

## DESCRIPTIONS OF WOMEN IN ANITA DESAI'S NOVELS FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to examine the status of Indian women mind, their womanhood and their mental underpinnings. It talks about how Desai's Indian ladies have endured because of their families and the general public that leave them with no other option yet to capitulate to mental sickness in isolation. Anita Desai has introduced various phases of human brain research particularly of ladies. Her range is very wide. Her characters are from the ladies of all age group. Her female characters face personality emergency and different experiences and that at last lead in suicide and demise. Their journey of self-revelation is cultivated distinctly through offense. This paper dissects how the disruption of phallogocentric account and landscapes involve the attack of connection among sexual orientation and re-conceptualization of female want. Such catastrophe is because of disappointment endeavor a re-conceptualization among fantasy and reality.

### INTRODUCTION

Anita Desai is mainly a novelist of moods, of human psyche and has a deep insight to examine the status of human brain in a clear and critical state. Being a novelist of human mind, she is perfect and wonderful in portraying female personality and present her novels as a predicament of compassionate, tender and aware women characters who are not up to standards of mechanical urban society. She investigates several features of feminine psyche like man-woman compatibility, husband-wife bonding, inner sensibility, mind confusion and causing of serious libidinous problems in the mental life of female characters. The state of great disorder in mind produces conflicts in their married life. As a psychological novelist she tries to delve deep into the emotional built-up and crevices of her female characters.

Anita Desai begins her writing with *Cry the Peacock* (1963) in which she depicts the violent commotion and obscure agitation of a youthful and touchy wedded young lady Maya who is spooked by a youth prediction of deadly fiasco. It offers articulation to the since a long time back secured cry of a sliced brain, the startling story of blunted human relationship being told by the principle saint herself. Anita Desai's female characters are upset with the marriage foundation and disregarded the restrictions of the Indian marriage structure. Anita Desai's endeavors to inscape the severe inward universe of its legend, Maya, who's on edge individual condition is cultivated by an assortment of parts including conjugal crushing and

pointlessness and extrasensory issue. In her father's hometown Lucknow, she is separated from everyone else because of her mother's death and her brother's absence. Her brother has settled in America and due to all, Maya gets more attention and love from her father. She is fully acquainted with all luxuries of life by her father's wealthy surroundings. Maya considers the world a toy which can be moved by her wishes. The earliest reference point of the novel features the spouse wife cold relationship which empowers Maya to transcend the limits of Indian Marriage framework. Maya weds Gautam who is very senior in age to her yet the two people are completely restricted to one another in their demeanor and enthusiastic reactions. Maya is enclosed within her mental space and geographical space to claim her husband's love. Gautam has the desire that his wife be traditional, submissive, tolerant and compromising. Maya tried also but soon she realized that her sexual desires and psychological necessity were incomplete and she was called 'neurotic' madwoman; she became a different person. Her mental state, her agony, her alienation and loneliness could not be portrayed in a better way by anyone other than the sensitive feminist like Anita Desai.

The Peacock's cries are representative of Maya's struggled weep for affection and life on inclusion. While, Gautam is a down to earth man, profoundly, Maya is an exceptionally touchy and enthusiastic sort of lady. She is neither ready to get organized from him nor physical sexual fulfillment. Her contribution is against Gautam's way of thinking of separation, while she has faith in an existence of all out ingestion and inclusion.

Hitched at an early age to Gautam, a companion of her dad and driving legal advisor, who is oftentimes her age Maya appears to be bound to experience the ill effects of enthusiastic starvation, particularly since she is childless. The first passionate emergency she faces emerges at the demise of her pet canine, Toto, on whom she has been showering all her fondness. The opening part enumerating it reports how Maya initially couldn't stand seeing her cherished dead canine and that she races to "the nursery tap to wash the vision from her eyes" (Desai, Cry the Peacock 5). Maya feels that "She saw the malevolent flash of a haze bottle" (Cry the Peacock 5) and becomes insane and finds the setting sun "expanding obviously life... a purulent bubble" (Cry the Peacock 6). Her condition is disturbed by Gautam's causal and unfelling comments: "It is all finished, come and drink your tea and quit crying. You mustn't cry" (Cry the Peacock 7). Further, rather than comforting her in her distress at the loss of her Toto, he leaves her to meet a guest who has come to see him and overlooks the dead hound. This occurrence draws out the complexity between Maya, who is exceptionally delicate and inventive and of a psychotic reasonableness, and Gautam, who is unoriginal and logical and unsentimental – a differentiation highlighted by correspondence holes by virtue of his being enveloped with his expert

distraction. It is, therefore, not surprising that there has been persistently quarrelling with each other impressively over burns through of time. Maya, pondering her hopeless marriage, watches:

“It was disheartening to think about how much in her marriage depended on an honourability constrained upon us from outside, and along these lines neither genuine nor enduring. It was broken more than once, and over and over by the pieces were gotten a set up together once more, starting at a sacrosanct symbol with which out of the pettiest superstition, we couldn't stand to part (Cry the Peacock 45).”

Monisha in *Voices in the City* is not different in nature as of Maya. While Maya violated everyone of the limits with the dread, Monisha violated every one of the limits in the feeling of suffocation. There are four principal characters in the story-Nirode, Monisha, Amla and Mother. Nirode, who can be portrayed as the saint of the novel, decides to remain a solitary wolf. He needed to transgress every one of the limits of establishments of marriage itself in an antagonistic way. Anita Desai probes deeper into the psyche of Monisha. Devoid of any true self-revelation and presentation, Monisha feels herself emotionally drained.

Monisha is wedded to Jiban however their wedded life is without joy and fulfillment. There are fickle contrasts between them. Monisha is a woman with a scholarly twisted of psyche yet Jiban is a functional sensible man and is basically average. It is the joint family which demonstrates to be a snag in their bliss. She needs to endure the slings and bolts of the insults and torments of the joint family. The void of separation Monisha made around herself, the obstruction she worked among herself and the family, demonstrated to be a lot for her. She couldn't bear the agony of being separated from everyone else. This frightened journey for feeling drove her, to her downfall, making her recognize when it was past the final turning point that was not what she required and finally the perpetuation of the behavioral symbols of male dominance was ultimately responsible for Monisha's death. Another fact of traditional male psyche was critically discernible in Dharma's attitude towards his daughter and also towards Monisha's sister Amla. Monisha felt stifled in the joint family of Jiban finding the loss of privacy of ethics, unbearable, she expresses the plight of Bengali women in general a truly feminist concern:

“I think of generations of Bengali women hidden behind the barred windows of half dark rooms, spending centuries in washing clothes, Kneading dough and murmuring aloud verses from the Bhagwat Gita and the

Ramayana, in the dim light of sooty lamps. Lives spent in waiting for nothing, waiting on men, self-centered and indifferent and hungry and demanding and critical, waiting for death and dying misunderstood, always behind bars, those terrifying black bars that shut us in, in the old houses, in the old city.” (Voices in the City 120)

Added to her misery is the fact that she cannot bear children. All this, she records her inner feelings in a diary. Her married life is devoid of love. These things lead to a sense of negation and isolation. Amla has a relationship with Dharma but this relationship gets fail in providing any mental peace and tranquility. Madhusudan Prasad commented on their relationship “This relationship been given stereotyped treatment instead it has been manifested through the medium of painting with a striking subtlety”(29).

A very different picture of women is found in Nirode's mother who was involved in her extra-marital relationship with Major Chadha rather than caring for her children. Due to lack of parental love and affection the children suffer a lot emotionally and almost become misfits in the society. Desai portrayed the image of independent lady with another female character named Aunt Leila in Voices in the city. Aunt Leila firmly believed that women can be self-sufficient, confident and free from the clutches of men only when they are able to discover their own spirits. Aunt Leila says emphatically:

“Women place themselves in bondage to men, whether in marriage or out of it. All their joy and ambition is that way while they go parched themselves.” (Voices in the City 221)

Hence, according to Aunt Leila a woman has to set limit for things and must find her ways and means to have independence. A submissive suppressed life could lead to mental tension culminating in trauma as in the case of Maya.

Similarly, Where Shall We Go This Summer? (1975) is essentially worried on the condition of Sita; the main female character. In the context of psychological portrayal of female characters Meena Belliappa observes:

“What is new in Anita Desai is the effort to delineate a sensibility to locale, as it operates within the

consciousness of her characters” (Belliappa 27). Where shall we go this summer also has the potency to show feminine sensibility. The main character is Sita in this novel and whole story projects the crisis of conscience in between husband-wife relationship. Sita is striving and not gratifies with her present condition as like Desai’s other novel’s female characters.

Sita acknowledges very promptly that Raman is an amazing administrator and had the expectations that he will assist her with leaving her unpredictable, offer her the required security and fill the hole in her life made by her dad. This is a striking conventional line of thinking and following up on the bit of Sita. It is clearly the enthusiastic side of herself that residual parts commonly excused. She at last weds Raman and through this signal makes a passionate section into life. As Usha Bande puts it: “Sita makes a deal with destiny in the event that she is powerless, great and humble, she will be adorable, Raman will cherish her. As self-destroying individual, she stances to be great, without pride and expectations that she will be dealt with well by destiny and by others” (The Far Side of Despair 109). According to Sita, love is a mind-boggling excitement.

In the Hanging Gardens; she observed the Muslim couple and stated that “They resembled a masterpiece so separated from all of us. They were no similar to us—they were barbaric, divine. So unusual, that adoration, that, dislike anything I’ve seen or known. They were so white, so brilliant, they made me see my very own life like a shadow, totally level, uncoloured” (Where We Shall go this Summer?). Anita Desai portrayed her characters in a way that they do not seem to rebel on their situation rather contradictory with realities of society. Sita gets alienated due to materialistic approach of her husband Raman, she feels isolation, despair in her husband’s parent’s house, “their age-rotted flat” that it is marked by ‘subhuman placidity, calmness, and sluggishness’ and feels that “their subhumanity might swamp her” (Where Shall We Go this Summer? 43). In reality she considers most of the people there as animals. “They are nothing—nothing but appetite and sex only food, sex and money matter, Animals” (Where Shall We Go This Summer? 47).

At the point when mental departure demonstrated worthless for Sita, at exactly that point she chooses for physical getaway from the city. Sita does not want the fifth child but she is not prepared for an abortion. She wants to keep it, she does not want it to be born. Therefore, she decides to abandon Bombay city and leave Raman in despair, she comes back to Manori island in a mood of doubt and desperation. She would like to remember the encounters which were unimportant fulfilling and had

their premise in enchantment. Her journey to this island is in fact a quest for integration of the self.

Her choice to come back to Manori primarily to keep down the introduction of her unborn infant by enchantment and halfway to escape from the brutality such a great amount of predominant in the metropolitan Bombay society and furthermore because of her disappointment with Raman might be named as a demonstration of masochist and irrational personality. In doing so she bears a nearby partiality to Maya and Monisha. Like all other Desai's character she isn't standard.

The environment of Anita Desai's novels is not suitable for women characters, a disturbed family environment where all female characters are struggling with their present conditions. Indian woman is self-sacrificing by nature and due to it, she has to face numerous sufferings in her life. She experiences a sense of loss of self-identity and alienation. In male dominated society of our country India, women have secondary place. In the context of psychological portrayal of female characters in novels of Anita Desai, Meena Belliappa observes: "What is new in Anita Desai is the effort to delineate a sensibility to locale, as it operates within the consciousness of her characters" (27).

In the presentation of inner mind reality, Anita Desai is perfect and her women characters are not ordinary but are eccentric and peculiar. Thus, novelist portrayed her female characters in that manner which presents them in a real form. This gives us the picture of 'New Women'. As R.K. Shrivastava rightly said:

"Unlike a photographer concerned with the portrayal of surface reality, she is painter of moods, of will, of conflicting choices and inner experience (xxxiii)."

Desai has great contribution in the growth of psychological Indian fiction by portraying psychological aspects of her female protagonists where female are not able to escape from despair, agony, detachment, adversity and isolation.

In a colossal piece of her books, Anita Desai directs rich cerebrum investigation. Noteworthy assessment of the wordy universe of Anita Desai's uncovers the creative possibilities of an

individual, especially of her lady characters who handled their focuses by breaking social rules and which reflected through various incidents in novels.

## CONCLUSION

Anita Desai's characters' existential alienation and despair turn into an insistent longing for death as a possible exit out of their hollowness and is sought to be overcome by the inner awareness of protagonists. They try to search within the meaning of life, but ultimately they fail in this search, and they are reconciled to the mental disorders. There is a dominant motif of death in Anita Desai's novels as her characters caught in the mire of existential alienation and ennui turn into a compulsive longing for death as an outlet. The theme of exile occupies the central part of Desai's novels. Most of her characters feel alienated and exiled. Though they visit in-crowd, they not ever texture the lack of culture around them. Her novels deal with the cruel assault of existence. Her protagonists are persons for whom alienation is the ultimate reality. They are mostly women comprising school-girls to grandmothers. They are fragile, introverts longing for their existence. Thus, in most of her novels, Anita Desai deals with alienation with her craftsmanship.

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