

The Making of an Individual in the Society, As Portrayed in Anita Nair's *The Better Man*

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Abstract

The paper offers a view of individual's intangible connection with the society that shapes his psyche in the ever-transforming world of complexities. Man needs to evolve an identity of his own by absorbing the patterns of existence and has to safeguard the evolved structure from the perils of over - exposure. The outer world carves out the character, when the individual gets exposed to the mores of the family initially as he grows, and then gradually acquaints himself with the codes of society. A successful balancing act with both the entities assists in building his personality. Further, there is a vast sphere of Nature that offers valuable lessons and drives the brush towards the making of a perfect painting. The individual's relationship with the world is intricate and stays away from the trails of definition, as the contours remain inexplicable in all forms. It takes a reciprocated move as the reflections of the society can be felt in the individual and on the same plane, the implications of the individual's mettle can be felt in the society.

Keywords: Individual, society, reflection, Psyche.

Human mind with the cauldron of emotions has structured itself based on the patterns of existence and created corners of assimilation with imagination as the seed. The entity has carved into different

branches of extended processes of thinking to broaden the vistas of knowledge of human life. The eternal journey with varied experiences and the foliage of thoughts when entrenched in a body of flesh takes the form of an individual and establishes an identity with the fluids of uniqueness. Further considering the state of human mind, one can perceive the three enclosures namely the conscious, sub-conscious, and the unconscious that owe their forms to the living conditions of the world that takes nutrients from the soil of survival. In a way, human mind can be compared to a tree with imagination as a seed and thinking modes as roots, the words as leaves, and the essence of thinking as a flower. Hence there can be a close connection established between the two entities of the world namely the Mind and the Nature.

The inner personality or the inner self is the individual in pure form. But the projection of the same individual with many outer forms governed by the impressions of the world create an image for the society and he lives with the mask of completeness. This process of identification can be compared to the formation of a fruit that gets a falsified form when observed from outside with the hard core shells as imposed qualities of the outer world. As the two layers of the

fruit symbolizing the societal perception, ego get dismantled, we find the individual with his self-inside that lies hidden from the contours of pretentious intentions.

Society is dependent on the individuals, and the individual is dependent on the world of nature outside. Our relationship with the world determines our inner personality, and that determines human society outside.

Anita Nair, through her novel '*The Better Man*' presents the conflict that an individual gets entrenched in, as he deviates to the mirage of the perceptions of the society failing to cater to his own self. In fact she portrays the journey of Mukundan as a being in the quest for inner peace. He is framed as a normal person confronted with emotional struggles but not a heroic figure who stays balanced all through the life, a quality which is chimerical in nature.

The novel gives an account of a man's growth and shows how he develops from being a man with selfish concern into a man with a wider concern to extend beyond himself. The writer herself in an interview to 'Hindustan Times' says, "I've never believed in heroic heroes. We only look at people when they achieve something. I know people who're extraordinary, but lead quiet lives. So whatever I write is not going to be about larger-than-life characters." (A Mistress Of Minutiae, Hindustan Times.)

Nair remains focussed on the theme of delving deeper into the layers of human psyche presenting real life traumas

and keeps a mirror before the reader and provides scope for him to identify himself with the situations that the characters are in. The novel 'The Better Man' features the same. As Nigam says,

"The story exposes a basic human predicament – each one of us has one wounded

corner in our personality." (Nigam. Gaze of the inner eye, India Today).

In projecting the landscape and lives of people in Kaikurussi, Anita Nair like R.K.Narayan imbibes life even to the non-living things and make them as spectators of the drama of life and says that she always gets fascinated by the writing style of Narayan as he gives little things great meanings.

As Bhasi introduces the different characters of Kaikurussi, he says about himself and perceptions of the people around him. He points out how an individual in society remains in pressure under the watchful gaze of the people. He feels that man starts being superficial owing to the value he gives to the observations and opinions of the world around him. He deserts the essence of the core and shifts towards the other side. But as Bhasi says, when once we overcome the unavoidable temptations of attributes from the society, the person acquires true freedom and moves beyond the plane of ostensible area. Bhasi experiences the same when he says,

When I am ten feet above everyone else I do not have to worry above how I

behave. I can stick my little
finger in my ear, turn it and
squiggle it till I feel sheer
pleasure squirm down me. I sigh.
I smile to myself. I hum. I make
faces. I declaim.

No questions asked. No need for
explanations. And so long as the
pace of my hands
keeps up a steady rhythm, no one
cares. (Nair, 1)

Then Bhasi says about the views of
people of Kaikurussi and how they
inscribe character to him. He comes
forward to lend a helping hand to
Mukundan who suffers from fears and the
guilt of deserting his mother when he was
young. He thinks that time had come to
prove that he was destined to heal
someone and has a mission to accomplish.
He scans the walls of the house and sets
them as a metaphor to the insides of
Mukundan as he says that the walls and
Mukundan had become one. In a way
Anita Nair was showing the relationship
between the individual and the outer world
as the external agencies pose a reflection
to the psyche.

Mukundan's past gets revealed as
how he led the life of a government
employee sharing room with Bachelors.
Mukundan feels frightened to look at his
own reflection and decides to shun the
truth as he avoids reading books. He feels,
"within their pages he will find startling
and unsavoury glimpses of himself" (Nair,
14). He recollects the past as how his
father Achuthan Nair discouraged him
from writing and considered him to be an
impractical person. Mukundan for the first

time in his life finds something that goes
against the dictates of his soul. The
suppression of interest effects his psyche
in such a way that even after retirement he
couldn't read a book as "it caused too
many inexplicable emotions to surface."
(Nair, 18). In fact the first opposition
force resulting from influence of external
agencies on the pure form of mind created
a scar inside him.

When Mukundan returns to
Kaikurussi, he doesn't want the villagers
feel that he had come as he couldn't find
home elsewhere. To cover himself he says
that it was his home and he belongs to the
place. So Mukundan gets inclined to
worry about what society thinks of him
and it makes him restless.

As he lands in his home, he is
confronted with hallucinations as he finds
his ancestors coming from all the corners,
questioning him. He says that the thunders
and lightening were not frightening when
compared to the insides of the house. This
shows that he was ridden with guilt. It was
the guilty conscious entity that he deserted
his mother in times of need that was
making him get into an imagined physical
threat. At one point of time he identifies it
as his own imagination but fails in
providing strength to the thought.

Anita Nair uses Pulmoorth
Mountain as a metaphor of Life. She
speaks about the thought process and
imagination of a child and an man and
says how their perceptions towards the
outer world differ. Mukundan on seeing
the mountain exclaims, "What is it about
age that shears everything around of its

grandeur? It is as if by simply growing old, he had dwarfed the Universe and robbed it of its awe-inspiring qualities. Even the Pulmoth mountain was no longer the huge mountain that reaches into the sky insurmountably.” (Nair, 50).

Mukundan recollects his past experience of climbing the mountain as a child and says how at first he felt it to be a plain mass and later how his perception changed when Krishnan Nair said that everything depends on how one sees things. Mukundan’s childhood friend, Meenakshi’s life offers an example of the plight of a woman who as a result of changing scenarios of the modern society, lands in a confused state by getting entrenched between the two poles of the society. She takes different roles of being an Extremist, runs a creche, and an insurance agent. She marries Balan, a Kathakali dancer who deserts her and later comes to her fold with an ailment and realizes that “he was nothing without his ability to dance.” Balan’s plight stands testimony to the fact that society doesn’t accept an individual when he is deprived of success. It plays on the psyche of him and creates craters in the space of self confidence which he acquires with acceptance of the outer world.

Mukundan’s mother dies in humiliation as she finds her husband Achutan Nair going for another woman. She gathers all her courage to wage a passive war against him but succumbs to fate. Mukundan used to visit his father now and then and bring things so that he becomes close to him. The action shows that he had no aversion towards his father and he was merely trying to capture his

attention towards himself. In a way, Mukundan shared a common instinct and the character of Achutan Nair was nothing but his negative side. In Alka Nigam’s words, “Mukundan is a timid creature who had hidden his inadequacies as an excuse under the domineering personality of his father”. (Nigam, India Today).

Mukundan leads a life in despair craving for recognition. But as Viktor Frankl who spent time in one of Hitler’s camps, said, “Despair is suffering without meaning.” (Yancey, Where is God when it hurts?, 200). The novel focuses on the journey of Mukundan in attributing meaning to the suffering by thorough introspection unveiling the hidden corners of the struggle for acceptance and taking a path towards realizing the true self. Initially when Bhasi offers help, Mukundan feels insecure as his ego doesn’t accept Bhasi who is more knowledgeable than him. But Bhasi is a revelation on the part of Mukundan and is a part of Mukundan’s conscience. His interaction with Bhasi enables him to awaken his conscience and it would be only one’s own conscience that can control a human being and it was quite evident as the words say, “It was as though he had stepped in and decided to take control of Mukundan’s life” (Nair, 89).

Bhasi speaks of himself and says that he was not an exile and gives the feelings of being an exile.

An exile is a creature who, in spite of being banished from his land, never manages to sever the ties with the place where his umbilicus lies buried. A pitiful being, who combines one part memory and two parts imagination to create a land

so magical, so unique, that he can never truly belong to the present – to the land that offers him the refuge (93).

In expressing the feelings of an exile, Anita Nair portrays the bond which an individual develops with a place, an entity of the outer world.

In the words of Maya, Nair's migrant consciousness is evident from the continuous evocation of the motif of *return* to the homeland in almost all her major novels. Throughout Anita Nair's novels we can trace a double consciousness pervading her writings or a like/dislike relationship which can be construed as a by product of the ideological construct fashioned by external stimuli and inner consciousness. (Vinay, 44).

Further, the fact that an individual perceptions change with age and life experience, is ones again depicted as Bhasi's life takes a turn. The concept that a person in the adolescent age feels that he can conquer the whole world and a vacuum would be created without his contributions, to the stage in midlife when he comprehends that the world can compensate his contributions and finally the last stage in which the individual comes to identify the he is nothing in the vast world, can be applied in the case of Bhasi who feels the same. He in a soliloquy says,

Do you remember what it was like to be twenty – three? The glorious certainty of

age when everything is bathed in the yellow light of hope and nothing is impossible. When the future stretches ahead, unbounded by the peripheries of time and mortality. When youth, as if it were the tungsten filament in the light bulb, draws on the power of conviction that life is what you make it. (Nair, 95).

Mukundan hesitates to reveal his fears as he is ignorant of his weaknesses and it makes him view Bhasi as someone who is intruding his privacy. He is unable to come to terms with the happenings and conflicts in his mind that would make him realize the strengths hidden inside. Resistance to assimilate truth as it demands courage and strength to get into the portals of inner self and take questions that bombard him makes him a victim. Nair in her fiction redirects the attention inwards towards the inner- self which is actually the true oppressor which subtly assists in the victimization procedure.

Mukundan strongly wishes to have recognition from the quarters of Kaikurussi and thinks that they would give him his father's place. In a way he aspires for an identity that makes him a prominent person in the village. He thinks that he has to be different from the "upstarts" (117) with the aristocratic background. He imagined people coming to him to seek his opinion. Mukundan even wants his father Achutan Nair, to praise him so that he can claim himself to be a powerful person and hide his weaknesses and resort to enjoying power to balance/satisfy his ego. He can be termed as a victim of

narcissistic disorder like his father. In the words of Nadine Richters, “Mukundan experiences his father’s behaviour as a permanent narcissistic mortification. It is important, though to overcome such mortifications and to become able to forgive others. (Richters,10). But Mukundan was not ignorant of the fact that society always pokes your nose irrespective of the good deeds you do to it when he helps Mad Moidu in solving the problem. He says, “The thing about life in a village was that you could never do anything right. If he had refused to see Mad Moidu, they would have said he was snooty. If he hadn’t made a suggestion, he would have been accused of staying aloof. But now that he had, it was the wrong one to have made.” (Nair,120).

When Bhasi says about Valsala, he says that all women of Kaikurussi “sound old and weary” by the time they reach twenty-five and adds that it could be the result of work they do at home or the “monotony that is more mind-glazing than backbreaking”. It speaks of the changing structure in Kaikurussi that alienates woman in making decisions related to family as well as the governing bodies. The plight of Meenakshi and parukutty stands as an example to the changing conditions in the society. With the socio-economic change in Kerala, and the conversion from women-centered kinships to Patriarcchy, the position of Nair women has undergone a drastic overhaul which has lead to the rise of gender-biased views and practices. The oppression undergone by Valsala in the hands of her husband Prabhakaran who is an educated person and a school teacher as he ignores her and

keeps her away from the privileges of a wife in husband-wife relationship says about the prevailing conditions in the society. The oppression leads to violence as Valsala maintaining an illicit relationship with Sridharan kills Prabhakaran. The aspect that Valsala starts cooking without considering the appetite of her husband speaks of the feelings of the oppressed as they start thinking of retaliation in an active or a passive way. Rajeshwar in the article titled *The Inner World of Indian Women: Neurotic Characters of Indian Women Novelist* says,

Society’s values imperceptibly enter the unconscious of these characters and from there they regulate their behaviour. The characters are therefore shown as grappling on the one hand with psychic conflicts of personal origin. These conflicts and traumas become too pronounced at a particular point of time in their life when a part of their psychic apparatus refuses to submit to repression. (50).

Even Parukutty, Mukundan’s mother does the same in waging a passive war against her husband Achutan Nair. The male prejudiced view usually disregards the passions and aspirations of womenfolk and labels them as unnatural. The idea that women are trained to gratify the needs and demands of the males finds its reflection in the characters.

As Catherine Mackinnon in *Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An agenda for Theory* puts it, “Sexuality... is a form of power. Gender,

as socially constructed embodies it... Women and men are divided by gender, made into the sexes as we know them, by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalize male sexual dominance and female sexual submission. If this is true, sexuality is the linchpin of gender inequality” (530-45).

The other issue of oppression is seen in the case of Kamban who is treated differently by the people of Kaikurussi, as well as Philipose, the Master of post office in Kaikurussi. When Mukundan invites Kamban to his home, he gets stiff opposition from Krishnan Nair who doesn't approve of serving him. The villagers even warn him to be away from him. Philipose using his power harasses him speaking of his background. This serves as an example of the conflict that an individual has to face with the societal impressions owing to the classifications based on caste. Mukundan says,

“Has not Kamban eyes? Has not Kamban hands, organs, dimensions, senses,

affections, passions ? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject

to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same

winter and summer as we are? If you prick him, will he not bleed? If you tickle him,

will he not laugh? If you poison him, will he not die?” (Nair, 149).

The traditional Indian hierarchy of caste and class gets projected in the village of Kaikurussi. The Nair community mixes with the Muslims, but the Christian post-

office manager from outside is given short shrift; and the so called lower class are allowed to work with the other people in the village but are not supposed to live near them. The fact that though a series of servant girls are employed in Mukundan's ancestral house and even as the years pass and one succeeds another, each of them is called by the name of the first one and no one bothers to find out their real names, is an indication of such discrimination.

Mukundan's perspective towards caste discrimination is very transparent which shows that he is a man with considerate approach towards fellow beings who imbibed the ideals of a casteless state. He feels that it is an obscure intention in the backdrop of selfish motives that discriminates a person lowering his/her self esteem. It can be termed as an act that forcibly attributes certain traits as a weakness and hence isolate him from the society. Insecurity could be a reason behind the unlawful deed.

Mulk Raj Anand shows a pure grasp of the psychology of both the caste

Hindu and the untouchable. In his dealings with the latter, the caste Hindu is

armed with the feeling of six thousand years of social and class superiority –

a feeling which refuses to accept the fact that the untouchable is a human being, but insists on treating him like a

subhuman creature, to be ignored or bullied or exploited as the occasion demands. (Naik,28).

The whole world is based on the figure 'Two'. The good and the bad; love-hatred; God – evil; Life- death. Every entity in it is bound to operate in two different ways. Even the human face which presents an individual's outwardly takes the two masks of hypocrisy and transparency. Man as a social being wears a mask of hypocrisy to gain acceptance from the society. He always feels insecure trying to comprehend the world outside and in the process takes 'pretension' as a weapon through which he can protect himself and curtail the egoistic tendencies of the fellow individual. The act leads to the conflict between the inner self and the outer world in the long run with the pent up negative energies.

Bhasi had chanced upon what he considered a universal truth: That all men are born with two faces. In his growing years, every man lets his environment and temperament determine which one he should wear by day. And it is this face that serves the purpose of a mere scab that is very often categorized so effortlessly as handsome, pleasant, nondescript, or even ugly.(Nair, 170).

Suganthy Krishnamachari in saying about the play 'Kattiyakaran' stresses the same aspect that individuals wear masks to hide their fears. He says that when the mask stays for a certain period of time, it becomes a part of the individual's psyche and it becomes difficult for him to get separated. He says,

"We wear masks all the time - a different face to present to different people. In fact, masks are us. And so used are we to masks, that we cannot tell a real face from a mask. The masks in fact, seem more real to us. We tilt at shadows. But we also fall in love with shadows. When relationships are built on mistrust and hypocrisy, assumed identities swallow up the real person. The reality then becomes abhorrent to us. (When the mask becomes the man, The Hindu).

Anita Nair uses perfect examples to show the eternal blend of nature and workings of human mind and says that a better understanding of nature can help humans in leading a hassle-free life. She, in bringing out the trauma of the character Mukundan often uses the symbols of 'light' and 'darkness'. 'Day' symbolizes exposure and 'night' symbolizes isolation which are the two poles of the mind. As Bhasi says, the real self comes out of the veil of pretension during night time, he means the rays of light which are free from the evil qualities like fear, sorrow

goes into every nook and corner and stands as an epitome of revelation, making the battered soul become wary of identifying itself with the enlightening form. But as darkness descends, it enables the injured entity to venture out craving for a release. Bhasi says, “It is all a matter of light and shadow. In the daylight, there are so many things vying for one’s attention – a person’s complexion, his clothes, his mannerisms, the chair he sits on – that there is no room for something as tremulous as his soul to emerge” (Nair, 171).

The usage of the two words ‘fragile’ and ‘callous’ in relating to an individual and the world respectively shows how a person needs to be skilful in treading the path of complexities that make the world outside. The inhibitions pertaining to the past actions and the experiences of the fellow individuals disable the mood of presenting oneself in true form to give scope for change. Trust comes to one’s rescue when the misconceptions of the problem are alienated. Hence Bhasi says to Mukundan, “I am going to teach you how to escape your past; I am going to help you bury the guilt, the sorrow, the fear that had feasted on you like a leech for years. Mukundan, are you listening? I am going to heal you. Do you trust me? Do you, Mukundan?” (Nair, 175).

Anita Nair poses a question when she says that Time is real and what is not real is the volley of moments that make it, she means to say that the two concepts of reality and imagined reality come for discussion. Reality is Universal truth.

Imagined reality is something that is a result of thinking that happens with the background of one’s perspective. Hence in normal terms, truth cannot be defined on a plane that is governed by the things happening outside. It is an amalgamation of trust bridging the pole of physical or mental experience. Mukundan had an urge for transformation and was trying to move out of the shell when Bhasi came to extend a helping hand. Bhasi even says that Mukundan was a “man capable of love and happiness”. As love is an inherent feeling gifted to a living being and fear is a foreign body that agitates the mind, Bhasi tried to bring out the feeling making him move out of the shackles of fear and sorrow.

Anita Nair uses metaphors to underline the aspect that human mind and body have everything to absorb from nature as they are intertwined with one another. When Bhasi guides Mukundan into the forest and as they come to a narrow opening, he asks Mukundan to consider the opening as a path to new life shunning fear and guilt. He asks him to cleanse his senses and feel the purity of light where ‘light’ symbolizes enlightenment.

Nair portrays the different stages of enlightenment when Bhasi makes Mukundan get into a clay urn to isolate him from the past. As he enters, the darkness engulfs him and he makes an attempt to get into the base form of a living being, the cell and continues to experience the formation of a whole being. He gets the feeling of himself being dissipated without an identity thus

becoming a new man with new life ahead. The process which Mukundan takes is a replica of Zen meditation. The Womb facilitates space for the germination of new thought which doesn't have the baggage of the past. As it was already said, fear is a by-product of the past action, and once it is shunned, the fragile being becomes free dismantling the walls of guilt. Anita Nair used 'Psychotherapy' as an instrument in showing the treatment which Mukundan undergoes in the hands of Bhasi. As per the Oxford Dictionary, 'Psychotherapy can be defined as the treatment of mental disorder by psychological rather than medical means. She aspired to be a Psychiatrist and the instinct of probing into the emotions of human mind has provided food to the thought and her wish to become a Journalist enabled her to scan the world from different angles thus making her put down her ideas with a thread that connects the inner self and the society in all possible ways.

Further, Mukundan's tryst with Anjana, a shattered soul and his wish to get married, made him think of the acceptance from his relations and the society. He finds a conflict where on one side he thinks of satisfying his soul by marrying Anjana, and on the other side, he broods over getting his decision approved by his father and the people of Kaikurussi. Even the same conflict arises when he had to save his friend cum healer Bhasi from the evil intentions of Power House Ramakrishnan and at the same time has to uphold the status given to him as a member of the community Hall committee.

Anita Nair says about the changing opinions of people, as they grow old. She says that the individual make attempts to think from the society's perspective and develops a feeling that though he is born all alone, he needs to garner the support of the people around him and see them beside his death bed.

As Muthahari quotes from Quran,

God has created man in diversity with different spiritual, physical, and intellectual aptitudes, dispositions, and inclinations. He has given some people special abilities, and has imparted superiority to some over others in certain talents. By means of this, He has made all human beings intrinsically needful of others and inclined to associate with others. (Murtuda Muthahari, The relationship between individual and society).

When Meenakshi, Mukundan's childhood friend with a burden of the past decides to leave Kaikurussi so that she can be free from the expectations of the family, she says, "I am a constant reminder of everything each one wishes to forget. Unhappy daughter. Abandoned wife. Wheeler-dealer mother" (Nair, 250). The three attributes are given by the society and she was saying about them. But she wants to trace out her true self and lead life.

When Bhasi's life gets into disorder, as Power House Ramakrishnan plots to usurp the land, Bhasi feels that he cannot solve the problem on his own. He feels like seeking the help of Mukundan but refrains from doing so, owing to the latter's preoccupation. It shows that an individual cannot lead an isolated life, irrespective of the knowledge he may possess.

When Mukundan's actions in pleasing his father doesn't get recognized, he gets frustrated and throws a volley of questions at his father trying to know what he had to do to satisfy him. He, as an extension of his father becomes possessive in getting himself accepted. He, like his father consciously withdrew himself from responsibility and started living with people who are independent.

Anita Nair in her interview supports the view and says, "I wanted to talk about a repressed man who still hasn't thrown off his father's shadow. I just thought that was typical of a lot of Indian men. No matter how educated they are, or how successful they are Men overall. They turn out to be replicas of their fathers.(Chanda, Imaginary Keralas, www.chennaiest.com).

Mukundan wants his father to live, as he wished to use him as a shield in the society to get his ideas accepted. Bhasi speaks of betrayal and says how he had taken advantage of getting into the role of God in healing Mukundan. The aspect that a human being is a small entity in the vast universe that is full of strange and unfathomable spaces of knowledge and

power becomes the prominent point. He says that man cannot change the movement of the planets with a sweep of his hand and every man is guided by a force that is individual and unfathomable. He adds that man can heal, but a little and no man is the master of another man's destiny. For man is not God. And fireflies are not stars

When Achutan Nair dies, Mukundan tries to blame his father for his inadequacies. He says that he spent his whole life trying to please his father and couldn't marry as his father wouldn't approve it. Then Krishnan Nair makes him understand the void in himself. He asks him not to blame him and shed away from his own weaknesses but asks him to look at himself using the true mirror of conscience. He says that his father had the courage of convictions and a strong will to pursue the things he wanted to see happen. He questions Mukundan, if he had the courage and strength to search ways for happiness. He is a man who moved away from Anjana thinking that an alliance with her could make people of Kaikurussi scoff at him, which would ruin his aim of gaining acceptance from the society. He even gets tempted when Power House Ramakrishnan plans meticulously and offers him a respectable position as a member of community hall committee and becomes mute in helping Bhasi who comes with the hope that he would solve the problem.

When Mukundan sees his reflection in the mirror, revelation dawns on him and he comes to terms with his

true self. The mirror symbolizes a situation in life where an individual bridges the gap between the past and the present thus enabling the being to enter the precincts of inner peace. He gets into a monologue and says that he is a creature who had hidden his inadequacies by using his father's domineering methods as an excuse to explain his own weakness of character. A selfish being whose world and happiness revolved around the appeasing and nurturing of his fragile ego. A timid man who used his niceness as a facade to deflect attention from the fact that he had made nothing of life. He was no better than his father had been. Selfish, brutal, incapable of loyalty or love.

Mukundan becomes a complete individual and chooses a better option of following his conscience without getting interrupted by the mirage of the gratification of the opaque self. He gifts his ancestral land to Bhasi and proves that he had overcome the chains binding his freedom of leading life as a individual with a transparent soul that promotes love and compassion. "From now on he would do only what his conscience told him was right. Between the individual and society, he had made his choice." (351) Anita Nair means to say that one need to carefully comprehend the thin line of demarcation between the two concepts, 'living for society' and living with society' and lead life that can make people become better men in the world.

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