

Postmodernism in an indian context english literature essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



INTRODUCTION:

Postmodernism focuses on de-structured, de-centered humanity. It also accepts the possibility of ambiguity. Postmodernism is an attempt to question to question the world that we see around us and especially not to take other peoples view as final truth. The theme for my presentation is Grappling with postmodern identity issues and problems on Ladies Coupe by Anitha Nair. Ladies Coupe deals with the identity of women and their search for their strength and independence by asking fundamental questions that not only shake the ideological ground of man's patriarchal role in the traditional society, but also imply that existence of an alternative reality. It shows how women's role is limited to reproduction regardless of her successful career, caliber, rights or own desires and needs.

WRITING STYLES OF ANITHA NAIR:

Anitha Nair is one of the finest writers in Indian writing in English with an international reputation. Her book " Ladies Coupe" (2001) was rated as one of 2002's top five books of the year and was translated into more than 25 languages around the world. She mesmerizes the reader with her evocative language and descriptions with which her novels abound. Her language is plain. She took the chance of writing to show the quality of strength in women.

WHAT IS IDENTITY?

The condition of being oneself and not another. It also means individuality and uniqueness. It is the individual characteristics by which a person or is

recognized. Over the few decades there has been a tremendous change in laws, attitudes and norms affecting women's status, roles and development in society in India. As a result of which women have ventured beyond the traditional role of wife and mother and have sought employment and career outside the home and have actively participated in the economic and social development of the nation. There is a restructuring and reorientation of women's roles in contemporary society.

IDENTITY CRISIS FACED BY WOMEN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL:

SHORT SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL:

The Brahmin heroine, Akhila whose life has been taken out of her control is a 45 year old " spinster", daughter, sister, aunt and the only provider of her family after the death of her father. Getting fed up with these multiple roles. She decides to go on a train journey away from family and responsibilities a journey that will ultimately make her a different woman. In the novel Ladies Coupe the protagonist meets five other women each of whom has a story to tell. These stories are an attempt to answer Akhila's problematic question. Can a woman stay single and be happy at the same time? Each chapter of the novel is devoted to one of women's stories. Janaki the old woman who is pampered wife and confused mother. Margaret Shanti the successful chemistry teacher is the victim of an unhappy marriage as an insensitive tyrant and too self- absorbed husband neglect her. Prabha, the rich submissive wife who loves swimming because it metaphorically gives her a sense of achievement. Sheela a 14 year old whose understanding of her

dying grandmother paves the way for her own future liberation. Marikolanthu whose rape literally and metamorphically coupled with extreme poverty and class exploitation is the culmination of all other stories. Ladies Coupe deconstructs that which is taken for granted the sacred, the traditional and the ideological.

IDENTITY CRISIS FACED BY WOMEN CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

I would like to deal with two kinds of identity
Physical identity
Psychological identity

PHYSICAL IDENTITY:

The novel begins on a note of identity crisis, where Akhila is irritated by the way women and the handicapped have to stand together while men stand separately at the ticket counter. It is indeed humiliating. Akhila is seen as the Father and the Protector of the family. She toils hard for her family, but no one seems to understand the fact that she too needs to have a life of her own. The family takes advantages of the generous heart. Ebe decides the appearance of Margret he says " Long hair doesn't suit you. Cut it off. You will look nice with your hair in about bob". Akhila's mother comments on Katherine are dressing style. Women don't even have their right to choose their appearances. Janaki is one protected by the men in the family and since she is not one protected by the men in the family and since she is not able to face the problematic situations of life.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IDENTITY:

Padma depicts the psyche of an ordinary woman, who takes it for granted her elder sister's sacrifices and hardships. Akihila express her wish to live alone at which Padma bursts out . She is not allowed to have her personal space. She had dissatisfaction of not being married. So she decides to make her own private rebellion. We find Akhila is afraid of society and is not able to overcome this fear. Thus she lives not for herself but for her family and the society and sacrifices her own individual interest. Marikolanthu gets raped and she is blamed " Why does a young woman walk alone?" She faces the consequences for the action of men. She feels the pain she has a son by that union but she manages to live. Though Prabha Devi is happily married to Jagadesh a rich man finds her life empty and for her learning to swim which she does without anybody's help is actually a means to establish her individuality a way of discovering. Even though they differ in age, educational backgrounds and cultural upbringings the story have a common thread an Indian women's life is dominated by a man in one way or other. All these women in one way or another advise Akhila to go against societal pressure and to discover herself. This is not only a physical journey also psychological journey.

CONCLUSION:

The emotional, sexual and psychological stereotyping of female begins when the doctor says, " it's a girl". Akhila identified herself through fellow travelers. When she reaches Kanyakumari, Akhil's journey of self discovery is completed and her identity crisis is overcome. She is not bothered about

what others would say. She becomes aware of her own rights and the need for an identity.