

DECONSTRUCTING GENDER STEREOTYPES IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF ANITA DESAI

A. Jegan Paul

Assistant Professor of English, N.M.S.S.Vellaichamy Nadar College, Madurai.

Dr.G.Rajesh Kumar

Assistant Professor of English (DDE), Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai

Abstract

In India, the noticeable female prototype is the pure, kind, idealistic, patient, self-denying, persevering, selfless and self-destroying lady. Indian women of the 20th century have changed and the modern women of this century questions the noticeable female prototype and androcentric authority. Man controlled society is the underpinning of women abuse, and neither of the peculiarities can be perceived without the other. Women concerns can never be examined without talking about them comparable to men's inclinations.

The investigation of man centric mentalities even presently shows that, things haven't changed totally for Indian women, however there is a touch of enhancement when contrasted with the prior ages. Besides, the orientation jobs directed by a male centric culture smother the genuine jobs of people. Irreconcilable circumstance is found in the existences of women by virtue of this concealment. Anita Desai has been chosen among numerous different women scholars for this paper as she is frequently viewed as the delegate Indian women Writer in English, who has made an impressive commitment to post free Indian fiction. The women characters of Anita Desai's fiction are intellectually and mentally progressed individuals, who are in a steady mission for personality and opportunity in a male centric culture.

Key Words: Gender, Identity, Patriarchy, Feminism, Stereotypes

Introduction

Man, centric society is the underpinning of women's persecution, and neither of the peculiarities can be perceived without the other. Women issues can never be examined without talking about them according to men's inclinations. Man is a necessary piece of a woman's life as is a woman a fundamental piece of a man's life. In any case, the man centric framework doesn't permit a man to understand that his reality also is worked around a woman. This provides women with a kind of distance. She feels subjected, dismissed and took advantage of. Simone de Beauvoir has properly expressed in her fundamental work *The Second Sex* that: "Sometimes the „feminine world“ is contrasted with the

masculine universe, but we must insist again that women have never constituted a closed and independent society, they form an integral part of the group, which is governed by males and in which they have a subordinate place" (608).

The investigation of man centric perspectives even presently shows that, things haven't changed totally for Indian women however there is a touch of improvement when contrasted with the prior ages. Women in the male centric Indian culture are put in a circumstance, in which there are two tasks to carry out, one the customary job as a woman, and the other as an individual and personally. It is unimaginable to expect to treat the two of them, similarly and

reasonably simultaneously. The orientation jobs directed by a male centric culture another the genuine jobs of people. Irreconcilable situation is found in the existences of women by virtue of this concealment.

Simone de Beauvoir has accurately brought up in her work *The Second Sex* : These conflicts may go so far as to cause a rupture, but as a rule woman wants to „hold“ her husband, while resisting his domination. She struggles with him in the effort to uphold her independence, and she battles with the rest of the world to preserve the „situation“ that dooms her to dependence. This double game is difficult to play in part the distributed and nervous state in which many women spend their lives. (486)

Anita Desai in her books has shown how women have been crushed under male mastery willingly or reluctantly. In her previous books, Desai has shown how troublesome it is for women, to understand their needs, dreams and necessities throughout everyday life. A couple of women save their inclinations, while others fizzle or split the difference with circumstances throughout everyday life. Anita Desai is particularly noted for her touchy depiction of the inward existence of her female characters. In her mental books, she presents the picture of an enduring women distracted with her inward world. She discusses the existential problem of a lady in a male ruled society. Through such characters, she makes a supplication for a superior lifestyle for women.

Anita Desai puts significant accentuation on inspecting women's lives inside the constraints of a male centric Indian culture. A few of Desai's books, investigate pressures between relatives and the estrangement of working-class women from their men and society because of noticeable and inclination male controlled society, that adjusts their lives. Notwithstanding, the majority of Desai's significant portrayals of women's presence

in her books, are worried about the day-to-day routines of conventional women in their customary jobs as spouses, mother, daughter, and sisters. The women characters neglect to determine the contention between their conventional jobs and their inclinations throughout everyday life. The women are completely caught in a general public that compels them to similarity. They make a real endeavour to find life for what it's worth. They are close to home loners, who attempt to keep up with and declare their uniqueness.

Women in her books are exploited, embarrassed and compelled to either end it all or surrender to the standards of the male centric family and society. In her books, a woman's triumph or disappointment relies upon the reaction of the men in her day-to-day existence. The characters who facilitate the deconstruction of gender roles and help and prevent a virtual disintegration of the family are generally males in the novel, though they are just a few traces that we see in the novels. Therefore, I choose to take three novels – *Where Shall we go this Summer?* *Cry the Peacock* and *Voices in the City* for my present study and analysis.

Deconstructing the Gender Stereotypes:

Where will we go this Summer? is a novel which like the majority of the Desai stories

centres round Sita who is the focal cognizance. She lives in Bombay with her four kids also, the fifth youngster is yet to be conceived. She has grown up into a woman who likes to carry on with a segregated autonomous life. She anyway doesn't appear to value the possibility of parenthood as she says-“Children only mean anxiety, concern and pessimism, not happiness, what other women call happiness is just sentimentality.”(107)

Sita chooses to pass on her kids and her significant other and needs to get away to Manori Island where she needs to be

isolated, away from the occupied, tumultuous world that encompasses her and furthermore from family life. She wishes to freeze the youngster who is filling in her belly as she doesn't believe that the kid should come into a world which is upsetting, vicious and firm. She feels there is a supernatural thing about Manori island and it will protect the youngster in the belly without conveying it. Every one of these are uncertainties and intricacies of her own upset self where she can't interface herself to the world outside. She feels that the island which has something supernatural will keep the youngster from being conceived. Raman puts forth all attempts to convince Sita and attempts to persuade her to get once again to her youngsters who need her more than any other individual. He is stressed and terrified to be aware over her arrangements to reside in Manori where clinical consideration and care won't contact her. He says-“Any woman- anyone would think you inhuman. You have four children. You have lived comfortably always in my house, you've had no worries .Yet your happiest memories are not of your children or your home but of strangers.”(147)

He leaves her and surrenders finally. Yet, his words continue reverberating inside, compelling her to think furthermore, reconsider over it. Lastly, she believes she was really honoured to have him as her significant other-“She thought, how nice he really was, how much the nicest man she knew. She allowed him then his triumph purely by being so unconscious of it, so oblivious.”(151)

Hence here in this clever Sita is a lady who isn't compelled to squeeze into the job of a mother or a spouse. Raman had demonstrated a decent accomplice. However, the opportunity to take choices and lead a life willingly now and again demonstrates really upsetting and tumultuous as we find for Sita's situation. At the point when she at long last understands this and accommodates to her

current circumstances the vast majority of her concerns appear to get settled. The weaknesses of Sita , her disarrays and her nerves are coming about in contradiction and Raman has emerged from the compels of a generalized male family head and has assisted his significant other with introspecting and restore herself by shedding away her dreamer demeanour lastly re-joining together and improving as an individual, a superior householder. I presently continue to carry my concentration to the subsequent novel Cry the Peacock .

Here again the whole story rotates round the couple Maya and Gautam. Gautam has all the earmarks of being a very heartless spouse and Maya a juvenile wife. Maya's concerns start right from her youth. She was raised by her dad and nonattendance of the mother, stayed one of the most significant explanations behind her mental issues. She has been displayed as a masochist who doesn't stand out which she anticipated from Gautam and she remained an introvert .She aches for organization and can't escape the injury of the demise of her pet for a long time. The jobs again have changed in Maya's childhood. Mother has stayed missing and a male take over as a mother substitute. He attempts to make his girl's reality as cheerful and satisfied as he could however these demonstrations to her detriment. Maya was raised like a princess. Maya has had an amazing adolescence, where she experienced no difficulties. It was an entirely agreeable and satisfied life that she drove in her dad's home. Be that as it may, she neglected to see the more obscure side of life.

Gautam understands this and attempts to take care of her and never shows up as a male centric figure. As a mature spouse, he gets exasperated by how she is raised by her dad and through his disappointments and explosions attempts to help Maya and attempts to save her from her concerns - “What have you learnt of the realities? The realities of common human existence not

love and romance, but living and dying and working all that constitute life for the ordinary man. You wouldn't find in your picture books: what wickedness to raise a child like that."(115)

Consequently, for this situation the stereotypes are being tested from something else altogether angle. The male person is involving his situation as a patriarch to bring some change and development in his significant other. The work that is made to acquire some sure change her personality and character is surely a positive step towards dismantling the generalized idea of family. The reality stays that he doesn't at last prevail with regards to reworking Maya's confidence, her mental messes were well established which couldn't be deleted. Yet, the endeavour from Gautam surely is a work towards improving for harmony and respectability inside the family.

Nirode the focal male characters in Anita Desai's clever *Voices in the City* seems are truly unreliable male head. He isn't displayed to groups any characteristics of a male centric family head in the family. However, he emerges as something else altogether changed person who salvages his family and keeps the family from virtual separate which is practically clear at the surface. He has been a gone through significant strife's. displayed as a man. He finished

dismissed the establishment of family and marriage and felt that man was tormented the most when he lived in the family. Be that as it may, on losing Monisha, he sister, who meets an extremely shocking end he is totally broke. His resurrection and compromise in finding his direction back is anyway brought by his sister Amala who is generally there to help him. He assumes control over the obligation not as a family head but rather as a mother to her auntie and sister Amala who are broken by the deficiency of their sister Monisha. He reassures them - 'Go to bed aunt you must

have some rest'. He seemed unable to remain still and silent, he

was filled with an immense care of the world that made him reach out, again and again to touch Amala's cold hands when he saw it shake."(248)

Thusly in practically this large number of above examined cases men have set themselves and the family liberated from the orientation generalizations of man centric job inside the family. Women absolutely have taken the middle stage in practically every one of the stories of Anita Desai yet through her male characters the essayist attempts to survey the ordinary generalized ideas and spots orientation jobs at an equivalent level. Obligation is consistently an aggregate exertion and is one of the most fundamental elements of a blissful family.

Whether it is a male or a female, the issues need a serene and super durable

arrangement and on the off chance that the family contains people these people are to take up the challenges that the family defies. The conveyances of force in the family must be adjusted

a plan which levels the power, position and status of each and every person. At the point when endeavours are made to connect with individuals by avoiding and accompanying regards to one's usual range of familiarity and make space

for one another family thrives and the people who comprise it get a superior life.

Conclusion

In the previously mentioned books, Desai presents the alternate points of view of reliance and implemented reliance of a woman. They are an investigation of women's discouragement coming about because of their powerlessness to wrestle with their family circumstances and an androcentric culture. The women characters register challenge conditions which

mistreat them. A couple of end up finding lasting success while others hit a split the difference with circumstances throughout everyday life and numerous others surrender to disturbances. In her books she shows four sorts of women, the principal bunch who are extremely touchy and have a more significant level of contemplation. They at last dive into dim, terrible profundities of hypochondria like Maya.

The second group, who experience peacefully what's more, end it all like Monisha. The third group, who acknowledge occasions in their day-to-day existence as their destiny, as Leila. The fourth group uncovers women like Sita who find their own better approaches for tracking down satisfaction on the planet. However, men stay on the outskirts in the books of Anita Desai, they possess significant positions and impact the existences of their women.

Women structure an auxiliary piece of a man centric culture. However, the characters talked about in the three aforementioned books are apparently freed, actually they are not. However, they are not revolutionary in that frame of mind of life, they are compelled to follow the directs of male centric culture either straightforwardly or in a roundabout way. The men in her books are impacted by male centric society as well as directed by realism of the current age. Current men are neither ready to make up for themselves, nor pass on the ladies to patch themselves.

Maya and Monisha, neglect to assume control over emergencies in their day-to-day existence, as they neither dissent appropriately against restricting powers, nor understand their inclinations to accomplish a fuller importance of life through split the difference. In an androcentric culture it is truly challenging for women, notwithstanding how present day they might be, to escape the odd circumstances they are put in. It is undeniably challenging for them to

understand their inclinations or accomplish them. Sita then again, prevails with regards to looking for a fuller importance of life through split the difference. This paper finishes up expressing that numerous women in our general public are dared to be freed, however in all actuality they are not. They are compelled to acknowledge man centric standards after beginning opposition and defiance. Women are as yet condescending in a male centric culture, where they are undeniably still persecuted and can't, unmistakably, settle the irreconcilable situation in their lives.

References

Anand, T. S., "Where Shall We Go This Summer? Anita Desai's Stance against Negativism." *The Fiction of Anita Desai*. Ed. R.K. Dhawan. New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 1989. 100.

Anita Desai. *Where Shall we go this Summer?* Orient Paperbacks, 1982.

Anita Desai, *Cry the Peacock*, Delhi: Orient paperbacks, 1985.

Anita Desai, *Voices in the City*, Delhi: Oriiet paperbacks, 1965.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. 1949. Trans. H. M. Parshley. Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1972. 609, 486.

Choudhary Bidulata. *Women and Society in the Novels of Anita Desai*. New Delhi: Creative Books, 1995. 77.

Linda Thompson and Alexis J. Walker, "The place of Feminism in Family Studies", *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol 57, 1995, p. 849.