

The Theme Of Isolation In The Novel Of Anita Desai's "Bye-Bye Blackbird"

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Abstract

In Indian English literature the Women Indian novelist also have been trying their hands in English writing. If we talk about the novelist, poets, playwrights, short story writer and critics. They all are makes their own literary reputation in the frame of world literature .Among the Indian Novelist, one of the prominent writer whose main concern to reflects the psychological sufferings faced by immigrants in alien countries. The novelist successfully attempt to highlight the fret of mind of isolated men and women in foreign land. Her portrayal of characters in which firmness of her feministic approach, outcomes and views depicts invariable manner. The main concern of her novel is isolation. The in-depth observation about the life of immigrants faced by Indians people and her interest to read the inner mind of characters portray in her novel. Anita Desai keenly predict the mind of oppressed woman and reflect light on their alienation and loneliness which are the result of women psyche and emotional imbalances.

Key Words: Protagonist, Isolation, Alienation, Identity, Migrant, Loneliness.

Many of the prominent writers like Anita Desai, Amitav Ghosh, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri and Vikram Seth who are living abroad. All these writers have showed their feeling of isolation and one of the major subject in all expatriate literature. They depicts and explore the pain of isolation by facing not only the geographical disorder but same they have to face socio-cultural sense of isolation. These all writers are prominently concern about these isolation problem as a global concern problem in today's world.

From all the non-resident Indian Writer, Anita Desai is one of the prominent writer who comes out differently to explore the human relationships with inter-cultural conflict of values. She gives a new direction to Indian English fiction by reflecting the theme of isolation and the conflict going on values. Anita Desai's novels are better known for the in-depth of

characters who face alienation, exile and a sense of immigrants. In all her novel, she depicts the human mind and her characters placed in compound situations where they find detached. Anita Desai's one of the most famous novel *Bye –Bye Blackbird* which is the third novel of her. This novel represents the idea of isolation, alienation, loneliness and lack of adjustment in foreign country England by the Indian immigrants.

The main protagonist character of the novel is Dev who arrive in England. He is a young and smart Bengali student who has an ambition in his life to get admission in prestigious London school of Economics. For the time being, he lives with Adit Sen and his beautiful English wife Sarah. Adit Sen lives a happy and settled life in England as an immigrant. He has a very good job which gives him good earnings and makes his life comfortable. He is always get fascinated towards the high rich economic status life of England and its materialistic wealth but Dev is one of the character who not get easily settled in new environment of English. When he is not able to adapt himself in England, he decided to do a job and leave the thought to continue studying. It is not easy task to get job in alien country and he feel sad, depressed and alone by thinking about discrimination manners of English people towards Indians. He gets irritated how the English treats Indians and against the ideas of Adit's 'Englishness'.

Sarah is another character in the novel feel homeless and detached although lives in her homeland. The reason of aloneness and rejected because she married to Indian boy Adit. She always feels unclear in her thoughts and helpless to whom she can share her dilemma. She never participate between the talking of his husband Adit and his friends too because she is unable to understand the Hindi language. She accepts the truth that she can easily misunderstood. She feel alone and helpless in spite of living in her homeland. She needs a support of emotions and take care which gives her strength.

The prominent change comes in the novel when three of them Adit, Dev and Sarah went to visit the place of Sarah's mother Mrs. Roscommon James. The novel gives the picturesque explanation about the countryside of English. Adit knows that war is held in his own country which makes him filled with emotions for his home city Calcutta. That is the moment when Adit left the fascination about England. He decided to go back India with his wife Sarah. He wants to live a life that makes him real identity. On the other side Dev is in dilemma that

whether he has to stay in England or return back to India. And finally he decides to stay in England only.

Anita Desai is one of the artistic author who portrait the character in the novel in such a way that how this non-residential Indians who are called as immigrants do struggle to develop their own identity in alienated land and find themselves in isolated country. The theme of alienation is firmly depicted. It also reflects the depiction of the truth of east-west relations. As we know the three main characters interwoven the novel till the end is Adit, Dev and Sarah. Adit Sen is called as the main hero of the novel who settles in London and marry to Sarah, an English woman. He shows his love towards England and appreciated the war of Nelson, Waterloo and everything about foreign country. On the other side he was busy in searching job in India. But hardly he only earns salary of two hundred and fifty rupees and in future it may raise upto only five hundred rupees. Adit Sen hatred the loneliness of the people who is in clerical job and about the unpunctuality of trains and buses.

Adit's dream are fulfilled in English country called England. He is so lucky that he get good job, friend and an English wife. He feels the satisfactory life which gives him happiness. He always show love towards England. On the other hand he loved his country and affection also. When he remember his motherland he says, "My mother will cook hilsafish wrapped in banana leaves for me" (BBB 49). He took think that his sisters will make ready Sarah in Indian saris with precious ornaments. After visiting his mother-in law home in a village, he change his view and his love for India burst first. He feels that he is not belong to England. Adit feels that, "the eternal immigrant who can never accept their new home and continue to walk the sheets like strangers in enemy territory"(BBB 177).

He remember the past life of himself about India. This shows that now he favour to go back India and when Adit's wife Sarah know about feelings and emotions of him for his homeland and she wonder about that how he hide his emotions for his country and suddenly releases his feeling in burst out manners. One of the prominent reason is that Pakistan start war against India. Adit feel that he is living falsehood life in England and want to go back in real life of India.

He always feel in England that he is not a person whose identity makes him pride but contrary he feel alone, exile and dejected from England. He announced “--No --England! England. Sarah, I am going back”(BBB 198). He finally decide to return his home country India. Whatever rich economic and prosperity life he spend in England makes him not real at all .He just convince himself to be English. When Adit is at Waterloo station with his wife Sarah at that time he is so happy to think about India. His sense of feeling of alienation, loneliness, isolation was disappear.

Sarah is the character who married to Adit, an Indian and after that she feel dejected alienated in her own home country. Adit aware about her loneliness and feel alone. Her mistakes was only that she has an Indian husband. She has to face number of embarrassing situations when her colleagues in the school treated in bad manner and ask questions on her personal life. All this make her feel that she is even though lives in England but not a part of it. School children also make humour on her identity. She is not the real Sarah only wears the mask on her face which makes her realize that she is not have any identity in England.

Both couple have different view about their own motherland. Sarah is very fascinated about India and read only about Indian life too. Adit finds difficult to understand Sarah that she is manageable but dislike about way of her cooking is not good for Adit. Sarah is not comfortable in the conversation of Adit and his friends due to lack of understanding of language and she too find difficult to wear traditional Indian sari and ornaments .It shows she dwell between two different culture and try to search her own identity. She is always shows love and sincerity towards her marriage with Adit.

Dev is one of the character who also face the sense of isolation. In the beginning he was so excited and ambitious to join college of London school of Economics and after that get lucrative job of teacher in India with foreign degree. But when he knows about the fact that the immigrants suffered by white people and lost their self-respect in alien country. He is called “Wog”(BBB 16) by a school boy. He cannot accept the logic that Asiatic have different lavatories. He show his feelings to Adit that he would not live in that country where we Indian feel insulted by English. He is fed up with the hollow life of England.

In India, he can find about the life of people go in which direction because there is no one stranger to each other. Dev feels uncomfortable to live in alien country where people live in hidden way and everyone is stranger. He feels number of times insulted by English people on various occasions. Sarah's friend Christine Langford also humiliated on racial discrimination.

In Indian Women Novelist, K.V. Surendran points out Dev's emotions of alienation and rootlessness. He clarifies that, "keeping away from India Dev feels entangled and suffocated" (72). Dev is feeling hurt when he finds that what people make Indian feel. He is fully disappointed and isolated to live in alien country.

He questions to Aditi, "Do you sell your soul and passport too to live in this isolated country."

He raised questions to himself that why he came here to waste the money of his father and not studying Economics. He makes himself realise that he is going to prove to these English people that we are free to live our lives and create our own personalities and conquer England and to show them who we are. He finally finds comfort in the nature of England and tries to adjust in alien country. He appreciates the beauty of nature, its colour and peace of surroundings. He finds a new identity in England and is ready to accept new challenges in English life.

The other two couples are also immigrants in the novel. They are Jasbir-Mala and Samar-Bella who belong to India and are now settled in England. They are enjoying their life in England like participating in clubs and coffee houses. They seem happy from outside but internally they are longing for their home country. They cannot flow in unity with the culture of English which is called an alien nation.

The in-depth observation of these characters depicts that they all faced different kinds of alienation. After that, the experience they get as immigrants in alien country makes them feel alienated because of that a kind of view is set in their mind that no one takes care of them. In the novel, the novelist Anita Desai highlights the theme of alienation and dislocation. The sufferings are different and to go away from this alienation, they search out a path according to their need. The novel depicts the conflict between the English and black immigrants which highlights the issues of alienation and isolation in foreign countries. The

experience of cultural conflict, human relationship, sense of feel alien are the common problems discussed on global level of twentieth century.

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