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The Theme Of Flux In Anita Nair's Novel, *Mistress*

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Abstract

Mistress postures the fluctuation in the life of protagonists. Today there is rapid changes in various social institutions because of modernity. It has distorted the roles and lives of both men and women individually, psychologically and socially. Generally, people believe that marriage is a shelter where men and women are interdependent and complementary to one another. But today marriage has made complicated to both men and women.

Keywords: Flux, Relationship, Freedom, self.

1. Introduction

Anita Nair portrays her characters with the brush of emotions and feelings. She has creation her own space in the string of women novelists of the 21st century. Using her beautiful language she attracts her readers attention and makes their journey to the interior of human psych.

In her novel *Mistress* Nair blends the story with the famous dance form of Kerala, Kathakali. Radha is the persona of the novel. This novel traces out the flux in protagonist life. She wishes to live her life and she has her own individuality. As she is sturdy, she pursues the command of her heart. The main story line of the novel *Mistress* is a depiction of traditional Indian Dance form, Kathakali. Two stories are artfully inter-wined together. The first stream of the story reveals about Radha's experience with whereas the second stream of the story speaks about Chris, travel writer and his acquaintance with Radha and her Uncle, Koman, Kathakali dancer.

Radha is a rich as well as educated women. She has got a job in a company at the age of twenty-two so she enjoys the state of independent life as she is away from the family. She develops love affair with a senior manager who is a married man. HR department arranges a cocktail party in which she consumes hot drink and she offered up her to that man. Their relationship continues. They visit pubs and restaurants. That man's wife explains Radha as he is a family man with three kids and he is ready to abandon them for her love. At that moment she realizes her mistake and she feel shame on her part.

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Therefore, he makes her pregnant so she is in trouble. By aborting the child, she wants to windup relationship with that man. Infact, their chapter of love affair comes to an end.

Radha's father, who smells her life style in the city, arranges marriage. She is forced by her father to marry Shyam, a successful business man with the help of Radha's father. Finally, she accepts her father's demand to marry Shyam. On the other hand, the wedding knot between the couples is not made up of love and affection. Marriage is misalliance here. On the same day of their marriage Radha divulges to Shyam about her pre-marital affair with a married man. She is afrank and forward woman. Though he comes to know about the past life of Radha, he accepts her.

Time rolls down, Radha seems to be matured in the ring of marriage. In her own house she plays duel role as the princes as well as a caged bird. While Radha is travelling in the route of Shyam, experiencing ebbs and flows Radha happens to meet another bend (flux) in the name of Chris Steward, a travel writer from London lands in Kerala in search of Kathakali dancer, Koman. Chris wants to write a book about the life of Koman for that the wishes to stay in Kerala. Both Radha and Koman allured by Chris's appearance. He likes to play cello a musical instrument. Radha is leading a miserable life with Shyam whose taste wont match with Radha's taste.

Radha abhors Shyam's insolent nature. Shyam fails to understand her predilection of life. For Shyam, Radha must play the role of wife by decorating herself in a beautiful way. She doesn't like this sort of man but she is longing to relish the life of independence appreciating art, literature etc., She fails to get boost of encouragement and appreciation from Shyam. Therefore, this is also one of the reasons for her nonchalance towards Shyam. Radha asks, "Did my father offer you money to marry me" (M123). Shyam catches her book while he is searching Radha. He happens to see a short description in the book which quotes. "The story of Woman's search for strength and independence...." (M123).

This shows her intricate life Shyam is not ready to accept her interference in his business activities. She dislikes his proletarian behavior. She feels that Shyam's taste is Plebeian. Radha, a married woman, is slowly drawn towards, Chris. She can't understand what is happening to her. Whenever she expresses her desire to work, Shyam obstructs her. He wants Radha to be a decorative doll in his house and she is a possession. Radha says "A much-cherished possession. That is my role in his life" (M53).

Radha is emotionally distanced from Shyam. She fells pain in her heart wherever she goes, she is stamped as a barren woman as she has no children but she is not the sole reason for that even her husband knows the fact, he doesn't came forward to same her from the verbal assault of the society.

He tries to derive pleasure by humiliating and hurting Radha to cover up his own mistake in life. She is bold and rebellions. So, she rejects the social traditions and taboos that fetter her freedom. As a married woman, she enroots extra-marital relationship with Chris. Who is a foreigner has come to visit a small town in Kerala. Koman's tale is knitted into this story. She is allured by the suave nature of the American, Christopher. "I look at him with every moment the thought hinges itself deeper in to my mind: What an attractive man" (M8). Shyam, Radha's husband is aware of Radha's inclination towards Chris, but he acts not to observe anything. Shyam wishes to shower his love on her, but Radha overshadows his reputation.

She has no objection about lying and deceiving her husband. Shyam perceives that she has no love for him but is ineffectual to resist her fearing that she may leave him. She falls in love with Chris for she adored his intellect but he adored her body and made her pregnant. She visits him frequently which pains his heart and places him in a defenseless situation. Rahda's life of love always lands her in trouble. Radha thinks that Chris can understand her better but very soon her hope is shattered when he argues on politics. Radha traces out his dislikes while his opinion being questioned. At this point she realizes that her relationship with Chris is mere infatuation. She disgusts about her inability to control her lascivious nature.

As a westerner he explains the meaning for the word tolerance is laziness so she replies that western people cannot understand what tolerance is about. Radha decides to break her relationship with Chris at last. A growing awareness of the incompleteness of her relationship with Chris leads Radha to a gradual separation from Chris. Radha feels a void in her life. Though she is smattered, she gains some sort of confidence to live her life. She is a robust character who attempts to bail her out from the limitations of nuptial life which is enforced her as a pined butterfly in the form of traditional wife.

Radha understands that her affiliation with Chris is based on lust. She decides to leave him. She is not even ready to leave a note of her pregnancy to him. "I don't want to be involved in this deception. It makes me feel sordid and responsible" (M252).

2. Conclusion

In the last chapter of the novel, Shyam is ready to accept both Radha and the child which grows in her womb instead of several confrontations with Radha. It shows his love for Radha, "Radha, I will say to her, he thinks this child, your child, will be mine (M425)". At the end of the novel Radha is in dilemma. She doesn't express her wish to reunite with Shyam, "It is fear that makes me seek him, not regard for him... I cannot continue to play wife merely because it frees me of worries" (M426).

She attains peace (Shantham) at last. She decides to live her life for the child which makes her to feel rapture. She loves it. She affectionately touches her lap and experiences the new budding relationship which keeps her alive. She finds a new meaning in life. Radha is constantly in flux. The ethos in the novel is neither of victory nor of defeat but of harmony.

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