



Women in the Fictions of Anita Desai

Subhash Rai, (Ph.D.),

ASRLS College, Nabiganj Bazar, Siwan, Bihar, INDIA

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



Corresponding Author

Subhash Rai, (Ph.D.),
ASRLS College, Nabiganj Bazar, Siwan,
Bihar, INDIA

shodhsamagam1@gmail.com

Received on : 16/10/2020

Revised on : -----

Accepted on : 23/10/2020

Plagiarism : 9% on 16/10/2020



Plagiarism Checker X Originality Report

Similarity Found: 9%

Date: Friday, October 16, 2020

Statistics: 138 words Plagiarized / 1565 Total words

Remarks: Low Plagiarism Detected - Your Document needs Optional Improvement.

WOMEN IN THE FICTIONS OF ANITA DESAI Abstract Women have always been the prey of male dominated society. They face many problems in their life in various ways. Women have been suppressed and ill-treated by men from long in past and upto now. From past time, women were slaves to men and also were under their control. They did not have the liberty or equality. Women were not free to act on their own. Many illegal activities and cruelties were done to them.

Abstract

Women have always been the prey of male dominated society. They face many problems in their life in various ways. Women have been suppressed and ill-treated by men from long in past and up to now. From past time, women were slaves to men and also were under their control. They did not have the liberty or equality. Women were not free to act on their own. Many illegal activities and cruelties were done to them. Education was refused to them but the suppression was broken out by some of the great women and they proved their power.

As we know that Anita Desai is an outstanding and persuasive personality among the Indian novelists writings in English. She is one of the most accomplished chronicles of the middle class India. Anita Desai's novels depict the Indian woman in all her changing faces, fires and fervor. Like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, Desai's themes are concerned with human nature and human relationship. She is the only novelist who shows some kind of similarity to Arun Joshi. She is very sincere and practical with her craft. She has beautifully described the position of women in Indian society. She is a minstrel of the human heart. She is an artist shaping the contours of her inner world. She has concerned exclusively with the personal tragedy of individuals. This paper deals with women and their position along with feminism from the novels of Anita Desai. Since the beginning movement of the women's, there has been a strong rise in the amount of literature that is self-consciously feminist in tone, clearly espousing the ideals of female equality.

Keywords

Women, Equality, Feminism, Suppression, Male domination.

Trully, Anita Desai is the most renowned of the contemporary Indian women novelists for her *Cry, the Peacock* is the story of a young sensitive girl obsessed by a childhood prophecy of disaster. Anita Desai has given the verbal picture of a highly sensitive, cultured, high-strung woman, Maya. She has plunged deep into the feminine psyche from childhood to youth and ultimately to death. The feminine psyche of the Hindu woman is shown in the novel, especially from the point of view of Maya. But taking into account of other female characters in the novel, Anita Desai has created a stained glass landscape with details of images, colours and odours. *Cry, the Peacock* is the product of a mellowed crafts woman. *Cry, the Peacock* is a family story in which the marital discord between Maya and Gautama is dealt with colour and symbolism. In the Novel, *Cry, the peacock*, besides Maya, there are other women characters life mother-in-law, Nila, Pom, Leila, Arjun, Mrs. Lal and the Sikh, the cabaret dancers and all of them have some depending upon her. In the novel Maya stands for the poetry of life and Gautama stands for prose. H.M. Williams quotes: 'It is a brilliant, Impressionistic novel; the total effect however, is one of despaire'. *Cry, the Peacock* is a mobbing story of a sensitive young educated Hindu woman who withers away and ultimately dies. Like the peacock symbol, she possesses many things, but most notably yearning is for love, Separation and sorrow. In Desai's fiction there is an effort to discover, underline, and convey the significance of things through imagery and symbols.

In *Cry, the Peacock*, Desai explores the turbulent emotional world of the neurotic protagonist, Maya who smarts under an acute alienation stemming from marital discord and verges on a curious insanity. Knowing about the women psyche, social inequality, marital discord, Loss of social standard, pain and pang of mind of women, Desai started to compose novels to draw the attention of people towards women in the patriarchal society. In her second novel, *Voices in the City*, Desai tries to portray alienated individuals. These individuals are Nirode, Monisha and Amla. The two sisters Monisha and Amla are rebels against the traditional middle class life. They are always longing for creativity and self expression but each comes to grief. Nirode drifts as a bohemian. Monisha commits suicide and Amla is heart broken.

Desai's third novel, *Bye-Bye Black Bird* (1971) deals with the theme of frustrations and loneliness which result from existential problems such as adjustment in a new hostile world of discrimination, estrangement, racial hatred and home sickness. In the novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), Anita Desai describes the psychic mind of a modern Indian woman whose loneliness, boredom and agony arise from existential factors. It tells about the inability and unwillingness of an Indian woman to communicate her agony in an insensitive and callous world due to her marital disharmony. In this novel, Sita, a being a lady of forty years old, wavers between married life and self-fulfillment. Her hopelessness makes her insensitive, cruel and alien to the family. Her insanity drives her to Manori, an island in the west coast. She rebels against the birth of her fifth child. Sita grows fade up with her dull and disappointed life. In her deep anguish she finds herself like a Jelly fish stranded on the sandbar, feeling suffocated and unable to service on the Sands of life.

Her fifth novel *Fire on the Mountain* (1972) is a study of woman's isolation in existence. It portrays the predicament of a woman living a solitary life away from the external world. The novel trends to emphasize loneliness, isolation and seclusion in the life of a deserted woman. The novel begins with the description of Nanda Kaul's life of solitude and seclusion. Nanda is the Widow of one time vice chancellor of a University.

In the novel, *Clear Light of Day* (1980), Desai presents the image of an Indian woman who is much different from the Protagonists of her earlier novels. Maya, Monisha and Nanda Kaul are portraits of women who denounce marriage, family and society which are subversive of peace of life. But the novel, *Clear Light of Day* portrays the existential predicament faced by two young sisters Bim and

Tara. These two girls are brought up in their hostile situations with their indifferent and disinterested parents. They live in a family where the mother is diabetic and father is a useless dependent. The other members are mentally related to each other. All these characters struggle to live and exist amidst the onslaught of death, poverty, abnormality and apathy.

Desai's latest novel, *The Village by the Sea* (1982) also deals with the existential hazards faced by Lila, a thirteen year old girl and her brother Hari, a boy of twelve year old. They encounter several problems and find their existence very challenging. They find it difficult for them to run the house with their unemployed dipsomaniac father and their sick mother. All other members of the family struggle to make their existence safe and secure. The novel describes the existential predicament in which Hari struggles to survive in Bombay city and how his sister suffers silently facing problems at home.

Anita Desai in her novel, *Fasting Feasting* (1999) takes the reader to her fictional World of women with their lives in a tradition bound society. The women protagonists in the novel are Uma and Aruna, two daughters who are emotionally Victimize by parents. Uma, the eldest daughter of the family was very simple and sober, though not beautiful. She had to suffer the torture of the family by over working for the comfortable living of her parents as a result of which her desires and dreams remain unfulfilled. Her education is eclipsed by the birth of her brother, Arun. She remains awfully busy in the household work of the family and neglects her studies where upon she failed her examination.

It is to be noted that the woman is naturally made for two things that are household domestic tasks and the exercise of pure love and devotion. while man in essentially action, woman is essentially nature. They bear suffering without complaining. They are accustomed to bearing tribulations and pain and it never surprises them. There are five basic qualities in the woman which make her household very happy. They are: 1. Acceptance, 2. Affection, 3. Association 4. Achievement and 5. Adventure. A woman should accept her husband as a worthwhile person. A woman should respond to her husband with affection. A woman should associate with her husband with mutual interest. A woman should achieve certain goals which make herself and her husband proud. A woman should adventure which should attract her husband and stabilize the family. Thus, married life is a combination of pleasure and pain. Desai's heroine, almost all of them are full of imagination and fantasy with no redeeming human attributes but are submissive to their husband. Thus, Anita Desai lodges her protest against unhappy married life in the phoney world through her female characters.

Conclusion

This paper concludes stating that many women in our society are presumed to be liberated, but in reality they are stuck up in a patriarchal society. They are to a greater extend still oppressed and are unable to solve the conflict of interests in their lives. The status of woman in modern India is a sort of paradox. They are trying their best to achieve their position and place even today at the advancement of education not in India but also abroad.

References

1. Desai, Anita. (1980), *Clear Light of Day*, London. William Heinemann.
2. Desai, Anita. (1978), Replies to the Questionnaire, *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*, Volume-iii, no.1, pp.1-6.
3. Desai, Anita. (1970), Women writers, *Quest*. No.65, April-June, pp.39-43.
4. Kumar, Radha. (1998), *The History of Doing*, Kali for Women. New Delhi.
5. Sen, Amarty. (September 17, 2001), *The Many Faces of Gender Inequality*. The New Republic.
