

**ONTOLOGICAL STUDY OF WOMEN IN THE SELECT WORKS OF  
ANITA DESAI AND SHASHI DESHPANDE**

**Ms.T.G.Akila**

*Assistant Professor, Department of English (UAP)  
National College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli - 620 003*

*The atmosphere was about her was calm and  
she looked the eternal women as she sat,  
serene and pregnant, in the firelight.*

Nayantara Sahgal

Woman occupies 'fourth dimension' because of her 'acumen'. Her acuity puts her to be 'a stonker'. She aims at 'lapidary existence'. Her understanding with her family and society is 'lummy'. Though she aims at a cloistered life, she has to face 'self deprecation'. Her mind always spins at the thought of corroboration with her family and society which forces her to have 'tail-spin'. The 'buff' in her pushes not to look at the 'lassitude'. Nothing can correlate with her thaumaturgy. She tries to bring 'lush' to her family, which revolves around her as mother and wife, In them, she strives hard to escape from 'the gutted self'. Adrienne Rich says "Motherhood is not only a core human relationship but a political institution, a keystone to the domination in every sphere of women by men." (P. 216)

Further, it is interesting to quote Partha N Mukerjee, who says:

*The reproductive capacity of women has been exploited to tie her down to sexual, childbearing and socialising roles within the confines of the home. This is the notion of patriarchy whose bastion is the cellular home and whose extension is the society. (P. 52)*

Women's reproductive system pushes her to face 'mano a mano with men'. The nurturing of children also adds egarment to her and lands her in 'Laingian'. Her life is marked by malarkey, which forces her to witness fiddly scenes. Yet, she bounces back to have a 'life of sashay.'

Anita Desai, in her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, portrays the 'self effacing life' of Nanda Kaul. Her life is imbrued with devotion, duty and sacrifice, at the cost of self respect. Like Nanda Kaul, Sara, in *Bye Bye Black Bird*, proves to be 'a docile, accommodative kickie-wickie'. She is ready to forgo many things for the sake of her Indian husband. Though she is an English woman, she marries an Indian and makes every possible effort to associate her life with him. For this sake, she is even ready 'to shed her cultural identity'. Emma Mofit, another English woman, rooses Sara as "*The most intelligent thing that you ever did was to marry Sarah, and what courage she has*". (P. 248)

Monisha, in *Voices in the city*, another protagonist of Desai is willing to accept 'the nethermost status' given to her in her husband's home. She knows fully that women's options are limited, and 'she willingly remains traceless, meaningless and invisible'. Among the novels of Anita Desai, Aunt Meera seems to be nonsuch in *Clear Light of the Day*. She is a symbol of sacrifice. Throughout her life, she remains to be a bachelorette and prepares to look after her 'loony brother'.

It is observed that marriage is 'oppressive and bruising', which forces women to ponder about it in its 'lashings'. It is viewed her silence is 'a symbol of powerlessness'. In *Dark holds No Terror*, Saru goes through "endless repetition of the same pattern" (158) of a marital home. There is a little espearce of ray in her. To her, life is not a 'humdinger'. It is turned by mere 'toing and froing'. This creates 'repine' in her and in it she 'laments'. She says "yes, that's why I'm going. To get away from this house, this paradise of matching curtains and handloom bedspreads. This hell of savagery and submission". (P. 23-24)

Extreme 'samey' and 'the meaninglessness', comminate the life of Saru. She is always oneric that she is 'a soulness' puppet. Her life is flummoxed by marriage, which is a total disappointment. This is observed in the following lines: 'It is all a fraud then, the eternal cry of ... my husband, my wife, my children, my parents? Are all human relationships doomed to be a failure? (P. 176)

Still, Saru expresses her inclination for self- sacrificing existent. This is observed when she weens:

*back ache, head ache, leucorrhea, menorrhagea, dysmenorrhea, loss of appetite, burning feet, an itch 'there'... all the indignities of a women's life, borne silently and as long as possible, because 'how do you tell anyone about these things?' Everything kept secret, their very womanhood a source of deep shame to them. Stupid, silly martyrs, she thought: idiotic heroines...Their unconscious, unmeaning heroism, born out of the myth of the self-sacrificing martyred woman, did nor arouse either her pity or her admiration. It made her angry....But they had schooled themselves to silence. (P. 98)*

Shashi Deshpande focuses on 'male domination' and 'violence', which damage eternal verity of women and suffers from psychological neurosis also. The male- centred power causes damages to marital structure always. The result is, men and women tend to be 'animus', and 'invidious' to each other with 'uprooted emotions'. Like Saru, Jaya, in *That long Silence*, has to face creve - coeur in her life. Basically, she is 'a humane'. Her mind is haunted by 'the familiar structure of marriage'. It gives, she feels, a safe and secure position and it is interesting to note her view of marriage. She says:

*Two bullocks yoked together-that was how I saw the two of us the day we came here, Mohan and I. Now i reject that image. It's wrong. If I think of us in that way, I condemn myself to a lifetime of disbelief in ourselves. I've always thought-*

*there's only one life, no chance of a reprieve, no second chances. But in this life itself there are so many crossroads, so many choices. (P. 191-92)*

Jaya is not a type of a protagonist, who longs for 'utopian world'. She is ready to accept patriarchal nature with hope because "without that life would be impossible...And if there is anything I know now it is this: Life has always to be made possible." (193). In fact, she prays to Mohan, her husband "to pull her like a pole with his beliefs out of a quagmire of doubts". (P. 127)

It is expected that woman should remain 'traditional' and 'feminine' with 'submissiveness', 'gentleness in manner' and 'prosperity for self negotiation'. When she looks for 'perseity' through owelty, she is considered to be 'hussy'. Also, patriarchal world shows its 'domination through fulmination'. She is viewed as 'a cunt' and proved to be 'manqué'. The patriarchal world around her always seems to be 'saturnine' and shows its 'disownership'. Still, she makes every possible effort to become 'a bloomer with ballsy', she always works for fruition of her life without expecting 'guerdon'. Her life is 'skewed' by 'patriarchal humgruffin', yet she proves to be 'zippy', and works very hard to 'come out of the realm of manumit'. To put it in a nut shell, woman has an appetite to practice 'hormic theory'. Even though, she has 'gainsayer' to meet in order 'to metagroblyze her', she is ready to have a life of 'a rondure'. This tendency makes anyone to consider her 'Hariolate'.

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