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## Analysing Anita Desai's works: A case study

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### Abstract

Anita Desai is one of the most prolific and prominent writers of Indian English fiction in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Three times she has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and in 1978 she was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel, *Fire on the Mountain*. With her sharp insight, Anita Desai observes with great precision the position and status of women in contemporary Indian society, for which she holds a unique place in the history of Indian English fiction. Her early novels examine the family problems that lead to the estrangement of women from their families. However, in her later novels, she incorporates stereotypes about Indian culture from the West. Political and social realities are less important to her than the interior landscape of the mind. Through her fiction, *Bye- Bye Blackbird* and *Baumgartner's Bombay*, she portrays diasporic sensibilities sensitively. The reader will experience life through Anita's simple, uncomplicated and vivid descriptions. This paper examines Anita Desai's contribution to Indian Writing in English novels.

**Keywords:** Psychological, western, societal

### Introduction

The purpose of the present paper is to make a fresh reappraisal of the contribution of Anita Desai to the canon of Indo-English fiction. Anita Desai has used experimental techniques in her fiction, and this article attempts to critically analyse those techniques.

### Fiction set in Indian English

With her new contributions to literature, science, travel, economy, and culture, India has emerged as one of the most preferred destinations. Indian multiculturalism and commitment to globalization play an increasingly important role in the twenty-first century. Besides the rich tradition of life, literature, and culture of the twentieth century, this achievement is also based on it. There are more English speakers in India than anywhere else in the world, which is significant. Today, Indian English Literature has succeeded in reaching literary acme after undergoing several vicissitudes and experiencing both appreciation and recognition. It is without a doubt a significant contribution to the larger picture of English speakers throughout the world. The publication contributes significantly to the larger picture of English-speaking communities around the world. It is therefore no surprise that Indian English fiction has become one of the strongest and most popular genres within this discipline. Due to bold experiments undertaken in the fictional mode, Indian English fiction has gained prominence in recent decades. A fiction writer has access to a vast canvas, which is not available in other genres. Fiction writers have been able to make it a powerful medium of expression due to the richness and novelty of the genre. Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in, A wide range of Indian English literature has been published In the global arena, the company has received recognition and accolades. As a result, now that it has carved out its own place, Not only in commonwealth literature, but also in Literature from around the world. This process has resulted in the development of Indian English A prestigious position and status have been acquired by fiction In India and abroad.

### English novelists who are Indian women

There is significance in the fact that Indian women novelists have The English language has established a special place in the world clearly, they have established a status for themselves.

They have received prestigious awards and prizes Over the past few decades. They have won a number of awards Among the prestigious literary awards are Man Booker Prize Commonwealth Writers' Prize for best first novel The book won the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award Their reputation was undoubtedly enhanced by this. The major women novelists who achieved laudable success in this domain include Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahagal, Ruth Praver Jhabval, Sobha De, Sashi Despande, Anita Desai, Manju Kapur and to name a few. In fact, they have added a new dimension and depth to Indian fiction in English. Among the young women novelists who have contributed an impressive corpus of fiction to their credit for enriching Indo-English literature and strengthening this tradition, the name of Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Anita Nair, Namita Gokhale and Nina Shibal etc. figure prominently. Notable Indian Women English Novelists. They have added a new dimension and depth to Indian fiction in English. Among the young women novelists who have significantly contributed to the enrichment of Indo-English literature and strengthening this tradition, Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, Anita Nair, Namita Gokhale, Nina Shibal, etc. figure prominently.

### **Fiction in Anita Desai's Art**

A critic's primary tools are comparison and analysis. The purpose of this article is to sharpen our understanding of Anita Desai's art of fiction based on this criterion. As a major and influential Indian English novelist of the twentieth century, Anita Desai has emerged as a prominent and influential novelist. This paper is an exploration of her experimental techniques. Thematically and technically, her novels differ from those of other eminent contemporary Indian women novelists who write in English in significant ways. In her psychological novels, the most striking features of modern fiction are present. Her fictional world is located in the corridors of human consciousness. Desai is the first woman to handle the existential problems of both women and men in the contemporary period.

Critical analysis is the focus of the present study Analyzing and evaluating Anita Desai's novels In the context of postcolonial critical canon. It explores Anita Desai's themes and techniques In this way, she presents a distinctive contribution to As well as twentieth century diasporic fiction. In addition, an effort has been made to highlight A study of the central characters, the narrative, and language, symbolism, and technique, A holistic approach to imagery, metaphor, and humour Anita's psychological motivation. Flashbacks, diary entries, self-analysis, powerful dialogues, descriptions of places and people reveal Anita Desai's psychological motivation for her novels as examples of psychic drama. A bold experiment in the art of fiction can be seen in these technicalities of fiction. Throughout the novel, her central theme is the existential plight of individuals, depicted through incompatible couples, sensitive wives, and mismatched husbands. Our understanding of Anita Desai's art of fiction and the vision she

embodies in her fiction will be sharpened by a detailed analysis of the technicalities of the art of fiction.

Desai uses a variety of fictional techniques, including Existentialist philosophy presented in a delicate manner the predicament of modern man, character development Illustrations and symbols used skilfully, delineation,

Narrative devices and plot devices Constructing. A distinctive aspect of modern Indian sensibility lies in her exploration of the human mind and its sensibilities.

The aforementioned features of Desai's fiction Her novel shows her ingenuity as a frontline novelist. She has added a new dimension to the theme It is significant that there is a spectrum of Indo-English fiction. Technically, her novels differ from those of others Women of eminence in India today There are a number of contemporary English novelists. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, and The main focus of Nayantara Sehgal's work is on Ethnicity, politics, and morality in East-West relations Anita Desai goes one step further than most As a writer of psychological novels with the most striking features of modern fiction, she excels at them Her novels are deeply moving tales of human emotion. Individuals caught in a socio-cultural and political bind A dilemma of existential significance. Desai's novels are also notable for their powerful use of images, symbols, and fictional devices. She explores the psychic lives of her characters. As a result, she penetrates deep into their psyches.

### **Background and contribution**

Among India's well-known modern novelists in English, Anita Desai is one of the world's most famous writers. Through her significant literary outputs, including novels, short stories, and children's literature, she has enriched Indian literature in English over the past four decades. Her bilingual parents give her the advantage of having a double perspective when writing about India and Indian migrants to the west. It has always been her family situation that influenced her view of India. Thus she is gifted with double consciousness; she often views Indian history and culture through the eyes of Europeans. Such is evident in her well known novels such as *In Custody* and *Baumgartner's Bombay* where she wrote: "I see India through my mother's eyes, as an outsider, but my feelings for India are those of someone born here." She thus is gifted with double consciousness. Therefore, her dual racial and cultural heritage has greatly influenced her life as well as her writings both thematically and stylistically. As a result, she develops an understanding of the global landscape of fiction.

### **A collection of literary works**

The literary horizon was opened by Anita Desai 1963 marked the beginning of Indian writing in English She published her first novel, *Cry, the Peacock*. The Readers and critics alike praised the novel A critical review. *Cry, the Peacock* is being hailed as a masterpiece In India, the book is regarded as one of the most important contributions to Indo English fiction. Desai has contributed to the arts for many years Through her novels and short stories, she contributed to Indian literature in English Children's literature and stories. The fictional character she creates It is an original and powerful technique. Among the author's include many major works:

1. Voices in the city
2. The Peacock Garden
3. Cry, The Peacock
4. Fire on the Mountain
5. Cat on a Houseboat
6. Games at Twilight
7. The Village by the Sea

8. Diamond Dust
9. Fasting Feasting
10. In Custody

A significant contribution to Indian English fiction has been made by Anita Desai with the publication of these works. The reader's primary impressions of reading her novels are her novelty, variety, and uniqueness of character sketches. Anita Desai believes that art is an exploration and enquiry, not an escape from reality, so her novels have drawn worldwide attention and her place in the world of fiction. Virginia Woolf's idea of 'reality' is strikingly similar to hers. She observes aptly:

Life is a reality you see on the surface- the visible world, while the literature plunges the depths, below that lie hidden and need to be explored and described. (Perspective of Anita Desai 128)

A few analogies are used by Anita Desai to explain She selects an appropriate topic for her writing. A chemical reaction illustrates the fluids involved. Her observation is aptly put as follows: Writers and novelists select their own material, His selection is based on what he considers significant Putting all these fluids together, he boils them Reduce them to a certain extent That's what a novelist can do, being able to capture essence. It is possible for him to convey the essential truth to his readers.

There are four major novels by Anita Desai, including *The Peacock*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* The themes of *Fire on the Mountain* and *Clear Light of Day* are similar Through the female sensibility Maya, Sita, Nanda Kaul, and Bimla are the protagonists In *Bim's*. In this way, she explores feminist concerns in Indian culture An effective and efficient handler of a genre of literature Powerfully and convincingly. Taking a close look at She manages themes with zest in her novels Her anxiety, anguish, and psychological crises A protagonist. As an example, she runs a Sahitya Academy "Fire on the Mountain", the winner of the National Book Award, was written by Nanda Kaul's inner emotional world is explored As well as *Raka*. By doing so, she dives deep into the hidden depths of her characters plagued by nostalgic reminiscences of their past lives. In fact, she is recognized as the herald of psychological novels in Indian English literature.

The interior is more important to Desai Political and social landscapes are secondary to the landscape of the mind She is the most celebrated and powerful woman in the world. She is one of the most important Indo-Anglian novelists of the post-independence era. Her central theme of complexity of human relationships, exploration of human psyche, and poetic prose have contributed significantly to the development of Indian novels in English. Her characters' inner psyches are explored deeply. Through her novels, she has ushered in a new era of psychological exploration of inner minds. Anita Desai is widely recognized as the pioneer of psychological novels in modern Indian English literature, along with James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. Her novels are notable for their treatment of existential themes and fine depictions of characters. As she employs the stream of consciousness technique, she uses highly suggestive imagery and symbols. Her work consists of She uses an intricate style to convey the frustrations of her hypersensitive characters.

A passionate young woman's descent into madness is the subject of her first novel, *Cry, The Peacock*. Throughout the novel, Maya is trapped in an unsuccessful relationship with Gautama, an older man who does not communicate and compromise with her. The inadequacy of her life becomes obvious when she is childless. Due to her belief in an astrological prediction, she is constantly haunted by presentiments of her husband's death. Despite her seeking someone to share her sentiments, emotions, and tension, she can't find anyone who will share her fear of Gautama's impending death. He was insensitive and unsentimental, on the other hand. She is treated like a spoilt child by Gautama. Despite living under the same roof, Maya dislikes Gautama for his authoritarian approach to life, creating a wide chasm between them. As a result of Maya's guilt and self-condemnation, she commits suicide after condemning Gautama to death.

In her second novel, *Voices in the City*, she explores the minds of three siblings, Nirod Ray and his two sisters, Monisha and Amla. Kali, both goddess and demon, both universal mother and goddess of death, is personified in the novel as the nihilistic influence of Calcutta (now Kolkata), which adversely affects three main characters. In the same way that Maya feels utterly frustrated, these three characters also feel that way. The jungles and its solitude and serenity bring them a mysterious longing to return home to Kalimpong. Their mother, who is portrayed as a symbol of Kali, makes them live in Calcutta even though they dislike her.

A third novel by Desai, *Bye-bye Blackbird*, takes place a year or two after *It* is set in London and deals with the problems faced by Indian immigrants. In the novel, there is a story about The expatriate community in England is divided between love and hate. There is a contrast between two friends, Adit Sen, who is well settled, and Assimilationist who feels alienated despite being culturally assimilated Despite the hardships, Dev finally returns to India As a result of the blatant racial prejudice he encounters, he decides to report the incident The land of his birth holds great appeal to him, so he stays A poet who writes romantic poetry. In his novel, the novelist delicately depicts Adit's Anglo-Saxon mother, Sarah, has psychological effects on him Getting married. When Sarah married Adit Sen, she became a nowhere woman in England, a land of racial hatred. Sarah's withdrawal from the world creates conflicts, which she overcomes when she comes to terms with the realities of her life as a wife of an Indian.

This 80-page book is about the Peacock Garden in India, A children's book about a Muslim girl who is very young. Her family hides from violence with a girl named Zuni A walled mosque garden during Partition, Rather than merely finding refuge, he discovers a whole new world A little girl can explore this world to her heart's content. Peacock feathers line the ceiling of their hut Among the things she does are pick up fresh chillies and oranges, pick feathers, and watch a movie A peahen raises her family and finally ventures out on her own Observe the changes in the world around you.

What should we do this summer? Displays a map of Sita, a married woman oppressed by her husband, resigned to her fate It is named after the Hindu goddess who accepts her fate in the end. The name is derived from a Hindu myth The mythological concept of womanhood, the wife of the Lord A forsaken land is the refuge Sita seeks from Rama (here

Raman) She spends the summer on an island called Manori Among her four children, two are still living. It is impossible for her to escape reality and she returns to an indifferent husband and an utterly meaningless existence due to the derelict house, barren surroundings, and memories of childhood spent with a selfish father. Although Desai recognizes Sita's inability to alter her condition, we get the impression that Sita also contributes to her predicament by accepting, reluctantly, a life lacking joy.

In *Fire on the Mountain*, the author describes It is the story of an unhappy great-grandmother named Nanda Kaul As a result of her unfaithful husband's death, she retires to Located on a quiet mountain ridge, Carignano is an island house She is examined by the novelist in Kasauli. The relationship she has with her great-grandmother, Raka, and her grandmother, The two of them are considered friends by Nanda Her privacy is invaded by intruders. She recognizes this fact. It is Nanda's bitterness that has led her to be the lone individual she is today As a result, she explores her relationships with the past Thus, Nanda's internal self and Ila Das's external self are influenced by Raka and Ila Das. Desai has analyzed the predicament in a proper manner.

It features a universal theme of children at play and their fantasies and disillusionment in Anita Desai's acclaimed collection *Games at Twilight, and Other Stories* (1978). After beginning the narrative objectively, Desai shifts the narrative focus from third person perspective to Ravi's consciousness as the tension mounts and the action progresses. In addition to its insights into child psychology, vivid imagery, and symbolic setting, the story displays powerful evocation of atmosphere.

An urban house in India is in the middle of a hot summer afternoon when the story begins.

After being kept inside all day, the children feel confined and suffocated, and when finally released, they play a game of hide-and-seek out of joy and excitement. He is chosen as the seeker since he is the eldest. There is a dash for hiding as all the children run helter-skelter. The garage is locked and Ravi hides behind it. Raghu panics upon hearing his little brother crying because he has been caught by him. In a moment of fright, Ravi slips through a small gap between the garage and an abandoned shed as Raghu's whistling grows louder. From this point on, the narrative filters through Ravi's consciousness and the reader is transported into his deepest thoughts. While the shed is dark, damp, and spooky, littered with discarded items and infested with moths and crawling insects, Ravi finds it a welcome refuge. Once he realizes that no one can possibly find him in the dark, his initial fear of darkness disappears.

As Anita Desai's novels progressed, the feminist theme became more prominent there is a marginalization of the issue and a feeling of loneliness as the central theme, the individual is emphasized that's the issue. There is no greater problem than alienation Today's man faces a number of challenges. Novels by Desai, such as *The Baumgartner's Nose*, *Village by the Sea*, *In Custody*, and *In Custody Throughout Bombay*, men are reflected in their existential plight. A collection of stories There is a strong focus on male characters in these three novels A protagonist. In spite of this, the *Village by the Sea* is still worth reading In addition to being categorized under children's literature, a mature fiction that is both enlightening and enjoyable. There is no doubt about it with a typical Indian milieu, this is a very powerful novel. An Indian family splits at the

beginning, but reunites at the end of the novel because of dire poverty. A complicated situation is revealed in the novel *In Custody* The story of the novel takes place in the world of human relationships. The story revolves around three major characters - Deven, Nur, and It is Murad and his friends who struggle hard to realize their dreams Despite their respective ambitions, Deven is the dominant male. An underprivileged protagonist In order to reach out to a wider world, he attempts to reach out to his family In spite of his position as a lecturer, he is striving for self-fulfillment. In Mirpore, a small town, I teach Hindi at a mufossil college Located near Delhi, he has lofty literary ambitions In spite of many setbacks and

frustrations, she strives for distinction. The inner strength of Deven is discovered and he realizes what he is capable of. As a result, the novel ends on a positive note The note ends.

A post-colonial world fades and crumbles in each tale, evoking glimpses of a vanishing reality. Desai's writing is sometimes as engrossing as she uses sensuality and charm to create her best works: birds sing with "piercing sweetness", mushrooms look like refugees with their ghostly pallor's and hats and bonnets. Despite their failure to persuade, the stories themselves fail to capture audiences' attention because of their explicit disappointments and abrupt endings. These interrelated stories of human disappointment are beautifully written, but ultimately disappointing.

### **Stylistic accomplishment**

It is notable that Desai has achieved a high level of stylistic achievement. In contrast to many other Indian English novelists, Desai does not experiment with language in her novels. In her novels, there is no clash between English, her medium of expression, and Indian subject matter. Despite the fact that her writing is both supple and precise, she uses the language with naturalness and unselfconsciousness. Even though each sentence is carefully crafted, overall, the style is easy to follow, not laborious or precious. Accordingly, Desai belongs to the mainstream of English novelists of the twentieth century.

As a matter of fact, Desai is considered to have been the first Indian English novelist to pay attention to the inner lives of her characters - their fleeting moods, fleeting memories, subtle thoughts. In her novels, Desai succeeds in capturing these evanescent moments of consciousness, preserving them from oblivion and giving them the permanence of art. Through her characters, Desai gives readers a glimpse into the rich inner lives of her characters as well as something of value for herself out of the endless flux of her own psyche.

### **Conclusion**

Anita Desai uses a variety of fictional techniques her plots are narrated using innovative techniques in stories and poems. In addition to the variety of themes, her novels are successful because of the techniques she uses a novelist's profession. She is primarily interested in deep issues inevitably, cultural and philosophical problems arise the contemporary society faces many challenges. The contemporary society faces many challenges. In addition, she an eminent storyteller of innovation. The technique she uses a combination of Indian and European perspectives is used in the narration history, culture, social structure, ethos, religion, etc. In his work, Desai exposes a range of mental states, psychic observations, inner motives, and existential

concerns a modern man or woman's pursuits. According to her, by breaking new ground, by dealing with the social and moral dilemmas of her characters, she breaks new ground for her fictional art. In her fiction, she explores psychological issues such as distortions of personality, oddities, dislocation from normal life, recklessness of human behaviour, and malignancy. Additionally, it embodies radical forms of alienation, loss of identity, maladjustments, and contradictions, which seem to have been preserved as the best of both great traditions. Her novel brings new elements to the Indian English novel and broadens the scope of her artistic expression. The themes she explores are both thoughtful and insightful.

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