



## ANITHA DESAI AS A WOMEN NOVELIST

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### ABSTRACT

*Anitha Desai was born in India and her novels are focused on the personal struggle of the middle class woman in the society by a traditional bound culture. She values the new possibilities for Indo-English writers to withstand the inspiration among the upcoming young writers. Anitha Desai is an Indian novelist, notable for her studies Indian life and portrayal of female characters in her writings. Desai novels mainly focuses on the personal struggle Anglicized, middle class women in contemporary Indian as the attempt to overcome the social limitations bound by culture. She explains the essentiality of familiar bonds and addressed such themes as Gee man anti-sentimentalism. She not only ushered in new possibilities for Indo-English writers, withstand to be an inspiration for upcoming young writers.*

### INTRODUCTION

Anitha Desai Christened as Anitha Mazudr Desai was born on June, 1937 in Nussorie, born to German mother, Tovi Nime and Bengal business man D.N. Malzumdar. She was an Indian novelist Professor of Humanities and won Booker prize for three times and was awarded the Sahitya Academy Award, in 1978 for her Novel, Fire on the Mountains. Despite German being her first language she did not visit Germany until late as an Adult she began to write in English at the age of seven and published her first story at the age of nine.

She was a student at Queen Mary's Higher Secondary School Delhi and received her B.A. in English literature in 1957 from the Miranda house of the University of Delhi. The following year she married Ashvin Deasi the director of a computer software company and author of

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the Book, *Between Extremities*. They have four children, including Booker Prize winning novelist Kiran Desai. Her children were taken for Weekends where Desai set her novel the village by the sea.

Desai published her first novel, *"Cry the Peacock"* "In 1963 she considers *Clear Light of Day*. In 1984 she published *In Custody* about an Urdu poet in his declining days which was shortlisted for the Booker prize. Her novel *Zig Zagis* in 20<sup>th</sup> century Mexico and her latest Novel *"The artist of disappearance"* came in 2011.

In 1993, Merchant Nory productions released *In Custody* directed by N. Merchant and it won the 1994 President of India Gold Medal for Best Picture and stars Shashi Kapoor, Shabnam Azmi and Om Puri.

Anita Desai has been one of India's best known women writers for over half century. She was one of the first writers from the sub-continent to introduce western readers to post Independence India. The bulk of Desai stories are about women, particularly they are woman who feels her to exist on the fringe of her society. Writing is a process of herself discovery to go deep into complexities of existence. She is essentially a psychological novelist. She does not reflect on social issues in her works. She sees social realities from a psychological point of view and does not look at them as a social reformer or a moralist. Her focus of attention is on her inner climate, the climate of sensibility. Her main concern is to depict the psychic states of her protagonists at the crucial juncture of their lives. She creates observing minutely what is going on around her.

The theme of man 'woman relationship in Anita Desai novels reveals consummate craftsmanship. Mrs. Desai sincerely broods over the fate and future of modern woman more particularly in male chauvinistic society and her annihilation at the altar of marriage. Men are considered to be rational where as women are sensitive and emotional. They have their different attitudes and interests so they look at things in different ways and react to the same conditions differently. Mostly women have been both culturally and emotionally dependent on men, any disruption of attachment or affiliation is seen not as a loss of relationship but a total loss of self, which is then seen in neurosis. The relationship between family and insanity as suggested here is relevant to the study of Anita Desai's characters.

Anita Desai has explored different aspects of feminine psyche which also includes man-woman relationships. *Cry, the peacock* is a family play mainly concerned with the theme of marital discourse between husband, Gautama, and wife, Maya. The play is about Maya's cry for love and life of involvement. Anita has dealt with a sterile woman, highly sensitive and emotional, who is married to Gautama, a busy, prosperous, middle aged Lawyer. The husband is too much engrossed in his own affairs to meet the demands, partly

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temperamental ,partly spiritual, of his young wife. Gautama's sensibility are too rough and practical to suit Maya. She is the pampered child of Rai Sahib, and is brought up in atmosphere of luxury. However the element of companionship is sadly missing in the relationship between "Maya and Gautama" The novel exposes an impression of martial incongruity and unhappy conjugal life. As Kohli points out," that no other writer is so much concerned with the life of young men and women in Indian cities as Anitha Desai is "Whatever marriages are referred to in cry, the peacock are not contended marriages in real sense of the term. Maya is deeply scattered at the in sensibility, hypocrisy and contempt exposed through other marriages around her. There we find no reference of her own mother. It appears that it be a pathetic and disgusting episode in her father's life. So he might be concealing it from Maya. Gautama's parents also lived in an unnatural martial life. Each one kept himself or herself busy with his or her vocation.

Laila, Maya's friend who marries to a tubercular man against the wishes of her parents. She is a teacher in girl's school and then she marries a man knowing his disease. Her life is fatalistic. She is gloomy and ascetic wearing no bangles or jeweller. If Maya is obsessed with the Llibinos prediction, Laila has accepted her destiny and does not complain "it was all written in my fate long age" She reveals the mockery of the marriage, yet forebears all childish fantasies of her husband.

Anitha Desai in voices in the city has depicted feminine sensibility mainly through the delineation of man-woman" damp pressure of critical attention Sister-in-law across he bed discussing her ovaries and tube. The deficiency of privacy makes her insane. She wants to read the book but she is not left alone to read, is also a reason of her insanity.

She was oppressed at the truth and that is what one is trying to explore. For her "it is depth ,which is interesting, delving deeper in character, a situation or a scene rather than going round about it. "This technique is used by her in a capturing a psychological realism and an intensified expressionism'. She is much interested in exploring the psychic depths especially of her female protagonists. The style is suggestive enough to convey the fever and fretfulness of the stream of consciousness of her principal characters"(2).

Today there is a great change in fiction writing all over the world. It shifts gradually from the external world to the inner world of the individual. It captures the atmosphere of the mind and directly involves the reader in the flow of a particular consciousness. The exploration of the under lying truth and discovery of private mythology and philosophy, It is style that interest most.one must find way to unite the inner and outer rhythms to obtain integrity and impose orders on chaos.

Among all the Indo-English novelists. Anita Desai lays stress on the landscape and correlates it to psychic states of protagonists. Her gift of suggesting things is rare. She employs various devices such as flash backs, asides and painting the landscape scenes in order to throw clues to the action of the story. Her novels are psychological revelations. The technique she has selected for her novels is the technique used by Virginia Woolf D.H.Lawrence, E.M.Forester and Henry James. There are flashbacks and stream of consciousness technique in some of her other novels. She employs the 'language of the interior to delineate the inner tensions, crises of her characters. The problem of her characters is 'existential'.

Desai is adept picturing beautiful symbolic scenes. The scenes she creates are approximately suitable to the situations of her characters. Her imagery and symbolism are very remarkable. They are always charged with tremendous significance and unlike other novelists. She registers as does the seismograph, the mental vibration of the characters and articulate them by hints and suggestions, symbols and images. Symbols are an integral part of her novels. She has interwoven them artistically and functionally into the texture of her novels. In fact the compulsive and functional use of symbols in her writings is due to the fact what is important, to quote in her own words. It is the movement of the wing one tries to capture, not to the bird. That it is the image that matters, the symbol, the myth, the fact of associating them, of relating them, of constructing with them"

Being essentially a modern psychological novelist in thought and technique, she employs symbol spontaneously and unconsciously. She resorts to symbolic technique in her writing out of her favourite authors.

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## CONCLUSION

Anitha Desai is an Indian novelist won the Sahitya Academy Award, was a prolific writer and she explores the process of discovery and also proves that she is also a psychological novelist and reflects the point of view as a social reformer or a moralist.

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