

MEMORIES OF RAPE NARRATIVE IN ANITA NAIR'S LADIES COUPE

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Abstract; Post-1990s Indian English Novels are nothing but the account of the new India from colonizes to decolonize Indian society. It explores the new issues of the postcolonial world such as colonize India and the marginal place of the Indian society under the domain of western dominance. It also demonstrated the issues of displacement of the Indian novelist and dehumanizing treatment of their lives on the overseas. Furthermore, it also explores the women's issues from the feminist perspective, the issues of cross-cultural context from the cultural controversy of the East and West. The paradigm-shifting of the magic realism is continued to be a focus on the conventional societal pragmatism and the issues of political havoc within India. These novelists also bring out the reality of memories of the rape narrative, issues of subaltern, globalization, the issues of industrial revolution, and issues of province and deconstruction of ancient myth from the new social perspectives. The memories of rape narrative were the center of the Post-1990s Indian English writing writings. The Indian English Novels bring the new aesthetic to the Indian world by portraying to new issues of Indian society.

Rape is a very tenacious act against the women's physical organs. The serious issue is concerning to women where she becomes the victim of the man's hostile aspiration for women's body. Rape spoiled the social life of women and makes their life deserted. Thus, the question of rape rises by the writers through their social consciousness. They plead with people to prevent the social patriarchal evilness of rape. Rape narratives come through the articulation of sufferer's memorable experiences. Women find herself silent due to the raped by the male superior dominance. She lost her mental discrepancy and position in the society. The following two post-1990s Indian English novels explore the memories of rape narratives.

In Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* (2001) dealt with the memory of rape narrative and gender issues. The women characters like Akhila, Prabha Devi struggle for the existence and Marikolanthus harshly raped by Murugesan and violent her body. Nair gives the voice to the victimized Indian women. The narrative will evaluate the rape narrative from the postcolonial framework perspective.

Keywords: Rape, Narrative, Memory, Gender, Violence, Body.

Introduction: What is Postcolonialism? Postcolonialism replaces the colonialism from the perspective of the deconstruction of the oppressive approaches of colonizers and dominance of the west over East. Postcolonialism is a discourse of various intermingles issues which deals with the very dark side of the western inclement tactics. It represents the oppressive voices through the writing of Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* It indirectly deals with the subaltern account and their systematic exploitations (Gandhi 2). Postcolonialism also deals with the quest of Universalism and particularism through the discourse of disentangling scrabble of both common and rich people to survive their lives. It happens to them through the chaos of globalization created by the colonizers for the sake of their interest merely. It also focuses on the struggle for independence of colonizing from the cultural, political, and economical perspectives (Venn 2). According to Hance Barren pointed out that Postcolonialism is as such, "In the course of 1980s, Commonwealth literary studies become part of the emerging and now vast field of literary, cultural, political and historical inquiry that we call postcolonial studies" (qtd in Sawant 1).

Postcolonialism offers the different sort of records, the sequence of events, chronologies and biased memo in order to handle social colonize circumstances as well (Patricia and Laura N.p) Postcolonialism is a phase of the shifting the scenario of the colonized countries. It practices the new values, culture, doctrines and opposing to the phenomenon of the western world as such. It is a kind of new pedagogical features of the new world that is self-independent nations (Young 7). Postcolonialism is itself a political

philosophy of the third world nations. Henceforth, post colonialism represents the internal chaos of the third world nations (Young 17).

Gayatri Spivak in her influential book *In Other Worlds* (1988) explores the notion of Post colonialism as such:

The matter of fact is that postcolonial woman to remain passive and continue to bear male oppressive environments. These women seek to emancipate themselves through education, struggle, and hard work. The postcolonial men re-colonized the bodies and minds of their women in the name of preserving their cultural values...postcolonial feminism is primarily concerned with the deplorable plight of women in the postcolonial environment (qtd in Zin et al. 426).

In Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe* the novel dealt with the notion of the rape narrative of women, mental torture, and emancipation, loss of social stratum, and of women's gender biases. The novel delves the narratives of six women characters during their conclave in the Ladies coupe from Bangalore to Kanyakumari. Such women characters are Akhila, Morikolanthu, and Prabha Devi, Janki, Margaret, and Sheela. Who narrate the inner pandemonium of their life to each other in the compartment of the train? Akhila is a protagonist of the novel. Janaki who is extremely gratified, bewildered, and sufferer wife. Margaret Shanti whose married life becomes incorrigible and she lives with the oppressive husband. Morikolanthu is the most sufferer women in the novel who gets rape and her life become alienated, traumatic and hypertense (Zin et al. 425). Prabha is an obedient woman and Sheela is a woman who recalls her grandmother's memory (Cherian 2).

Nair portrait the protagonist Akhila without marriage as her family denied getting married her. Her family, social oppression, and the old tradition make her life desolate where she finds herself alone from the social world as well as her own family. She takes the responsibility of her whole family to earn for them to survive their lives, but her vision of life falls down and she oppressed her inner requirements it's because of the societal archetype of human life. She goes on the journey in search of the inner truth of life (Cherian 2). Akhila have a vision of life, "Dreaming of escape and space Hungry for life and experience" (Nair 2). Akhila's alienation brings her close to Hari. Who blemished her virginity by playing the psychological war? He raped her but Akhila never disclosed it either family or society. She has to face the internal trouble. Her external affair devastated her life. Akhila advice to Hari her boyfriend:

Hari, this is goodbye. I will never see you again. Are you done? ... I'm done and I will never see you again. Please don't call me at the office or try and meet me. You will leave me with no option but to this city. I love you, Hari. I will perhaps never love anyone else but this is not meant to be (Nair 153).

She kept the memory of the entire incident and never shared with other members of her family and society. She scared to damage her image in the eyes of people. Here Nair exposes the terror of the domination of the patriarchy. The rape is also a destructive phenomenon of the self-dignity and spoiling of the life. According to Russell rape is as such, "As vaginal, anal, and oral sexual contact involving force or threat of injury, or when the victim was asleep, unconscious, severely drugged, or otherwise physically helpless" (Ellis 3).

Moreover, her sexual longing collapsed her social life the memory of sexual life and rape created the war of thoughts within the mind. Thus, she suffered from the mental disorder (Dominic 10). Anita Nair explores the mythical life of Akhila through the narrative technique. The life of Akhila moves from the past to present. She deals with the various people during her journey and rebuilds her next life through the experiences of the other people (Kalamani 117). Nair talks about Akhila:

....Protagonist's dilemmas with a freshness and charm that makes her story more than just the predictable feminist homily it might appear. She is particularly good on the domestic details such as lazy Sunday lunches, a family row.... The smells of a busy railway station which make up her characters lives. These give her writing a sharpness and immediacy that lifts it above the commonplace (qtd in Kalamini 120-121).

Furthermore, Nair introduces the very crucial woman character Morikolanthu in the chapter "Sister to the Real Thing" (Wasnik 4). The meaning of her name is Lavender it is a sort of Plant (Wasnik 4). Morikolanthu is a victim of the rape and she narrates her suffering and torture to Akhila. Being women from the downtrodden community how she trapped in the male narcissistic world of well-to-do. Morikolanthu works as a maid in the rich society Chettiar Kottai. She is brutally raped in the Mango Orchard by Murugesan a rich man from the same province. Here Nair opens the horrible picture of the second face of the elite class. Her life is spoiled by the one incident and she became the victim of the hegemonic power of male-dominated society (Suganya 320-321). According to Stephen J. Schulhofer rape is unnatural as such, "In common thought and common parlance, rape is the imposition of intercourse by force...At common law was unlawful sexual intercourse with a female person without her consent" (Cahill 10-11).

She can't resist against Murugesan. Her Mother shouted at her, "It's not just the money but how can I send a young girl by herself...there is too much at risk" (Nair 215). Here Morikolanthu mother's protective approach reveal through the confession of love for her daughter. Morikolanthu's mother and Sujata realize that Morikolanthu is pregnant that nobody would get married to her. Both of them scared from this moment. They blamed to Murugesan doing unjust with Morikolanthu. They plea to Murugesan to get married to Morikolanthu but he does not listen to them, and threaten to kill them. From this moment Morikolanthu life's struggle begins that society, family and Murugesan tortured, harass and raped again and again. Morikolanthu seems as a result vulnerable being so underprivileged and marginalized. Murugesan takes the advantages of all the circumstance to accomplish his aspiration by rapping to innocent Morikolanthu (Suganya 321). Morikolanthu thinks of her life as such, "What do they know of how cruel the world can be to women" (Nair 209). Moreover, Morikolanthu gave the birth to an illicit son Muthu. She gets the label of dishonest and frailty woman. Due to an illegitimate son, both society and family hates her and throw her from the family. The brother advised her do not stay with them. Find the place wherever you would get the shelter. She does not forget the horrible memories of rape. She started working at the hospital as a co-worker. This circumstance exposes the horrible picture of her life's tragedy (Rajlakshmi and Shanmugam 4). According to Andrea Dworkin, rape is as such, "The celebration of rape in the story, song, and science is the paradigmatic articulation of male sexual power as a cultural absolute" (Cahill 15).

The sticky matter goes to the reputed person of the Chettier son Sridhar who is identified for his justice but in this matter, Sridhar neglected the case by saying "the girl must have led him on and now that she is pregnant she's making up a story about rape" (Nair 245). Here it was an insult to Morikolanthu womanhood, motherhood, and social reverence. Nair explores the injustice of rape against Morikolanthu. It is not only about Morikolanthu but also all the Indian women who face this kind of confrontation of rape and did not get the justice whether they belong to the elite class or marginalized. The male-dominating psyche approach of the patriarchy is a major concern to the decline of the women's position. According to Robin Morgan rape is as such, "the perfected act of male sexuality in a patriarchal culture it is the ultimate metaphor for domination, violence, subjugation, and possession" (Cahill 15).

Moreover, Murugesan stands for the oppressor and colonizer from the perspective of to keep dominance over the woman. He shouted at Morikolanthu, "What is a servant like you doing wearing a watch? You have more rights in that house than my poor sister. It's time someone has reminded you of who you are" (Nair 239- 240). Here Nair extremely raises the issue of the dominance of the male-centric world. Moreover, He said to Morikolanthu "If the Chettiar's sons can feast on this body of yours...remember I'm a relative, even if only a poor one, and I'm entitled to their pickings before anyone else" (Nair 239). Murugesan reveals his hidden desire to seduce her body. Moreover, Sridhar also becomes passionate for Morikolanthu as she works maid and prepare food and wash the clothes. In absence of his wife Sujata he sexually harasses her several time and force to seduce her. He raped her for his passion and motivates to do the erroneous activities with him. He crosses the boundaries of manhood and created the physical hurdle against her craving. She seems merely taciturn and unable to resist the man who oppressed her and takes the benefits of her powerless. She becomes the symbol of victimization of rape by the various

people of the area. Morikolanthu's life does not reveal her own tragedy but also the entire scenario of the rural Tamil Nadu (Suganya 322). According to Susan Griffin, rape is as such, "As the symbolic expression of the white male hierarchy, rape is the quintessential act of our civilization" (Cahill 15).

Conclusion: Nair exposes the issues of rape in the novel. She comes forward for the Indian women as her portrayal of the women characters; these women characters have examined their own individual world through the perception of dominating society. They face the social obstacle, oppression, suppression, and order of the patriarchy. But the rape narrative is an articulation of the horrible incident of physical attacks by the male-dominating desires to make the women marginalize from the social point of views. Nair offers the solution and the way of resistance against the male-dominated approach. Nair raises the issues of rape in India and women became the victim of the violence of rape. Nair encourages to the Indian women who became the victim of the rape. She put forward the instance of the Akhila and Morikolanthu and other women characters that comes out from the horrible traumatic circumstances of rape, gender violence, and discrimination as such. Sunita Sinha remarks in her influential work *Postcolonial Women Writer's New Perspectives*:

Nair's India suffers from a patriarchal system which has tried in many ways to repress, humiliate and debase women....She poses in the novel not only shakes the ideological ground of man's patriarchal role in our traditional society but also imply the existence of an alternative reality (qtd in Rajlakshmi and Shanmugam 2).

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