

A Study of Religious and Existential Perspective in the Novels of Anita Desai

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Abstract - Anita Desai, a leading figure in contemporary Indian English fiction, has garnered widespread acclaim from Indian and international abstract circles, and her books have carved out a unique niche in the field of Indo-Anglian writing thanks to their eccentricity and idiosyncratic beauty. Affectability in structuring the pattern of her books, uprightness of masterful vision, creative brain, sharp perception, sharp mindfulness, and capable craftsmanship have made her a much sought-after essayist, pursued by distributors and readers alike. Only her hopes and desires, her blunders and disappointments, are reflected in her fiction. and the study in which discussed about Existentialism, Anita Desai: The Novelist, Critical Analysis Of Anita Desai , Anita Desai's Treatment Of Feminism, Maya' As The Representative Of Post-Modern Feminism, Sita' As The Embodiment Of Indian Feminism, Definition Of Tradition And Modernity, Anita Desai – Life And Works, Existentialism In Anita Desai's Fiction

Keyword - Novelists, Women

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INTRODUCTION

Anita Desai was born on 14th June 1937 in Mussoorie. She is of Indian origin and is famous as a fiction writer. She wrote novels, short stories and children's stories, and became well reputed in the field of Indo-Anglian literature. Like other contemporary writer's of Indian-English literature, Anita Desai paved way for her recognition in the global map. Today she is the source of inspiration for many young aspiring writers Anita Desai's birth place Mussoorie, a quiet little hill-station, is close to Delhi. Anita Desai, christened as Anita Mazumdar was born of a German mother, Toni, Name and a Bengali businessman father D.V. Mazumdar. She belonged to an unconventional family which contributes a lot to nurture writing aspirations in her young mind. In an orthodox family, one cannot think and act freely which are the essential elements to be cultured and civilized. [1] Had Anita Desai not been attached to a well refined and unorthodox family, she would not have been so reputed and significant personality. During her childhood, she was intended to learn different languages such as German, Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and English. Gradually she acquired deep and wide knowledge of many languages which compounded her passion for literature. Without having immense knowledge in many languages, a person cannot have profound perception of different facts. A particular subject doesn't contain sufficient knowledge of the universe. She received her early education from Queen Mary's Higher Secondary School in Delhi. After it she earned her bachelor

degree in English Literature from Miranda House, University of Delhi in the year 1957. To pass her adult life she chose Ashbin Desai and married him in the year 1958. Soon after completing her graduation from Delhi University, she engaged herself in the martial relation to accomplish her activities more successfully. Ashbin Desai was the director of a computer software firm and the writer of the book 'Between Eternities: Ideas on Life and The Cosmos'. The couple was endowed with four children in the following years. Among their children, Kiran Desai was destined to follow her mother's footsteps. By her genius and diligence, she acquired name and fame almost like her mother. [2]

Anita Desai was capable to get recognition in many ways and to several levels. She has been active to contribute and enrich the Indo-Anglian Literature for more than two decades. Due to cultural encounter between her parents, she got favorable circumstance to be famous in the field of Indo-Anglian Literature. She did not choose English language as her medium of expression because of the fashion of modern age rather she found herself more easy fluent while expressing in English language. Replying to a question of Jasbir Jain, she argues: "By the age of seven or eight I was certainly writing a great deal and determined to be a writer. I did not pick English out, I don't think a child of seven is capable of doing so. I must have

simply picked the language which came most fluently and easily to me.

Anita Desai was never fascinated and affected by American landscape. She was not curious to enter the American world. She came there when she was already too old to set in her ways and in her way of thinking. Anita Desai was winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award and Guardian Children's Fiction Prize for her excellence in writing. She has authored as many as sixteen works of fiction, some of the best ones being 'Fasting, Feasting', '**The Village By The Sea**', 'In custody' and '**Clear light of Day**'. Her style of writing is distinct and graceful. Her choice of characters is according to the need of the story. Her subject matter is based on realistic line. On account of these characteristics she becomes much popular in Indian English literature. With her refined and impressive skill and technique, Anita Desai succeeded to acquire many awards worth recognition. She was shortlisted for the Booker Prize twice. In 1980 she was awarded Booker Prize for 'clear light of Day' and in 1984 she was again shortlisted for the same prize for her excellent work 'Fasting. Feasting' besides her contribution as a significant writer, she has brightened the future of India Being an ideal and prominent teacher. Today she has become the source of inspiration for many young aspiring writers. [3]

These Indian women Novelists have portrayed women's issues realistically both psychologically and physically in their novels. They broke the literary and social norms of the past. They studied deep into psyche of their characters and projected various images of women and their status in society. They have written about women in a varied cultural perspective. In fiction, some women characters have attitude of rejection and negation of life while others have an affirmation and acceptance of life with a compromising attitude leading to deep sense of fulfillment. In this sense, the postmodern Indian women writers create a pattern of new study because they have dared to shatter the myth of a male dominated social system. They laid a firm foundation in the realm of female study in Indian Literature in English.

Existentialism

Existentiality is the term for a collection of beliefs and concepts that have been expressed today in the works of individuals such as Sartre, Heidegger, Marcel, Camus and Jaspers. Although existentialist authors vary in their theory, a number of basic topics are typical. They highlight the distinct and unique experience in human life. Every guy decides to be or do it. Awareness is a prerequisite of genuine being for such freedom. Existentialists have demonstrated an impressive insight in their psychological investigations and have offered explanatory ideas that expand the field of moral knowledge and self-

confidence. This is why their works are widely appealing.

The existential philosophy has inspired many famous authors, including Dostoyevsky, Graham Greene, Patrick White, Joyce Cary, Conrad, Kafka, Colin Wilson, Paul Tillich, Martin Buber, Samuel Beckett, J.D. Salinger and Thomas Hardy. Their works offer a clear image of a guy in his environment who is a stranger. In a homeless condition, he is eternally condemned to roam in silent desperation, disobedience and a defeated man.

In the Indian literary world many writers have written about existing philosophy to the extent that Anita Desai is a realist, although many others like R.K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, Raji Narasimhan, Vikram Seth, Aran Joshi, Tara Ali Baig, Salman Rushdie, Bharathi Mukhejee, Sasha Deshpande, R. W. Desai, etc. have not exploded existential philosophy. [4]

Anita Desai: The Novelist

She is one of the most excellent and famous novelists in Indian fiction in English today. She has written the remarkable as well as notable masterpieces to the world of literature. She is among the prominent Indo Anglian novelists. Her novels present social situations but she keeps greater significance on the findings of the inner-self because it is the inner self that determines the mark of a person. Srinivasa Iyengar is aptly said....

"Anita Desai has added a new dimension to the achievement of Indian women writers in English fiction. Her two novels, (Cry, The Peacock and Voices in the City) the inner climate, the climate of sensibility that lours or clears or rumbles like thunder or suddenly blazes forth like lightning, is more compelling than the outer weather, the physical geography or visible action. Her forte, in other words, is the exploration of sensibility that is ill at ease among the barbarians and the philistines, the anarchists and the moralists."

The hammer of writing of Anita Desai is very distinct and unique one in fiction. She has social fabric but a matchless personal insinuation. In her novels the main characters are seen in the finding of their personal identity. She has given the account of psychic drama through flash back, diary-entries, self-introspection, meditations, rattling interlocation and mental inspirations of her fictions. R.K. Dhawan's quote on her fictions, "Anita Desai is one of the major voices in the modern Indian English fiction. She ushered in a new era of psychological realism in this genre with her novel

'Cry, The Peacock' in 1963. Her novels are materially different from those of the other eminent Indian women novelists writing in English such as Kamala Markandaya, Ruth Praver Jhabwala, and Nayantara Sehgal who concern themselves mainly with social and political themes of East-West encounter. Anita Desai's serious concern is with "The journey within" of her characters the chief protagonists being female characters." [5]

Anita Desai is well-known for her technique the stream of consciousness. Through the works of all these authors, equally is differentiated. The content theme of their fiction is emphasis drawn from outer authenticity, the communal, territorial and political milieu. Their manner of fiction is normally recited with its requirements of plot, character, action and setting. Narrated traditionally, the fiction were also given as 'Indian' competition and background to understand the 'enormous problems already referred. These equalities among writers banded then within a somewhat end, a convention of novel to which Anita Desai is obviously a variation. She differentiates firstly by replacing communal documentation with mental inquiring. The prominent move from the global outside to the inner self, her novels search a personal and acute practice related to outer authentic mere indirectly and never as a centre. The practice is outside social impacts; think in the indirect endorsement of community as a class of repression as in the statement of an educated lady suffocated by the ordinance mores of a conventional community. Otherwise, there is a few try at mindful social criticism, for the center in these fictions are on Anita Desai herself asserts, "I have never been interested in society as such..." Instead, writes of the inner life, obligations and insecurities of sensible and brilliant personals. [6]

Critical Analysis Of Anita Desai

Anita Desai is one of the celebrated Indian fiction writers. For three times she was shortlisted for the Booker prize. She holds unique place among novelists of India. She is the recorder of dilemma faced by a person in Indian urban setup. In her career as a novelist she has published ten novels and other literary work. In her novels female character play important role. Her female characters are rebellious and rebel against the traditions. Her female characters are sensitive and as a consequence, they are unwilling to adjust with the reality. Anita Desai is not believer of feminist movements. She makes it clear that her interest is with individual man and woman, only the individual, the solitary being, is of true interest. One must be alone, silent, in order to think or contemplate or write. She introduces a new age of psychological realism in her novel Cry, the Peacock (1963). Anita Desai like Kamala Markandaya has made human relationship as a central of her fictional subject. She is mainly concerned with the journey within her characters, the main protagonist being a female character. Anita Desai's novels present the agony of existence in a

male dominated society. In her novel the struggle of the protagonist, as heroic attempt finally brings glory to the individual and add dignity to the spirit of freedom.[7]

Anita Desai's Treatment Of Feminism

Anita Desai, without a question, is the leading Indian feminist writer. With her powerful, hypersensitive understanding of the natural and genuine daily life of family, social and economic relations, her erudition and inner psychological strength have had a very strong effect on her main books. Her writings represent the feminism of the universal. In her books, Desai disclosure, particularly female questions in many of her works from our post-moderne age, the harsh and enigmatic reality of human psyche. Desai has spread undetected pictures of the lower and hated female population of her eras in her self-conscious societal critique and change. Feminism is one of the most important problems in its fictitious universe; it has envisioned a women's paradigm for disseminating the second sex message. In the face of the wretched, drudgeric condition that women are in the weakest working class of immeasurable distress, agony, and psychology, contradictory sensations in the unconscious, foolish spouses and dads, and siblings, she dealt with her fiction in the light of woman's spectacular and vivid topics. Desai intended to underline the matriarchal battle, independence of oneself and self-identity against a masculine controlled society, and universalize with the inner view the feminist message. Although Desai tries to examine the sensationalist of women and vibrant expressionism in literature, she is not prepared to feel as a feminist writer.

Anita Desai's psychological books concentrate upon her minute, delicate pictures of a tormented, pained, struggled, stumbled and self-frustrated feminism devoted to her inner heart, soul and mind; to her sullen sadness; to melancholy and pessimism. The existential difficulty of the world of women is in contradiction to mankind. Desai appeals fervently to the entire female community for a bright daybreak, despite the fact that their female heroes or female characters are deadly. The author addresses the obvious and vibrant issue characteristics of temperamental incompatibility, marital chaos and difficulties, and the constantly increasing hate and contemptuous gender difference. In her novels most Cum Heroines are segmented and alienated from the world, from society, from families, from their own families, because they are not average people but individuals who can hardly cope with patriarchy, who are not capable of keeping up with this set up, instead drifting into their own secluded world, where they are spinning great hopes, ambitions, dreams and other people.

Anita Desai's main preoccupation, along with a nocturnal and nebulent environment of the female

mind, is regarded an inner psychological writer. The motives, consciousness, psychological thrill and tumultuous upheaval of Desai's work are addressed by the stormy psychology of the women's group around them. A unique trace and characteristic feature of women is that a catastrophic fall leads to a psychological illness that causes the neurotic and the hysterical mentality of women like Maya in *Cry, Peacock* who suffers from the obsession of fathers. Desai's fictions are self-biographical, affecting her quiet anger. Anita Desai portrays the striking depiction of the women's searches by encouraging her characters to develop a wider and deeper world. Anita Desai is enhanced by the understanding and understanding she has in her fictional universes. Desai figures are part of the wealthy or Indian society they have to deal with practicality of life fight for survival and existence with difficulty and completely. Desai writes about the people because she feels them with keen knowledge and wisdom.[8]

Ms. Anita Desai is genuinely interested in, and her destruction of, the destiny and future of the postmodern women, especially in male chauvinist culture.

Desai's female actors typically find themselves in a web of unpleasant situations and are usually the foundation of their fight and the result of their book. In each instance, the issue is always that it is difficult to adapt in marital relationships, create bridges, bring together or harmonies and take a holistic perspective of one's surroundings.

Maya' As The Representative Of Post-Modern Feminism

In the first book *Cry Peacock* (1963). In order to awaken the ignored, tortured lower women of the Indigenous Bourgeois society Anita Desai has attempted to expose the underlying trueness of the post-modern era by the female protagonist cum heroine. Maya can barely adapt to her family, her husband, Gautama, a misogynist lawyer considerably older than her in the male dominated culture. Through Maya Desai aims to reveal, along with the terrible scare, crazy features and the suicide deed, the psychological struggles and agony, alienations and aberrant treatment and mannerism of the protagonist. Desai's book focuses on the dread, pain, loneliness, melancholy inner mood, and repressed optimism of India's post-modern feminism. It is notable that Indian women's differences in age, difference in maturation, Indian concept of separations, and mental connectivity between husband and wife are the cardinal causes of marital conflict and solitude. In addition to their emptiness is the basic mentality of Indian women who are meant to be weak, other, lower and submissive.

Maya had a strong love with her dad and was sorry to leave the family house in the wedding. She was

isolated from the outside world by her unnoted mental agonies and sufferings caused by loss of her mother. She does not live up to her goals and expectations in married life, which results in her being fragmented, fluffy and psychologically disturbed. Maya is therefore emphasized as an exceptionally sensitive character; Desai is a hysterical and neurotic lady who cannot deal with the patriarchal order and society where she quietly and hopelessly revolts like an underprivileged person. We feel that Maya doesn't embrace natural reality and actual cocoon problems. She takes an escape road and becomes a "natural kid," trying to find condolences in genuine surroundings and sceneries. By mixing it with birds, animals and a place that people in the stormy life of Maya do not make up for, she tries to get rid of its emptiness. Maya may be seen as distinct from conventional and customary standards and principles. In fact, in a middle class household in Gautama she never promotes the idealized meaning of an ideal woman. Her dependence on her spouse economically makes her feel insecure, hollow and weak, since she sees herself as the ruler. The author would want to concentrate on Maya as a post-modern woman with the aim of opening the iron of her lonely existence; Maya aspires to find a world cleansed and equitable in which she would have no distinction between husband and wife. [9]

The *Peacock* Desai's *Cry* deals with Gautama-Maya marital conflict. The book is centered on a pitiful lady who lacks love sentiments and emotions, who prays metaphysically. In the conflicts of extreme pleasure and ecstasy of their terrible inward experience of love and affection, she connects herself with the peace. The astrologer Albino once prophesied that either herself or her husband would die before time within four years of their spousal existence, tell me about her harsh history, and her disagreement with the woman. With the passing of time, but with the death of their animal dog Totto, the worry generated by this forecast decreased. She often haunts all these unforeseeable events and recollections. Her memory of Albino's oracles is strongly linked with the brutality from the past of her upbringing, her dread of death, her expectations to exist and her regression.

The storey of the existence of Maya appears to be one of triple patterns of events finished as: deprivation, estrangement and eventual extinction. First, Maya is without brotherly care and love, as well as parental care. Secondly, she is estranged from her father's spouse, and last, she eliminates family obligation and family duties from life and herself. A woman from the protagonist Maya who appears to be suffering because she is wedded to the masculine, and she fails to comprehend the fragmented identities, is shown in the peacock of Anita Desai's *Cry*. In this respect, Dr. Sanjay

Kumar's remark about the psychological agonies of Maya may be acknowledged:

Maya's anxiety is compounded since she doesn't connect to her spouse Gautama. There is a tremendous communication gap between husband and wife, since they both live in different worlds.

Maya, on the other hand, is an inert lady of passions and feeling, Gautama as a mental scientist. The issue of her existence is one of the key comments of the book. She wants to comprehend the inconceivable expanse of space where she stands in temporal isolation. Her frantic fight to have a personal life endangered by her husband's presence; She thus thinks of him as an adversary and her psychological issue becomes existential.

Sita' As the Embodiment Of Indian Feminism

Emphasize Sita in the *Where Shall We Go This Summer* in Anita Desai, the feminist message via the protagonist? (1975). the main focus of Anita Desai is human connections, and the distressing psychology of contemporary Indian women is explored. The star, Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer* is an anxious, delicate middle-aged lady who, because of her emaciated responses to many things that happen to her, finds herself separated from her husband and children. She goes to Manori, an island for spiritual cleansing on her sacred journey. Her connection with her childhood soil, Manori where she knows her spouse, kids and city life, is also redefined. Sita's identity is likewise being changed and her connection with her spouse is being redefined. Her spouse agrees to go. Her return with her spouse to the mainland is the consequence of her perception and her feeling of estrangement is rootless. Where are we going this summer? Anita Desai's where are we going this summer, she's over-sensitive and physically amazing. Her sensitivity cannot mix up with an everyday existence. It obliges her to leave this heavy and congested region. Sita chooses to escape to Manori, where nothing but the landscapes exists. Her heightened sensitivity prevents her from giving birth to her fifth kid. However, her time at Manori helps her realize that her life cannot live on a stage of faith forever and her whole life needs to be accepted. Sita deals with the past and in this book contain the key to the current conduct. It is possible to connect Sita's difficulties with Maya. Her lovely marriage to Raman mentally captivated her. The connection between marriage and abnormal man and woman has been shown to be a unique mood.

Sita's married and has four children, but sorrow and dejection. Sita is married. In a home that gives her nothing but an arid crust of boring monotony, hopeless disillusionment, she feels like an enclosed

bird. Her disappointment in married life has a feeling of disregard for her husband's acquaintances and coworkers. Your harsh upbringing has had a bad effect on her psyche, with doubts about privation and despair affected. In these uncertainties she feels trapped and tries to liberate herself. Severe strain, compulsion and retreat from Sita's solidified soul are the cause of a number of circumstances and occurrences. The uncertainties, the waiting, the problems which are unanswered inside her and feed upon her mind, transform her into a hypersensitive and sad person with a certain element of mental distress. It is like a flying monster that is a little bit startling at the least sound, a paranoid, crutchless figure. Sita has an odd reaction and has mental reluctance. What another individual might barely perceive is an act of persecution for her. She is furiously afraid of a disagreement surrounding her. There is a conflict between the aware person and the isolated world of complacency. Sita's smoking is a hint of quiet rebellion, an attempt to be her, and to show the world that has its own personality, but in fact it's collapsing. Her unflavored before her spouse is the result of a basic want to show that she cares for nobody in a world which hasn't taken care of her. Her abhorrence of patriarchy is just her ennui, to hide from the world her fading strength. All her heart's troubles and complexity gradually increase in size. Like Anita Desai's previous characters, Sita repels everyone, yet stays like an enclosed bird. [10]

Sita feels that imagination would be the only option if reality could not be controlled. So she chooses to live with an imagination and discovers that the island is a refuge, a shelter. After a dreadful history, it gave her the first rays of joy. Now she can only picture the dazzling possibilities of the island that spell for her throughout time. The quest for identification leads to Manori Island's tremendous security - a getaway for a sensitive person so sensitive to his spouse. Sita thinks that her choices of saying no to society, breaking its standards and not bringing baby into birth are right. Their refusal of their unlaw and the estrangement from social dictation are simply camouflage. In order to hide their uneasiness, their unrest and quest for their real identity and their unsuccessful inner force from the domicile, a little creature may assume some characteristics, not of its own race. She is certain that her aspirations would be guaranteed in solitude.

Sita's main worry about her fifth kid's arrival is a sort of regression she wants to get back as a youngster. For, before she could completely enjoy the life of a child, her duty had to be taken up as an adult. No surprise she is fascinated with keeping her 5th kid instead of letting it go or growing up since keeping the child on a carefree island means preserving her infancy. Soon Sita will realize that reality is no more troubling than fancy. Manori's happiness is an illusion, since on this Island, as on

Bombay, the worst things in life are there. Sita is confused and fantastically perplexed by Manori.

Her Manori stay has revitalized her psyche and now she has a realistic view of the world. Sita's connection with her spouse is not odd, unlike Cry's Maya, the Peacock. When Sita arrives to Manori, there is no doubt a temporary isolation. However, absence makes her heart more supportive, and she learns that this approach to life is more logical. He has a stronger bravery in dealing with the complexity and truths of life. She was just a coward and had always been fascinated with the "hardness of a pointless existence." Sita felt that she was making a sacrifice between psychologically and emotionally living with her spouse and travelling alone. But it seemed unlikely that she would compromise later on. Thus she left the necromancy country but discovered that time had caused harm to the area and its inhabitants there.

Definition of Tradition And Modernity

The word "Tradition" derives from the Latin word "Tradere" or "Traderer" which literally means "To Transmit" or "To hand over" or "To give for safekeeping". As per the word meaning, "Tradition" stands for transmitting something. Here, Tradition means when follow by the term "Modern" a kind of updating whether it is desirable or not. So, the term "Modern" is a set of things that new to the "Tradition" that is not at present but in the past.

From the point of the society, Tradition stands for the structure, norms that are already in date. Likely Modern gains its meaning by the new changes in the tradition. Reason for the change, sometimes may be needed in traditional structures that are differing from one another. [11]

Anita Desai – Life and Works

The post-modern trend of individuality and modernity is wrought well in the systematic plotting structures of these novels. These post-modern women succumb to the values and dogmas of the post-modern trend as discussed earlier. The effect on the psyche does not uproot them from the social structure, but on the contrary, these women paint a new form of pattern to make them comfortable with the contemporary social structure. They are self evolving, natural, vibrant, energetic and mightier than any other man in the novel. Their mind and body unite to develop their psyche in such a way that there is no doubt for disillusionment about life. Anita Desai's Protagonists have never seen in the mode of self-destruction. Their path of pathos may be enlightening, a new tunnel towards a new living for the readers. But they never make the reader go astray. In speaking of the

inner feminine sensibility, a famous critic argues about Anita Desai that her novel is concerned with the emotional world of women, revealing a rare, imaginative awareness of various deeper forces at work and a profound understanding of feminine sensibility.

The female characters of Anita Desai fall into three stages of sensibility: realization in the society, in the family and in isolation. Many writers fail to achieve all the three successfully or fail to present any one of them. But Anita Desai throws light upon all the three faculties to prove the eminence of every woman's consciousness. She argues through her characters that no woman has been leading a life of singularity and no woman is lesser in the intellectual potential compared to men in society. They are sensitive, intelligent and humane. There is no window for a woman to fail in an unorthodox manner in facing life's worst challenges, as they see life in its entirety.

Anita Desai has made the characters to be intensely humane. They can either be totally secluded due to the pressures on the psyche, or with a strong ambition, overcome this situation. The sense of loneliness and alienation is, however, not overpowering in her novels. She even admits in one of her interviews that, her purpose in writing was to discover for herself and then to aesthetically convey the truth which for her is synonymous with art. She wants to realize the depth of reality in herself when she admits that, "Plunging below the surface and plumbing the depths, then illuminating those depths till they become a more lucid, brilliant and explicable reflection of the visible world.[12]

The above statement holds that Anita Desai is a versatile and eminent character that floats above the stellar family of literary geniuses. Her dual heritage that she had gathered from a Bengali father and a German mother had a deep impact on her life. Racially and culturally she was a mélange of western and eastern ideals which strongly influenced her thematic and stylistic levels. She was born in Mussoorie, in India, on June 24, 1937. She first joined Queen Mary's school and later studied at Miranda House in Delhi. Her father was an engineer and their nativity was East Bengal, called Bangladesh. After her marriage, she got four children. Desai's mother being a German, definitely it had an effect on the linguistic capability of Desai, the transition from the social phenomena to individual character is obviously the gift of western world.

Anita Desai started her career as a novelist with her first publication, Cry, the Peacock in 1963. She started her career as a novelist at the age of seven, which makes every eyebrow rise. Her second work, Voices in the city, was published in 1965. This novel spoke about Desai, as a renowned successful individual who could raise the curtains

of femininity with an extraordinary sketching of the characters. Her novels were not immature, but it spoke of her deep knowledge of English classics. She also excelled in the study of Hindu scriptures that make her a superwoman in the field of Indo-Anglian fiction. She has successfully managed to publish around fourteen works. Among them were twelve novels, two books on short stories and two books on children's stories. She won the Winfred Holt by Award for Regional literature of the Royal Society of literature, London, and the Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* in the year 1978. Her feminine sensibility gave a lyrical touch to her notes. Her novels *Clear Light of the Day* (1980), *In Custody* (1984), and *Fasting Feasting* (1999) were some of her best works that were shortlisted for the Booker Prize, and *The Village by the Sea* was a Children's fiction that won her the Guardian Award in the year 1982. These novels won her much fame because of the language she uses, that has polished sentences, with chiseled phrases. Her techniques excel in presenting a contrasting image of a variety of settings.[13]

Desai's *Cry*, the *Peacock* and *Voices in the City* illuminate the recesses of the human psyche. Family situation from the principal scenario in the stories is an atmosphere of impending sense of doom. What comes to the fore from the two narratives is the anti-thesis between the male and the female worlds. Both indict the patriarchal norms that look down upon them, condemn passionate nature in women, while poise, self-possession and composure are applauded as virtues. Maya in *Cry*, the *Peacock* and Monisha in *Voices in the City* trapped in incompatible marital life are seen as unreliable, capricious in terms of the social norms. Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, is pessimistic and whimsical, she is a victim of the situation. Her sharp sense puts her in troubles. Sita neither dies in the end nor kills anybody nor does she become mad. She realizes her destiny so she moves to Bombay back with her husband. Her journey to Manori is her problem of self – alienation, but her self – adjustment and self-perception pave the way of her return to Bombay. Desai attracts the readers through the unresolved conflicts, un-admitted desires, and traumatic cultural past, when unsuccessfully pushed out of consciousness, reaches the realm of the unconscious and communicate obliquely. Though she does not write with a conscious social purpose, her works have unconsciously contributed to the feminist cause, an expression of inner preoccupations and of the modern ideal of building a male-dominant free society. [14]

Existentialism in Anita Desai's Fiction

Existentialism is concerned with the unchanging human condition and the different strategies adopted by human beings to deal with their existential dilemmas. In Anita Desai's fiction, the protagonists protest in different ways against their spiritual conditions. In existentialism, man is seen as a lonely

and alienated, burdened with the responsibility of choosing between two opposed ways of living, one way is of authenticity and the other is the way of bad faith. Anita Desai's characters have to make similar choices in the similar circumstances. She expresses the existential dilemmas of her characters repeatedly in her novels. She used to explore and inquire into the human situation from the existential perspective. She focuses on alienation, loneliness and routine of her characters. Anita Desai repeatedly tries to explore the existential condition of modern man in modern scenario. She shows her concern about the maze in which man finds himself today. There is a great shift of focus from society to individualism which in turn leads to a change of environment. According to Harish Raizada, "The tragic impact in her books is stepped up since the outside circumstances not only oppress outwardly but also defect in the character of the actors in her novels. [15]

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the proposal provides an evaluation of the alienating factors that prevail in contemporary society, as depicted in the novels of Anita Desai, and weighs on the meaninglessness of human life, based on the examination made, perceptions and discoveries drawn, and representations given in the body of the proposal. It also seeks to highlight the need of personal growth as the only remedy for alienation. A man's sense of alienation emerges from inside, yet he has the power to overcome it since he is independent. Adapted to his environment, his history, and his tendencies, man is limited and unique. To achieve authentic presence, a man must tend to his inner summons and respond it with courage. He is free to accept his lot in life as he sees fit, and to align his destiny with that course. Desai's works also illuminate the truth that man must conform his life to his environment, his community, or his inner voice; doing otherwise would lead to his annihilation. The need of the person's purposeful inclusion and a position in the system carries the most weight in the final evaluation. It also serves as a reminder that we are not isolated individuals but rather part of an intricate web of interconnected lives. Desai's works shed light on the meaninglessness of human existence. Nothing in human existence makes any sense. Most heroes, whether male or female, are ultimately engulfed by weakness. Very few people are immune to the terror of being alone.

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