



ప్రభుత్వ డిగ్రీ కళాశాల, టెక్కలి
Government Degree College, Tekkali
శ్రీకాకుళం జిల్లా, ఆంధ్ర ప్రదేశ్

తెలుగు, హిందీ, ఒరియా, ఇంగ్లీష్ విభాగాలు
Departments of Telugu, Hindi, Oriya, English



సాహిత్యంలో మహిళ
Women in Literature
साहित्य में नारी
ଓଡ଼ିଆ ସାହିତ୍ୟରେ ନାରୀ



Honorary Editor
Prof. T. Govindamma

Editor
Prof. Ayyagari Sitaratnam

Jane Austen as a Novelist - A Critical view

Smt. Bongarala Jhansi Rani
lecturer in English
Government Degree College
Tekkali

Introduction:

Jane Austen was an English novelist known primarily for her six major novels: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Persuasion* which interpret, critique and comment upon the British landed gentry at the end of the 18th century. Austen's plots often explore the dependence of women on marriage in pursuit of favorable social standing and economic security.

Her leisurely manner of writing: Jane Austen spent something like twenty-seven years on her six novels, writing them with care, constantly revising and then allowing a full twelve months for each final rewriting before publication. Her leisurely method of writing may be contrasted with the haste of Sir Walter Scott, who at time produced four novels in one year. It is not surprising therefore that the final versions of her novels have a formal perfection- no loose ends, no padding, no characterization for its own sake, and a flawlessly consistent idiom suited to the person who is used it. Nothing is allowed in a Jane Austen novel that is not there for a clearly defined reason, to contribute to the plot, the drama of feelings, the moral structure, or the necessary psychology.

A realist: She is a realist who draws her materials from actual life as she sees it. Her stories are perfectly credible and convincing. There is nothing fantastic, fanciful, or far-fetched in them. She depicts the social life of her time and is thus a practitioner of the domestic novel or the novel of manners. Realism is the keynote of her novels whether they are considered from the point of view of story, characters, or setting.

Matrimony, her principal theme: The principal theme of her novels is matrimony. She is preoccupied with the business of making matches for her heroines. Generally the heroine, after a few false

starts, meets the right man, and a series of misunderstandings and frustrations occur to delay but never to prevent their union. Morning calls, dinner parties, dances, shopping expeditions, weddings, etc. are the principal ingredients of her stories.

Her Humour and Irony: Jane Austen is a humorist whose favourite weapon is irony. Irony is her forte, and most of humour proceeds from her use of it. Her novels are all comedies in which she exposes the absurdities and failings of her characters. She has a comedian's attitude to life, and her vision is ironical and satirical. However, her humour is not of the boisterous type : it is a mild and subdued kind of humour. It may be noted also that there is little malice in her attitude, though a note of bitterness occasionally creeps into it. Her humour has been compared to that of Shakespeare, but that is an exaggeration.

Character-portrayal: She gives an abundance of character portraits. She shows an acute grasp of the human mind and human motives, and reveals these with great skill. She is not only concerned with the externals of character, but also with a psychological portrayal of it. Her studies of women are more successful than those of men. Another noteworthy feature about these novels is that there are neither any perfect or idealized characters nor thorough villains in them.

Few dramatic or melodramatic incidents: There are few dramatic or melodramatic incidents in her stories. Her exquisite touch renders commonplace things and characters interesting by virtue of the truth of description and the sentiment. She is not interested in paraphernalia of the "romantic" novel. Nor does she show any capacity to depict "passion". There are no fiery outbursts in her stories, and no dwelling upon the passion of love. Nor do we have many tragic or heart-rending or deeply poignant situations to grieve us. She deals principally with the comic side of life, not its painful side.

Her detachment: Her narration shows a remarkable detachment or objectivity on her part. She does not interrupt her stories with her personal comments (as Thackeray and George Eliot often do). She does not obtrude herself on the reader's attention, and her novels are free from intrusions by her. Nor is there any moralizing in her stories. A moral purpose is certainly there, but the reader is allowed

to reach it by his own effort.

Her limited range: As her stories are based on her personal experience and an observation of the life around her, her range is extremely limited. She deals with a narrow mode of existence, and does not even show much interest in external nature. She excludes much of human life from her novels, because she does not have imagination enough to carry her beyond her own observations. But within her narrow range she is supreme. Her characters are true to life, and all her work has the perfection of a miniature painting.

Critical view:

Norman Sherry's view on Jane Austen:

As a novelist, Jane Austen works within strict limitations. This is often put forward as a criticism of her work. It has been said that she had only one plot, that her subject matter is limited, superficial, repetitive, and without any real seriousness or relevance to life. Certain limitations were imposed upon her by the conventions of the romantic novel, whose plot demanded that she should deal with the courtship and marriage of her heroine. But she herself claimed that she worked on a "little bit of ivory". She was conscious of her limitations, worked strictly within them, and turned them to her advantage.

Cazamian's view:

Jane Austen shows an intuitive understanding of human character. Her intuition is so natural and supple that it appears absolutely simple. She reads the inner minds of her characters as if those minds were transparent. She seizes them in their depths. The secret complexities of self-love, the many vanities, the imperceptible quivering's of selfishness, are all indicated or suggested so calmly and with so calmly and with so sober a touch that the author's personal reaction is reduced to a minimum. Her stories are perfectly objective and show a spirit of gentle tolerance, though a subtle suggestion of Ivory hovers over every page and reveals a sharpness of vision that could be extremely severe.

lord David Cecil's observations:

Jane Austen's imaginative range was, in some respects, a very

limited one. It was, in the first place, confined to human beings in their personal relations. Man in relation to God, to politics, to abstract ideas, did not interest her. It was only when she saw him in the context of his family and his neighbours that her creative impulse became active. Her view was further limited by the fact that she looked at her characters with satirical eyes. Jane Austen was a comedian. Her first literary impulse was humorous; and to the end of her life humour was an integral part of her creative process. It is the angle of her satiric vision, the light of her wit which gives its peculiar character to her picture of the world.

Mary lascelles's view:

Jane Austen greatly valued fidelity to observed truth, and she believed in keeping the subject well within her range of observation. The point of view from which each story is related remains constant; though we may have something to learn from the conversation of any of her characters, and must always listen for the occasional, unobtrusive comment in the narrator's own voice, yet the heroine remains firmly established at the center of the composition. The heroine's mind is fully opened to us; to her judgment, even when it is clouded by prejudice, and to her sensibility, even when it is coloured by love, every issue of significance is referred.

Very few English writers ever had so narrow field of work as Jane Austen. Her characters are absolutely true to life, and all her work has the perfection of a miniature painting. The art of observation, therefore, is one which every great novelist must possess. In this art, Jane Austen surely excels, and this constitutes the secret of her power as a novelist.

References:

1. Jane Austen : By Norman Sherry.
2. Jane Austen's Novels : A Study in Structure : By Andrew H. Wright
3. A Reading of Jane Austen : By Barbara Hardy.

WOMEN CHARACTERS IN ANITA DESAI'S NOVELS

GOPIA KANDI

lecturer in English,
Govt. Degree College, Tekkali
Srikakulam Dist, Andhrapradesh.

ABSTRACT:

This paper attempts to see the theme of miscommunication and lack of understanding in marital life of Anita Desai. Anita Desai is the most remarkable women novelists in India. She was born in Mussorie in 1937 of a Bengali father and a German mother. She received early education at Queen Mary's School, Delhi and later on she studied at Miranda College, University of Delhi. Anita Desai's first novel **Cry the Peacock** was published in 1965. Her second novel, **Voice in the City** was serialized in the illustrated weekly of India during 1965. Since then, she published seven novels. **Bye, Bye, Black bird, Where shall we go this Summer?, Fire on the Mountain, In Custody and Baumgartner's Bombay**. She got Sahitya Academy Award for **Fire on the Mountain**.

Anita Desai's novels reflect social realities which are not immediately perceived. 'Her forte is the exploration of sensibility -the particular kind of Indian sensibility that is ill at ease among the barbarians and the philistines, the anarchists and moralists'. All her writing is an effort to discover, to underline and convey the true significance of things. In her early novels, she delves deep into the forces that condition the growth of female in the patriarchal, male dominated Indian family. She observes social realities from a psychological perspective, not as a social reformer or a moralist. Many of her major female characters have a near neurotic quality about them. Anita Desai sets out "to voice the mute miseries and helplessness of millions of married woman tormented by existential problems and predicaments in the insensitive male dominated world". She explores the emotional life of woman, revealing a rare imaginative awareness of the various forces at work.

Story:

The plot of Desai's seventh novel, *Fire on the Mountain*, is neither complex nor full of dramatic events. In fact, a large amount of the 'action' occurs inside the mind of Nanda and, to a lesser extent, that of her great-granddaughter, Raka. The story, set in the early 1970s, is divided into two parts.

Part -I Nanda Kaul has lost her husband, who was a Vice Chancellor Punjab University, and has chosen to live a life of seclusion in the Himalayan region of Kausali. She has found an old colonial house, called Carignano, which is which is perched on a hillside. The postman arrives with a letter from her daughter, Asha, who asks her to take in Raka, Nanda's great grand-daughter, who has just recovered from typhoid and is in need of some good and clean air. We also learn that Tara, Asha's daughter and Raka's mother, has been abused by her diplomat husband. The impending visit and stay of Raka disturbs Nanda's peace of mind, which is further disrupted by a phone call. The caller is not an old friend, Ila Das, who suggests that she would like to visit her in her mountain retreat. Triggered by these instructions, Nanda's memories wander back to her life as the VC's wife in Punjab some years ago. Then she talks with her servant and cook. Ram lal, about how to prepare for Raka and what to feed her.

Part-II Raka arrives at Carignano, where Nanda attempts to make her feel at home, even though she herself is internally upset. Raka settles in, explores the area and is particularly interested in a new structure being built nearby. Ram lal explains that the factory is run by the Pasteur institute and that they 'make serum for mad dogs', that is, people with dog bites are taken there for treatment. Raka spends hours climbing about the hills and comes home full of scratches, which annoys Nanda until she realizes that the young girl is like herself: fiercely private and independent. One day, Nanda and Raka notice a fire glowing in the distance, which frightens them, but it dies out and only leaves a film of ash in the sky. Nanda then receives a letter from Asha informing her of Tara's breakdown in Geneva, but Nanda keeps this information from Raka. Ila Das then

arrives in the isolated house and the old friends catch up on each other's news.

Women:

The three main characters of this novel [Nanda, Raka, Ila] are women , and all three of them suffer at the hands of men. Nanda was stifled in a boring marriage that was full of duties and events, but very little joy or unbridled enthusiasm. Her husband had an extra-marital affair, which he didn't even bother to hide from her, and yet he wanted her to produce his children. In one of Nanda's remembered moments, she is out on the lawn after a party and watches her husband slip away with his lover, 'just take to take home', he later says. It is painful, especially since Nanda is close enough to smell his cigar smoke. The second character, Raka, her great-granddaughter, has had her young life already battered by a man, her father. She remembers how he abused her mother, hit her in a drunken fury and then screamed at her ' to get up'. She like Nanda, finds some peace in the isolation of the mountains, but the images of abuse still plague her and prevent her from connecting with other people. like both Nanda and Raka, she too finds refuge in the mountain, where she works as a social welfare officer. But, in the end, she can not help herself opposing illegal child-marriages and is raped and murdered by a man who is hoping to marry his daughter to an older, rich man. It is appropriate, one realises after a moment's reflection, that the cause Ila championed and died for was to halt the injustice of marrying off young girls for money.

As an exciting addition to Anita Desai's success as an Indian novelist, the novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer* has been admired in English. In this novel, Desai isolates a real and miserable portrait of a charmingly married women and wants to inaugurate the victory over her rather unusual presence's chaos and suffering. She gives her favorite theme to examine the perception of a timid and sensitive women who is bored and unfulfilled with her every day life and efforts to escape into pointless and unhealthy soleness. She considers married disagreement as a subject and emphasizes how the inability to lay one's soul and fear and distress leads to the split

between husband and wife. This isolation between Raman and Sita, who causes marital disharmony, is enhanced by various approaches, individual complexes, and fears.

Conclusion:

Anita Desai's characters' existential alienation and despair turn into 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 the 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 not ever texture 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. Thus, in most of her novels, Anita Desai deals alienation with her craftsmanship.

References:

1. Anita Desai's "A Fire on the Mountain, Voice in the City."
2. Agarwal, Anju Bala. "Exploration of Feminine Psyche in Anita Desai's Novels.", 2011.
3. Dr. Prem Bahadur Khadka, A Study of alienation representing female characters in Anita Desai's Novels.
4. Malhotra, Ruby. "Feminist consciousness in Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock and Where Shall We Go This Summer?.", 2011.

Pride of Dalit Women: Babytai Kamble

KASAVAYYA GANGARAPU M.a., B.ed.

Lecturer In English
Government Degree College
Tekkali

Women are considered to the back bone of the society. There is no man survived without a woman. Though women have calibre of doing their regular works at home and office, they are often considered second fiddle to men. They play a pivotal role in shaping home and society altogether. In this regard, I would like to present a paper on life and struggles faced by a Dalit woman writer of Maharashtra Babytai Kamble.

Early life of Babytai:

Baby Kamble, affectionately known as Babytai Kamble. She was born in 1929, to a relatively affluent family of an untouchable Mahar community in Maharashtra. Her maternal grandfather and grand-uncles had worked as butlers for British officers. Kamble and her family converted to Buddhism and remained lifelong practicing as Buddhist family. She was a well-known Dalit activist and writer who was greatly inspired by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of Indian Constitution as the leader of nation. She was one of the earliest women writers from the untouchable communities whose distinctive reflexive style of feminist writing kept her apart from other Dalit writers and upper caste women writers. She penned a book entitled *Jina Amucha* (*The Prisons We Broke*), a vivid narration of her (as well as many other Dalit women) real experiences in life. She was critically acclaimed and known for her autobiographical work *Jina Amucha*, written in Marathi. The book was translated into several languages. She also wrote several poems and articles delineating Dalit women lives and ran an *Ashram* for the children of vulnerable communities. Her book gave us one of the first critiques of twofold patriarchy – by gender and caste.

She came to be admired as a writer and was fondly called as *Tai* (Meaning Sister) by all in her community. She is widely remembered and loved by the Dalit community for her contributions of powerful literary and activist work. Feminist scholar Maxine Berntsen was instrumental in encouraging Babytai Kamble to publish her writings which she had kept them secret from her family. Berntsen discovered

Kamble's interest and her writings in Phaltan where Berntsen was conducting her research. She encouraged and persuaded Babytai to publish her writings which soon became one of the best autobiographical accounts on caste, poverty, violence, and triple discrimination faced by Dalit women of her time.

To a surprise, one day a pit was dug for her in the village, but her mother insisted on keeping the 'dead' baby in her lap all night until Babytai finally regained consciousness. The people around her did worship (*Bhajan*) and prayed to God throughout the night. Her miraculous 'rebirth' was attributed to a man of God and the powers of faith in Him. It was all happened due to lack of medical support to the bereaved families who lost their children in the lap of mothers. Babytai wonders how many children were dug alive in pits due to the lack of medical facilities and having faith in god men.

Her father was a labour contractor who worked on the Mumbai Temple in Bombay as well as a milk dairy in Pune owned by the Central Government. He did very well for himself and was also incredibly generous, sometimes to a fault, spent his money on feeding his labourers until the British pay their wages.

From him, she learned that one had to earn enough money to feed one's stomach and not one's greed. The true earning lies in one's good deeds. However, her mother was never allowed outside the house. Babytai's grandmother, Sitavahini, had led the revolution against eating dead cattle meat. It shows that their family had become staunch vegetarians.

It was happened as her father travelled a lot, Babytai and her mother lived with her maternal grandparents, in Veergaon of western Maharashtra. The village (including Babytai's family) was inhabited by the Mahar community, to which Dr. B. R. Ambedkar belonged to. The entire village was referred in her own words "*decorated with eternal poverty*". Babytai Kamble treated every household as part of her own family and was on friendly terms with the entire community.

Marriage and Career:

The age of marriage for women in the Mahar community was seven to ten years old. Babytai was accordingly married off very young, after which she ran a provisions store supported by her husband, taking on the duty in the mornings when he went to buy

fresh supplies for the store. Babytai witnessed many things related to success of elite women she wrapped the groceries people bought from their store in a newspaper. She felt sad about women of her community for being kept aloof from the society. She decided to explore the brutal sufferings of women in the society and slowly started writing her own narration and therefore the community's. But she was very careful to keep her writing hidden from her husband and most of her relatives for twenty years.

Babytai: As a Path breaker

There had many works on lives of Dalits earlier to Babytai's works. But there was no any kind of literature on Dalit women exclusively. This is one of the major reasons why Babytai's writing has become a path breaking one among all chronicles on Dalit women. Her book gave us one of the first critiques of two-fold patriarchy: an experience of Dalit women's lives recognizing their dual oppression by gender and caste.

Babytai Kamble recounts in detail the reproductive labour of Dalit women. After giving birth, the woman's stomach would be tied and she had to be given soft food to line her stomach. But there was no soft grain to be found, despite Mahar women putting out a call in the village for soft food. Women would then often have to swallow the hard *Jowar* for the pain in the stomach. They would return to their maternal homes to have their first child. Often there would not be enough cloth to stem the flow of blood after childbirth. Many women died of giving birth to child or after it, so women continued to have children until their menopause to ensure at least two to three surviving children.

Unethical imposed customs:

Babytai also recounts in great detail the influence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar by the time. As per caste and religious diktats, all Dalits had to bow in front of the Savarnas as they travelled in the streets of the villages. If young married women of them did not find to follow this custom, the offended Savarna men would shout at the Mahars loudly in the village square, questioning how the Mahars could possibly deign to get so high and mighty. Then the girl's father-in-law and other male elders of Mahar community would profusely apologize for the mistake. Then they would come back to their own houses and

shout at the girl asking if she wanted the entire community to be let down. Their mothers-in-law and other neighbours would also join in such unethical abuse to the young women.

When women went into the villages to sell firewood and grass, the Brahmin women who would buy it from them, sit on their shoulder-high sit-outs (the pyrol of the houses was designed to maintain caste hierarchy excluded for Dalits) and haggle for the lowest prices. Once this was done, they would shout at the women to carefully inspect the product to ensure no hair or thread belonging to the sellers was left on it, lest it "polluted" the entire Brahmin household. Once this was done, the Brahmin women would throw a few *pie* their way as payment, without coming near them.

Once Dalit children started attending school, there were inevitable clashes between them and Savarna children, with several exchanges of harsh words against Ambedkar and the people of the community from either side. Dalit children were segregated in school, while fighting Savarna children at the school tap for water as the Savarnas tried to block their access and place the Dalit children at the back, far away from the blackboard.

Babytai urges her community to remember the lessons from Ambedkarite struggles. She denounces taking them to temples for idol worship and encourages remembering Dalit struggles of the past and the way of life before Dr. B .R. Ambedkar. Her words have immense relevance today as we see the continued prevalence of pernicious caste practices to some extent.

Babytai Kamble passed away on 21 April 2012, at the age of 82. Her words, firmly rooted in Ambedkarite ideology, have continued to inspire Dalit activists to this day, urging them to look beyond the individual to the community in the struggle for freedom and equality in many areas in the society.

References

1. Prominent women writers of Dalit literature in the Telugu language include Challapalli Swaroopa Rani, Joopaka Subhadra, Jajula Gowri, Swathy Margaret and Gogu Shyamala. These writers have primarily used poetry, short stories, essays and more to challenge the intersectional forms of oppression they faced.