



Women's Struggle for Uniqueness in Novels of Anita Desai

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Introduction:

Feminism is a belief system which indicates female. As indicated by the Oxford English Dictionary, the term 'Feminism' was first utilized as a part of the last piece of nineteenth century and it was characterized as having the characteristics of females. By and large, feminist awareness is the cognizance of exploitation. As a theory of life, it restricts women's subordination to men's in family and society, alongside men's cases to characterize what is best for women. Feminism is characterized as a method of presence in which the woman is free of the dependence disorder whether it is the spouse or the father or the community or religious and ethnic group. Indeed, even today a normal woman feels indeterminate about his identity as a social being. So feminism is focused on the battle for balance for women rights verifiably and politically. It stresses to be "Feminism" especially in her book *A Literature of their Own* calls women's written worker a subculture she follows the advancement of this "subculture from the seasons of the Bronte's to the present day. Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai has also made the 'Woman-subject' her main preoccupation. But unlike Markandaya, who is more concerned with the social, political and economic issues affecting the lives of the common people, especially the rural and urban ones of the newly independent Indian nation-state, Desai clearly shows her disfavor for the novelists who take interest in "the 'outer' rather than the 'inner' world preferring the social to the psychological novels" (India Today: 15.03.1986: 149). About her artistic mission, she herself states:

Writing to me is a process of discovering the truth ... the truth that is nine-tenths of the iceberg that is submerged beneath of the one-tenth visible portion we call reality. Writing is my way of plunging into the depths and exploring this underlying truth. All my writing is an effort to discover... and convey the true significance of things (Vinson: 1972: 348).

Hence, K.R.Srinivas Iyengar's evaluation of her fictional world was quite Pertinent:

Her forte is the exploration of sensibility - the particular kind



of modern Indian sensibility that is ill at ease in a sterile set up

(Iyengar: 1969:64).

While reading Mrs. Desai's novels the reader's first impression is that the novelist always tries "to forge a style... suggestive enough to convey the fever and fretfulness of the stream of consciousness of her principal characters" (Iyengar: 1985:464). The emotions in her novels are too many and are often the result of excessive celebration on the author's part and not always determined by the exterior social consciousness. They truly constitute together the documentation of radical female resistance against a patriarchally acknowledged concept of normality.

The novelist finds the link between female duality, myth and psychosis intriguing; each heroine is seen as searching for, finding and absorbing or annihilating the double that represents the socially impermissible aspects of her femininity. In other words, Anita Desai thus represents the welcome "creative release of the feminine sensibility which began to emerge after the world war second" (Rao, A.R.: 1972:50). It is interesting to note that Mrs. Desai does not profess herself to be a feminist as some other woman novelists like Shobha De and Namita Gokhale do. Even critics like Usha Sande (1988), S. Indira (1995), Rajib Sharma (1995), Asha Kanwar (1989) and O.P. Budholia (2001) have analysed her novels from various points of view, but none of them has made an attempt to explore her as a feminist novelist. However, Sunaina Singh (1994) has studied her four novels in comparison with Margaret Atwood's four novels in a feminist perspective, and Jasbir Jain has passingly mentioned that her work, if examined against the three phases -- the feminine, the feminist and the female -- as traced by Elaine Showalter in her book *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) -- "falls into the third phase, and directly relates to it" (Jain: 1987: 157).

All these feminist readings of Anita Desai have remained incomplete in some way or other. The feminist perspective in which Sunaina has studied her four novels is ideologically inflected one with the result that she has failed to explore the complexity of power relations in her novels.

Conclusion:

Through the literature of Anita Desai women status in Indian Society magnify. This is a very important approach which examine by Anita Desai through various novels. i.e. The



novels *Cry, the Peacock* (1963) and *Voices in the City* (1965) deal with depressed housewives in altogether different way. In *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya-the protagonist has to suffer as her husband can't understand her various needs while in *Voices in the City*, Monisha, suffers due to husband's insensibility as well as the cruel nature of mother-in-law. 6 In the novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975), Desai presents the predicament of a married women who wants to win over the difficulties and sufferings of her life. The novel *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) , takes place in a small village.

References:

1. India Today: 15.03.1986: 149
2. Vinson: 1972: 348
3. Iyengar: 1969:64
4. Jain: 1987: 157