



Social

DREAD IMPLICATES DEVELOPMENT IN LILA'S LIFE: A NARROW STUDY ON ANITA DESAI'S "THE VILLAGE BY THE SEA"

I.Ilavarasi ¹, Dr.K.Revathi ²

¹ M.A., M.Phil., M.Sc.,M.Ed., Ph.D Research Scholar, D.K.M. College for Women(Autonomous), Sainathapuram, Vellore-632001, India

² M.A.,M.Phil.,B.Ed.,Ph.D., Principal (Rtd), D.K.M. College for Women, Dean, Professor of English, VIT Deemed University, Vellore, India

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Abstract

Fear is the basic step for regulation of society. If there is no fear there is no virtual. Fear keeps society regulated and peaceful. Fear decides one's way of life and reflects in the society. In this article, the researcher attempts to find out how the dread implicates development in the life of the heroine in Anita Desai's novel 'The Village by the Sea'. Lila is a protagonist in the novel who helps in all the ways to her family by sacrificing her teenage life.

Keywords: Dread-Lila-Village by The Sea-Self-Development.

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1. Introduction

Anita Desai is a versatile novelist in Indian Literature. Her novels were researched in various dimensions such as Socio-Psychological, Social Criticism, Economic and Cultural Critics, Psycho moral delineations and her novels were famous for feminine sensibilities. 'The Village by the Sea' was published in 1982 and was awarded with Guardian Children's Fiction prize in the year 1983. **S.P.SWAIN** correctly says that **'It would be a misnomer to classify the novel as a book for children since it is concerned with the life of teenages like Hari and Lila. The problem it elaborates centres round the issues of the eternal and the adult world.'** Anita Desai as a participant observer lived sometime in the village called 'Thul', which is nearby Mumbai. The story is based on people who live in that village.

'The Village by the Sea' is about Lila's family. Lila and Hari were sister and brother respectively. They have two younger sisters. They have to take care of their ill mother and

drunken father permanently. Hari runs away to Bombay in desperation. Lila was left alone to safeguard her family. She is the eldest daughter of the family. She is responsible for everything in the family. Lila is soft and caring to her sisters, ill mother and drunken father.

Lila's dread in the novel is about

- 1) Being isolated from other families.
- 2) Mother's disease.
- 3) Her disappeared brother's life.

Lila is an energetic and loving girl in the family. She manages to lead the family with the help of De Silvas family when her brother runs away to Bombay. De Silvas family often stays in that village to spend its vacation. **DALVIR SINGH GAHLAWAT** observed Lila's fears are **'She is worried very much about their lack of means as to sustain their family, to educate their sisters, to get medicines for her mother. She has a fear in her mind lest her father should kill himself with the toddy that he consumes.(P.105)**

1) Being Isolated from Other Families

Lila's family is financially hard pressed and materially alienated. Lila's house in the Thul Village serves as a symbol of alienation and disintegration. It has been well expressed by Anita Desai in the novel as

'The hut should have been re-thatched years ago- the old palm leaves were dry and tattered and slipping off the beams. The earthen walls were crumbling. The windows gaped, without any shutters. There was no smoke to be seen curling up from under a cooking pot on a fire as in other huts in the surrounding groves of coconut and banana.' (P. 5)

Her neighbour house was also at some distance. When her mother was sick, she sent Bela and Kamal to their neighbour's house to call Hira-bai, So that she'll arrange for a doctor.

'Bela and Kamal ducked beneath its branches and scuffled through the dense shrubbery that separated their hut from their neighbour's grove'.(P.5)

They have to travel a little distance from their home. So, Every night, she was in fear till her brother or father came home. Afterwards Lila got used to it and became bold to live alone with her sisters when her brother was in Bombay and her father and mother were in the hospital.

2) Mother's Disease

Lila's mother was bed ridden and needed her help all the time. Her mother frequently got fever and cold and sometimes no sense in her body. Following quotes from the novel reveals the anxiety and fear that Lila undergoes for her mother.

"She has fever today', Lila murmured. 'High fever. Go tell – go and tell'".(P.69).

“She spoke in a trembling voice that she tried to control. ‘Go and see if you can find Hari in the field. Tell him to go to village and ask – no, there is no doctor there.’(P.70)

“Lila sighed. Then she said, ‘Go to the Khanekars next door, Bela. Go and ask Hira-bai to come. Or to send a doctor.’ (P.70)

Lila gets nervous and dreadful when her mother gets sick. This made her ask for help from De silvas to admit her mother in the hospital. They admitted and gave money for treatment. At last her mother gets cured from anaemia.

3) Her Disappeared Brother’s Life

Hari went to Bombay unannounced to his family. Lila and her sisters were waiting for him whole night. **“waking up, she was aghast to see..... Pinto’s silence and Hari’s strange disappearance. She thought he must surely have come back in the night after walking off his anger but he was nowhere around.” (P.128).** Her mother once again ‘burning with fever’ (P.128) called her sisters and said **“Go to the bazaar and get some ice for ma. See if Hari is there. Call him, he may have stayed in the village at night to see the drama in the temple. Tell him to come home and bring some ice’. (P.128)**

Lila’s friend Mina told her sisters that their brother Hari went to Bombay along with other men to give a petition to the government.

‘Lila frowned as if she could not understand. Could hari have been so angry and so upset as to leave home and run away? She would never have run away herself..... It was all very frightening and difficult but she was here, her sisters and her mother were in her care, and somehow she would have to manage.’ (P.129).

During monsoon, when the storm struck their place, they were worrying and frightened about Hari’s life in Bombay. Lila’s sisters asked her **‘why did Hari not come?. He had sent them a post card to say he was in Bombay, safe, but why did he not return? They say in silence, Listening to the frogs clamouring in the dark’. (P. 204)**

Lila answered them that **‘He can’t come now- the ferry will have stopped for the monsoon,’..... trying to sound sensible and brisk. ‘Perhaps he will come when the monsoon is over. Perhaps he will come at Diwali’. (P. 204)**

Though Lila too had the same doubt, why he didn’t return, she hidden her fear and consoled her sisters.

Lila is main and most appealing character in the novel ‘The Village by the Sea’. Though she is thirteen years old, in the absence of parents and Hari, she looks after the house, Bela and kamal. She takes care of her sick mother as a matron and tries her utmost to reform her father. Lila’s dread about her being alone from other families, mother’s disease, disappearance of brother and all made her determine, to maintain patience, suffer a lot and work hard to uplift the family. Hence, Lila’s dread implicates development in Lila’s character and such development reflects in the family surviving against all odds.

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