Anita Desai (1937) is indisputably one of the most dynamic contemporary Indian novelists in English. Among the Indian English women novelists, Anita Desai is unambiguously different and has caught the imagination of readers in a fascinating way. To date, she has contributed the literary treasure of Indian English Fiction by a good literary output; she has so far written eleven novels. Cry, The Peacock (1963), Voices in the City (1965), Bye-Bye Blackbird (1982), Where Shall We Go This Summer (1975), Fire on The Mountain (1977), The Village by The Sea (1988), Clear Light of Day (1980), In Custody (1984), Baumgartner’s Bombay (1988), Journey to Ithaca (1995), Fasting, Feasting (1999). She has been several literary awards, notably the prestigious ‘Sahitya Academy Award’ for literature. She has been twice short listed for the Booker prize.

With her intellectual credentials and stylistic devices, she is a class by herself. She is superb in probing into the inner consciousness of her female characters and the complexity of human relations, particularly the man-woman relationship. This exploration of the inner weather of the mind lends a queer psychological interest and profundity of her works. She
attempts to discover the labyrinths of her female characters in the context of the psychological formulations. This thesis is a deep study of feminine sensibility through the text-based analysis of her novels.

The entire corpus of this thesis has been divided into six successive chapters. The first chapter Introduction presents a general survey of Indian English fiction in general and the contribution of Anita Desai for the development of her fictional art in particular in order to enrich the store of this genre with the themes of her novels. It also deals with the formative influences upon Anita Desai.

The second chapter Egoists reveals the categories of different types of characters in the novels of Desai but it describes in detail those characters who are egoists and their psychological obsessions. There are some characters who show some inborn egoistic trends in their personalities. Their egoistic reflections lead them to loneliness and isolations and in their loneliness and isolation, they analyze themselves and develop a self-schooling process, which regenerate them. Thus the entire process from their inborn egoism to the transformation to normally is analyzed through text-based analyses of them.

The third chapter Neurotics deals with the psychological reason and the mental estates of the characters. The efforts are made to go in deep analysis of human behaviour as to why they
show some temperamental and clinical observation leading them to their neurotic behaviour.

The fourth chapter Altruists reveals the fact that there is a series of events that goes inside the psychic depth of her characters. This series of change creates in them a glow, a self-realization and self-schooling process, converting their inborn egoistic tendencies into the altruistic purposiveness. They get loneliness when they are tense and analyze themselves and come to realize their social and moral obligations which compel them to yield to the moral purpose of life.

The fifth chapters Existential Dilemma draw attention to the modern approach of the novelist in the analysis of the inner motives and existential dilemma of her characters. Modern man undoubtedly witnessed in his personality an eagerness to exist in the society he belongs to. They are search of their identities. They face many social, economical and moral hurdles while seeking their respective identities.

The Sixth last chapter Conclusion deals with various technical devices that she has used in her novels. The technical devices take stock of her imagistic and symbolic expression, psychological language and findings of the entire structure.

I cannot close these prefatory remarks without expressing my gratitude to all those who helped me in the preparation of the present work.

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