

THE THEME OF ISOLATION AND ALIENATION IN THE NOVELS OF ANITA NAIR

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Abstract

In modern literature, the theme of isolation and alienation has been applied by many writers in various genres like novel, play and short stories. It displays the gap between individual and others. This gap is in the sense of emotional, psychological and social relations. This theme has been reflected especially after the Great World War in the twentieth century. It has influenced to the authors in other various languages in other countries also. Indian authors are also not different in this case. The plot of the novel or play has been interwoven in various situations which exhibit strikingly the theme of isolation and alienation. Various Indian English writers have also focused on this theme. In recent time, Anita Nair is a novelist who has depicted situation and characters in familial background in relation to this theme. The family problems like miss-communication, state of deprival, treatment of hatred, gender bias, diversion in temperament and relational attachment are the major issues in her novels. She has presented in various backdrop with the different socio-cultural milieu. Her characters are facing plea of isolation and treatment of alienation as they are unaware about their upcoming situation what they are not expecting. The entanglement in situation has put forward them into the complexity of life. Nair's characters Akhila in 'Ladies Coupe', Meera in 'Lessons in forgetting', Radha in 'Mistress', Lena Abraham in 'Alphabet Soup for Lovers', Mukundan in 'The Better Man' and Idris in 'Idris:Keeper of the Light' face the traumatic situations in their lives. These situations bring them into the feelings of isolation physically and psychologically.

Keywords: ignorance, state of deprival, rejection, detachment in relationship

Introduction

Anita Nair is a prominent name in Indian English literature in the recent time. She has written novels which focus on human relation, familial issues, conjugal issues, emotional and psychological crisis. Nair's character-Akhila in 'Ladies Coupe' has repulsive feelings about her life which forced her to leave from the situation. Akhila being an unmarried woman faces the emotional crisis in her life which tends her to come out from the situation. Nair's second novel 'Lessons in forgetting' shows the deprival and snobbishness of the life. Her novel 'Mistress' displays the multiple relations of Radha with men which ultimately results into her isolated life. Lena Abraham in 'Alphabet Soup for Lovers' is a victim of alienated feelings due to her husband and its end is her escape from this treatment. She accepts the way of freedom for which she was deprived. Mukundan in 'The Better Man' and Idris in 'Idris: Keeper of the Light' are away from the true familial love and emotions. The theme of isolation and alienation are strikingly shown in Nair's novels in various stages of life and in various social backgrounds.

The feeling of ignorance and deprival in Nair's characters: A survey of isolation and alienation

Akhila is the protagonist of the novel 'Ladies Coupe' in which she is emotionally a neglected and a suppressed character. Akhila did everything for everyone. She did not do the same for herself, just for others. She has spent much of the time in the welfare of the family members still it's in vain. She was rejected by her family members as she is only the caretaker of the family. In this process, her emotional, physical and psychological needs have been suppressed. The feeling of isolation gathers in her mind through this ignorance and its result her elopement from the tedious routine life. Her isolation forms since her childhood being a girl child. Her expectations and ambitions have been put away by her closed ones. She has interest to do something in her life, but her interests have been frequently rejected. Each individual has ambitions in her or his life. If an individual is prevented by others or by the situation, he or she becomes unsatisfied and unfulfilled on the emotional level. It can divert his or her attention from his or her life. It naturally creates the feelings of alienation in the mind of an individual. Akhila's attention is diverted in this sense, so she decides to escape from the present life. The cause of alienation can be seen through her escape from the situation. Her meeting with the unknown women in coupe transforms her life. When she intermingles her emotional life with their stories, she comes to know the isolation is the part of women's life. It is a remarkable thing that women face the common feeling of isolation and alienation. The stories of six women in 'Ladies Coupe' can be the standard for this. 'Lessons in forgetting' displays the theme of isolation and alienation in its protagonist-Meera. Meera is the real victim of betrayal in the relationship. Her husband's decisive nature hurts her which she never forgets in her life. She has done everything for him still she has been betrayed by him. The isolation forms in her life when she is disturbed by her husband. Her husband's quit from conjugal life means the formation of alienation in their relationship. The female character in 'Mistress'- Radha feels alienated when she comes in the contact of different men in her life. Her husband's forcibly makes relation with her. Her husband believes a woman is a toy in the hands of a man. It forms the feeling of alienation in the mind of Radha. When the oppression is done directly-indirectly by the closed ones, an individual mentally and emotionally suffers more. The same traits are seen in Lena Abraham in 'Alphabet Soup for Lovers'. Her loneliness forms in the presence of her life partner. Her husband cannot pay attention to her which becomes harsh thing in her life. She is unfulfilled by the desires and expectations what she deserves. Nair has shown the remarkable picture of isolation and alienation in her female characters.

Nair has applied the same theme in her male characters also. Mukundan in 'The Better Man' obsesses with the feeling of alienation which results into his isolation. His own desire to be a literary artist has been suppressed by his father. His father is tyrannical in nature which directly makes reverse impact on his mind. Like Akhila, he is mentally and emotionally harassed since his childhood. His state of unmarried shows he cannot connect himself with others. Idris in 'Idris: Keeper of the Light' is the victim of isolated life. The

cultural diversion cannot bring his closed ones together which made him very sensitive in the isolation. The cultural rules keep him away from emotional and familial fulfilment.

The theme of isolation and alienation is depicted vividly in the characters of Anita Nair. Nair has focused on various socio-cultural pictures which make direct impression in the minds of the characters. The character is influenced by specific situation or the person which increases the gap between the two individuals. The alienated feeling leads towards the isolation which emotionally and psychologically disturbs the character. Nair has successfully presented the situation through this.

Conclusion

The theme of isolation and alienation is displayed in Nair's novels through her characters' minds. Isolation means to keep away from others intentionally or unintentionally. The alienation can be formed due to the rejection and ignorance by the individual or society. Nair's characters are the victims of such rejection and ignorance which leads them into the state of isolation.

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