

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters an attempt has been made to interpret and analyze Anita Desai's three novels. The present chapter in the light of analysis and interpretations in the earlier chapters provides some findings on female protagonists.

In all the three novels: *Cry, the Peacock*, *Voices in the City* and *Fire on the Mountain* Desai describes the helplessness of married women, the emotional world of women and their sensibility as well as psyche. Her female protagonists: Maya, Monisha and Nanda Kaul fail to adjust themselves with their families and even with their husbands because of misunderstanding. It does not mean that Desai treats Indian woman as a figure of misfortune. While reading her novels thoroughly, we come to realize that Anita Desai is closer to the earthly reality and woman's inner life and their feelings. She depicts very beautifully Indian sensibilities, culture and pictures all with the minute details.

In her novels both the male and female protagonists stand isolated. Desai is interested only in individuals. Her female protagonists are sensitive human beings suffered from the limits of despair and living within a confined conventional structure. They seem to comment on the sad lot of Indian women. The female protagonist Maya cannot communicate with the cold Gautama in *Cry the Peacock*. The same is true with Monisha who fails to keep conversation with her husband Jiban in *Voices in City* and Nanda Kaul in *Fire on the Mountain* looks helplessly on her husband who carried a lifelong affair with a Christian woman.

Anita Desai in these three novels writes remarkably about what she has minutely observed and deeply experienced. In her fictional world the female characters exhibit the feelings of helplessness, agony, anger, struggle and surrender.

Desai describes the marriage in India and the various complexities involved with it. She tries to represent the western world which is not available here. In foreign countries people have least concern for arranged marriages but in India the arranged marriages are considered to be blessings.

These three novels bring forth a living picture of the dullness and meaninglessness of today's society. That is how the characters become much and more matchless and individual. Maya, Monisha, Amla, Nanda Kaul, Raka and Ila Das all of them are created as the embodiment of resolved mystery never following the currents always fighting against their surroundings and people for the sake of their freedom.

Anita Desai's emphasis on the study of the individual as an aggregate of psychic and emotional impulses, her female protagonists are basically tragic characters. They are psychologically disturbed, morbid, self-absorbed and incoherent in their manner and expression. They do not have the determination and a strong will to pursue a certain line of action. Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* never dare to go beyond her husband Gautama. Again female protagonist Monisha in *Voices in the City* commits suicide instead of revolting against her husband Jiban and in *Fire on the Mountain* female protagonist Nanda Kaul withdraws herself to lonely and battered place after tiring and monotonous life with her husband Mr. Kaul.

Another observation is that Anita Desai's characters are presented in binary opposition in terms of values, attitudes, temperaments and outlook on life. Female protagonist Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* is emotional and sensitive whereas her husband

Gautama is very practical and insensitive. He cares his work more than her wife's emotions. He never understands her passions and personal desires. Such a binary opposition we also find in the case of female protagonist Monisha and her husband Jiban. Monisha like Maya is emotional and sensitive. She expects little privacy from her husband but it is not given. Jiban fails to understand her wife's true nature, so their familial life became futile. Like Gautama, Jiban is over practical and emotionless kind of person. Again, female protagonist Nanda Kaul and Mr. Kaul stand against each other in the novel *Fire on the Mountain*. Nanda Kaul like an old tree bears everything to maintain her husband's social prestige but Mr. Kaul, her husband doesn't care about her emotions and passions.

All her major characters are entirely the products of her fine imagination and they are least received from actual life. Female characters like Maya, Monisha, Ananda, Nanda, Raka and Ila Das are all imaginary. In the novels we see that their attitude is like the attitude of outsiders, they behave like strangers because they experience their insufficiency to adjust themselves to the customary social structure. Female protagonist Monisha, though lives in crowded family feels lonely and awkward. Nanda Kaul feels refuge in her own house, and Maya is always stranger in her husband's house.

Anita Desai's female protagonists declare her tragic vision of life. Her female characters present the designs of life she had in her mind. They share the experiences and perception, and turn onward searching for the real meaning and embassy of life. Since Mrs. Desai loves lonely place and privacy, also her female characters which she had created love to have lonely place and privacy, they don't differ their creator in their liking.

Feminine sensibility is seen in her three novels. Her first novel *Cry, the Peacock* is typically feminine novel not because of it is a story of a woman told by a woman, but because it is a story of feminine sensibility. The novelist through female protagonist Maya's tragedy

conveys social fatalism into a coherent pattern to communicate the tender sensibility of a woman. Such a feminine sensibility we also find in her remaining two novels: *Voices in the City* and *Fire on the Mountain*. Through female protagonist Monisha, novelist presents Indian women's agony, nervousness, and pessimism due to patriarchal dominancy. Female protagonist Nanda Kaul also expresses Indian women's tragic sensibility in their old days. Ila Das through rebellious and work for the welfare of society becomes the victim of male dictatorship. So we can look that the feminine sensibility in her these three novels is predominant and cannot be avoided while going through these novels.

She closely examines the serious world of womankind through her female protagonists. Desai sets herself to voice the unhappiness and helplessness of millions of married women. In these three novels novelist focuses on how her female protagonists in the contemporary society are struggling against the situation.

Anita Desai portrays female protagonists in these three novels as not fully cut off from familial social ties but as women who remain within these orbits and protest against lack of variety, injustice and humiliation. Her female protagonists are not mere female god or mechanical man but they are self – actualizing personal. Describing after noble the pitiable and very bad or ugly evil stage of alienated self especially of female protagonists like Maya, Monisha and Nanda Kaul Anita Desai has given a new dimension to Indian English novel.

By portraying the character of Maya and Monisha Desai has prevented the irritable soul of related to woman. They might be called sub-normal if not uncommon. Anita Desai's psychological probing of the women is that she includes females of different age groups. It is not that she confines herself to the young or the middle aged. She has also presented the soul of girl Raka in *Fire on the Mountain*.

We have seen that Anita Desai's female protagonists: Maya, Monisha and Nanda Kaul are all of the upper class of urban India. Economic independence is not an outstanding issue for them. Yet all of them directly or indirectly question the recognized codes of a patriarchal society. They refuse to recognize the roles ordained for them by traditional social conventions. The female protagonists of Anita Desai hold center-stage in her novels. In focusing on the working of the mind of the female protagonists Desai shows their capacity for dissent. Thus in short we can say that about her female protagonists: Maya is the childish in *Cry, the Peacock*, Monisha is dreamy in *Voices in the City* and Nanda Kaul is the escapist in *Fire on the Mountain*.

The three novels closely present the emotional world of her female protagonists and highlight their personal traits, peculiar and tender instincts as crushed by the customary of the society.

In this way Anita Desai paints the real picture of modern Indian woman who is working and tries to establish her own identity without breaking the present structure. The three heroines in the three novels are representatives of modern woman in India. This portrayal of protagonists rightly underlines the mindset of urban woman who is struggling for new identity.

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