

# The Analysis of Female Views in Anita Desai's Novel in Custody

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## ABSTRACT

The most well-known Indian woman author in English after India's independence, Anita Desai, focuses a lot of her writing on the issues of women's survival and existence. At this moment, the purpose of this piece is to examine how gender has shaped resistance. Anita Desai has been a strong representation of Indian women's lives, their battles against patriarchy, and colonial repression. The feminist consciousness of Desai's "In Custody" permeates the entire book. This is the best indication of her comprehension of female psychology and experience. In "In Custody," the male characters are confined to a life without success. Anita Desai condemns classical society and crisscrosses on a deplorable male character Deven Sharma whose wife execrates his powerlessness to succeed economically. This article helps us to show how women change their ideas to make the lives successful or unsuccessful not only for them but also for their whole family. This article has been written in simple language so that people may understand the fact that how a woman can make or mar the society by her capability of doing things.

**KEYWORDS:** Custody, Patriarchy, Resistance, Deven Sharma, Independence

## INTRODUCTION

Indian English fiction developed a noteworthy presence in English literature after independence. To some extent, historical, political, social, and cultural events contributed to the development of the English novel in India. Gandhian struggle for Indian independence including three significant events—the Gandhian Movement, the Partition of India, and evolution of the English novel. After the 1970s, the topics were expanded to include the East-West Culturalism, social realism, gender difficulties, the comedic side of human nature, magic realism writing from many diasporas, etc. The writings of women writers are critical of novels that promote knowledge of India in modern times.

Among the writers of novels during this time was Anita Desai. Her best-known compositions often have an Indian or international setting. In Custody (1984), Baumgartner's Bombay (1988), Fasting-Feasting (1999), Journey to Ithaca (1995), Cry the Peacock (1963), a reputation for social realism, patriarchy, support for women's rights, etc. Desai always attempted to identify and challenge the numerous presumptions about women, their conflicts, feelings, positions, and their aspirations. "In Custody" written

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by Anita Desai in 1984 is a book. Its key concern is the seeking identity and a purpose in life.

Even if the book "In Custody" is primarily written from the perspective of men, it cannot be denied that the female characters play important roles. The female character in this novel are:

Sarla, Deven's spouse

Nur's second spouse is Imtiaz Begum.

➤ Safiya Begum, a senior citizen and Nur's first wife

The majority of these female characters are supporting ones, but they all share one thing in common in terms of how they are portrayed: they are all strong wives who appear to have authority over their husbands.

The first few sentences of the story make it clear that Sarla has control over Deven. Deven has been influenced by her "penny pinching" tendencies, which have made him a "two-cigarette" man. Even before using his own hard-earned money, Deven thinks a lot. Instead of canteen meals, he would like homemade food. Her assertive qualities also appear to be at odds

with traditional patriarchal Indian society, which holds that husbands should exercise control instead of wives. Deven's hesitation to buy Murad lunch actually demonstrates Sarla's influence on him. She might not be able to stop Deven from going back and forth between Mirpore and Delhi, but she undoubtedly helps to return him to Mirpore at the end.

Imtiaz Begum is the second notable female character. The young wife of Nur exhibits similar domineering traits to Sarla. She successfully leveraged her youth and beauty to transition from being a Chandni Chowk prostitute to being the wife of the famous Urdu poet, Nur. She appears to have placed restrictions on her husband like Sarla did. She actually makes Deven's interview far more difficult by stealing the Great Nur's right to freedom of expression and movement. Her key tools are her acting prowess, youth, and alluring attractiveness, which unquestionably make her a remarkable female role. Her ability to transition from a prostitute to a beggar is another one of her strengths.

Despite just making a brief appearance in the story, The Old Wife of Nur "Safiya Begum" plays a significant part in the interview. She is frequently referred to as "the Old Woman," which Desai may have done on purpose to highlight her advanced age. In the Muslim religion, polygamy is actually acceptable, and Nur's insatiable nature is mostly highlighted by her character. The young Imtiaz Begum has 'replaced' her in actuality. She may have suffered from her advanced age and the possibility that she gave birth to a daughter.

The story's characters are metaphorically imprisoned in their lives, which is reflected in the title "In Custody." Characters experience a sense of imprisonment as a result of their inner selves combined with external social circumstances. Anita Desai's second book to be nominated for winning the Booker Prize. It represents a "conscious" turn in her work. Anita Desai has no interest in recognizing the surface-level truths of Indian life. Instead, she is drawn to investigations into people's inner lives. These facts are hidden behind the surface. She uses a variety of techniques to present buried psychic reality, including a variety of linguistic techniques. Anita Desai focused on the internal things in her previous novels. Nonetheless, "In Custody" illustrates a world outside the individual's knowledge of the Individual.

Deven Sharma, the male protagonist of this novel, hails from a lower middle-class household and aspires to find fulfillment in the wider world. He teaches Hindi at a college in Mirpore, a small village close to Delhi. His was very shy, as a result of his shyness, the

normal guy is represented as being entirely lacking in initiative. He is presented as a unique and awkward hero who views himself as the victim of circumstances. As a protagonist, who appears to be flung from one issue to the next without receiving any help or relief. Although the male character is the novel's protagonist, the current study focuses on how women are portrayed, as well as female acts of resistance and the environments in which females are able to exist in a post-Independence Indian society that is dominated by men. There is oppression in the society, the marginalization brought forth by the colonial status has created a space for feminism. Since both feminism and post-colonialism are seen as forms of resistance, they should advance together. They both challenge oppression in all of its forms is a shared goal. In terms of "In Custody," The tale of Deven, an admirer of Urdu poetry, is one of narrative plots. The females in the world of silence surrounds those who are "In Custody." Anita Desai says about women:

I thought I would try to write without any female characters, but it proved impossible. I could hear them screaming in the background, banging on the doors, being very hysterical.

She further states, "I asked myself, "Why did I make all of these women so horrible and I thought to myself. and I considered," Well if that was the house they were made to live, they would probably be awful,"

Deven's good buddy Murad assists him in speaking with Nur, a famous Urdu poet. Deven, however, is unable to extend hospitality to Murad because he is a visitor. The fact that he refused to buy lunch for Murad truly demonstrates Sarla's influence over him. She might not have the authority restricting Deven's frequent transit between Delhi and Mirpore, but she most definitely enables him to return to Mirpore at the novel's conclusion. In spite of these Sarla is a victim of her dashed goals while possessing admirable qualities, her forced union with Deven appears to have experienced more setbacks than triumphs. Their combat Relationship is more of a "love-less one." Their son Manu may be the only person holding the strings to keep them together.

She is a dissatisfied wife. Her fantasy home included a phone, a Frigidaire, and all the conveniences, but it was all a dream. She feels like an unfortunate wife since she perceives her husband as having abandoned the family in favor of poetry.

In this novel marriage is portrayed as a burden in which both sexes share victimhood, but only men, who are accustomed to satiety, are given the freedom

to respond to their unhappiness. The common practice of victimizing women continues. Desai did not just depict the agony of married life but also the suffering of widowed women. Mrs. Bhalla and her other widowed acquaintances are despised by Deven and other neighbors. Deprived of all rights to happiness, hope, and fulfillment, they lead "colorless lives" that are identical to their colorless clothing, and they must find salvation in charitable and spiritual services.

The relationship between the male and female characters in "In Custody" clearly develops as a hierarchical one throughout the story and shares the same disparities of the hierarchy of both colonizers and colonized. The subordinate character Desai manages to create screams from the novel's own narrative form's margins. By articulating and making her ladies mute via means of male mental processes.

Desai is exploring the ways that womanhood functions as male desire is used to define society as a whole and is used in every way conceivable. Verbally, physically, mentally, emotionally, and philosophically.

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