

Study of Alienation in Anita Desai's Bye – Bye Blackbird

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Abstract:

Among the Indian women novelists, Anita Desai's novels center on the psychological crises that immigrants face in a foreign land, where they are subjected to physical and psychological sufferings. Throughout the novel, the novelist successfully portrays the agonized minds of alienated man and woman. Her portrayal of characters in her novels reflects her feminist approach, outlook, and perspective. Her novels are heavily influenced by the theme of displacement. Through the portrayal of her characters, as is evident from the keen observation of the lives of immigrants, she shows an interest in understanding their inner minds. Due to Desai's feminine nature, she is able to dive deeply into the minds of repressed women and expose their alienation and loneliness, both of which are the result of women's psychological imbalances and emotional imbalances. Anita Desai is a powerful and persuasive voice among Indian novelists who have moved away from their ethnic roots. A close study of Anita Desai's works reveals her struggle for women's autonomy against the backdrop of male-dominated cultural practices. Her protagonists ... constantly face the astonishing task of defining their relationship to themselves and their immediate human context.

Keywords: Anita Desai, alienation, displacement and emotional imbalances.

Introduction:

The process of alienation and rehabilitation involves a three-stage operation, viz., construction and reconstruction. For example, when a person is ready to migrate, his beliefs, responses, attitudes, behavior patterns, etc. are already shaped by the system of the place he or she belongs to. This is the construction phase. Then, he or she migrates to a new place that has its own lifestyle. Migrants therefore have to first deconstruct what they have built and then reconstruct it according to the lifestyle of the new place. This three-level operation can also be seen as follows: one, departure from the original location and arrival at the new location; two, identification and reconnection with the new space; Three, rehabilitation and reunification with a new place. Then, there are three basic factors that hinder or facilitate the completion of the rehabilitation process, viz., degree of sensitivity, previous rituals and conditions during the rehabilitation phase.

Anita Desai tackles this complex issue of alienation in *Bye-Bye Blackbird*. The novel is mainly woven between two groups of characters, viz., Adit Sen, his English wife Sara and Adit's Indian friend Dev; And two Indian couples - Jasbir Mala, Samar-Bella. A close reading of the novel reveals that the process of reconstruction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of Samar, a doctor and his sweet wife Bella has not gone without a hitch; Jasbir, an anesthetist and his good Punjabi wife Mala. They migrate from India to Clapham, England. They start living. They enjoy their weekend. They visit clubs and coffee houses. They do their chosen work. Their sensibilities or culture or local conditions create no distance and distinction in their resettlement at Clapham, England. New arrivals Adit, Sara and Dev face problems with their resettlement with a view to learning at the London School of Economics. After coming to England, Adit worked in different positions in post office, sorting office. Then he joined

the camping equipment business. He also worked as a teacher and eventually took a small job at Blue Sky. He considers himself lucky to have Sarah as his wife. We can see the happy state through his own expression:

I am happy here. I love going to the local for a pint on the way home to Sarah. I love wearing a good tweed on a foggy November day... I love the girls here... I love steamed pudding... I love being called Vogue. Like choosing between three types of toilets... I love pubs. I love the freedom a man has here; financial freedom; Social freedom... Oh, I think gold, god, gold—gold like Sarah's golden hair.

At least initially the focus of the novel is on Dev who comes to London to study. As the plot develops, we see him turning into a completely disillusioned individual. When Dev took out the clock from the pillow, he was disgusted to see that it was five o'clock. He wondered if they had died in the night of not favoring themselves. Inability to adapt is in a sense Dev's own problem, he feels alienated from both the Indians and the English in London. It was very difficult for him to adapt to the new environment. He saw: super-markets with pyramids of frozen foods, delicatessens with their continental fruits and wines and cheeses, clothes shops with their wax, startled models in the windows, gloves and lace handkerchiefs, pubs and fish and chip shops. Tall, aristocratic perambulators and hairless, pudding-faced babies with lollipop stoppers, well-groomed dogs on leashes, trim nylons on women's stout legs, red umbrellas and blue mackintoshes, drizzle and sunshine and high-priced easy trade.

Dev's contact begins with Adit, who has settled in London with an English wife. Cultural differences increase and God goes out looking for a job. He has various experiences

and cultural shocks. The difference between expectations and reality upsets him and makes him self-conscious. Dev found it difficult to adjust to the silence and emptiness of London which was not characteristic of India. Houses and flats, streets and squares all seemed to him dead and alive.

The English habit of keeping all doors and windows tightly shut..., to protect their privacy as they keep their tongues from speaking and throats from getting cold, cannot be explained by the fact of cold and rain. He criticizes the way churches are built in London. The cross itself is almost indistinct and is definitely overshadowed by the monstrous white mushrooming of the marble statue (64)." He thinks that these are not temples of Christ but temples dictated by the British Empire. It is a celebration of the British concept of God, King, and Country. And not the Christian concept of God. . They further proclaim their belief that it is not mercy that makes a man worthy of his honor, but service and successful service to king and country in the name of God. There are more tourists than worshippers, and they come with guide books and whispers of history, not piety. God when this criticism When doing it, obviously the Indian congregations were in mind.

Staying away from India made the gods suffocate. He kept telling himself that he was deceived. As he looked out of the window, he saw a view of cedar trees, willows, meadows and woods, which reminded him of a similar plight of the Dewan occupied by the Desai: God sees white dust and yellow weeds, leafless. Thorn trees, broken fences, tin and brick sheds and scattered carcasses of cattle.

Adit also faces an identity crisis in the novel, initially appearing as a romantic admirer of England. He has his own reasons for migrating. He finds it difficult to realize the shortcomings of the English system. For him, India is all that is bad. Whenever I go there, I take these things for granted, and I only notice the laziness of the clerks, the untimeliness of

the buses and trains, the beggars, the flies, the smell, and the boredom... I'm crazy to get back to England and the nice warm pubs and pick up a glass of Guinness and stare at the girls and feel happy again."

But he never wants to call it a dilemma. His life is lived in the moment, he does not think about the future and he does not worry about it. At one point Adit remarks that he sees himself as India's ambassador, showing the British how a gentleman Indian can be: "I never called myself a prophet or a saint. It was only my promise that I would occupy India House with some style, savoring the rich murg mullam and chicken biryani, serving alcoholic beverages from Jaipur made from pigeon's blood and pearls, and dazzle everyone with my oriental knowledge and fluency."

After a long inward debate, Adit finally announced; 'No-England. 'England. I'm done with England now, Sarah, I'm going back. To India- Home'. This announcement hurts Sara a lot. But now Adit is firm. He must be in India. He gives the following reason for his departure: I cannot stay here any longer. Our life here - it's so surreal, don't you feel it? Little India in London. All our records and lamb curry and singing, it's all so unreal. I am twenty-seven years old now. I want to go home and start living a real life. I don't know what real life would mean there... Sarah, you know I loved England more than you. I've often felt myself half English, but that was only pretense, Sally. Now the real thing has to happen. It is time for me to leave and you will follow me.

Sara, the next important character in the novel, also faces an identity crisis. She is in love with India. She dislikes the privacy and reserved love of English people. Her marriage to an Indian shows her love for India and the Indian lifestyle. She does not find it difficult to

bear the insults of her fellow citizens. In fact she is straddling two different societies. She never asked questions about her personal life. To show her letters from India, to discuss her Indian husband, she would have been forced to parade like an impostor, to claim a life, an identity she did not feel was her own.

Sara is stuck in a tragic situation. She is the only child of a middle-class couple in the beautiful countryside of Hampshire. She is very sensitive. The innocence and beauty of the countryside has shaped her to a great extent. And when Adit announces his decision to return to India, Sarah faces three challengers: 'There was the baby. It was a journey. to uproot'. She somehow consoles herself about the uprooting: 'I think when I go to India; I wouldn't find it so strange. I'm sure I'll feel at home soon. But soon she feels 'a sureness and certainty melt within her'. Her guts become 'a drop of rain, a flake of snow' within her. And she finds that going to India means 'all the pain of saying goodbye to her last twenty-four years'.

It was the English self that dwindled and faded and died, she knew, it was her English self that she must say goodbye to. That's what hurt- she whispered without saying goodbye to England and then her instinctive reaction was to grab something and hold on to what had already slipped through her fingers.

Conclusion:

All the three main characters in Anita Desai's novel face an identity crisis. These characters have their own uniqueness in the novel. The characters are forced to deal with societal demands. So, the problem with the characters in *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is that they are too involved in the physical world to take it for real, and this creates their sense of alienation. However, the amount of coating varies among different characters resulting in varying

degrees of alienation. Desai uses imagination not only to create an alternate reality, but also to contrast two or more visions of reality projected in a particular work of fiction.

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