

## THE FEMALE WORLD OF DESAI

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### Abstract:

Anita Desai is always very conscious about unraveling the inner turmoils and tension of her female characters. With her poignant, hyper sensitive knowledge, erudition and inner psychological power concerning the natural and everyday affairs of the female in her world, Desai depicts her females and their familial, societal, economic dealings in her novels. She therefore becomes the explorer of the inner psyche of her female characters and opens a huge vista of their psychological layerings.

**Keywords:** Female aesthetics, Gender Crisis, Self Determined and Psychological Portrayals.

At the very outset, it is apt to mention that the application of deconstructive feminism to the texts and discourses reveals the place of women their struggle for their identities, the challenges and the threats to such efforts and the operations of patriarchy overtly and covertly in such texts. Anita Desai is the foremost writer of India. Her works have been critiqued by countless critics from diverse angles and perspectives. The present study means to read the four major novels of Desai (Fasting Feasting Clear Light of Day Fire on the Mountain Cry the Peacock) from a feminist perspective with the objective to highlight the place and the plight of women in a world governed by patriarchy. The study also means to investigate the role and contribution of patriarchy and patriarchal values towards the misery, suffering, loneliness and unhappiness of women or other psychological social and economic problems experienced by them. Desai's novels in addition to being the finest specimens of poetic and lyrical prose the ultimate examples of form also attain the status of feminist counter ideology to debunk and subvert the myths of superiority of men constructed by patriarchy for containing women by exposing their superficiality and hollowness and worthlessness. The study found that the unhappiness of the women represented in the novels of Desai is due to operations of patriarchy. Anita Desai has treated psychological realities very minutely in her novels. Her purpose of writing is to discover herself and then aesthetically, convey the truth. She has tried to probe into the depths of a woman's psyche and show its relation to society. And, this concern can be drawn through the portrayal of the neurotic like Maya and Sita. Both these women present sensitive individuals in their moments of intense struggle and their efforts to seek neurotic solutions. Anita Desai is widely recognized as the pioneer of psychological novels in modern Indian English literature. The prominent feature of her works is her art of the portrayal of characters. She examines the psychological inner workings of women and presents their reactions. Her two novels Cry, the Peacock and Where Shall We Go This Summer? present the traumatic experiences and mental tensions that Maya and Sita undergo. Desai explores the emotional world of neurotic Maya, who is haunted by a premonition of her husband's death on account of her belief in astrological prediction; while in Sita, Desai highlights the theme of repressed childhood neurosis. Undoubtedly Anita Desai occupies a supreme position of the contemporary Indian Feminist novelist. With her poignant, hypersensitive knowledge, erudition and inner psychological power concerning the natural and real everyday affairs of familial, societal, economic dealings as minutely impacted in her major novels. Her novels symbolize universal feminism. Through her novels, Desai has unveiled the grim as well as mysterious truth of human psychology, especially women's questions in most of her novels of our postmodern era. As a self-conscious social critic and reformer, Desai has divulged the unnoticed images of the inferior and hated feminine community of her age. Feminism is one of the top most issues of her fictional world; she has pictured a paradigm of the whole women community with a view to spreading the message of the second sex.

She has dealt her fiction with feminine sensationalism and vivid themes which are innovative and potential concerning the miserable, drudgery plight of the weaker working class of women's untold affliction, agony, and psychological, conflicting senses under the unconscious and unwise, inconsiderate husbands, fathers, and brothers. Desai has wanted to highlight the matriarchal struggle, self-freedom, and self-identity and self-power against the male dominated world, where she has universalized the feminist message with the inner gaze. Though Anita Desai attempts to analyze women's sensationalism and vivid expressionism in the field of fictional world, however, she has no willingness to sense herself as self-conscious feminist writer. Anita Desai, in her psychological novels, focuses on the minute and subtle images of a tormented, tortured, toiled, trodden and self-frustrated feminism preoccupied with her inner heart, soul and mind, her sulking depression, melancholy, pessimism, self-

storming pragmatics surrounding the atmosphere of mankind. The existential predicament of the female world contradicts masculinity.

Her art of feminine characterizations are superb but who are haunted by a peculiar acute concept and judgments of doom, withdraw themselves into an imaginative world of their own, get hysterical, neurotic, self-agitated and unhappy mood changes. A prick into the mystical crusts of the psychology of the female protagonists of Anita Desai upholds the universal emptiness, conventional alienation and solitude and an abysmal segregation from which they are victims of mental agony and pang of tormenting psychology. Her feminist superb creations are adamant and eccentric towards the male dominated order and system. They silently rebel and take recourse to naturalism and realism socially and economically - a world of their own, a world where they can be able to confirm their determination, affirmation and freewill. Femininity and womanhood are not bound by social contracts. Her tale and novel are presented through the feminine sensibility and pragmatic sense. Desai aims to examine the natural, social and fanciful bonds that unchain the women's issues and in this way she is concerned with the destiny of the house minded woman in the typical Indian society of the postmodern period. The theme of the marital unhappiness and sorrowful heart and

an unadjusted marriage-bond cause depression and alienation in the mind of women as impacted in her popular novels. Anita Desai is considered as an inner psychological novelist as her prime concern is mingled with the nocturnal and nebulous atmosphere of the women's psyche. Evidently the motivations, the conscience and the psychic excitement and turbulent agitation of the storming psychology of the female community of their surroundings are dealt with the cardinal and exclusive incidences of Desai's oeuvre. A particular trace and trait in the women's characterization, a tragic downfall turns into a psychic malady making their mentality over neurotic and hysterical as Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* who suffers from the father-fixation. Desai's fictions are auto-biographical, in the sense they impact her silent temperament. Anita Desai pictures the glaring portrayal of the women's quests by fostering out the profound and deeper universe of her powerful protagonists. Anita Desai is magnified with the comprehensibility and intelligibility which brightens her aestheticism through her novel-worlds. Desai's characters belong to the affluent sections of Indian society they hardly realistically and comprehensively have to tackle the pragmatism of struggle of life for survival and existence. Desai writes regarding the classified characters because she senses them with an acute knowledge and sagacity. Anita Desai, through the perfect symbolic delineation both in the art of characterization and occurrences and happenings, through milieu and natural surroundings and insignia, has excellently and artistically interwoven the fictional world into a symmetrical and similar blending of the societal bonds. Generally Anita Desai's female protagonists are caught in a web of painful circumstances, their struggle and the outcome of which is usually the basis of the novel. The problem invariably in each case, is the difficulty of adjustment in conjugal relationship, of building bridges, of bringing together or harmonizing and taking a holistic view of one's circumstances. The major concerns of Anita Desai are hatred, love and affection, depression and solitude. For long centuries, women communities in the traditional social order and system have always been considered subservient to men. In the male dominated Bourgeois society, the matriarchal community has been "humiliated", "afflicted", "silenced" and "tortured" socially and economically, truly speaking, in all spheres of their lives. It is to be noted that with the postmodernization age, women began to see the universe with their own eyes and not through the male gaze. In India, with the matriarchal struggle against patriarchy another inner revolution started manifesting itself in literature, especially women's writings. The voices of women began to vie with those of men. The purpose of our paper is to focus on the feminist echoes as articulated in Anita Desai's famous novels, *Cry, the Peacock* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Our intent is to examine critically how in the post-modern era Indian women writers in English have highlighted women's questions, demanding the rights, suffragettes. They have raised a fiery voice and initiated an inner revolution against the traditional order, system and gender discrimination with a view to achieving human rights. Considering the femme fatale characters of Anita Desai, one of the most renowned Indian writers writing in English, especially the powerful and domineering female protagonists of *Cry, the Peacock* and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*

"Sita' as the Embodiment of Indian Feminism

Here we intend to highlight the feminist message through the protagonist, Sita in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975). It is significant to note that Anita Desai's chief concern is human relationship and she explores the disturbed psyche of the modern Indian women. The protagonist, Sita in the novel, is a nervous, sensitive, middle-aged woman who finds herself isolated from her husband and children because of her emotional reactions to many things that happen to her. She takes a holy pilgrimage to Manori, an island for spiritual

purification. She also redefines her relationship with her childhood soil, Manori where she understands her husband, children and city life. There is also a change in Sita's identity and she is redefining her relationship with her husband. She accepts to go with her husband. Her return to the mainland with her husband is the result of her realization and her sense of alienation is rootless. Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* deals with the inner world of the protagonist, Sita. She is physically unimpressive and over-sensitive. Her over-sensitiveness does not allow her to mingle with an ordinary life. It compels her to go away from this burdensome and crowded area. Sita decides to flee to Manori where there is no crowd except landscapes. Her oversensitiveness does not allow her to give birth to her fifth child. But her stay at Manori helps to understand that she can not live forever on a make believe stage and that she has to accept her existence as a whole. Sita deals with the past and holds the key to the present behavior in this novel. Sita's predicament may be compared with Maya. She is psychologically obsessed with her loveless marriage with Raman. Here marital relation as well as abnormal man-woman relationship has been portrayed with a remarkable poignancy. Sita is a married woman and has four children, but in the picture of misery and dejection. She feels herself to be an uncaged bird in a house which offers her nothing but a crust of dull tedium, of hopeless disappointment. Her unhappiness in married life finds expression in emotion of contempt for the friends and colleagues of her husband. Her cruel childhood, stricken with deprivation, doubt and despair, has had a negative impact upon her psychology. She feels enslaved within these doubts and struggles to free herself. A series of situations and incidents project the seething tension, the compulsion and withdrawal of Sita's festered soul. The doubts, the waiting, the unsolved questions that seethe within her and prey upon her mind, turn her into a hypersensitive and depressed individual, with a certain element of mental derangement. She turns into a paranoid character, a cripple

without crutches, like a flying creature that startles at the slightest sound. Sita reacts abnormally and suffers from psychological hesitation. What would hardly be noticed by another person becomes to her an act of persecution. She develops a haunting fear that there is a contradiction around her. There is a clash between the conscious individual and the insular, complacent world around her. Sita's smoking is a trace of silent rebellion, of self assertion, an effort to be herself and to show the world, which has an identity of her own, whereas in reality she is actually crumbling down. Her untidiness before her husband is the outcome of an underlying desire to prove that she does not care for anybody in a world that has not cared for her. Her abhorrence against the patriarchy, her boredom is only camouflaged to conceal her failing strength from the world. Gradually, all the problems and complexities of her heart magnify in dimension. Like other protagonists cum heroines of Anita Desai, Sita repels from everyone, but she remains like an uncaged bird. She can never attain peace and solace whether she is in Bombay or in Manori.

Her condition reminds one of a person in pairs who shifts from one posture to another with a vain expectation of removing untold sufferings and conflicting senses. Sita senses that if reality can not be controlled then fancy would be the only alternative. She therefore decides to live under an imagination and finds the island to be as a gypsy, a protection. It had provided her the first beams of happiness after a grim past. Now, with the passage of time she can imagine only the radiant prospects of the island which spells to her. The search for identity leads to the great protection of Manori Island - an escape of a sensitive individual, so sensitive as to be made by her own husband. Sita believes that her decisions to say "No" to society, to break its norms and not give birth to the baby are correct. Her rejection of her in-law and her alienation from social dictum are only camouflages, the way

a tiny creature might adopt certain features, not of its own breed, to conceal her insecurity, restlessness, her search for her true identity and her own succeeding inner strength from the abode. She has the conviction that she would ensure her expectations in loneliness. Sita's overriding concern in unwilling to give birth to her fifth child is a kind of regression that she wishes to be reborn as a child. For, she had to assume the role of an adult before she could fully lead the life of an infant. No wonder she is obsessed with keeping her fifth child rather than let it go or grow because to her, keeping the child meant retaining her childhood in a carefree island. Sita soon finds that reality is no more troublesome than imagination. Happiness at Manori proves to be a mirage for the grim realities of life are present on this island just as in Bombay. Sita gets puzzled fancifully with Manori and has to face reality. Her stay at Manori has refreshed her pressed psychology and she can now look at the world realistically. Unlike Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*, Sita's relationship with her husband is not abnormal. There is, no doubt, a temporary solitude at the time Sita comes to Manori, but absence makes her heart grow fonder and she realizes that this attitude towards life is more rational than her inner self. His courage in facing the complexities and realities of life has a greater meaning. She had merely been a coward and had all along felt obsessed while confronting the "ugliness of a meaningless life." Sita felt to make a compromise to live with her husband and travel alone mentally and emotionally. But later on, it became improbable for her to make any compromise. Hence, she escaped the land of necromancy but there she found that

time had made damage there also on the place and its dwellers. The intensive realization brings her back to painful reality, forcing her to retrace her steps back towards the safety and slavish security of her house in Bombay, to wait for the birth of her child. She takes sagacious attempts than Maya and pacifies herself and she acts before annihilation can occur. Sita's final moment of realization comes, ironically not when her husband is patient with her in trying to reason with her but at a time when he has deserted her.

Now she feels "released" and tension-free. The tensions and emotion within her psychology are not quite independent of her husband's, that life with him is real and the future is more precious than the past. And, with this realization the truth dawns upon her

that her behavior had not been completely unnatural because the heifer, the grain, the slum barons all hoped to hide and resort to alienation before giving birth. In each case, the solitary experiences precede that of creation. She returns to Manori in order to give her fifth baby a normal birth. Till now, there had been complexities in her thought. She was like a restless spirit unable to attain solace. With the realization that true courage is in facing the complexities, the realities of life, and that fleeing away is merely an act of cowardice she comes to peace with herself. Her fleeing away from her home and urban milieu has brought about a damaging effect. None of her doubts and problems have been resolved. In fact, she has become a winner in alienating herself further from her husband and children. The one and most important aspect where she has emerged triumphant in her escape to Manori is her sanity and normality. She realizes that real courage is what her husband exposes, it means standing up and trying to tackle the circumstances and coming to terms with them quietly, boldly and creatively. In alienation, she has discovered that her true identity can be forged only in relationships. If she has to live on earth, she can do so merely either by adapting to her circumstances or by copying with others to whom she has to deal in the course of life.

'Maya' as the Representative of Postmodern Feminism

In her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), Anita Desai has made an attempt to unveil the inner truth of the postmodern age through the female protagonist cum heroine, Maya with a view to awakening the neglected, tormented, inferior women of the Indian Bourgeois society. In the male dominated society, Maya hardly gets adjusted with her family, her husband, Gautama, a misogynistic lawyer who is much older than she. Through Maya, Desai wants to expose the psychological conflicts and agonies, alienations and abnormal treatment and mannerism of the protagonist along with the dreadful fright, culminating in lunatic traits and the suicidal act. Through her novel, Desai focuses on the fears, sufferings, solitude, inner melancholic mode, suppressed optimism of the Postmodern feminism of India. It is observed that the cardinal reasons of marital discord and loneliness of Indian women in age difference, difference in maturation, Indian philosophy of segregations and mental relationship between husband and wife. The very mindset of the Indian female community that they are supposed to be weak, other, inferior, and docile and so on adds to their vacuity. Maya shares a deep affectionate relationship with her father and is pained to leave the parental home at marriage. Her unnoticed mental agonies and afflictions caused by her mother's death makes her alienated from the outer world. The ambitions and expectations she had at married life are not fulfilled and as a result, she becomes fragmented, fuzzy and upset mentally. Thus Maya is highlighted as an extremely hypersensitive figure; Desai represents a hysterical and neurotic woman who fails to cope with the patriarchal order and system where she revolts silently and hopelessly like an inferior being. It seems to us that Maya fails to accept natural truth and realistic issues in the cocoon. She adopts an escapist path and becomes a "nature child" wherein she tries to find out condolence in the realistic environment and landscapes. She wants to get rid of her nothingness through getting mixed with birds, animals, and a space that humans fail to compensate for in Maya's storming life. Maya may be regarded as a different being from traditional and conventional norms and principles. Actually, she never supports the idealistic sense of an ideal

wife in a middle class family of Gautama. Her economic reliance upon her husband makes her feel insecure, helpless and powerless because she regards herself as the ruler to the ruler's gaze. The novelist wants to focus on Maya as a post-modernist female with a view to unchaining the iron of gate of her solitary life; Maya wants to search out a purified world where she will get equity without having any difference between male and female. Her magnum opus *Cry, the Peacock* deals with the marital discord between Gautama and Maya. The novel is based on the metaphysical prayers of a pitiable woman who lacks romantic feelings and emotions. She identifies herself with the peacock in the conflicts of the excessive joy and ecstasy of their dreadful inner experiences of love and affection. We are told of her cruel past and her contradiction with the astrologer Albino who had once predicted to her that either she or her husband would die prematurely within the four years of their conjugal life. The anxiety caused by this prediction had diminished with the passage of time but with the demise of their pet dog Totto. All these

unexpected incidents and unpleasant memories haunt her frequently. The cruelty of the past of her childhood, the constant fear of demise, her expectation to exist, her regression, all these are closely related with her recollection of the oracles of Albino astrologer.

Thus, the tale of Maya's existence seems to be one of the three-fold patterns of facts that may be concluded as: deprivation, alienation and elimination gradually. Firstly, Maya is deprived of brotherly as well as parental care and affection. Secondly, she is alienated from her father figure husband and at last, she brings about the elimination from life and her own self from familial responsibility and duty. Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* portrays the drudgery life of her female protagonist Maya who seems to suffer since she is married to the male, who fails to realize the fractured identities. Regarding the psychological agonies of Maya, Dr.

Sanjay Kumar's comment may be accepted in this regard: Maya's fear is aggravated as she fails to relate to Gautama, her husband. Between the husband and wife; there exists a terrible communication gap as both of them seem to live in different worlds. Maya is an inactive woman of passions and emotions on the other hand, Gautama as a psychological intellectual. One of the crucial remarks in the novel is the problem of her existence in her case. She longs to realize where she stands in alienation of time, the impossible vastness of space. Her desperate struggle to have a self-existence of her own being, threatened by the presence of her husband. Consequently, she imagines him as an antagonist and her psychic problem becomes an existential one. Maya's disappointment at Gautama's lack of sympathy and understanding is hardly realized. She never confides in her anxieties, but her husband tries to help her to tackle the situations.

Here it is apt to quote Suresh Kohli, who says, "No other writer is so much concerned with the life of young men and women in Indian cities as Anita Desai is." For a woman, the traditional stereotype is one that cares and gives to others, even to the point of neglecting herself. The feminist inspiration has produced women characters that do not lose their identity, but assert the necessity for an independent identity. In the feminist fiction, we find women who are highlighted to be making efforts to mould their lives to be themselves, even to the point of disrupting their convention, bond relationship in a traditional society. But in portraying Maya as a character born of feminist inspiration, Desai is apparently ambiguous of her own because Maya fails both in creating an identity for herself and in leading a stable life. Remarkably the psychological problem and the agony of Maya's life are accurately impacted in the significant fable of the peacock's mating ritual. The cry of the peacock is the cry of the natural instinct of a woman, who is not mentally satisfied. Maya realizes that she wants Gautama's physical

presence, his love and a normal life. She is capable of empathy which enables her to experience what the peacock and peahen are experiencing but this makes her feel all the more intensely that although there is an emotional arousal, there is no physical satisfaction which is the chief reason of her agony against Gautama. In fact, a sense of lack of fulfillment leads Maya's psychology to brooding and regression. Being an introvert, Maya does not like socializing, nor is she able to face realism, and remains at home brooding. In the novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, Anita Desai has given the feminist message of the post-modernist female generation through creating the protagonist cum heroine Maya. Through a small world of wife and husband, Desai has drawn a universal feminism where she also has pictured a basic difference between the patriarchy and matriarchy. But in the post-modern period, we may find the situation a little better. In fact, the Indian authors have tried to truncate the ever growing feminist questions through the form of literature. It seems that Desai has tried to equalize the difference between male and female through her characters. According to many critics of Desai, Maya is the embodiment of the Postmodernism feminism of the Indian Bourgeois community, culture and society.

#### Portrayal of Female Alienation

In today's society and in the world, alienation is widespread and can be seen everywhere. We primarily live in a culture of consumerism where dangerous, grimy, and underpaid work is the standard on a world scale. Alienation as a universal existential predicament has been a central and inevitable fact of all human existence. Far from being acknowledged as a human condition applicable to all individuals, alienation has frequently been attributed as an experience related to the males, the patriarchs of the society, while as the 'second sex' and the second class citizens', the women have often been considered the 'pariah' and kept perpetually in a marginalized state. Alienation is endemic to human existence. It is a state wherein a person fails to maintain a sense of identity, leading to a disintegration of his psychophysical system. A state of alienation exists when a person is unable to identify himself either with himself or with the society. When a person lacks an identity, it is said that he is alienated. But a sense of non-alienation exists in proportion to the existence of a sense of identity. No person is entirely lacking in any of the aforesaid conditions. Hence, all individuals are neither totally alienated nor entirely non-alienated.

Interestingly a concept such as the 'female alienation' has hardly attracted the attention of any intellectual debate or discussion. Alienation can be viewed as a theory, a concept, a philosophy, a pragmatic reality or may simply be dismissed as a fictional state of mind. Alienation as a literary device has been inscribed in literature from the beginning of any kind of creative writing, only that the theme has been addressed differently by different writers from a different perspective and points of view. An attempt is made in this study to explore the multiple dimensions of alienation and the alienating factors, particularly the female alienation. Woman as a class, as a separate entity, as a category, has been for centuries not recognized as a person in her own rights. Alienation, as a theme and a concept has provided a base to innumerable 20th century American and European fiction and it impacted the Indian English Literature as well, may be due to historical and sociocultural reasons. Meenakshi Mukerjee rightly affirms that "alienation or rootlessness is a very common theme", whereas Prithvi Nandy simply dismisses it as a "rootless literature totally alienated from the people, unconcerned with Indian realities". Alienation suffered by women, is a much neglected area with the women being marginalized and oppressed in all public spheres. Alienation is an attribute and a tendency not usually associated with a woman.

Alienation is, as it is depicted in literature either as personality trait or a trope appears to be man centered and male specific while women were never ever considered to be within the realm of being affected by the same affliction and a tendency not associated with the women. Considered almost as sub-human, she is "a womb, an ovary; she is a female" (Beauvoir), and "this enslavement of the female to the species", has reduced her to an anomie and a depersonalized entity, who has no 'self' or identity of her own. It is to be noted that female alienation is a theme that has been portrayed and discussed threadbare by many writers. In fact, alienation of women may be defined as a dislocation, a separation from their family both mentally and physically. It is an estrangement from the existing values and society. A sort of neurotic phobia overtakes them. As a result, their mental health gets destabilized. Such a high state of distress in women is instantiated. They search for the deep causes of alienation and the magnitude of loneliness increases disastrously. A woman's situation is precarious as time sweeps, whereby abandoned by her family which teases and taunts her and the society which taunts her she becomes frozen. Such conditions often result in expressing greater symptoms involving anxiety and withdrawal known as internalizing disorders. More such internalizing disorders are depression, fear, obsessions, psychosomatic complaints and schizoid features. All these internalizing syndromes are associated with the traditional categories of neurotic and physiological disorders. Indeed, female alienation is an existential experience and condition that has frequently been encountered in women's literature but it happens to be an area that has either been ignored or neglected as much as women, as a race has remained subordinated, marginalized and suppressed as a voice. Female alienation which is essentially very different from the one experienced by the patriarchy has been an area less researched and not fully explored either holistically or comprehensively. 'Female Alienation' requires a specifically different definition and understanding. Always

viewed and treated as Beauvoir's 'the Other', it is because of the woman's identity as "The Other" and her fundamental alienation derived in part from her body-her reproductive capacity- and primitive order of division of labor due to childbearing and rearing function that results in women alienation from any other creative activity. What renders the situation tragically pathetic is that most women are not aware of their state of immanence that their alienation stems from their sex

more countries, Anita Desai had confessed that, "she feels about India as an Indian, she thinks as an outsider". As individuals and writers uprooted from their native grounds, either by chance or choice, these women writers, who infuse their characters with notions

estrangement, isolation and alienation, may have probably frequently experienced these emotions themselves. Female alienation stands out heroically in Desai's fiction. It is apt to mention here that Anita Desai's preoccupation as a novelist has centered around the exiled social casts and characters, who have withdrawn into themselves. Each of her novels presents one or two memorable women characters; she is primarily interested in the projection of female protagonists living in separate, closed, sequestered worlds of existential problems and passions, love and hatred. Unlike most Indo-English novelists, Anita Desai does something unique by portraying each of her individuals as an unsolved mystery. Her concern for the character's alienation enables her to offer an unexpected glimpse into the deeper and unconscious psyche state of her protagonists. Anita says in an interview with Yashodhara Dalmia: "I am interested in characters who are not average but have retreated, or been driven into some extremity of despair and so turned against or made a stand against, the general current. It is easy to flow with the current, it makes no demands, and it costs no effort. But those who cannot follow it, whose

heart cries out "the great No", who fight the current and struggle against it, they know what the demands are and what it costs to meet them."

Her characters are an investigation into the psyche of women alienated by a lack of fellowship. Their dilemma is even more poignant because these women have longed for their husband's human trace, sensitivity, and friendship. Although Desai's characters are uncomfortable with their reality, they have a sense of isolation, alienation, and pessimism in mind. She is sometimes called an "explorer" of her woman's interior life. The inner turmoil and tension of her female characters are always very aware of her. Therefore, it becomes a recorder of the dilemma a person faces in the urban set-up in India.

Lovelessness in relations leads to lawlessness of existence, when one is pushed to an extreme extent of either killing another, as Maya kills her husband Gauthama in *Cry, The Peacock* or kills oneself like Monisha in *Voices In The City*, who simply torches herself to death. Leaving these two extremes is the character of Sita, who aims to evoke a miracle in a world of discord and conflict in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Most of Desai's characters belong to the class of the elite they don't suffer from, but are comfortable in the bracket of the elite and are women of leisure and class. Maya, Sita and Monisha do not wallow on the brink of poverty. Neither are they wanting any material comforts. They are shown as women who have no individual intellectual aspirations, no separate ideology or creativity; they simply fail to connect with reality and are chiefly self-absorbed women, lost in a world of private dreams and fantasies. Totally dependent on their husbands, they see themselves as reflections in the mirror of their counterparts. In the analysis and depiction of human relationships, she is interested. The novel is mainly a way of defining human relationships, which in the sense that human actions and will often come under uncertain conditions are mostly uncertain. Desai, therefore, always

uses novels to explore the inner psyches of women. Her work focuses on alienating the human being from the world of "absurds," its consequent alienation from a "standard" society. His recognition of the world as a hostile and meaningless person fragmented and spiritually destroyed by life's social circumstances. All the characteristics in her novellas, such as Maya, Nirode, Amla, Monisha, Sita, Sarah, and Uma, are physically and mentally isolated. Keep this in mind that Anita Desai analyzed women's characteristics psychologically in *Voices in the City* to reveal the world of women's nature. A close reading of the *Voices in the town* reveals that they live another life for the novel's essential characters, like Amla, Monisha, and Otima, in their mental state. The second part of the novel, 'Monisha,' addresses Monisha's inner experiences in her lawyers' family. This part reveals the inner psyche of Monisha, which has been recorded in her diary. It is Monisha's personal experiences and the collective voice of the Indian Women that reflect Monisha's personal experiences Anita Desai attempts to focus on the nature of a delicate woman who tries to escape the oppressive system. Monisha's personal experiences are feminist. It feels as if her personality's grain is being caught in evil forces. Monisha married Jiban during her lifetime and is entering a new phase. Her marriage was arranged, and so she started to live with Jiban in an ordinary family. The experiences, however, were far from over. In Monisha's life, which she hopes for amid an extended family for her personal 'space,' silence plays an important role. Monisha records in her journal her personal experiences, which reveal the inner world of her private life. In this novel, she would also like to escape from the monotonous world, as Monisha takes refuge in Kafka. In this novel Monisha has a melancholy and mental disorder. There are also references to the concert in the second section of the novel. Monisha's love of art is shown in detail in her diary. Music is a temporary refuge for Monisha from the complexities of the world. Only music reveals the inner trials and trials of Monisha. This section of the novel

ends with Monisha's revelation she suffered all by herself. She silently accepts the defeat and is invisible all her life. Amla is the novel's other prominent character. Amla is portrayed as an energetic person that would have wanted to live her life "in the heart of a world of excitement." At first, Calcutta does not repress her, but slowly the city is upsetting in her little world. Amla appears to be more of an extrovert in comparison with Monisha. Desai's character presents specific contradictory trends. The city birds and the horse that dies as an outsider convey such conflicting trends and urges to Amla's mind. Desai's Amla is the spirit of liberty. She has been longing for many things in life. She wants to fly and get out of the past. However, she is helpless and an outsider in the lives of Nirode, Monisha, and Dharma. In her life, her youthful energy has been sparked, and she is a failure. Monisha's mom Otima has described the last part of the novel, 'Mother.' Desai presents her as a complex character. We discover that she takes full responsibility for her drifting children during the novel. Kali represents a deity in Indian mythology that symbolizes destruction and death. According to the Hindu religious tradition, the character of Diotima's is the true embodiment of the goddess "Kali" It is to kill and destroy wrongdoers whenever Goddess Kali appeared in the

universe. Therefore Otima is also a demythified figure of the deity. Although the physical presence of Otima is not felt in this novel, she still has a good place because she is a 'mother' with many minds and heart qualities.

Her novel, *Fire on the Mountain*, features a great photograph of the inner world of the three women characters: Nanda Kaul, Ila Das, and Raka. Nanda Kaul's life is a life of retirement and surrender. She leaves her previous life and comes to Kasauli to look for solitude after her hustle and bustle with her family. Nanda Kaul is presented as a novelist who has also suffered from melancholy if separated from human society. Before that, she met the demands of the family and now wanted

full silence. In order to highlight Nanda's inner world, the novelist uses different symbols and metaphors. To explain Nanda's mental condition, Desai uses certain symbols of nature. Individual old-age trees were described as droughty, as Nanda Kaul's stubborn life is. Two other prominent characters in the novel are Raka and Ila Das. Raka symbolizes Desai's utterly different feature. Desai's writings are excellent due to her extensive knowledge of women of different ages' feminine psyches. In this novel, Desai explores Raka's inner psyche, a young woman. It is the outcome of the family's distress. In fact, thoughts of Raka were so dehumanized by the traumatic experiences of children's life that she is indifferent towards childhood games and that her character is nothing like infancy. It is essential to use different photographs of animals. Her rejection of toys with ordinary children very well describes her psyche. The next novel, *Fire on the Mountain*, features a great photograph of the inner world of the three women characters: Nanda Kaul, Ila Das, and Raka. Nanda Kaul's life is a life of retirement and surrender. She leaves her previous life and comes to Kasauli to look for solitude after her hustle and bustle with her family. Nanda Kaul is presented as a novelist who has also suffered from melancholy if separated from human society. Before that, she met the demands of the family and now wanted full silence. Actually in order to highlight Nanda's inner world, the novelist uses different symbols and metaphors. To explain Nanda's mental condition, Desai uses certain symbols of nature. Individual old-age trees were described as droughty, as Nanda Kaul's stubborn life is. Two other prominent characters in the novel are Raka and Ila Das. Due to its extensive knowledge of the woman's feminine psyche, Raka symbolizes Desai's work's entirely different characteristic aspect. In this novel, Desai explores Raka's inner psyche, a young woman. It is the outcome of the family's distress. The trauma of childhood has had such a dehumanizing effect on the thinking of Raka that she is indifferent to childish games, and her nature is

childhood-like. It is essential to use different photographs of animals. Her refusal to play with toys with ordinary children very well describes her psyche. Another character that is worth mentioning, especially during the novel, is Ila Das. As a woman suffering from mental depression, the novelist presents Ila Das. Ila Das wants a life full of human company in Desai's view. The woman suffering from psychological imbalances is presented as a perturbation woman. The novelist presents Ila Das's character-as leading an active public life and an intimate life from two angles. Her public life is very active, but it disturbs her personal life. She is a lonely person, and a victim of interior crises reveals a careful analysis of her personal life. Ila Das is described as a loner, sometimes lonely or desperate. Desai has an entirely different character through Ila Das. She may be called a pathbreaker that breaks society's patriarchal standards and embraces new life challenges. *Cry, the Peacock*, Anita Desai, discusses her characters' philosophy of relief and psychics. The theme of marital misadjustment and the resulting distraction in the lives of a wife who has failed reveals the innermost conflict of women in disaster. The novel, *Cry, the Peacock* is a remarkable effort at furry fantasy. It represents truthfully the psychosomatic development of the female character that is incapable of fulfilling depressed, deserted, and dishearted impressions of the applied world of the spouse. The theme of conflict in the relationship between husband and wife is primarily involved. Desai appears in explanations of marital discord and shows how such discord afflicts the family. Occasionally, an individual's inability to deal with her partner's behavior leads to anxiety and strain in the relationship. In contrast, at times, the relationship is stressed on the interpretation of different sensitivities. The proposal in this novel is to live in the sharp contrast between Maya and Gautama. Maya, the strong character, is alive and exists for every single moment. Her wife, Gautama's hyper-sensitivity, is isolated, intellectual, and somewhat disconcerted. Both are, indeed, separate poles in their nature. Maya is

dreamy, sensible, and affectionate, while Gautama is realistic. Maya, while Gautama is separate, philosophic, and remote, is poetic and high tense. Maya's sensitivity, calmness, and warmth are hard and cold for Gautama. Thus, because of their incomparable temperatures and temperatures, they are plague with a stressful relationship. Maya was soothing to her doting dad, but nobody in the Gautama family speaks a word of love. They talk about things that are generally connected to society, but never personal or private issues. She is a daddy child; nobody else loves her as her daddy did. In her husband, she is pursuing an alternative dad. However, therefore he does not answer her. Profound Maya's death is appallingly upset by the loss of mental tranquility and Gautama's disregard for Maya's



emotional desires to catch her alternative dog. Maya broods over this mechanical behavior. The husbandry, which binds both, are delicate and divisive. Moreover, their growing rigidity influences their climax when Maya murders Gautama in sufficient craziness and forces suicide. The ultimate goal is to discover the stormy emotional life of the neurotic leader Maya, who was living under her loving father's permissive care a light-hearted life and who asks to increase her husband's equal attention, but on her marital journey, she bombs. In sum, Anita Desai's characters' existential alienation and despair turn into an insistent longing for death as a possible exit out of their hollowness and is sought to be overcome by the inner awareness of protagonists. They try to search within the meaning of life, but ultimately they fail in this search, and they are reconciled to mental disorders. There is a dominant motif of death in Anita Desai's novels as her characters caught in the mire of existential alienation and ennui turn into a compulsive longing for death as an outlet. The theme of exile occupies the central part of Desai's novels. Most of her characters feel alienated and exiled. Though they visit in-crowd, they do not ever experience the lack of culture around them. Her novels deal with the cruel assault of existence. Her protagonists are persons for whom alienation is the ultimate reality. They are mostly women comprising school-girls to grandmothers. They are fragile, introverts longing for their existence.

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