



Portrayal of Women in the select novels of Anita Desai's.

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ABSTRACT

One of the most well-known and talented writers writing in Indian English is Anita Desai. On June 24th, 1937, she came into the world in Mussorie. While her mother was of German descent, her father was of Bengali descent. She was exposed to English, Hindi, Bengali, and German throughout her childhood. She spoke just English when she was little. At the age of seven, she started writing, and English was the language she used. Her body of work includes novels, short tales, books for children, and articles. She is frequently referred to be a psychological novelist and a feminist due to the fact that she deals with key issues such as alienation, a lack of communication, inner conflict, man-woman relationships, and marital discords in her writing. Her main characters are always women. Both the language and the manner that Anita Desai use is appropriate for the subject matter and the setting. As a method of story construction, she employs sentimental recollections of times gone by (sometimes known as "nostalgia"). Her writing is so charming because of her unique writing style, the original characters she creates, the language she uses, the realistic themes she explores, and the narrative approach she employs, and this has garnered her numerous accolades, recognitions, and prizes for her work.

Keywords: relationships, women, language, communication.

INTRODUCTION

The novels written by Anita Desai are separated into two categories for the purpose of this investigation: those that represent the progression of the protagonist from feelings of alienation and meaninglessness of life to self-understanding and self-realization, and those that are concerned with women characters that are contrasted with each other but drawn with equally distributed sympathy from the novelist. The first category includes those novels that represent the progression of the protagonist from feelings of alienation and meaninglessness of life to self-understanding and self-realization.

Even though it was Anita Desai's first novel, "Cry, the Peacock," the book catapulted her reputation to the forefront of the world of literature due to its lyrical language, its style of narration, and most importantly, its character of the protagonist, who was distinguished by her furious instinctually and emotionalism. This novel, which is the most lyrical of all of her writings, resounds with the unfulfilled longing for love of a young girl who is driven to insanity as a consequence of her frustration and her preoccupation with a childhood prophecy of death. She is driven to insanity as a result of her frustration and her fixation with a childhood prophecy of death because she believes that she will die.

In this text, Desai addresses the topic of marital conflict and the disparity that may exist between couples in terms of their emotional, sensual, and intellectual development as well as their age and their social strata. He also discusses the discrepancy that may exist between couples in terms of their age. Maya was raised in the lap of luxury, surrounded by an environment that was at once aristocratic and aesthetic from the day she was born. As a direct consequence of this, she possesses an innate sense of appreciation for poetry and beauty, in addition to a profound and unwavering fondness for nature. Gautama, her intelligent, sensible, self-sufficient, middle-class husband, is unable to grasp the same thing. He is a little bit older than she is. When Maya is in the mental realm of her youth, which was replete with fairy stories, or with the highly artistic Kathakali dance, or of the melody of the birds, Gautama would quote from The Gita in order to teach detachment to her. She is in excruciating pain, and as she does so, she keeps thinking about the frightening forecast that an albino astrologer delivered to her when she was a little girl. The prophesy states that in the fourth year of her marriage, one of her spouses would pass away in an unexpected manner. This will occur. And as a direct consequence of this, the quality of her life deteriorates into a bottomless hole that is replete with agony and the sound of impending doom.

The psychological suffering of this fragile lady is portrayed in the novel using a variety of symbols, images, metaphors, and similes, all of which provide meaning and poignancy to the tale. Additionally, the torment of this woman is presented in a manner that is sensitive to her audience. The image of a wick, which serves the same purpose as a powerful one, is the one that is considered to be the most significant and significant symbol depicted in the book. Maya's desire and self-respect are extinguished as a result of Gautama's incapacity to recognize and respond to her impassioned scream for love, much like the albino astrologer who, unable to see the oil-filled lamp, only tends to the wick and kills the light. Maya's situation is analogous to the story of the albino astrologer. The union of these two ill-suited individuals is doomed to end in disaster and calamity because of the inherent compatibility issues between them.

Where would you recommend that my family and I go during the summer? focuses primarily on the issues of alienation, monotony, and strife that are present in marital relationships. Sita did not receive a lot of parental attention or a suitable living environment while she was growing up; as a result, she vacillates like a ship without a rudder between the precarious existence she led as a kid on a remote island and the harsh, violent one she now leads as a married woman on the mainland. Sita's life has been marked by instability because of her upbringing.

She was able to experience the same degree of love, affection, and reciprocation with the couple she encountered for the first time by accident in the garden, but she is unable to attain the same level of love, affection, and reciprocity with her family. As a direct consequence of this, she creates an emotional gap between herself and her family. In addition, the all-pervasive violence in the world, in addition to the callousness of her family, makes her conscious of the fact that she does not have a 'connection' with the local surroundings that she is in. Her sixth pregnancy, which is now going place at this point in time, softens her resolve to submit, to go along with whatever the flow of events may be. She arrives to the erroneous conclusion that she would be able to halt the process of giving birth if she partakes in the magic that her father invented in the past on an island that is situated a significant distance from the city. This is a mistaken assumption on her side. On the other side, the difficulty of living on the island much surpasses the hazards that are present on the mainland. While she is pent up inside the run-down home on the island, which is being pummeled by rain, she comes to the realization, through thought and analysis, that there are shadows hiding behind her father's magic and the false veneer of the islanders' innocence. She comes to this realization while she is experiencing the storm. She gets the sense

that the father isn't being entirely truthful. She comes to the conclusion that the anarchy that exists on the mainland is more enticing than the jungle law that exists on the island, and so she chooses to accompany her husband back to the mainland. As she does so, she places her footsteps symbolically on top of the footprints that her husband had previously put in the sand. As a consequence of this, she is able to rise beyond the limiting parts of her life, make peace with, and "connect" with the everyday components of her existence.

Clear Light of Day is the most life-affirming and mature of all of Desai's writings, and it charts Bim's journey from the darkness of anger, fury, and rejection into the life-giving day-light of acceptance, reality, maturity, love, and forgiveness. This journey is recorded in the novel Clear Light of Day, which is also the novel that Desai wrote. Desai's novel is titled Clear Light of Day, and it was written by Desai.

Bim, out of the four children in the Das family, is the one who is left behind to nurse her wounds after being ostracized and rejected. This is an ironic circumstance given that Bim is the child who is the most loving and caring as well as the one who is the most smart, active, and progressive of the lot. The horrific experience that was India's partition is reenacted in the severed umbilical cords of the Das family, which acts as a microcosm for the broader catastrophe that was India's partition. Bim, the most active of the four siblings, is unable to move out of the old home in the old city because she is haunted by these memories, which stop her from growing emotionally and lead her to remain stagnant. Tara, the sister who never stopped clinging to her brother and relied on him for everything, eventually got married and moved away so that she could have a family of her own. This is a somewhat ironic turn of events. The sibling who was regarded in the highest regard and received the most affection from the family has parted ways with them in order to carve out a unique niche for himself by getting married to Hyder Ali's one and only daughter. This sibling was the recipient of the most admiration and devotion. Their landlord was a man named Hyder Ali.

By causing them to reflect on what happened before, the serendipitous visit that Tara paid that summer reopened old wounds. However, as a result of her resolve to reconcile with her family and accept the truth of her familial links, Bim's naturally joyful personality, as well as her dynamic and combative character, are brought into the open. When she forgives her brother for avoiding responsibility for his misdeeds, she finally realizes that she is capable of reaching her full potential.

As a consequence of this, there is a development from one book to the next in terms of how the protagonists are shown in each of these four volumes. This development may be seen as a progression. All of these women, to varying degrees, are successful in actualizing their full potential, and in each case, the woman exhibits the courage and tolerance, in addition to a wealth of love and knowledge, that are essential to prevail despite the restricting conditions into which life has forced her.

The second collection of books consists of titles such as *Voices in the City*, *Bye- Bye Blackbird*, *In Custody*, *Baumgartner's Bombay*, *Journey to Ithaca*, *Fasting, Feasting*, and *The Zigzag Way*. Anita Desai is able to investigate different parts of the female mind by using characters that are diametrically opposed to one another in every way. Nevertheless, the level of detail provided in the narration is calibrated such that it is equivalently distributed among all of them in order to emphasize the salient features shared by all of them.

Objective of the study

1. To examine the roles, expectations, and depictions of gender, sexuality, and power that were placed on female characters in earlier works of English literature.
2. To investigate how women have been portrayed in English literature over the years, moving from standard positions in the past to more complicated and diverse depictions in modern literature.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Dr. Sridhar Sharma (2016) The term "feminism" refers to both a movement for the liberation of women as well as a philosophy that is gaining popularity in today's society. It is the purpose of this organization to liberate women from the limitations that they have placed on themselves as a direct result of being raised in a culture that is dominated by males. In its most fundamental form, feminism may be seen as an advocacy movement that seeks to increase awareness of the accomplishments, demands, and rights of women. Not only is feminism or feminist assertion in literature associated with a political campaign for equal pay that began in the nineteenth century in the United States, but its roots can be totally traced back to the works of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Kadam Sachin Kumar L (2013) Women's voices have always been underrepresented at lower levels, both in the annals of history and in the pages of literature. They are referred to as the "adjudged" in the ethnic region, which indicates that they have been burdened, indented, and subjugated. They have held this designation for a long time. In recent years, women have begun to effectively use their independence to claim space for themselves, and this trend is expected to continue. In India, the fight against colonialism was joined by another battle, this one fought discretely in the background, that followed women's attempts to bestow upon themselves the same rights as males. This conflict followed women's efforts to bestow upon themselves the same rights as males.

According to Babita (2012) according to research published in under the title 'social Critique in Anita Desai's Novel *Cry, the Peacock*,' the author of the novel feels that it is a social fiction. The author makes the smart comment that Desai's novels are delicate portraits of women's inner lives, which is dead on, and the author notes this in a way that is both insightful and accurate. Desai makes an effort to illustrate the plight of working-class women living in India's patriarchal culture via the narrative of her novel. The manner in which women are barred from participating fully in society due to a lack of education and preconceived conceptions. Throughout the entirety of the narrative, we see the effect that the use of fake swear words has. It investigates the conflict that arises between those who come from families and desolate Indian women who come from the white-collar society. It is vital for a husband and wife to have affection for one another as well as an understanding of one another in order for them to have a happy existence together. The relationship between a man and a woman serves as the primary focus of this epic.

The discussion in Roy (2013)'s This paper focuses on the female characters that serve as the main characters in Anita Desai's novels. The title of the paper is "Sense and Sensibility of Women Characters in the Novels of Anita Desai," and the focus of the article is on the female protagonists. She is fully aware of the obligations that come with her role as a woman essayist, and she has done her best to maintain the heritage of previous female authors. Anita Desai has done her best to uphold the legacy of other female authors. When it comes to observing and responding to reality, the author believes that Anita Desai is fundamentally a writer of "inner weather" because she possesses the capability to demonstrate the ability to develop the shifting dispositions, the rhythmic movement of feeling, the transition of thinking, and the mysterious workings of the human mind. She possesses

a one-of-a-kind affectability, which gives her the ability to investigate the state of consciousness that her characters are in. This is only one of her many excellent qualities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The article on "Portrayal of Women in English Literature" (also known as "Portrayal of. The article "Then and Now," which was penned by Anita Desai, analyzes the many ways in which female characters have been depicted in works of English literature throughout the course of time. This study proposes to analyze not just the cultural and social settings that have led to the construction of these pictures, but also the evolution of how women have been pictured throughout the course of history. Specifically, this research will look at how women have been portrayed as having different levels of independence, sexuality, and power.

This investigation makes use of a diverse assortment of research approaches, such as literary analysis, feminist literary criticism, content analysis, interviewing, surveying, and historical research. The purpose of this project is to explore the portrayal of female characters throughout history and how that representation has developed over the course of time. These approaches are being employed within the scope of this project to accomplish this investigation. In addition to this, the research makes an attempt to explore the influence that feminist movements and female authors have had on the depiction of women in English literature. This is done in an effort to better understand how women are portrayed in written works.

DATA ANALYSIS

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She began writing fiction and nonfiction at the age of seven, so it's clear she has a talent for writing. Her inner writer flourished in her later years, despite initial difficulties. She was a sporadic contributor to the school newspaper. She calls herself "an observant person" and says that trait has served her well.

In my opinion, a writer's primary skill is keen observation. If he isn't, he has no business trying to write a novel, especially one that requires such precise diction and careful attention to detail. (Stairs to the Attic,9)

Anita Desai is one of the illustrious women authors whose work has improved Indian English fiction via the liberating expression of feminine sensibility since Independence. She is also a keen observer of Indian social life and its cultural history and has been highly affected by the ideology of Gandhi.

For Anita Desai, the point of writing is self-discovery, followed by truth description and communication. She thinks of art and truth as interchangeable terms, but not reality. Truth and art are indistinguishable from one another. Art is the nine-tenths of the iceberg that lie under the ocean's surface; reality is only the one-tenth that is visible above water. This is undeniably true and cannot be disputed.

Commenting upon her writing she says that:

Writing for me is an exercise in uncovering, emphasizing, and communicating meaning. I need to take the incomplete and seemingly meaningless mass of reality around me and try to understand its purpose by diving beneath the surface and exploring the depths, then lighting those depths until they become a more vivid, dazzling, and explainable mirror of the visible word. (Indian Fiction in English,152)

Her works clearly articulate this literary philosophy, and through the projection of her thoughts, she has succeeded in showing the reality of this social landscape. She came to the conclusion that fiction could convey the truth more effectively, passionately, and memorably than any amount of factually correct papers, meticulously studied histories, or wonderfully documented biographies, and so she made it her profession to write novels.

The Inheritance of Loss

Her keen eye for detail in describing her characters' everyday lives and their homes is what really stands out. Her story's momentum never flags, and that's what holds the reader's attention. The novel's setting and characters are introduced against the backdrop of the mighty Kanchenjunga, and the description of this natural wonder is enthralling. In the first paragraph of chapter one, Kiran Desai's readers are immediately transported back to this vibrant scene. In this setting of mountains and shadows, metaphors leap to life. The novel's opening portrayal of nature injects it with new ways of thinking and metaphors. All day long, as described by author Kiran Desai, the sky was a deep blue, the mist rolled in like a sea creature, and the mountains cast shadows as deep as the ocean. Kanchenjunga, a distant mountain chiseled out of ice, was briefly visible above the mist, catching the last of the light and sporting a plume of snow blown high by the storms at its top.

The fundamental issue running throughout the work is one directly tied to colonialism and the impacts of post-colonialism: the loss of identity and the way it goes down generations as a terrible sense of loss. As a novelist writing at the height of her social awareness, she captures many of the most pressing concerns of our day. Kiran Desai's self-assurance, dedication to his ideas on terrorism, and recognition of the limitations of a society afflicted by poverty are all examples of his direct, brave honesty.

The social and political climate of Kalimpong is vividly depicted in Kiran Desai's second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss*. A superb analysis of the changing social and cultural landscape of India. The effects of industrialization, consumerism, and globalization, as well as the thirst for western ideals, manners, and lifestyles, have resulted in substantial societal changes in India. As a writer who has experienced cultural displacement, Desai portrays people who are unable to fully embrace their new home and identity.

Anita Desai's treatment of feminism

Among contemporary Indian feminist writers, Anita Desai is without peer. In her primary works, she demonstrates a deep and moving comprehension of the natural and genuine everyday issues of family, social, and business interactions, as well as a wealth of knowledge and an inner psychological drive. Her works represent feminism in its fullest sense and are thus symbolic. Desai has, via her writings, illuminated the shadowy and puzzling facets of the human mind, with the majority of her postmodern works addressing topics specific to women. As an introspective social critic and reformer, Desai has exposed the hidden images of her

era's degraded and hostile female community. With the goal of spreading the message of the second sex, she has envisioned a paradigm of the entire female community, and feminism is one of the most prominent themes in her invented world.

She has infused her fiction with feminine sensationalism and vivid themes that are both innovative and potentially illuminating, such as the untold suffering, agony, and psychological, conflicting senses that lower-class working women experience at the hands of their husbands, fathers, and brothers who are either unconscious or unwise and inconsiderate. She has written literature that is rife with sexism and feminism, as well as with vivid topics that are both novel and possibly relevant to the predicament of working-class women.

"Maya" as the symbol of modern femininity

Anita Desai's debut novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, was published in 1963. Its female protagonist and heroine, Maya, served as the vehicle through which she attempted to reveal the underlying truth of the post-modern age. Desai wrote the book with the intention of rousing the neglected, tortured, inferior women of the Indian Bourgeois society. Maya has a difficult time finding her place in her family and with her husband, Gautama, a chauvinist lawyer who is a significant number of years older than she is. In a society where males prevail, Maya is the minority.

Desai utilizes Maya as a vehicle to investigate a number of topics, including internal conflict, sorrow, alienation, aberrant treatment and conduct, and ultimately insane traits and an act of suicide. The author, Desai, delves into the suppressed optimism as well as the repressed sorrow of India's postmodern feminist movement in her novel. Disparities in age, disparities in maturity, the Indian concept of segregations, and the mental relationship between a husband and wife have all been cited as key causes to marital struggle and isolation among Indian women. Among Indian women. The general idea that women of their gender are innately weak, odd, inferior, subservient, and so on only contributes to make the situation worse for Indian women, who are already empty vessels. The bond that Maya shares with her father is quite strong, and it will be difficult for her to separate from him when she gets married.

Image of women in Anita Desai's novels

Anita Desai is a novelist, and she does not think that authors should write propaganda. That is a journey of self-discovery for her as a writer. Her work is focused on unearthing the truth, which is followed by its description and transmission to the reader. Desai's quest for the truth prompted her to write about characters who were dealing with marital discord in their relationships. Desai took inspiration for her female heroine from members of Indian society's middle and upper middle classes who live in metropolitan areas.

Cry, the Peacock

The novel *Cry, the Peacock* tells the story of a troubled and lonesome young girl named Maya who is preoccupied with the prophesy of a childhood calamity. It investigates how the fate of the female heroine reflects the psychological state of women in connection to their function in society by analyzing how the events that befall her. Maya is married to an older guy who is a dispassionate and hard-working solar lawyer who is unable to recognize or comprehend the sensitivity of women. Maya's husband is a solar lawyer. Maya's marital relationship eventually leads to unhappiness because of a lack of mutual understanding. Gautama is unable to

comprehend her desires for sexual love and commercial success. He coddles her and treats her like a child. Desai provided a picture of a woman, a vision of a woman who could be lived with, in the 1960s.

Voices of the City

The existential themes of alienation from society, loneliness, and estrangement between husbands and wives are investigated in Anita Desai's second novel. The novels address issues such as Monisha's ennui, her husband Jiban's refusal to cooperate, their inability to maintain their privacy, the power of Monisha's mother-in-law, and the absurdity of living in India's current urban areas. In this book, Desai focuses on the pointlessness of human existence. Nirode and his sisters, Monisha and Amala, are three sensitive persons who live in their own world. Nirode is the oldest of the three. Monisha, a young woman who is known for her sensitivity, is unable to adjust to the responsibilities that come with marriage.

CONCLUSION

The conversation that we are now having demonstrates that the work of Anita Desai introduces a new path for Indian literature. She is an existentialist writer who, although living in a world that is indifferent, is concerned with the suffering and inner turmoil that her female characters experience. She writes on men and women as individuals, focusing on topics that are really only of interest to those who are alone in the world. The delicate union of two distinct brains is a concept that has not been fully realized in Indian households that are predominately headed by men. Marriage is the idea in question. Women's individual identities, emotions, sentiments, wishes, and levels of self-esteem have not been favorably examined within the context of Indian social life. *Cry, the Peacock* and *Fire on the Mountain* are the two novels written by Anita Desai that most accurately depict the female mind and psyche from the inside out. The female characters are isolated from the main flow of life and do not have access to its resources. Maya, Nanda, Raka, and even Ila Das are all examples of high-string, wayward, and hypersensitive persons.

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