

Time as a Destroyer and Preserver in Anita Desai's Clear Light of Day

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Abstract

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* reveals that how time works as a role of destroyer and preserver in one's life. Time acts these two roles in each and every one's life. It never shows any partiality to anyone. It does its duty in a perfect way even one may be a king or a beggar. All are in the hands of time. As a human being we have a short span of time in this world. Within our life time we must do certain good things in our life. At least we never do any harm to others. It is the nature of human beings that when time plays a role of preserver we admire it and we shower in the blessings of time. In the mean time when it reveals its negative side we condemn it. We never think hoe to make it in a positive way. Here in this novel also time acts its dual role. But the protagonist of this novel Bim makes it in a positive way. This novel ends with an optimistic note through the change in the heart as well as in the mind Bim.

Key Words: Time, destroyer, preserver, optimism, Positivistic approach, Clear Light of Day

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* indicates the harm and the damage which the passing time does to people. No one can escape from the hands of time. At the same time cannot we cannot stop or arrest the passing time. All human beings are slaves to time. There is no doubt time place a wonderful role in our life. In this novel, time brings a vital change in the lives of the characters. There are certain happenings that continue to exist despite the ravage of time. The fleeting of time can disrupt the life of Bim's family. Desai affirms that "Time is presented as the fourth dimension of human existence."

Desai's *Clear Light of Day* deals mainly with the fortune and misfortunes of the family of Das. The ephemeral of years works disorder with the members of this family. This novel exposes how time takes

part in the role of destroyer as well as preserver in the lives of Bim's family. Time perform both roles in one's life. When time works its part as a destroyer we have to manage ourselves and adjusts it. We try to struggle against time when it behaves as a destroyer. but as a human being we curse time when it shows its negative side. At the same time we praise it when we are blessed with the same time.

The title *Clear Light of Day* is highly complex and interesting. It is also a paradoxical one. It suggests two things. The author's aim is to reveal that she is an optimistic in personality. The day is always clear and bright. Sometimes it may not be a plain one. It means that time takes action as a function of destroyer. But here Desai

expects that one day or another that the climatic condition will be changed.

Clear Light of Day begins with an optimistic note. When it opens the koels begin to sing before dawn that it indirectly shows that at the crack of dawn is going to happen soon. Here Desai describes not only the external events and happenings but also the inner working of the minds of the characters.

Elaine Showalter identifies three phases in women writing. The first phase (1840-1920) is called the feminine phase. During this phase, women writers imitated male writers. The second phase (1880-1920) is called the feminist phase. During this phase, women fought for their rights. In the third phase (1920) women's texts are rediscovered and revealed. When we analyze these three phases her time works itself as a preserver, because time improves itself and also acts a well-wisher in the life of women. Desai's Clear Light of Day moves towards the third phase.

The power of Indian women has been treated as less important than men. Nehru once said that "you can tell the condition of a nation by looking at the status of women" (URL: 2). Through the words of Nehru we come to know that when women believe themselves then only our nation can be fully develop itself.

When an Indian girl is married, she must forget her parents, relatives, friends and her circumstances. As a married woman she must sacrifice everything to the will of her husband and his family members, it is an unwritten law in our society. Her parents are also expected to give dowry to their son-in-law. In the case of an Indian girl, she has

no time to remember her family. At the same time, she cannot support her family at any cost. Here Tara is also not an exception.

When Desai published her Clear Light of Day at that time our country slowly begins to change in itself. Desai portrays Indian women in a wide range. Tara is the sister of Bim. Even though Bim and Tara are grown up under a same roof their opinions, thoughts, suggestions and ideas. Both of them are polar opposites. But Bim and her brother Raja are close friends. They share everything with one another whereas Tara stands aloof from them. Tara alienates herself from the surrounding. Tara fills in many ways the traditional role of women as she is fair and handsome who dreams of marriage and children rather than school and career for herself. But Bim, in contrast, is the modern girl who imagines of becoming an idol rather than someone's wife or mother.

When Bim's parents die, naturally as an eldest of her family Bim has to fend her kith and kin. She is the pillar of her house. She even takes care of her mentally retorted brother Baba. Later Raja who is the flesh and blood of Bim abandons the duties of a brother. There is a misunderstanding between Raja and Tara. Raja fails himself as a brother. Bim cannot bear the transformation of her brother Raja. Raja marries a Muslim girl and settled in his father-in-law house. Bim never expects that kind of action from him. So she is totally distressed and disturb through the deeds of Raja. Now Bim and Baba are alone in that house. Time passes away.

Tara is a subservient wife to Bakul. Tara is very flexible and pliable in nature. Bakul likes Tara's this temperament so that he wishes to marry her. He shapes her in accordance with his own recruitments and his own desires. He wins in his purpose. Here we can compare Tara Ibsen's Nora in "A Doll's House". Here Tara dances according to the tunes of Bakul. She accepts the time whatever it is. She wants to make time as a preserver in her life. Her life with Bakul exposes that Surely she turns time in a positive way with her two daughters. As a mother and wife she wins her life whereas she fails as sister to do her duties in a proper way.

Mira is the aunt of Bim. She is a young widow. After the death her husband, she is even given up by her husband's family. It is the fate in our Indian families a woman is admired and honoured by the deeds of her husband otherwise she is nothing in that family. A woman can achieve anything if she can get her husband's support only. But here Mira's state is very pathetic and pitiable. She is driven out from her husband's house. Now she is an orphan and yields herself in the house of Bim. Now Bim's parents also need a caretaker to look after their son Baba. Now Mira is the world of Baba. Baba easily attaches with her. In the mean time, Mira takes concern the family of Bim. Aunt Mira slowly recuperates herself from the death of her husband and now she blends with Bim's family. Mira struggles to alter time as a constructive one. But, however, she fails to come out her habit of drinking. At last she cannot come across from the evil habit and finally she generates time as a destructive

force in her life. She is the own cause of her destruction.

Time gives one more opportunity for aunt Mira after the death of her husband. But she fails to create it as a successful one. Here Bim's parents also don't win the favour of time. They construct time in a negative way. They forget their children and they want to enjoy themselves. As a mother, Bim's mother fails to remember her responsibilities. Unless Bim takes charges to guard Baba his life will be a questionable one. Bim sacrifices her life to the welfare of her family. She is only irritated by the acts of Raja. Because she adore him very much than anyone and there is no hide and seek between them. They discuss everything in their life. after the marriage of Raja there is no relationship between them.

Now time provides one more occasion to modify it in a positive way through the marriage of Raja's daughter. Now the ball is in the court of Bim. If she goals it, she twists time as a role of preserver. Raja invites his daughter's marriage and sends an invitation to Bim. Tara also now comes to India with her daughters to attend the marriage. Bim is in dilemma to go or not. Tara also encourages her to come to the wedding. she advises Bim it is a great chance to reunite with her brother. Here she indicates that time now is ready to shower its blessing towards us. Indeed it is a grand opening for the reunion of the brother and sisters.

Bim now also hesitate to go to attend her daughter-in-law marriage. Now she points out Baba and informs her sister Tara that she is in such a condition not to leave Baba alone. In the mean time she cannot bring

him with her because of his physical ailment. But now there are a certain amendments in the minds of Bim. She expresses her greetings through Tara for her daughter-in-law and also invites Raja to visit her when he is free. Thus the novel ends

with an optimistic note. Bim is ready to welcome time in a positive note. Bim expects a new life. Time also prepares itself to shower its blessings as a preserver in Bim's family.

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