



Portrayal of Men Dependent on Women in Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupè*

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ABSTRACT:

Literature is an art that paves our mental journey towards a pleasant path of life. Among the artists in literature Anita Nair is an eminent writer from India well known for her themes relating to typical Indian traditions and cultures. Her famous novels include *A Better Man*, *Mistress*, *Lessons in Forgetting*. Nair, has won the prestigious Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 2012 for her contribution towards literature. *Ladies Coupè* deals with dimensions of life. The novel shows how a woman is seen through an Indian eye. This paper proceeds with a focus on men's dependence on women with reference to the novel *Ladies Coupè*.

Keywords: Dependence, Gender roles, Love.

Anita Nair never wanted her novel *Ladies Coupè* to be under the theme of feminism. The novel starts and ends with the character Akhila, the protagonist of the novel. Akhila shares her life with questions regarding women's dependence. Being the bread winner of the family creates a smile on her lips after completing her responsibilities. After, the death of her father the family began depending on her. Her brothers named Narayan and Narsi, depended on Akhila to complete their education and also to have a settled life for themselves. The brothers never thought about their sister's marriage but got ready for their marriage. Akhila gave everything they wished and they wanted expecting the same to be reciprocated by them. But, her expectations were in vain.

One day in Akhila's life, her brothers approached her for giving an information about their love and their desire to get married. Akhila's mother supported the marriage never minding about Akhila's marriage. The boys had to depend on her until they had a happy married life but, Akhila's selfless love has not got any recognition. Akhila accepted the marriage with a rage within herself silently. "Akhila waited for Amma or Narayan to say something. To broach subject of Akhila's marriage. When they didn't , Akhila swallowed the hurt she felt and let the anger that grew in her flare."(77). Akhila made the lives of all three siblings a comfortable one. The fame of the family was taken high. Padma, the youngest of the family entered her marriage life by the grace of Akhila who filled Padma's new house with dowry. Narayan was appointed as a machinist and Narsi as a teacher only because of Akhila who gave them their standard in life. The family considered Akhila to be a stiff and rigid woman as her saree appears. Though she was the reason for the family's decent survival she has to get permission from her brothers for any new activity she does. Narayan and Narsi , experienced a terrible fear after the demise of their father and began depending on Akhila and fulfilled their desires rather hearing to her desires. Hence the men of the family laid their life goals successfully by depending on one woman who toiled for them to get their lives happy.

Janaki, can be the best example of a homemaker. She lived under the guidance of men throughout her life beginning with her father then her

husband and lastly her son. She was instructed saying “He is your husband and you have to accept whatever he does.”(25). She lived within safer hands and in a comfortable zone. She never knew anything new but she knew to forgive and forget. She cultivated her son Siddharth with good virtues and happiness entered when she knew that she was going to see her son as a father. Her ignorance was not encouraged. Her son hated his mother to be innocent. He questions about her impossibilities by comparing with his mother-in-law. Though, he unleashes his disapproval towards her ignorance he wants her terribly when there is a need for a care taker. Siddharth calls his mother to take of her wife during her pregnancy and so the couple planned to move. Janaki was good in everything but with the help of her husband. This triggered Siddharth and so Janaki gets words of insult. But, Janaki never minding about the hurts, takes care of Jaya the wife of her son. Siddharth, though found her mother to be an odd one out depends on her to make sure that his wife and his child are safe. He utters words towards his mother that causes ceaseless overthinking about her life. Siddharth knows that he can't give a secured life to his wife and child without his mother. He shares his anger and also his dependence towards his mother. He says that he would not feel secured if he doesn't find his mother near him. He feels good and he is proud of his mother-in-law but, he depends on his mother when it comes to love and affection.

“Please Ma, will you two come? Jaya's mother is here and she is perfectly capable of managing, but if you were around I would feel a lot more secure.”(35). Margaret Shanthi, wife of an arrogant man called Ebenezer Paulraj shows how a woman can express a fact that woman can also be dangerous to show how it hurts to be dependent on another. Both got into marriage after few years of love. Margaret wanted to have her doctorate but her husband ended up giving an opportunity to get into a school under him as a teacher. This stimulated her anger but she managed to be the best wife. On knowing that she is pregnant she overwhelmed with joy until she knew Ebenezer was not feeling the same. The love got faded when Ebenezer asked for an abortion. The words of Ebenezer was so flattering and convincing showing that his happiness is not got only by him but he has to depend on his woman to get his happiness of not being a father so young. She had to live under him by following his regulations even the way she looked. She was not given the freedom to study her desire but to work under him depending him. Margaret wanted to show the pain of living under one's dependence.

When she moved into the operation theatre to scrape her baby out he said “All the best.”(109). The words gave her the zeal to take revenge. A woman has the capacity to bear with dominations and also has the capacity to stand against dominations. Margaret uses cooking as her strategy to defeat her husband and thus she gets her husband fat in a year. The way she wanted her life to be is got through this activity. She showed how dependence is felt. Finally, Ebenezer ends up depending on Margaret. She gave her time for loving him as she wished, not as earlier and Ebenezer reacted calm to every activity of Margaret. He understood the fact that men are not going to live without depending on a woman for his whole life.

Conclusively, Anita Nair in her novel *Ladies Coupè* shows how the concept of dependence plays a vital role in human psyche. Men are dependent on women indirectly but not equally as women depend on men. All the beings on Earth live with a need to dependent on its fellow beings.

Reference:

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