CHAPTER-VI

SUMMATION

According to Carl Jung every individual psyche inherits collectively an unconscious idea or thought that is universal. This ‘collective unconsciousness’ is common to all humans and Jung believed that it plays a dynamic role in the psyche. According to him, the myth forming elements are ever present in the psyche. Every individual grows, develops and gradually builds a concept about his or her self. This process of seeking the self takes place in the deepest level of the unconscious. As one seeks the self, it provides one a power to move towards wholeness. In Freud’s psycho analytic theory of personality, the unconscious mind includes everything that is inside of our awareness. This study enquires into how Anita Nair has unconsciously acquired an urge to be a feminist writer as she highlights the concept of patriarchy and female defiance against it and how her characters grow, develop and arrive at their self. It also makes a study of her conscious mind to present a cultural-milieu that her characters interact with. It also attempts to study her narrative techniques and style she has employed in her novels.

Anita Nair is a writer who makes her readers, understand and feel what it is to be a woman, know how a woman thinks and feels and behaves. She depicts the psychological crisis of Indian women who are subjected to physical and psychological torture in a male
dominated society. She skilfully explores the agonized mind of the persecuted women. She portrays the psychological conflicts of women to choose between tradition and modernity. She protests against the violence against women physically and mentally. This attitude of her marks her as a feminist writer which she often refuses to agree. Thus the second chapter analyses how according to Carl Jung’s “Collective Unconsciousness”. Anita Nair has unconsciously used the myth of patriarchy in all the four novels, and has given voice against it through her characters and thereby has become a feminist writer.

Through the character of Prabha Devi in Ladies Coupe Anita Nair brings out the inner conflicts that arise in a woman, and how she arrives at a metamorphosis on her own. By portraying the childhood of Prabha Devi she highlights the gender discrimination that prevails in Indian society. It is in Prabha Devi’s marital life arise her inner conflicts, as she suffers from an agonized mind and feels guilty of her entices towards a man, when she was newly married that would have ruined her marriage. She could not imagine of her marital chord broken and so comes back to form to become a dutiful mother, wife and daughter-in-law. But she is not satisfied with such mere role-playing. She longs for a self-contentment and she achieves this by acquiring the skill of swimming. Anita Nair here clearly depicts how Indian women do not step out of tradition but live a self-contended and self-fulfilled life within it. This is true with Margaret Shanthi too in Ladies Coupe. She bends to the maximum as her husband
Ebenezer Paulraj hurts her in all possible ways of male-chauvinism. But she does not break her marriage as she feels she will not be accepted by her family as a divorced woman. So she stays within her marriage and puts off the tyranny of her husband very tactfully. Her success is that she draws the attention of her husband and makes him think that there is no other go for him, other than her.

Anita Nair powerfully strikes at the fact that religion too plays a dominant role in subjecting women. Religion has set its principles that sanction the repression of women for stabilizing the patriarchal structure. They silently speak for the traditional gender difference. Through the character of Saadiya in *Mistress*, Anita Nair highlights this fact. Saadiya craves for freedom and breaks the rules of the Muslim community and chooses a life with a non-Muslim. But going there she is not able to forget the rituals of her community and wants to do everything for her new-born son as per her Muslim community. As she is not able to get the freedom for practising this from her husband Seth, she chooses death as her redeemer and commits suicide. Saadiya registers her protest by committing suicide. Here Saadiya has got a quest for her “self” and has achieved it by breaking the rules, yet she is unable to free her from her communal rituals and again turns back against her self. She has been once a woman to fight against the rules set on her being a woman, but being successful in it, once again she is not able to fight against her husband Seth who is not willing to let her practise her communal rituals for her son. So
she chooses death as a means to free herself from all patriarchal bondages, neither of her father nor of her husband.

Anita Nair has depicted the evils that exist in society and violence that is perpetrated on women by the patriarchal order even now. The rape of Marikolanthu is not an isolated incident. Rape has become the privilege of men to oppress women. It is the most humiliating and horrifying experience for women. It is used as a powerful weapon to silence them. When a woman is raped she is put on the precipice of fear. The patriarchal structure controls her by instilling fear in her. It is the new woman who overcomes this fear and lives a life for her self. This is true with Marikolanthu. Unlike Ila Das, in Anita Desai’s *Fire on the Mountain*, she fights in her battle of life and comes out of it, to become ‘the real thing’. She threatens Murugusen who raped her to take the matter to the public, but she is put off by him quoting the class difference. This cripples her from proceeding further. After she is found pregnant, it is the worry of her mother, as no one would be ready to marry such a girl. But Marikolanthu has no such dreams of getting married. After giving birth to the baby, she moves off to live a life for her, leaving behind her son Muthu to her mother, as she considered him to be a memento of the rape. But it is at the end she musters up confidence and courage to face the world, with a son without a nameless father. There lies her individuality. Then she is ‘the real thing’. She sought a life for her
self and not ‘a sister to the real thing’ as she had been in all the by-gone days.

Dee Glass defines domestic violence as “anything threatening when used by those with power (invariably men) against those without power (mainly women and children)” (11). Thus violence is a means to control, assert authority and extract obedience. This means the seclusion for one (women) and freedom for the other (men). Radha in *Mistress* is an example of this secluded woman. She is raped by her husband Shyam as he strongly believes that he is born to take liberty over his wife’s body. Though she is not willing to have sex with him, he shows his power over her by raping her and Radha could not resist it as she was of a weak constitution.

Anita Nair highlights the fact how most women think that it is ideal womanhood to be contended with the security and nearness of her husband. Such a false sense of security, fails them to realize their operational energy which will offer them more satisfaction and confidence. Such women are naturally prone to confusion. One such woman is Janaki in *Ladies Coupe*. She is satisfied with the nearness and security of her husband. Moreover she is not given a chance to overlook for something more than her married life. She is in a state of confusion as at first she says Akhila the protagonist, that she could make a living without her husband if she is let a change, but immediately says that even if she is let to do it, she is not sure how far
she could be comfortable. The result is that she does not want to have a quest for self.

Through the character of Janaki, Anita Nair emphasizes how from a very early age women are trained for the self-sacrificing role of a wife. So they fail to realize that this kind of self-sacrificing role set for them is highly exploitative and robs them of their self-respect. They become disoriented if they are taken off from their role of a wife. Moreover if they are forsaken by their husband, they suffer from a terrible sense of loss and helplessness. This hides them from developing a self-concept in them.

As Shodhaganga observes:

Self-concept is the solid foundation on which the life of the individual is built. If we want to use our full potential, we have to have a solid self-concept. It is definitely the prerequisite for an all comprehensive and powerful life. This self-concept helps one in making a self-image (23).

Anita Nair has brought to light how women are mercilessly denied this opportunity to build a new self-concept. She shows how women are insignificant of the distorted view of their self-concept, that has often been responsible for their depression. In Indian society women thus become useable and useful commodities.

Meera in Lessons in Forgetting, falls a prey to this self-sacrificial role of a wife. She has no likes or dislikes of her own. Her likes and
dislikes are those of her husband’s. When he smiles she has to smile. She has to dress her up to the choice of her husband Giri. Meera represents the women who blindly believe that a husband could do nothing but love his wife. When they come to know the other side of them, they become totally disoriented and helpless. Meera is contented about her life she had made with Giri. She is happy that Giri has chosen a girl like her for a modern corporate girl. She had not known the money-minded Giri who had an eye over Meera’s Lilac House and its gracious living. Once when she comes to know about the reality of Giri she is dismantled. She is left helpless and hopeless. She is pushed into depression as she had been used by Giri as a useful commodity. She is not able to think ahead. She is baffled if she could lead a life without Giri. But the betrayal of Giri makes her an empowered woman to stand on her own. Leaping over all absurdities she builds a self-concept. As she becomes a self-conceptualized woman, she takes a job for her, not merely for the sake of living but for the contentment of her “self”, as she loves her job to work for Jak, the cyclone expert. She develops a self-concept, that she is not ready to fall a prey to anybody as she has been once with Giri.

As Sinha says:

When we stand at the beginning of new millennium, we still find the one thread of that tradition which suppresses women winding its manacles around them in a vice like
grip, strangling their essence. Even today we carry the unconscious ego ideal transmitted by tradition, creating an intense conflict and depression in the minds of women who strive for autonomy. (23)

In *Ladies Coupe* the protagonist Akhilandeswari strives for autonomy. But it takes a long time for her to break the family shackles. The family takes her for a cash-cow and lives off her, least bothered about her desires, just because she is a woman. Akhila too mutes her desires within, as she feels it embarrassing to express her desires being a woman. Though like others, when she chooses a man to be her partner she is not able to reveal it as he is much younger than her. She is afraid to face the society that would look at them with indifference, a husband younger than his wife. But at the end as she is inspired and awakened by the words of her school friend Karpagam, she decides to live in autonomy, to live a life for her “self” leaving her family. At the end she is reminded of Hari, with whom she has broken off her relationship. Though her “self” seeks the company of a man, then she is a ‘new woman’ who is least bothered about the society, that might look at her with indifference, as she being a woman elder than her man. Here she chooses a self-image, an image marked by independence of mind and self-confidence.

It is a woman’s independence when she rebels against the injustice meted out to her and succeeds in it. It is Kala in *Lessons in Forgetting* who has a face to face battle with her husband and catches
hold of her independence. She is chosen to marry by her husband, just because of her long, black hair. He was a sort of man who loved his wife’s hair more than her. When she finds this intolerable at one extreme she cuts off her hair and gives it to him and walks out with pride as an independent woman. She is against the saying “kal anaalum Kanavan Pul anaalum purushan” which she often tells Meera. Through the character of Kala, Anita Nair gives voice against this common Tamil proverb, which voices mere patriarchy.

Thus Anita Nair’s female characters espouse of a new change that has come over Indian women. That is it was their past in which they were “Being-for-others” and which had been shifted to “Being-for-their self” in the present.

In Anita Nair’s fictional canvas the individual is given more importance than the social or cultural milieu. But she qualifies the individual by connecting it with the physical environment and that is the locale of her novels. Chapter four has made a study of this concept of the cultural milieu. The locale in her novels also draws a lot of significance. To be well said she paints an ornate, engrossing portrait of the outer world in order to project the turbulent chaos of the inner world of her characters. In *Mistress* as she presents a vivid portrayal of Kathakali art, she unravels a clear dimension of the psyche of her characters.
In *Ladies Coupe* she presents a class conscious society, through the character of the protagonist’s mother. It is a focus on the fact how such class distinctions fail to help and see the inner feelings of people like Sarasa mami, though she belongs to the same Brahmin community, but blames her when she chooses the means of selling her daughter’s flesh to make her living. Also it highlights the fact how justice is denied for the poor, as that in the case of Marikolanthu, that had been the root cause of all her agonies.

Feminist groups do try to make women more aware of their oppression. Anita Nair uses her novels as a tool to bring awareness of women oppression. She presents a stereotyped culture of the society that curtails women in the Indian context that she is weak and needs protection. The cultural stereotyping is the most powerful weapon used by patriarchy in making women submissive. Anita Nair had dealt with the victimization of women due to stereotyping. As she presents a portrayal of a cultural milieu, she primarily throws light on how the religion, society and culture are not in favour of women. She highlights the fact that women are victims of the inequalities resulting from social stereotyping. On the other hand she does not fail to show how the rapid urbanization, education and job opportunities have changed the status of women in India to a certain extent. Anita Nair’s novels whether psychological or sociological, expose the depression, regression, trauma and the inner most feelings of her characters.
In chapter five, this study makes an assessment of how Anita Nair has used the stream-of-consciousness technique to depict what is going on in her character’s mind. It is not merely a string of words but it attempts to present the inner most feelings of the characters. Her characters are real-life characters that we see through their eyes and hear through their ears. Using the stream of consciousness and flash back technique she probes into the deepest recesses of the mind and analyses its intricacies, conflicts, mysteries and the way in which it is modified to its betterment. In the words of Kamala Roy, Anita Nair conveys the message that is given in the Opanishads, “The way is long; it is as it were, walking on the sharp edge of a razor, yet despair not. Awake, arise and stop not until the goal is reached” (305).

Among the crowding female characters there are also a few male characters like Mukundan and Bhasi in The Better Man and Jak in Lesson in Forgetting, who have a battle with their self on their way towards the betterment of it. Jak who struggles with his guilt of being responsible for the tragedy of his daughter Smriti, and Mukundan with his guilt of being responsible for the death of his mother. They both undergo a strong psychological struggle, in which Jak finds self-contentment as he tries in all possible ways to find out the truth behind his daughter’s tragedy and Mukundan attains a betterment of his self as he unfolds his past to the healer of minds Bhasi. Though Bhasi heals his inner scar, Mukundan attains self-betterment only through self-realization.
The present study of the four select novels of Anita Nair, in which the crowding female characters have been prominent and dominating with their defiance against patriarchy and their quest for self, says in unequivocal terms that Anita Nair is a feminist writer, though she refuses to be claimed so. Her writings have definitely given the Indian womanhood a “golden dome” and that is the dome of a “new woman” with a pride of her “self”. She fulfills what Shodang has quoted what Helen Diner has expressed in her poem, “Seitto” (Blue Stockings), “Women when you paint your own portrait, Do not forget to put a golden dome at the top of your head” (49).

This dissertation entitled, “Select Novels of Anita Nair: A Psycho-Analysis” undoubtedly has a scope for future researchers. It will further encourage young scholars and researchers to do a detailed study on Anita Nair.