



Available online at www.jlls.org

JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTIC STUDIES

ISSN: 1305-578X

Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies, 17(3), 2384-2386; 2021

Leading Men In Anita Nair's Novels, *The Better Man* And *Mistress*

Mrs. R. Akila^a, Dr. A. Santhanalakshmi^b

^aPh.D Scholar, Department of English, ADM College for Women (Autonomous), (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli) Nagapattinam- 611 011. Email: visitakila@gmail.com

^bResearch Advisor & Associate Professor & Head (Rtd), Department of English, ADM College for Women (Autonomous), (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli) Nagapattinam- 611 011. Email: santhanalakshmiadmc@gmail.com

APA Citation:

Akila, R., & Santhanalakshmi, A. (2021). Leading Men In Anita Nair's Novels, *The Better Man* And *Mistress*, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3), 2384-2386.

Submission Date:08/10/2021

Acceptance Date:22/12/2021

Abstract

The intent of the present article is to present Anita Nair's male characters' quest to more on life from the novels, *The Better Man* and *Mistress*. Anita Nair portrays the conflict in the life of male characters through her novels. She has created for herself a niche – unsurpassed in Indian English Literature. Her novels are inestimable records of the state of human mind. Her novels are the platforms not only for studying inner mind of female characters but also for studying male characters.

Keywords: Male world, evaluation, self-discovery.

1. Introduction

Anita Nair is one of the liveliest women fiction writers. *The Better Man* is a great novel of Anita Nair. It describes the struggles and sufferings of Mukundan, protagonist of the novel, who remains unmarried. The action of the novel takes place in Kaikurissi, a little fictitious village. He is an ordinary man having common human weaknesses. He is afraid of his father Achuthan Nair right from his childhood. His father is a dominant character who suppresses his mother Panukutty and Mukundan. In this novel Mukundan who undergoes psychological trauma.

He returns unwillingly to his native village, Kairkurissi after retirement. He mourns for the death of his mother. His guilty conscious pricking him that he has become one of the reasons for the death of his mother who has experienced distress under the clutches of Achuthan Nair. Parukutty as well as Mukundan are the victims of his father's rudeness. His dreams are smashed. He is like a cave painting in the presence of his father.

Mukundan meets Bhasi a painter and a practitioner of herbal medicine. Friendship between Bhasi and Mukundan develops. Bhasi notices Mukundan's distress and decides to help him. He wishes to remove unwanted weeds of agony from Mukundan's mind and asks, "Tell me Mukundan. Tell me what it is that haunts you" (BM12).

Email: visitakila@gmail.com

Mukundan is the loser of the childhood pleasures. He even forgets Meenakshi, his cousin. He experiences solitude. He feels himself as a lifeless person. He suffers like a cannibal. But Bashi Comes forward and extends his helping hand towards Mukundan whom he recovers from the valley of misfortune. Bashi plays a vital role in shaping Mukundan's future. Along with Bashi, Krishnan Nair also consoles Mukundan and comforts him to forget about the dark side of his past. Krishnan Nair is the care taker of the ancestral house, Tharavadan where Mukundan suffers isolation.

In Tharavadu Mukundan observes uneasy nights of disturbed sleep. He is haunted by the hallucination. He can not tolerate his mental torture so he accepts the treatment of Bashi who handles a different method of treatment to recover him from the state of fear and makes him to ascertain his potentiality to become a better man. Bashi takes him to attic in Mukundan's house where Bashi guides him to enter into an old huge jar.

Here the jar stands for Metaphorical womb inside which he confesses everything. It is a rebirth for Mukundan while he comes out of the jar. This is the starting point of self-discovery in his life journey. Mukundan comes out from the shell of fear for his father and overcomes short comings in life.

Mukundan's life begins when Anjana enters into his life. She adds colour to the lifeless life of Mukundan. Though Anjana is in wed-lock with an another man he accepts to marry her after listening to the sorrowful story of Anjana. Nair's novels is concerned with the theme of individual's quest for fulfillment in life. He falls in love with Anjana.

Mukundan aspires to hold the power and position of his father in the village. He joins with Power House Ramakrishnan, a power monger. Mukundan wishes to maintain social status in his village. The richest and the most powerful man, Power House Ramakrishnan gains his company by mere flattery. He decides to build a community hall with support of Mukundan fo rthat he demands Bhasi's land. Mukundan does not come forward to help Bhasi who is the healer of his traumatic condition. He is completely enchanted by the Power House Ramakrishnan's words. He" is a Social Climber, a status seater, a snob and opportunist" (TBM 206).

Bhashi is an important character who carves the life of Mukundan. Instead of acquiring post graduate degree, he works as a painter. He can recover his life from love failure but he struggles to emerge from the pain caused by his friend, Mukundan who pays money for his land and asks him to move away from the village for the sake of a snubber. Soon Mukundan realizes his mistake and begs pardon to both Bhasi and Anjana. Once again Bhasi sanctions another chance to Mukundan to prove himself a better man. Thus, Mukundan reunites with his friend Bhasi and his beloved Anjana.

In *Mistress* Nair beautifully creates the world of men by exploring ups and downs. The background of the novel takes place in God's own country which is the birth place of the traditional dance, Kathakali. Koman, the kathakali artist plays a vibrant part in the novel. Koman discloses his story to Chris, a foreign travel writer, who has come to know about the story of Koman. He explains his unhappy childhood, about his father, Sethu and Mother, Saadiya to Chris.

As his father wishes, he learns Kathakali under the guidance of Aashan and becomes a skillful Kathakali dancer. He faces a lot of obstacles in his life. He is a dedicated artist but he is swayed by negative criticism. He decides not to perform Kathakali. It is painful to him to see the traditional dance form's degradation for money. Koman's Aashan advises him to continue his career.

He becomes Kathakali Ashan and teachers the art. Angela is introduced to him as a student. The spark of love spreads between the two. She falls in love with Koman. She starts admiring his skill in the field of art. They live together. After some time, he goes to London along with Angela but he cannot survive there. So, he returns to Kerala and continuous his career as a Kathakali Aashana. He is not stick on to one woman. He lives his life freely.

He does not want to lead his life alone. He needs a company to take care of him so he marries Maya at last. He understands that his real spirit lies in Kathakali. At last, he proves that he is a Kathakali artist for Kathakali sake. The specialty of the novel is, Nair infuses Navarasas – Love, Contempt, Sorrow, Fury, Velour, Fear, Disgust, wonder, detachment, into the main stream of the novel.

The next important character is Shyam a young business man and husband of Radha. He is not leading a happy married life with Radha who abhors him. Above all he loves her wholeheartedly. In the meantime, Christopher, a cello player visits a riverside resort. Radha is allured by the suave nature of Chris and falls in love with him. He frequently meets Chris. Chris also wishes to develop intimacy with Radha. Though Shyam is aware of their relationship, he is helpless to speak. The illicit affair of Radha with Chris burdens his heart and cries inwardly.

Chris represents western culture whereas Shyam represents Indian sample. Chris leaves Kerala after the break up with Radha. Chris and Shyam differ vastly in their personalities. Shyam's generosity is revealed as he is ready to accept Radha's not yet born child as his own child. It shows his unflinching love for Radha.

2. Conclusion

Thus, Nair presents her male characters' struggle among struggles in a vivid manner. She has a keen eye for situations and characters. She goes into the depths of the stark realities of life. In this sense, Nair is not prejudiced. Not only focusing on female victims but, also pinpointing male victims. Anita Nair with a skillful hand delineates the psyche of her male characters.

References

- Nair, Anita: *The Better Man*, India: Penguin Books, 1999, Print (*Mistress*, India: Penguin Books, 2005, Print).
- Agarwal and Sinha. M. P. *Major Trends in the post – Independence Indian English Fiction*, New Delhi: Atlantic publishers and Distributors, 2003, Print.
- Sengupta Ranjana *Rustic Ruminations: Rev. of the Better man*. *Biblio: A Review of Books* 5:3 and 4 (March – April 2000) : 21 Print.
- Arulmurugan. S, and B. Kathiresan. "The Dystopian Trope in Yevgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin's *We*." *Asia Pacific Journal of Research*, vol. 1, no. XXIV, Feb. 2015, pp. 155–157.
- Arulmurugan. S, and B. Kathiresan. "The Immortality Trope in Rudy Rucker's *Software*." *International Journal of World Research*, vol. 1, no. VII, 2014, pp. 58–62.
- Nainar Sumathi, P. (2013). *Diaspora and its Impact in the select novels of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni*, *Shanlax International Journal of English*, 1(3), 47-54.
- Nainar Sumathi, P. (2020). *Issues of Women Identity in Bharathi Mukherjee's Desirable Daughters*, *JAC:Journal of Composition Theory*, 13(8), 1-5.
- Nainar Sumathi, P. (2019). *Post Modernism in Chetan Bhagat's Two States*, *Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research*, 6(3), 3.
- Nainar Sumathi, P. (2017). *Diasporic Consciousness in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Mistress of Spices*, *Shanlax International Journal of English*, 6, 5.
- Karthick Babu, R. (2021). *The Depiction And Revolution Of Vampires In Stephanie Meyer's Twilight Saga & Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(3), 1883-1890.
- Karthick Babu, R., & Vishnuvardhan, V. (2021). *The Impact of Fantasy and Symbolism in C. S. Lewis' 'The Chronicles of Narnia'*, *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 17(2), 1210-1214
- Karthick Babu, R., & Abdul Mohamed Ali Jinnah. (2015). *The Exploration of Vampire and Horror Films and Its Influences in the Modern viewers and Readers of the World*. *SMART MOVES JOURNAL IJELLH*, 2(10), 9.