

LITERARY DEVICES IN THE NOVELS OF ANITA NAIR

Franklin Thambi Jose. S*
J. Preethi**

* Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Languages and Communication, Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia.

** Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Jayaraj Annapackiam College for Women, Periyakulam, India.

Abstract

Literature reflects the society of any age. Writers use several techniques to express their thoughts in their writings. Literary device is one such technique which is used by the writers in their literary contributions. It plays a powerful role in writings. Moreover, it strengthens the narratives, highlights the concepts in the text and provides impressions on the protagonists used. Literary devices include metaphor, simile, assonance, alliteration, consonance, onomatopoeia, etc. Using these in their writings strengthen the subject matter and also provides additional understanding to the audience. Hence many writers use the literary devices in their writings. Anita Nair is one of the writers who use literary devices and other techniques in her novels. She is one among the Indian literary contributors who contributed to the English literary world. She was very much fond of writings in her childhood. Her book, *Satyr of the Subway* a collection of short stories became popular among the readers and it was her first contribution to the literary world. Because of her interest on literature, she wrote novels and became a successful writer of English. She has written more than 15 novels. This article tries to identify the literary devices used by Anita Nair in her novels.

Key words: literature, devices, novels, literary techniques, English

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Literature is generally explained as a piece of written work. It is an art to express one's feelings or expressions. Poetry, short stories, novels, epic, essays, etc. are some of the form of literature. Literature reflects the society and people. The literature written in English language can be referred as English literature. It has a history of around 500 years from English Isles. Each and every country has their own literature which varies according the languages. Even English literature varies country to country according to one society's culture and people. For instance, America has American English literature (American literature), Malaysia has Malaysia English literature, India has Indian English literature and so on. Writers of any literature use several techniques to express their thoughts in their writings. Anita Nair is one of the Indian English writers who has contributed to the English literary world. A study was carried out to identify the literary devices used by Anita Nair in her novels. This article tries to explain the literary devices used by Anita Nair in her novels.

1.1 LITERARY DEVICES

Literary devices are one of the techniques used by the writers in their literary contributions. It plays a powerful role in the writings. Moreover, it strengthens the narratives, highlights the concepts in the text and provides impressions on the protagonists used. Literary devices include metaphor, simile, assonance, alliteration, consonance, onomatopoeia, etc. These are called as poetic devices by some literary critics. The good and skilful writers are sensitive to the rhythmic flow of language in their writings and they achieve this effect through the work of literary devices. Further, the sensitive writers those who are conscious of literary devices pay much heed to the ornamentation of language and are at liberty to use the literary devices as much as possible without any constraint in their novels or any piece of literary works. Anita Nair is one such sensitive writer who has used the literary devices in her novels.

1.2 ANITA NAIR AS A NOVELIST

Anita Nair is one of the Indian women writers of English language. She was born on 26th January 1966 in a place near Palakkad in Kerala State, India. She was graduated in field of English Language and Literature. Her literary career started after the publication of a poem entitled *Happenings in the London Underground*. This poetry found a place in the anthology brought out by the Poetry Society in India in 1992. Later, she came out with her first book *Satyr of the Subway*, a collection of short stories. The success of this book brought her close to literary writings. Later, she has created several award winning campaigns and became a frequent contributor in *Times of India*. She earned popularity all over the world through her novels *The Better Man* and *Ladies Coupe*. These novels have been translated into more than 25 languages. She received JFW Women Achievers' Award 2001 from the Sathyabama University, India, which was conferred on her for her contribution to literature. Soon, she was awarded with Sahitya Akademi award in 2013 for her contributions to Children's literature by the government of India.

She is one of the women novelists in India, who used literary devices in her novels. She has used several literary devices which are considered a part of literary writings. The study identifies the literary devices used in her novels.

1.2.1 Alliteration

Alliteration is a literary device which is used by Anita Nair in her novels. In literature, the duplication of any sound is alliteration. Literary writers use extraordinary command of *exploiting* words and collocating the words in a rhythmic fashion. Alliteration is called as the initial rhyme which is the repetition at close intervals of the initial consonant sounds of accented syllables in words interrupted by grammatically required words like a, an, the, to, for, by, with, etc. The use of alliteration adds musical quality to the literary works. Numerous alliterations are found in the novels of Anita Nair. In the novel *Mistress*, Anita Nair has used alliteration such as, 'near the nila', 'pause and peer', 'patch and peer'; in *Lessons in Forgetting*, 'furies and fates', 'college, corridors and the canteen', 'favourite fruit' and in *Ladies Coupe*, 'concrete corridor'. She has consciously used alliteration to attract the audience and also to convert her prose into readable and communicable.

1.2.2 Assonance

Assonance is another literary device found in the novels of Anita Nair. Assonance is the repetition of identical vowel sounds in words in close proximity. This literary device adds fruitiness to the text or a play. The identified assonance from the texts of novels of Anita Nair is given here. In the novel, *Lessons in Forgetting*, 'blue, blue sky', 'plop, plop, plop', 'shut up! shut up', 'not in his home, not in his home', 'the hunger, the hunger' and in the novel *Mistress*, 'I know, I know', 'I say, I say', are the literary device, assonance identified from her novels.

1.2.3 Consonance

Anita Nair has used consonance which is another literary device in her novels. Consonance is the repetition of consonants at the final position of neighbouring vocabularies though they

have different vowel sounds. The consonances identified in the novels of Anita Nair are, 'rich bitch, begged and pleaded', 'licking liking', 'hubbly bubbly', in *Lessons in Forgetting*; 'coaxed cajoled', 'cooking, cleaning, sewing and pickling', and 'sparkled, whizzed and exploded' in *Ladies Coupe*.

1.2.4 Cacophony

Cacophony is another literary device, which is found in the novels of Anita Nair. Cacophony is defined as a harsh, discordant and unpleasant sounds used deliberately by the writers for poetic effect. 'hubbly bubbly' is found in the novel *Lessons in Forgetting*, 'squawk bark of hours' in *Mistress* and 'creak and groan', 'Bah! Bah! Bah', 'thwack, thwack' in *Ladies Coupe*. By these one can conclude Anita Nair has used several cacophonies in her novels.

1.2.5 Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is another literary device found in the novels of Anita Nair. It is the act of creating or using vocabularies in which the sounds occur immediately with mimic meanings. Moreover, onomatopoeia creates a lively sentence by its sound effects and beautifies the text found in the literary piece. Some of the onomatopoeias found in the novels of Anita Nair are identified. 'Hush hush', 'psst psst', 'creak of the gate', etc. are the literary device, onomatopoeia found in the novel, *Lessons in Forgetting*.

1.2.6 Metaphor

Metaphor is the literary device which is used in literature. It is a figure of speech which is used with more rhetorical effect and directly refers to one thing or the other. It can be also said as a type of literary image in which a comparison is made in such a way that something is said to be the same as something else. Usually, in metaphor, the comparison is implied, i.e., the figurative term which is substituted or identified with the literal term. Anita Nair has used metaphor in her novels to create interest among her audience. 'I lay stone faced', 'A fishbone of anguish', 'The boy's eyes were those of a rabbit's caught in a light' are some of the metaphors found in the novel *Lessons in Forgetting*. Moreover, 'I feel a dark cloud in my eyes' and 'The naked hope in her eyes' are found in *Mistress*. Also, 'Love is a poison', 'Love was a liquid fuel propelling our lives forward' etc. are found in the novel *Ladies Coupe*.

1.2.7 Simile

Simile is another literary device which can be used in literary works. It is commonly used literary device by the writers. Simile is a figure of speech in which an explicit comparison is made between two things essentially unlike. Similes are used to express emotion, to explain things, and to make their writing more vivid and entertaining. Usually humans have the tendency to compare with many things or matters. The comparison is made explicit by the use of some words or phrases. Like other women writers, Anita Nair also has used similes in her writings. 'Akhila saw herself as a serpent that had lain curled and dormant for years' is found in the novel, *Ladies Coupe*; 'Mutton dressed as lamb', 'Do I look like a taxi cab?', 'She is like a dog worrying for a rag', 'Meera blanches like the almonds sitting in a bowl of warm water', etc. are found in the novel *Lessons in Forgetting*. Moreover, 'Like jaggery and a fly', 'Mica dust is like fool's gold', etc. are found in the novel, *Mistress* of Anita Nair.

1.2.8 Personification

Another literary device used in the novels of Anita Nair is personification. It is also known as anthropomorphism. It is providing the attributes of a human being to an animal, an object or a concept. Moreover, it is really a type of metaphor where an implied comparison in which the figurative term of the comparison is always a human being. It considers abstracts or inanimate things as human, by attributing them with human powers, or spirits. It is one of the best ways to picture a mood or image without directly stating it. Anita Nair has used inanimate objects to convey a mood, delight, drama, romance, sadness, etc. in her novels. Some of personification used in the novels of Anita Nair are, 'The moon hangs at her shoulder and rides with her' (*Ladies Coupe*) and 'The skies heaved, a slap of thunder' (*Lessons in Forgetting*).

1.2.9 Mirror Image

Anita Nair has used yet another literary device called as mirror image. It can said as a character or an incident that mirrors another character when they follow similar plots, acts in similar ways or holds related elements is a mirror image. The kind of literary device adds depth to writing and increases the reader's attentiveness. Being an efficient writer, Anita Nair has used mirror image in her novels. She has used this to bring out the mood of the protagonists. Meera with Hera in Greek methodology, Kitcha with Nikhil are cleverly used by Anita Nair in her novels. 'She, Meera Hera...', 'I am as lost as you are, he thought', 'Kitcha thinks that "I was the boy, he thinks"' are some of the mirror image found in the novel, *Lessons in Forgetting*.

1.2.10 Foreshadowing

Foreshadowing is another literary device used by Anita Nair in her novels. In foreshadowing, a writer drops subtle clues or hints to prepare the reader for the future course of action. It provides only clues or hints at the possible outcome of the story, without describing it explicitly. Usually it is used in literary piece to suggest certain plot and character developments as a way to help the readers keep engaged in the story, and to make the readers continue reading the literary work with interest. Further, foreshadowing is used to prepare the reader to think about how the story will unfold in the course of time. It is also used to hold the suspense of the plot. This provides extra accurate reading among the readers. Anita Nair has beautifully used this literary device, foreshadowing in her novels.

'Why don't you invite your Professor? Or is there someone else you would rather? Soman?' is found in the novel, *Lessons in Forgetting*. Through this sentence, Anita Nair seems to give a hint to the readers that the future of Meera rests with the professor and thus used the foreshadowing in her novel. The sentence is described as, Meera feels isolated because of her husband's absence. When she makes her lone presence at the Vinnie party, Vinnie asks her about the possibility of taking the professor with her. She also makes use of the words 'your professor' instead of 'the professor'.

1.3 CONCLUSION

Every literary contributors have their own way of presenting their works. In other words, every literary works have its own style. To express their ideas through their writings, the writers use various techniques to impress their audience. A work of art can be made richer both in style and meaning with the efficient of the writers. The writers use literary devices or literary techniques to make their writings rich. Anita Nair is one of the writers who have efficiently at the same time beautifully expressed her thoughts through the novels by using several literary devices. Her novels contains assonance, alliteration, consonance, cacophony, onomatopoeia, metaphor, simile, personification, mirror image, foreshadowing. No doubt, Anita Nair has used literary devices in her novels.

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