

The Old Vs. New Indian Culture in Anita Desai's *In Custody*

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ABSTRACT:

Anita Desai (1937-) is a contemporary Indian novelist, short story, and children's books writer. She introduces psychological novels to India. Her works are highly symbolic. In her novels, she discusses cultural themes like the clashes of Eastern and Western cultures and the conflicts between Indian cultures and religions. In *In Custody* (1984), she discusses many cultural themes focusing on the death of the old valuable culture of India after Partition and the birth of a new culture.

In *In Custody* (1984), Desai depicts the changes that India has witnessed in post-colonial period. She focuses on the ruined ancient Indian culture which has been replaced by a new materialistic one at the hands of the British colonization. She concentrates on the death of art and poetry specially the death of Urdu poetry and language which are associated with the glorious culture once India had in the past. Deven, the protagonist, whose ambition is to be a great poet in Urdu is forced to teach Hindi instead of Urdu which is rarely used. The novelist narrates the journey of Deven who struggles to revive Urdu poetry by interviewing the famous Urdu poet, Nur. Deven faces many obstacles during his journey. These obstacles are represented in the change India has witnessed and in the change of people's motives and mentality. The paper discusses the influence of the Partition and the British colonialism on the Indian culture and the change India witnessed due to the Partition between Muslims and the Hindus.

Keywords: Culture, Urdu, Materialism, Partition, Hindi

In Custody (1984)

Anita Desai's seventh novel, *In Custody* is about the conflict between Hindi and Urdu, the old culture and the new culture, passion and materialism, and good and evil (Anjali Sharma 1). The protagonist, Deven Sharma, a middle aged man is trapped in some social problems. He teaches Hindi language in a private college (Lala Ram Lal College) in Mirpore . Despite that, he respects and appreciates Urdu language and literature. Murad, Deven's old school friend and an owner of an Urdu magazine called *Awaz*, suggests for Deven to interview the outstanding Urdu poet, and Deven's idol, Nur Shahjehanbadi, for a special issue in his magazine. The rest of the novel is woven around Deven's struggle to find a way to

interview Nur, and the final catastrophe he faces due to his naive personality (Agrawal 240-241).

In the novel, Desai comes across the politics of languages. Urdu language became the language of literature when it was the official language of the Mughal Empire. In the novel, Desai alludes to the 1857 mutiny and describes the demise of Islamic culture in modern India. In fact, this mutiny is considered the starting point of the decadence of Urdu language, literature and Islamic culture. The consequences of the mutiny were punishing of the Muslims cruelly and dismissing them from Delhi, "the cultural capital" of the Mughal Empire, and finally the destruction of massive Urdu libraries. The strategy of "divide and rule" that the British used weakened Urdu language as well. They separated the Indian community into two communities (the Hindu and the Muslim communities) on religious bases. The strategy included the languages of those two communities also. They suppressed Muslims after the mutiny by excluding everything related to their culture including their Urdu language and preferred strengthening the position of Hindi language (Driss 2-3). To Muslims in contemporary India, Urdu language is a symbol of their identity (Rahman 2).

In *The Politics of India Since Independence*(2003), Paul R. Brass considers Urdu "the largest minority mother tongue" in contemporary India. In 1981, Urdu language claims the sixth place. Most of its speakers live in the northern states of India. After the Partition between India and Pakistan along religious lines, the Indian congress disregarded Urdu as an official language of some Indian states in which Urdu had been the official language up to Independence. The governments of some Indian states in the north suppressed Urdu language by limiting its usage in educational institutions. As a result, the language started to decline as "a medium of communication in north India" (179-180).

The characters of the novel face two conflicting cultures, one is dying but cannot be forgotten by them and the other is the dominant culture which is newly born in India at the hands of the British colonizers. On the superficial level, Deven, Nur and Murad struggle to revive the traditional culture of Urdu. Through his magazine, Murad allows Urdu poetry to be alive in modern India. Murad gives a chance to Deven to participate in the project of reviving Urdu language by asking him to interview Nur. On his part, Nur accepts to help Deven to record his Urdu poetry to keep Urdu tradition alive in India.

The conflicting cultures and languages force the characters, especially Deven to experience what W.E.B. DuBois calls "double consciousness". Although the concept is a part of African-American theory and it is used to explain the dilemma of African people because of the two identities they have while they live in America among the whites, it can be applied to other races that experience the same situation. DuBois believes that having two identities requires a struggle to determine which identity the person must have. It is harmful for the person to have more than one identity, especially when these two identities oppose each other. DuBois

struggles to find a solution for those persons to merge between the two identities peacefully without neglecting one of them “In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost,” (qtd. in Black 394).

The signs of double consciousness are evident in Deven’s concern for Urdu poetry. In fact the modern culture in India forces Deven to experience “double consciousness”. As a Hindi teacher, Deven spreads the tradition of Hindi literature and language, at the same time he struggles to keep Urdu language alive. In other words, Deven participates in spreading the traditions of two antagonistic languages which represent his two conflicting identities.

As a Hindu, Deven feels himself responsible for reviving Urdu language. Usually, Urdu language is part of Islamic identity that Indian Muslims have, but it is considered in a large scale a part of the Indian identity as well. Deven as an Indian person who is fully aware of this fact is hurt because the language and its legacy are dying and losing their position in modern India. When Murad pessimistically exclaims, "who reads Urdu anymore?" (Desai 8) Deven encourages him to keep publishing Urdu poetry in his magazine, "Murad, your magazine must be kept alive for the sake of those who do still read it," (8). At the same time, Deven cannot escape the fact that he is attached to Hindi language, the antagonistic language to Urdu. When Murad criticizes Hindi language in front of him and describes it as the "vegetarian monster" (8).

The main issue which causes Deven’s dilemma is the war between languages. Deven has a shiny positive picture in his mind about the notable legendary poet, Nur. He thinks of Nur as the only ray of hope to save Urdu language and poetry from dying. He insists that Murad should add Nur’s verses in the special issue of Urdu poetry in his magazine, “but no special issue on Urdu poetry would be complete if it did not have some verses by Nur... Old, new, it doesn’t matter- you must have Nur,” (Desai 10). In fact Anita Desai prepares the readers to meet the great poet by introducing him to them through Deven and Murad’s conversation. Nur is a very famous poet and his fame reaches “all corners of the world,” (10). Murad tells Deven that they have “sent his name to the Nobel Prize Committee for its award for literature...,” (10).

Nur is the representative of the Muslim minority who live in India after partitioning it. The majority of Muslims live in Pakistan, for this reason the Muslims and their culture are treated like outsiders in India. Deven seems excited to meet Nur, the hero who will revive the tradition of Urdu language and poetry in India as he thinks, “Deven felt another warm, moist tide of jubilation rise and increase inside him at being recognized, named and invited into the presence of a man so clearly a hero,” (Desai 35). Unfortunately, the atmosphere of the poet’s home contradicts his great fame. Jayed Ul Ehsan comments on this scene. For him Nur’s room is very “gloomy as a prison” which makes him an exiled person. After the Partition, the hegemony of Hindi language and the Hindu culture forces the Indian Muslims to believe that the Hindi language is their enemy (12). Nur

laments the death of Urdu language at the hands of the hegemonic groups in India:

How can there be Urdu poetry where there is no Urdu language left? It is dead, finished. The defeat of the Moghuls by the British threw a noose over its head, and the defeat of the British by the Hindiwallahs tightened it. So now you see its corpse lying here, waiting to be buried. (Desai 39)

According to the Italian Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, the dominant group in society is the privileged one which imposes its culture on other less powerful groups. He defines hegemony as:

Spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (qtd. in Lears 568)

The kind of hegemony that Hindi language perceives is not out of prestige. Desai proves that Hindi language is not a prestigious language in India, whether in *Clear Light of Day* (1980) or in *In Custody*. In both novels, Urdu seems the prestigious language, the language of literature and the elites despite its slow death. In fact, Hindi language becomes the dominant language because of the British colonial strategy “divide and rule.” Moreover, the choice of Hindi language as the official language of India is based on religious and antagonistic basis. Because of the antagonism between the Muslims and the Hindus which has been caused by the British colonizers, the Hindus choose to use Hindi language as the official one. Mainly, they choose it because it represents their identity and individuality as a separate religious group from the Muslims who have been the dominant group in Mughal Empire. Paul Brass confirms this opinion, he states: “the principal political struggle over language recognition was between Hindus and Muslims over the status of Hindi and Urdu. In this competition, Hindus ... began the practice of declaring Hindi as their mother tongue...,” (186).

Both Nur and Murad are unable to accept the fact that Hindi is the dominant language in modern India and that Urdu becomes the less powerful and less important language. When Nur asks Deven whether he teaches Urdu, Deven becomes nervous for he is fully aware of the antagonistic relationship between Hindi and Urdu. He answers Nur that he teaches Hindi only for living. Hindi proves its hegemony and “its position and function in the world of production,” (qtd. in Lears 568). Nur suspects Deven and his real intentions which indicate that Muslims believe that the Hindus seek the destruction of the tradition of Urdu language after partitioning India:

Those Congresswallahs have set up Hindi on top as our ruler. You are its slave. Perhaps a spy even if you don't know it, sent to the universities to destroy whatever remains of Urdu, hunt it out and kill it. And you tell me it is for an Urdu magazine you wish to interview me... why are you teaching Hindi? (Desai 40)

Deven explains to Nur that his father has been a lover of Urdu poetry and he inherits this love of Urdu poetry from his father. Deven tells Nur that he has been taught Urdu ever since his childhood. He Justifies to Nur his choice of Hindi language “it is my living, sir. You see I am a married man, a family man. But I still remember my lesson in Urdu,... If it were not for the need to earn a living, I would – I would -,” (40).

The complex web of languages, capitalism, and industrialization which modern India embraces contributes to suppress Nur’s identity and steal his glory from him. The first appearance and conversation of Nur with Deven show how much Nur is pessimistic in his worldview about Urdu language and poetry. After his first meeting with Nur, Deven becomes disappointed because of Nur’s dismal house and pessimistic speech which do not reflect the glory and greatness of Nur which Deven has always imagined before meeting him. Nur as an admired Urdu poet seems changed radically along with the radical change that India has witnessed in post-Independence period. In “Anita Desai’s *In Custody*: Delhi’s Tryst with Turmoil, “ Sangeeta Mittal examines Desai’s Delhi in the novel. She thinks that Desai reflects the reality of Delhi which has been exposed to radical changes. These changes have influenced its dwellers. Nur is one of those dwellers whose life, house, poetry and motives have been changed (405).

Seemingly, Nur suffers from individual identity crisis which is the result of collective identity crisis. The concept of identity could be divided into two kinds: the personal (individual) identity which is established by the individual and the “collective identity” which is constructed by the superstructure of the society. Both personal identity and collective identity coexist with each other in the self and they complete and influence each other. The collective identity is formed by the individual’s sense of belonging to a group of people which share with him certain characteristics and manners. In addition to that, one’s identity can be influenced and shaped by the dominant culture which imposes new principles on him (Deeley 22-23). The personal identity, on the other hand, is more limited to the individual himself. It refers to the individual’s personality (way of thinking, choices in life, desires, ambitions.) that distinguishes him from other individuals (Fearon 11).

Both personal and collective identities could be influenced by the identity of the dominant group of the society which leads to shaping a new identity to the individual. This new identity which becomes the dominant one contradicts the original ones (the personal and the collective identities), thus it causes their suppression. Nur’s original identities are suppressed by the identity of the dominant culture of modern India. Being a great poet is Nur’s personal identity, and Urdu language is associated with Nur’s collective identity for Urdu is the language of the Muslim community to which Nur belongs. Both personal and collective identities are suppressed by the dominant capitalistic identity that modern culture imposes.

Both Nur and Murad’s collective identity is influenced by the modern culture to a certain extent. In fact, Desai does not only present a pessimistic picture about the death of Urdu language, but she also criticizes

the growth of capitalism and the dominance of the materialistic culture. She associates the decadence of Urdu and Islamic culture with the growth of materialism and capitalism. Because of the latter, the tradition of Urdu language and art in general are destroyed and dying. She symbolically creates Muslim characters like Murad and Nur to embody the capitalistic spirit which kills art and the glorious tradition of Urdu literature and turns them to goods to earn money not to spread passion and love.

Nur's character and life symbolize different things. He symbolizes Old Delhi which once was the capital of the Mughal Empire and known as Shahjahanabad (Blake 1). Nur's full name is Nur Shahjahanabadi. It indicates that he belongs to Delhi. Delhi or "Old Delhi" has been called by this name since Independence. The city has been radically changed since Independence and especially after the partition and the migration of the major population of the Muslim community from it to Pakistan. The city has been inhabited then by traders who have established their commerce in its buildings (Mittal 406). Thus, this traditional city has become a site for commerce and earning money. Nur who is changed negatively stands for Old Delhi which has been changed negatively as well.

Turning a traditional and historical city to a place for commerce influences the mentality of the Muslim minorities who are still living in it and expose them to what is called a "cultural trauma." Cultural trauma is defined as the impact of a certain event on a social group. The event usually cannot be forgotten or omitted from their collective memory. Besides, it also changes their future identity. This kind of trauma usually happens out of a certain "political action." The cultural trauma is usually caused also "... by an act of violence or harassment... experience of social transformation and change," (Alexander and et. al 1-2). The cultural trauma usually happens because of "the successful imposition of a new system of cultural classification," (10). Changing the political and educational system in India after the partition influences the Muslim minority. Further, the culture itself is changed to a new one which is another reason behind Nur's cultural trauma.

Nur's cultural trauma is not only caused by the radical change to which Delhi has been exposed, but also by the oppression that his community is prone to. The dark side of industrialization and technology are embodied in Nur's character and Delhi. Nur is lost in the maze of the changed Delhi which strips him of his individual and collective identities. Nur appears uncooperative when Deven attempts to obtain new Urdu verses from him to serve his cause (Anjali Sharma 1).

Both Nur and Deven are imprisoned in Delhi but in different ways. With regard to Deven, B.N. Chaudhary believes that he is tormented by the fact that people's main concern in Delhi is earning money only. He is imprisoned inside his illusion which leads him to a bigger prison which is Delhi (79-80). Despite his failure in interviewing Nur in his first meeting with him, he does not give up his goal easily.

On the surface, Murad seems concerned about Urdu language and he struggles to revive it. Murad exploits Deven's naive nature and his

admiration for the poet Nur to depend on in funding this project by forcing him indirectly to spend his money for the sake of his magazine. When Deven starts complaining about the difficulty of interviewing Nur, Murad tries to revive his ambition by reminding him about his admiration for Nur as a poet "... I thought with your lifelong admiration for his work, your book about him, you were sensitive to his poetry, his quality'," (Desai 96).

Murad as a capitalist has a foxy nature, he manipulates Deven for the sake of his own business. All what matters to Murad is improving his business by taking advantage of his collective identity (Urdu language). This makes Murad a greedy capitalist. It's notable that Murad does not pay any amount of money to Deven for his hard work to interview Nur or for the stuff which Deven uses for the project. Murad forces Deven to sacrifice his family, job, time, and money for his own business. He takes advantage of Deven's respect and love for Urdu poetry to develop his magazine. In other words, Deven is treated as a proletariat¹.

Bhasha Shukla Sharma states that Murad's character stands for New Delhi (modern Delhi). He exploits Deven and indulges him in the Urdu project to increase the saleability of his journal. Murad feels himself superior to Deven because he lives in an industrially developed city which is Delhi. Further, he is different from Deven in character. He is practical and materialistic. He acquires these traits from the new industrial culture of modern India, whereas Deven's character lacks practicality (170).

Bhasha Shukla Sharma notices that Desai does not intend to side with one culture over the other, but she reflects the reality of people and the status of each culture and language in modern India. Through his journey to interview Nur, Deven becomes aware of the fact that people and culture are changed. Urdu literature and language are declining because their admirers are decreasing. Deven is depressed because Nur does not share with him his ambition of reviving Urdu poetry as he has thought. He notices the lack of seriousness in Nur's behavior. Instead of discussing Urdu poetry with a great passion, Nur discusses silly matters like what kinds of food and drink he prefers. Even the kind of people Nur chooses to accompany is not that interested in literature, instead they visit Nur to enjoy the delicious food and drink he offers (169). In fact, the only person who seems concerned about Urdu is Deven, the rest care about material things. Desai explains why Urdu and art in general decline in modern India, it is because of the decline of passion and the rise of materialism.

Deven is trapped and deceived by materialists starting with Murad who deceives him by letting him buy a second-hand tape recorder which is proved later to be a bad one. Nur, whose only interests are wine, food and women, exploits his name and poetry to force Deven pay money. The series of messages Nur sent to Deven proves that Nur is as materialist as his wives and that he uses his poetry for materialistic reasons:

¹Proletariat refers to the working class who are oppressed by the capitalists. They live in bad conditions and they do all "the manual work" (Tyson 54).

My son will be left fatherless... It is necessary to arrange the future of the boy before I depart for my heavenly abode. The Mirpore College should endow the child with free education in recognition of work I have done for them. This is the minimum payment I request for recording and recitation of poetries. (Desai 208)

Murad who is supposed to be Deven's close friend refuses to help Deven in paying Nur's bills. Deven is on the edge of bankruptcy after spending most of his money for the project, further, he fails to provide the College in Mirpore with useful information about Nur and his verses because the tape recorder is "rotten" (Desai 198). After checking the recorded verses, Deven is astonished at what the tape records:

When the tapes could be induced to produce sound, there seemed to be nothing to listen to_ long intervals of crackling and sputtering interspersed with a sudden blare of horns from the street,... loud explosions of laughing and incoherent joviality, drunken voices bawling, singing, stopping short. Where was Nur? Occasionally his voice wandered in like some lost mendicant off a crowded street, offering a few lines of verses in a faint, foundering voice, then breaking off to say..., 'Fetch me another glass of rum. What have you ordered for lunch today? Has someone gone to collect it? I need more rum if I am to wait for so long.' (196)

Mittal explains the failure of the process of assimilation between two different cultures. In case two coexisting cultures cannot be assimilated, the less extensive culture must follow adaptive strategy to survive. Usually the cultures which are not able to adopt the new characteristics of the dominant culture are exposed to cultural death. She believes that the developed societies are those which accept innovative changes. Thus, these changes automatically have their impact on the less progressive cultures (405). Nur, Murad and even Deven are influenced unwillingly by the innovative culture while they are trying to revive the ancient culture without being aware of the contradictions between both cultures. Consequently, they are trapped inside the passageways of the conflicting cultures.

Deven's decision of using a tape recorder as a means to protect the tradition of Urdu language is an attempt to blend two contradicting cultures. By the help of Sidique Sahib, the head of Urdu department, Deven succeeds in borrowing some money from the funds of the college to buy a tape recorder in return he has to enrich the library of the Urdu department with Nur's recorded verses and biography. Murad helps Deven to buy a second-hand tape recorder and to send a boy with Deven to help him in recording Nur's verses. Instead of writing Nur's verses, Deven decides to use the new technology to record them. Symbolically, Deven decides to unite the ancient culture with the modern one by this step. He decides to unite the Mughal and Urdu culture with the capitalistic and electronic culture. But the question is will the ancient culture survive by uniting it with the modern one. Sidique Sahib comments about this step, wondering about the tape recorder:

You must tell me more about this, Sharma Sahib__ It is the first time I have heard of a biography on tape. You have to admit, it is not done like

that in our part of the world. What is this, please__ the age of electronics entering the royal court of poetry over which the Moghuls once presided? (Desai 108)

The failure of the tape recorder to maintain Nur's Urdu verses symbolizes the failure of the assimilation between the old culture and the new capitalistic and industrial culture. The tape recorder stands for the culture of capitalism, technology and industrialization which are based on materialism. This new culture contradicts the old culture of Urdu language and art which is based on passion. This cultural duality leads Deven to experience identity crisis.

Narinder K. Sharma believes that Deven's failure as a Hindi teacher and as an Urdu poet causes him identity crises. The gap between his real self which is being a Hindi teacher and the romantic or the "idealized self" which is related to his ambition to be an Urdu poet is the reason behind Deven's crisis of identity (4). He is torn between two conflicting identities, two identities cannot be reconciled and for both he feels responsible. He defines himself as an Urdu lover and an Urdu poet, at the same time he is forced to be a Hindi teacher, the identity that is imposed on him. Deven experiences what DuBois calls "twoness," which is:

The conflicting two perspectives, or the two identities and selves, seem comparable to the "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one ... body," that define DuBoisian twoness. One thought and striving is self-defined while the other is imposed from the outside. (qtd. in Black 396)

Desai sheds light on the problem of the traditional marriages as well. Deven does not only fail to protect the tradition of Urdu poetry, he also fails to be a good husband and father to his son Manu. Despite being oppressed by the greedy materialistic people, he himself acts like an oppressor. He marginalizes his wife Sarla and fails in leading his familial life. Instead of spending money on his family's needs, he almost spends all his money on Nur and Murad's Urdu project only because it interests him as he claims, "I took up the work only because it interested me," (Desai 214). In fact, Deven escapes his dull life with his wife to the world of art, poetry and "Nur's world, the world of drama and revolting lights and feasts and furies," (68). His marriage is traditional. Sarla was not his choice but his mother and aunt's choice. Desai describes Deven and Sarla as victims. They are victims of the unhappy traditional marriage and their incompatible mentality:

Although each understood the secret truth about the other, it did not bring about any closeness of spirit, any comradeship, because they also sensed that two victims ought to avoid each other, not yoke together their joint disappointment. A victim does not look to help from another victim, he looks for a redeemer. At least Deven had his poetry; she had nothing, and so there was an added accusation and bitterness in her look. (Desai 70)

Deven believes that Sarla is inferior to him because he "had been more a poet than a professor ..." (69) when he married her. Being ambitious and dreamy, Deven thinks his mentality and way of thinking are

different from Sarla's. Deven feels that Sarla, as a "wife of a poet," seems "too prosaic," (69). His superiority over Sarla is based on his belief that the world of poetry is for male only, and the females are excluded from it. He is the intellectual one because at least he has "his poetry" and she has "nothing," (70). On the other hand, Sarla's silence indicates that she represents the "crushed Indian woman," (Driss 8-9). Despite her silence, Sarla's suppressed words can be read through her gestures (Narinder K. Sharma 4). She is clearly "the picture of an abandoned wife," (Desai 67).

Deven attempts to practise his masculine superiority over Imtiaz Begum, but she is totally different from Sarla. She is courageous enough to scream and enter the closed world of males and poetry. Imtiaz's scream and singing are her means to speak for "common women" and "women artists" in particular. Deven is shocked when he visits Nur for the second time because he finds that the comet that attracts the audience is Imtiaz not Nur (Driss 9-10). She is a threat to Deven for she seems the custodian of Nur's Urdu poetry not him, "It was disgraceful how she had learnt everything from him, from Nur, and parodying his skills," (Desai 87). Despite his aversion of her, he cannot escape the fact that he enjoys her poetry and singing which is "very beautiful, very feeling, very clever," (87). Despite her skill as a poetess, she is misunderstood as a "devilish figure." Anita Desai explains Imtiaz's Character:

She sounded so shrill, like a harridan, and I did not like her very much myself. And I wondered: why am I creating such an unpleasant character if I want to create sympathy for women? Why am I not making them sympathetic? Why am I making them so nasty? And I realized that if women are kept locked up in the conditions that they are in, that is how they would be. They would be extremely nasty and shrill and make sure that they were heard somehow, even if just by making a great deal of noise with pots and pans. (qtd. in Driss 10)

Imtiaz Begum senses Deven's aversion and patriarchal treatment to her. She knows that Deven belittles her as a poetess that is why she sends him a series of letters challenging him and inviting him to listen to her poetry. She openly faces Deven with the truth that he as a man feels superior to women. He believes that women cannot be intelligent and creative. For this reason he has no courage to read her poems because the merits of her poems may threaten his masculinity:

I am enclosing my latest poems for you to read and study and judge if they do not have some merit of their own. Let me see if you are strong enough to face them and admit to their merit. Or if they fill you with fear and insecurity because they threaten you with danger-danger that your superiority to women may become questionable. (Desai 224)

She is conscious about Deven's jealousy and fear. Deven's ambition is to be a great Urdu poet, so it is normal to feel threatened when he finds that a poetess challenges him. Even with technological development, male's mentality does not develop in regard to female's position.

Deven at the end reaches a full realization about the reality of the world around him. He is like a dreamer who lives a beautiful dream then

suddenly, he wakes up to the harsh reality. The end of the novel suggests that Deven will start a new beginning after he has faced a harsh experience in life. On the other hand, the clash of different cultures, and the clash between the old principles with the new born ones in India result in creating ode and materialistic people like Murad and Nur, who care only about Money. Like the Minotaur which is a monstrous creature which Lives on humans' flesh, Nur and Murad are the result of the confusing multicultural deformed society which exploit the weak (Deven) to survive. At the end, Urdu language and art need to be in custody by someone who really appreciates them, but even Deven, whose dream to revive art and Urdu, fails to be a good custodian due to his nativity and the change in people's motives in modern time.

Conclusion

The novel tackles the negative side of the new India which has been born after the Partition. The end of Deven is somehow tragic because of the social forces which prevent him of achieving his dreams which are reviving art and Urdu language. The dark seeds of the Partition are rooted even in the mentality of great poets like Nur who used to be a great Urdu poet before the Partition. Deven's flaws are many, starting with his naïve nature, his big dreams which seem impossible to be achieved in the materialist society of India, and finally his delusion which blinds him to the truth of Nur, Murad and the reality of India after Partition. All these flaws derive Deven to a tragic end. In conclusion, the shiny old culture of India cannot survive with the new materialist culture, that is why the protagonist, Deven, fail to revive it.

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الثقافة الهندية القديمة مقابل الحديثة في رواية انيتا ديساي "تحت الوصاية"

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المستخلص

أنيتا ديساي (١٩٣٧ -) روائية هندية معاصرة وكاتبة قصص قصيرة وكتب أطفال. وهي الروائية الهندية الاولى التي قدمت الرواية النفسية إلى الهند. تتميز أعمالها بالرمزية. تناقش في رواياتها مواضيع ثقافية متنوعة مثل الصراع بين الثقافتين الشرقية والغربية والصراع بين الثقافات الهندية المتعددة. تناقش ديساي في روايتها "تحت الوصاية" ١٩٨٠ مواضيع ثقافية عديدة اهمها الموت البطيء للثقافة الهندية القديمة وولادة ثقافة جديدة في الهند.

تستعرض رواية "تحت الوصاية" التغييرات التي شهدتها الهند بعد زوال الاستعمار البريطاني. تركز ديساي في الرواية على موت الفن والشعر وخاصة الموت البطيء للغة الاردية والشعر اللذين ارتبطا بالثقافة الهندية المجيدة القديمة. يطمح بطل الرواية الى ان يكون شاعرا عظيما في اللغة الاردية لكنه أجبر على تعليم اللغة الهندية. تروي ديساي رحلة ديفين وهو يحاول احياء الشعر الاردي من خلال مقابلة الشاعر الشهير، نور. يواجه ديفين عدة عقبات اثناء رحلته لتحقيق حلمه. تركز الرواية على تأثير التقسيم والاستعمار البريطاني على الثقافة الهندية والتغيير الذي شهدته الهند بعد الانقسام بين المسلمين والهندوس.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ثقافة، اللغة الاردية، المادية، التقسيم، اللغة الهندية