flash back is a person's narration in which the past is unfolded in a straight forward manner. The novel opens as Akhila is waiting in the railway station to board the Kanyakumari express. There when she reads the board, "Ladies, Senior Citizens and Handicapped Persons" (6), there is a turbulence in her conscious state. She is angry at these wordings in the board. This is revealed through the interior monologue, "but why spoil it all by clubbing women with senior citizens and handicapped persons?" (6). This conscious of her that arouses in favour of women reveals that she is standing in the threshold of living a life of her own. Anita Nair has also used flash back technique in the novel *Ladies Coupe*. It is the story of five women who are connected with Akhila the protagonist in the train. The novel opens with a third person narrator. Among the stories of five women, the stories of two women namely Margaret Shanthi and Marikolanthu are told by first person narrators. As Margaret and Marikolanthu tell their life stories to Akhila they flash back and tell it straight forward to Akhila. As

Margaret unfolds her past of her love with Ebenezer Paulraj, their marriage, the abortion of her first child, the tyranny of her husband and how she had overcome her tyrannical husband, Akhila gets the confidence that her decision of leaving her family and lead a life alone is not a predicament. Margaret Shanthi starts telling her story as: I, Margaret Shanthi, did it with the sole desire for revenge to erode his self-esteem and shake the very foundations of his being. To rid this world of a creature who if allowed to remain the way he was, slim, lithe and arrogant, would continue to harvest sorrow with a single-minded joy (96). Marikolanthu was a silent observer of the stories of the four women. In anger she began telling her story to Akhila. She was angry because according to her all the four women have made a fuss of little things. For her she was the most tragic woman and the ever strongest woman who had overcome that tragedy: I thought, these women are making such a fuss about little things. What would they ever do if real tragedy confronted them? What do they know of life and the toll it takes? What do they know of how cruel the world can be the women? (209). The story of her past strengthens Akhila's confidence and as she gets down the train, she has become a powerful woman. The relationship between the writer and reader is constructed by this type of narrative which obviously creates a sense of readability. The texts move back and forth in a non-linear progression yet without sacrificing the continuity of events. The immense worth of Anita Nair's novels has been tinged with an exemplified fervour for language. The passages anticipate the effects of the character well in advance so that the use of words and expressions make the text subsequently fixed deep-seated as the postmodern text. What precisely is to be noted here is the novelist's effective use of expressions which fulfills the emotive needs of the writer. Hence, one is well aware of the fact that Anita Nair does not deal with crude emotions or unnecessary sensation. The words create profound emotion and which proclaims the feminist doctrine. The words help the readers to evaluate experience. Women can be strong if they are able to find the strength buried into their depths. One of the ordinary features shared by the female characters of *Ladies Coupe* is that most of them have forgotten to be a woman. The characters in the novel undertake the journey of suppression and revolt on their lives. Men and women are indivisible and the bond between them is not only a right but also a rite. The ladies coupe gives women travellers a wisdom of courage and sisterhood and also a clearer idea about their objective in life. These women have spent their lives being restricted into male-dominated and male-related spaces. The only way to survive with their agony is to ascertain their inner strength and to be sturdy, despite of family ties and social chauvinisms.

Ladies Coupe is an ideal paradigm of modern women's writing in India as it discovers entirely women's identities and their reliable relationship with the tradition, male-dominated culture and gender bigotry restrictions. Akhila not merely observed everything but has also given a persistent glimpse at her psyche. Akhila learns through all experiences and realizes the pointlessness of clinging to support systems, be it a man, a woman, or institutions, for ultimately everything leads to nothing, but one form of confinement or capture. She realizes the value of freedom. Akhila decides that she needs companion in the journey of her life and she thinks Hari to be the right person. After listening to the life stories of the five women, she relives her experiences and decides that she has a right, even at the age of forty-five to seek her lover Hari and begin a new life. Her decision is her rebellion against the society and its repressive forces. She has had a spiritually and emotionally liberating journey and Akhila forms herself and discovers life. She learnt life is attractive, thrilling and full of wonders. She learnt that it is in her hands to create happiness and it is her responsibility alone. Akhila is undoubtedly a lucid example of the new woman who chooses freedom and sovereignty. Women can be strong if they are able to find the strength hidden into their depths. Akhila learns through all these experiences and realizes the senselessness of clinging it to support organizations, be it a man, be it a woman, or institutions; in the end everything leads to nothing but one form of captivity or capture of some kind. Anita Nair gives an answer to the question whether a woman can survive alone by presenting an insight into the way of women live in India. There is an aspect of sympathy

in all women. The author has touched on many controversial and sensitive subjects, but all with extreme elegance and calibre. She talks about untouchability, casteism, cultural and religious bias, betrayal, abuse and disrespect of women, domination of power and money and even homosexuality. The novel remains an uplifting tale of womanhood, love and endurance. It brings out the preferences women make for themselves and options made for them. Akhila's experience teaches that a female can survive and get her identity and liberty not by keeping herself secluded from the male-dominated society but by co-operating with them.

Findings

1. The characters are shown as strong women who can make a stand for themselves to fight for their own dignity.
2. The characters revolted back to gain equality in the society.
3. The characters are shown leading their freedom maintaining their dignity and freedom in society.
4. The use of stream of consciousness technique is very well portrayed in the novel.
5. The narrative technique used in the story focuses mainly on the woman character to rebel against the patriarchy and under the concept of 'self'.

Conclusion

Anita Nair's novels are brave and independent and the women characters are only needed to prove themselves as strong rebellion at situations when needed. Readers see a new image of the women characters in Anita Nair's "Ladies Coupe" as self independent, self-reliance, courageous and strong opponent towards patriarchal system. The title of the paper clearly indicates that the narrative technique used in the novel by Anita Nair has fulfilled the purpose of writing as it has connected the readers with the daily life of the people. The technique demands to fulfill that if a women realizes her inner needs she can win a conflict within herself to achieve something. She can achieve it at her own stand maintaining her purity in the society. She needs no support at her back to make her success in life if she wills to achieve. Through the use of the narrative technique the writer has tried to bring out the inner self of the six woman characters. The narrative techniques help the writer to evoke delight, sympathy, wonder and sorrow in the readers. Anita Nair's use of narrative technique was an attempt to generate the graphic images and visions of her mind into the readers. Even though other women novelists are more famous for their style and for their approach in handling fiction, Anita Nair has taken up an outstanding place as a novelist in Indian literature. Anita Nair stands unique in her style, character portrayal, uplifting woman's rights and duties in their life. She vividly portrays their sufferings in the society. Anita Nair is particularly good on the domestic details such as lazy Sunday lunches, a family row, the sights, sounds and smells of a busy railway station, which make up her characters', live. To acknowledge the fact, she has proved that, her books are a novel in parts and indeed, she seems more adept at stringing together a collection of short stories than in going for the long story.

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