

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE POSTMORDENISTIC PERUSAL ON ANNE TYLER'S '*BREATHING LESSONS*'

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Abstract:

The paper deals with the brief analysis of the novel, *Breathing Lessons*, written by American novelist, Anne Tyler with respect to postmodernism. It contains the description of events that is associated with the concept of postmodernism for the better vindication of its adherence to the theory. It employs certain ingredients of postmodernism to the incidents of the novel to ensure the extent of its coherence. The grip of the novel with the genre, comedy of manners is explicitly bestowed by scrutinizing the scenes of amusement. The novel carries third person omniscient narration of ordinary middle class people with humorous dialogues. It is said to be a postmodern novel for its components of isolation, identity, issues of married life, games and scientific machines influencing human thoughts.

Keywords: amusement, identity, isolation, marriage, perspective

I. Introduction

The term postmodernism is quite arduous to explain as the theme of postmodernism appears in many aspects containing unscrupulous disciplines within it. It could be simply said as the reaction to modernism of twentieth century in art, culture and literature. Postmodernism gradually enters into the field of academy through literary criticism explaining itself not mere as a drift of movement from modernism but also spells out the human relationships. The major aspects it deals with are marriage, family, adjustments, isolation, arguments, failures and suffering. Anne Tyler, in most of her novels, depicts the life of middle class ordinary people and their issues in both family and community.

II. Self -Alienation

The presentation of family problems in Anne Tyler's novel, *Breathing Lessons*, as alienation of the characters by themselves getting away from their family relationships for achieving their own identity resulting in

RESEARCH ARTICLE

reduction of blood bonding relations stands as a primary element of postmodernism. This is evidenced in the life of Jesse and Fiona who got divorced and separated from each other. The family bonding is seen declining as Fiona left Jesse along with her daughter, Leroy earlier at her age of single year. This leads to a pathetic condition of Jesse to introduce himself for his own offspring as Leroy couldn't recognize her own father for not having seen him for several years.

III. Quest for Identity

Identity seeking as the most prominent theme of postmodern literature is found with the character of Fiona. She takes care of her own survival and looking after of two female lives, the one born out of her and another one whom she was born from. She wishes to achieve self-identity by meeting her expenses of survival by working as a beautician.

IV. Familial Fragmentation

Disbanded family is hold within postmodernism as one of its salient features. *Breathing Lessons* portrays itself to be occupied with such postmodern themes with the noticeable character, Ira and his family members as well. Ira himself doesn't socialize himself and seen to be stayed alone. He keeps himself away from the issues both in person and public role. His father and sisters are even presented as isolated characters depending completely on Ira for external societal communication.

Though Ira and Maggie live together, they often indulge in arguments and disagreements of opinions. On the other hand, Serena's daughter, Linda lives on her own. Mr. Otis, a black man who is accidentally met by the major characters of the novel along their way also lives his life in isolation on account of his flopped married life.

V. Machinery Dominance on Mind

The role of games, vehicles like car, tuner, movies and machines presented as taking control over the actions of human beings seem to be an add on element of postmodernism. Maggie heard the woman's voice asserting about her remarriage over radio set in the car while driving from a machine shop just having repaired her car. Having misconceived the voice of a lady over the tuner to be Fiona's, her daughter in law, accelerated her car instead of taking a break which took her into a trouble of getting struck into a truck. Ira often isolates himself by playing cards and engrossed in the game of Solitaire. As the novel belongs to postmodern concept, it is justified by the usage of phone for communication by Serena and movie of her marriage to recollect her past wedding.

VI. Apathetic Vision on Marriage

"Marriage is not always positive" is the chief essence of the novel as in the case of Fiona and Jesse. Jesse, a dreamer of rock star and Jesse, one of his group mates fell in love with each other. Fiona got impregnated

RESEARCH ARTICLE

with Jesse's child and married with the effort of Maggie as she has the concern over her son's life. But, Fiona left Jesse along with their daughter, Leroy because of Jesse's irresponsibility and his careless treatment of the relationships. Though Maggie cares and worries for the life of her son and daughter in law out of which she counsels her son of his negligent behavior, she is unable to fix the problem as Jesse is least bothered towards his wife as well as his own progeny. A lady who speaks over tuner in the car heard by Maggie has a failed married life which is performed out of love and declaring her remarriage for the sake of security this time. Ira and Maggie themselves are disunited in their discussions and do not amalgamate in their decisions that made them feel discomfort in their marital relationship and frequently brawl over several circumstances.

V. Omniscient Narration

The noteworthy attribute of indirect narrative method used by Anne Tyler is a crucial facet of postmodern literature. The occurrences are not presented in sequence. This dearth of successive presentation of events corresponds to the component of postmodern theory. Employment of third person omniscient narration is handled. The story is divided into three sections comprises of Maggie's perception in the first and third part and Ira's viewpoint.

VI. Comedy of Manners

Comedy of manners is a manner that uses the life and deportment of the people as the element presented through amusing and comical language with mocking tone. The humorous attribute is provided through the sexual affairs of the characters. Anne Tyler has handled comedy of manners in the entire novel by exhibiting ignominious situations that comes about as an outcome of substandard conduct. The most embarrassing situation is when Ira and Maggie crept into Serena's bedroom and made love with each other in her husband's funeral ceremony. This is an inappropriate act for anybody to do so on such a mourning occasion. The depiction of Serena on the day of her husband's funeral proves to be an ingredient of embarrassment as she plays her wedding video and urged her friends to recollect her marriage events by singing and dancing. In addition to it, she was colorful in her red colored bright translucent dress embedded with rhinestone sunburst.

Another minute constituent serves to be an incorporation to provide humorous effect to the novel is that Maggie is offered with a shampoo coupon at the funeral to write down any lovable lyrics for the song told by Serena turns into an mortifying circumstance when that coupon was given to a male cashier at a supermarket to cash and he gave back with a polite thanking. The notion of hilarity is delivered through the

RESEARCH ARTICLE

characters of Ira and Maggie conceived when Ira whistles and Maggie identifies the songs of the tone and she, reacting to his thoughts according to the lyrics of the songs.

Anne Tyler's humor is always tragicomic. There are characters in very pathetic condition in terms of alienation. On the other hand, the events and conditions are comical because no destruction or damage occurs for any of the personalities. For instance, the scene at the beginning of the novel where Maggie got struck into a Pepsi truck is perceived as comical since no distress is caused.

VII. Conclusion

Therefore, the novel is seemed to be presented with the events of a single day in the life of common middle class people but it also contains various episodes that have taken place in past brought down here as the flashbacks. The crucial problem on which the novel encircled is marriage. Everybody has different opinions on marriage. The perspective differentiates based on their experiences they come across in their society. As far as postmodernism is concerned, the novel significantly justifies itself with distinctive aspects that corresponds to the postmodern view of the novel. The genre of comedy of manners is explicitly maintained by the author by

highlighting funny incidents with comical presentation.

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