Desai, Anita.

*Cry, the Peacock*/Anita Desai.— Delhi : Orient Paperbacks, 1983.

*Cry, the Peacock* is a story of Maya and her married life with Gautama recollected by Maya herself. Maya marries Gautama only because she finds some resemblance between Gautama and her father. But after the marriage she feels that everyone in her husband's house neglects her. She becomes restless and miserable. The reason for her misery is that she is a misfit in the family. She wants to have Gautama completely to herself just as she had her father completely to herself. The situation is complicated by an astrological prediction that her husband will predecease her. All these thoughts oppress her mind. One day she has an argument with Gautama and during the course of the argument Gautama falls down from the building and dies. The third part of the novel describes what happens after Gautama's death. It is interesting to note that in Part II, the central part of the novel, we have first person narration and in Part III, it is third person narration. Maya's effort to tell her story to herself seems to be to discover some meaning in her life or even "to justify herself to herself" (K.R.S. Srinivasa Iyengar : Indian Writing in English, p.465).
Cry, the Peacock is the first novel of Anita Desai, but the novelist shows the qualities of a mature novelist. Maya's intensity fills the whole book and gives it form and life. The name Maya is itself suggestive and symbolic. Maya seems to be in a state of 'maya' because she feels that it was only her father who loved her sincerely. The privacy that she wants to have with her husband is not possible in a joint family. The novelist employs psycho-narration to unravel Maya's hopes, fears, obsessions and her tragic melancholy.

Desai, Anita.

Voices in the City /Anita Desai.– Delhi :
256 p.

Voices in the City explores the life of the middle classes in a densely populated city. The nauseating industrial backdrop plays a crucial role in generating psychic disorders. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar feels that this novel, in spite of its rich diction, is less satisfying than the first novel, Cry, the Peacock, because it is not contained by a single sensibility like Maya's.

Nirode is a practising Poet and Journalist and moves with the minor poets of the city. He dislikes his mother when she becomes the mistress of Major Chadhar. He always has
in his mind the life of Baudelaire: "He longed to remind them of the two rights Baudelaire had added to the rights of man....". The right to controdict oneself, and the right to leave (p.71). But Nirode's problems are too personal to articulate. His study of Canus also does not help him. He writes a Play and gives it to his elder sister, Monisha. She feels that Nirode is more involved with their mother and the past than she had suspected. Surprisingly Monisha's suicide brings about a great change in Nirode's attitude towards everything including his mother. The obsessions in Nirode and Monisha have their roots in the disharmony they find in their family, thus proving the fact that the external world has a strong influence on the inner self of a person. Like Maya in Cry, the Peacock, Monisha is also married into a joint family where her privacy is violated. It is not only her home life but the life in the city that drives her to suicide.

Desai, Anita.

266 p.

Of all the novels Anita Desai's Bye-Bye, Black Bird is most closely related to her own experiences "Of all my novels it is most rooted in experience and the least literary in derivation" (Atma Ram, "Anita Desai: The Novelist who writes for herself", The Journal of Indian Writing in English
(July 1977, p.40). She also says that this novel is "the closest of all my books to actuality" (Atma Ram, p.31). The central character in this novel is Dev who goes to England to study at the London School of Economics. In the initial stages he finds it difficult to adjust himself to the new environment. Anita Desai's description of Dev's life in England is filled with humour. Dev is unhappy because he finds that Indians are not treated properly in England: the London docks have three kinds of lavatories — Ladies, Gents and Asiatics (p.19). He does not want to live in a country where he is insulted and unwanted. He is at a loss to know why the Englishmen are so firm about their privacy. His alienation and agony are clearly revealed by his experiences in the London tube, which for him is a "dark labyrinth of a prison" (p.64). He starts hating the immigrants because he thinks that they are very soft and do not have self-respect. Slowly, as Dev observes the various attractions of London, he becomes uncertain about his attitude to England. He is caught under England's spell. He changes place with Adit, whose attitude to England has also undergone the great change and who wants to go back to India. We have another character in the novel, Sarah, who also suffers from a loss of identity. She feels that she is culturally alienated. In conclusion, we can say that people like Dev and Sarah cannot belong to a world. They are torn between two worlds.
Desai, Anita.

Where shall We Go This Summer? /Anita Desai.—

This novel has been compared with Virginia Woolf's To the Lighthouse and Margaret Attwood's Surfacing. Sita, in her fifth pregnancy, deserts her husband and goes to an island, Manori, where her father once commanded respect, in search of peace. The novel is divided into three parts. Part I entitled "Monsoon 67" describes Sita's visit to Manori. She is fed up with the business atmosphere of Bombay and is unhappy with her husband who is "not an introvert, nor an extrovert - a middling kind of man, he was dedicated unconsciously to the middle way" (p.47). She takes two of her children along with her to the island. Part II entitled "Winter 47" presents in a flashback Sita's father and his saintly life in the island. He was a Gandhian and the villagers worshipped him. But Sita is shocked when she comes to know that her mother had, like herself, deserted her father and stayed in Benaras for twenty years. Sita fails in her attempt to know the reason for her mother's behaviour. It is after her father's death that Raman becomes her guardian and her husband. Sita does not feel that she is indebted to Raman for his help. On the other hand she thinks that her marriage
led her "out of the ruined theatre into the thin Sunlight of the ordinary, the everyday, the empty and the meaningless" (p.100). In Part III entitled "Monsoon 67" we find that Raman goes to the village and Sita thinks that he has come to take her home. She knows that in spite of her reservations about her husband, it is in the company of her husband that she finds comfort and security. She is disappointed when Raman tells her that he wants to take their daughter back so that she can join the Medical College. In spite of her silent protest against her husband's view of life, she accompanies her husband and children to Bombay.

This novel reminds us of R.K. Narayan's The Dark Room. The only difference that we find between Narayan's Savitri and Anita Desai's Sita is that "Sita appears more spirited and shown greater awareness of the kind of life that is possible for a woman in the changing society of contemporary India" (Five Indian Novelists, p.20). But she also has to toe the line of her husband just in order to save the family.

Desai, Anita.


Anita Desai was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award for this novel. The scene of action in this novel is Kasauli on the Simla Hills. There are three main characters in the novel, Nanda Kaul, her great grand daughter Rakha and her old friend, Ila Das. These three characters come though near to one another, link in their separate loneliness and make vain attempts to understand one another. Nanda Kaul feels that her life as a Vice-Chancellor's wife was not a pleasant experience. "Its crowding had stifled her" (p.29). That is why she is afraid that Rakha's visit may force her to open the "troublesome ledger" (p.30) again. She feels that her life in Kasauli, where she came after her husband's death, will be disturbed. She has got used to the peaceful surroundings of the house, and the only visitor is her old friend Ila Das. She and Ila Das were friends even in the childhood but she cannot approve of her wholeheartedly because of her rigid attitude. Also, Nanda Kaul does not like things about which Ila Das talks, things like old age. But Ila Das discharges her duties as a Welfare officer efficiently. It is her passion for justice that brings her trouble. She is raped and killed when she tries to prevent a child marriage,. When the police officer tells Nanda Kaul about the murder of Ila Das, the news shocks and kills her. She realises the difference between what society thinks of her and what in fact she is.
Like her great grandmother, Rakha also seems to suffer from an oppressive memory associated with her parents. There is no love lost between her mother, Tara, and her father. In one of the secret trips to the Mountain she sees a huge fire in the valley "The death of Nanda Kaul, caused by the unhappy fate of Ila Das seems to be a thematic variation ... of the fire Rakha causes on the Mountain" (Five Indian Novelists, p.140). As K.R. Sreenivasa Iyengar points out, "The supreme irony is that Nanda with all her children, grand-children and great grand-children and the unmarried Ila equally feel utterly lonely, which perhaps is meant to show up the futility of living, married or single" (K.R. Sreenivasa Iyengar : Indian Writing in English, p.745).

Desai, Anita.


Clear Light of Day is the story of a family of two brothers and two sisters. Raja and Baba are the two brothers and Tara and Bimla are the two sisters. Tara is married to a successful diplomat and is the mother of two daughters. But she is unhappy that she cannot help her problem - ridden parental home. Raja is a Poet. He marries a Muslim girl and lives in Hyderabad. He almost discontinues his contact with his sisters and brother. It is left to Bimla to look after
Baba who is mentally retarded. She is unmarried and works as a lecturer in a Delhi College. When Tara along with her husband and children visits her parental home that Bimla remembers the past and reflects on it. She is unhappy with the behaviour of her parents and her brother. She often compares her relations to mosquitoes. It is Dr. Biswas who diagnoses Bimla's predicament: "Now I understand why you do not wish to marry. You have dedicated your life to others ... to your sick brother and your aged aunt and your little brother who will be dependent on you all his life. You have sacrificed your own life for them", (p.97). The domestic disharmony strifes and chokes Bimla's adventurous spirit. We also have in the novel the family of the Misra whose life is meant to be a commentary on the various mental conditions of Bimla. The Misra girls were married at an early age but live away from their husbands. Bimla's views on the Misras apply to her parents, her brother and sister.

As V.V.N. Rajendra Prasad points out, "Unlike Maya in Cry, the Peacock, Monisha in Voices in the City, Nanda Kaul in Fire on the Mountain and Sita in Where Shall We Go This Summer?, Bimla's wounded self discovers the soothing balm and the healing touch at home and in the family. She becomes a part of a pattern, and the pattern consists in her realizing the importance of her relationship with the lawn, the rose
walk the guava trees, the flower-beds, the dog, the pigeons, aunt Mira, Baba, and the sound of Baba's gramophone" (p.143).

Desai, Anita.

The Village by the Sea/Anita Desai.—


The Village by the Sea: An Indian family story may be classified as a children's story. But the tale itself has rich meaning which can be put in any adult framework. The Village by the Sea dramatizes the heroic struggle of a boy and a girl, a brother and a sister who hail from Thul, a village near Bombay. Hari and Leela try to manage their affairs in such a way that the reader is made to see the significance of a cliche that man lives by hope. In the other novels of Anita Desai human predicament appears to be hopeless. But in The Village by The Sea surprisingly enough it appears to be hopeful. Hari's father is a confirmed drunkard who squanders the very little money he has on booze. His mother is bed-ridden and her ailment is later diagnosed as chronic anaemia caused by malnutrition. Unable to cope with the crisis Hari leaves for Bombay leaving his sister to do what she can for the family but by a happy coincidence
of circumstances the mother after a long treatment in the hospital recovers her original strength. He returns home from Bombay as a skilled technician in watch-mending. His experiences in Bombay were such that they made him a man. The story ends on a happy note with the mother and children coming together but this family amelioration is the consequence of the sympathetic and substantial help Hari and the children received from de Silvas and Syed Ali Sahib who lived in the bungalow of the village. What is significant about this story is when we compare it with the other novels of Anita Desai is the sense of hope and a capacity for endurance which children show in types of crisis. Most of the characters in the novel wilt under the heat of a crisis.

Desai, Anita.


The Protagonist of In Custody, Deven Sharma, is an ineffectual but well meaning young man whose problems, unlike those of the other Protagonists of Anita Desai's novels, are not just personal and private but public and social. Deven works as a Hindi lecturer in a college at Mirpor. He has great passion for Urdu poetry. The town has a Muslim area and a Hindu area represented by the Mosque and the Temple respectively. Deven is asked by one of his friends to write an article on the poetry of Nur for his journal. In spite of
his poor financial circumstances, he ventures to interview Nur as he wants to become popular as a critic. But when he goes to Chandni Chowk he finds himself in an alien and suffocating atmosphere. He finds the celebrated poet completely immersed in tackling people who surrounded him. Deven likes Nur for his active imagination: "That was what Nur's verse did ... placed frightening and inexplicable experiences like time and death at a point where they could be seen and studied in safety" (p.54).

Deven finds it extremely difficult to translate his aesthetic sensibility into a written document in spite of his best efforts to overcome obstacles like Nur's poor health and the friction between his wives. Even the attempt to record Nur's views on poetry fails. Deven feels that his friends cheated him but, in spite of the crisis he fails, "He thought of Nur's poetry being read, the sound of it softly murmuring in his ears. He had accepted the gift of Nur's poetry and that meant he was custodian of Nur's very 'soul and spirit. It was a great distinction'. He could not deny or abandon that under any pressure" (p.204).

Desai, Anita.

William Heinemann, 1989, Penguins, India.
229 p.
Anita Desai foregrounds the Indian cityscape in her novels. The actions of *Voices in the City*, *In Custody*, *The Village By the Sea* dramatize, apart from the private lives of the characters a variety of Indian urban life. *Baumgartner's Bombay* dramatizes hugo. Baumgartner's life in Calcutta and Bombay during and after the second world war. Baumgartner, a German Jew who lives in Berlin because of political compulsion and comes to India to eke out his livelihood as an exile in an unknown land without anybody to share his existential agony. Baumgartner shifts himself from Calacutta to Bombay. In Bombay he comes into contact with Lotte, a dancer who boasts of a German origin - Living in a dilaitated apartment in Bombay. Baumgartner is friendly with Lotte and lives as a man whom nobody acknowledges as his friend. As in the other novels of Anita Desai in *Baumgartner's Bombay* also we have the flashback narration in which we see hugo Baumgartner's childhood and youth in Berlin and his middle and old age and death in Bombay. The narrative mood is such that we also see the political, racial and the cultural tensions that prevailed in Europe and Asia before and during the war years. It sounds very ironic to note that Baumgartner, the Jew is knifed by a young man of the Aryan origin. The motive behind may be simply stated as lucre. But considering it from a broader historical and cultural perspective which the novel evolves Baumgartner's tragedy is symbolic in the
sense that gives the political and cultural milieu of the post-second world war. It appears that the evil forces generated by nazism are still active and are tremendously disturbing.

BOOKLENGTH STUDIES:

Bande, Usha.


191 p.

The book is divided into seven chapters with bibliography and index at the end. In chapter two, entitled "Third Force and Literary Characters", the author discusses the Third Force Psychology. According to the author, Anita Desai believed that childhood experiences determine conditions for neurosis but they are not the only cause of later troubles.

In chapter three, "Down Dock Corridors", Cry, the Peacock and Voices in the City are discussed. Maya in Cry, the Peacock is a motherless child and this fact goes a long way in shaping her tragedy. Her father is a benevolent despot and she never wants to displease him. According to the author, Maya's childhood world of fantasies and adult world of realities clash and produce imbalances in her life. Her childlike dependence and her inability to master her life make
it impossible for her to survive without the protection of love around her. But Gautama cannot be one with her in her world of senses. "While Maya craves for love, Gautama flees it" (p.51). The second part of the chapter discusses Monisha in *Voices in the City* the author feels that Monisha stands in direct contrast to Maya. Maya's trouble lies in her rich sensuality and Monisha's difficulties arise due to her passivity. The author is in the opinion that Monisha's trouble is more of the nature of personal problems than existential. The chapter ends with the statement that "Maya and Monisha spell their own destruction by their refusal to see, accept and live the ordinariness of life" (p.69).

In chapter four, the immeasurable emptiness the author discusses Nirode in *Voices in the City*, and Nanda Kaul and Raka in *Fire on the Mountain*, who reveal those self alienating tendencies that hasten their self-destructive moods. The author does not agree with critics who have studied Nirode Hamletian disgust and Lawrentian Oedipus complex. "Enslavement to her glorified self-image, and the inability to transcend the limitations of the solipsistic nightmare, exercise a dehumanising effect on him". In *Fire on the Mountain*, Nanda Kaul and Raka offer the pattern of self alienation of the severe kind, leading them towards neurosis.
Chapter five, "The Far Side of Despair" discusses Sita in *Where shall We Go this Summer?*, Sarah in *Bye-Bye, Black Bird* and Amla in *Voices in the City*. In spite of being high-strung introverts, and highly complex, these three women tend to reconcile with life and its problems, which saves them from psychic disaster.

In chapter six, "The Seraplic Vision" the author discusses Bim in *Clear Light of Day* and Deven in *In Custody*. Bim's main tendency is to grab power and glory. For her, triumph means to be at par with Raja. As long as she is successful she does not understand the situation she is in. It is only when she finds life becoming difficult that she looks for peace of mind by blocking consciousness and shrinking all sensitivity to nothingness. Deven attracts our attention with his helplessness, humility, suffering and nobility. Socio-economic factors influence personality and mould his psyche.

In chapter seven, "From Darkness to Light", Usha Bande considers Anita Desai as a great analyst of the human mind, a creator of brilliant characters and an astute interpreter of life" (p. 167).

Belliappa, Meena.


52 p.
In this short book, Meena Bellappa discusses two novels of Anita Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* and *Voices in the City*. In *Cry, the Peacock* the novelist succeeds in placing the centre of the novel within a single consciousness. Maya, the central character cannot accommodate her tumultuous responses to available patterns of living. The author also discusses the concept of a stream of consciousness and the use of imagery to pattern moments of awareness which are integral to the structuring of the novel. Discussing *Voices in the City* the author says, black is the colour crucial to the theme even as white is in *Cry, the Peacock*. There is in the novel a persistent symbolism of the dark in connection with scenes, characters and experiences.

**Dhawan, R.K., Ed.**

**The Fiction of Anita Desai**/Edited by R.K. Dhawan:


*(Series in English Language and Literature-X)*

The book is a collection of essays on Anita Desai by R.K. Dhawan, R.S. Pathak, Usha Bande, Ramesh K. Srivasthava and others.

The essay entitled *The Fiction of Anita Desai*, R.K. Dhawan emphasizes the point that though Anita Desai is
catalogued as a psychological novelist, she could more amply be described as the novelist who explores the language of the interior. Dhawan further says that Anita Desai is neither apologetic nor defensive about her use of the English language in her fiction.

R.S. Pathak in his essay on The Alienated Self in the novels of Anita Desai sees how Anita Desai gives creative release to feminine sensibility in the Indian novel in English. He discusses the protagonist of Anita Desai’s novels in terms of different kinds of alienation like social alienation, self alienation etc.

Usha Bonde in her essay entitled Anita Desai, Arun Joshi and 'Anashakthi Yoga' examines the novels of Anita Desai and Arun Joshi in terms of the Philosophy of detachment in order to understand the psyche of the characters. The implications of the philosophy of detachment are studied in terms of its enunciation in the Bhagavad Gita. As the author points out "the real attitude of 'Anasakti' lies in enjoying the world of objects from the point of view of the Creator, so that the enslaved 'self' does not waste its energy in the pursuit of narrow goals. Gautama and Sindi would have succeeded in their aim only if they could understand the concept "STHISPRADINA" as expounded by the Gita".
Rhytham in Cry, the Peacock by Kalpana S. Wandrelar examines Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock in terms of its lyrical structure and describes the novel as more appropriately a novel of rhytham. The implications of the term rhytham are derived from E.K. Brown's Treatise, Rhytham in the Novel.

Tagore Guruprasad's study the Generic structure of Cry, the Peacock unlayers the fourfold generic structure of the novel.

Ramesh K. Srivastava analyzes the Voices In The City in order to show through a character sketch of Nirode that between the aesthetic and the materialistic the artist should aim at the former but should not forsake the latter.

T.S. Anand's study of Anita Desai's Where Shall We Go This Summer? is brief account of Anita Desai's stance against negativism.

K.P. Ambedkar studies the symbolism of Anita Desai's Where Shall We Go This Summer? and compares the novel Virginia Woolf's The Light House. If in the Light House the centre symbol of Light House suggests stability and constancy. Anita Desai, according to the author, does not work out to the end the ramifications of the Symbol of the Wounded Eagle.
Usha Pathania in her article entitled 'The Filial Ties - A Bane', 'Fire on the Mountain' discusses what she calls Anita Desai's hypotheses the filial ties are the most sensitive and enduring bonds.

Santosh Gupta in 'Bridging the Polarities of Imagination and Reason In Clear Light of Day studies Anitya Desai's characterization and finds that a quest for fulfilment undertaken by them remains a struggle ending in violence and self-destruction.

"The wheel Turns" central theme in The Village By The Sea in which the author finds a departure from the familiar preoccupation on the part of the novelist with the problem of the human psyche.

F.A. I a dar in Fetters of Illusion : In Custody observes that Anita Desai's portrayal of Deven and Nur appears to corroborate the Shakespearean dictum in a Midsummer Night's Dream that the Lunatic the lover and the poet are of imagination all compact.

Syed Amanuddin studies the complexities of the plot structure of Anita Desai's novels and finds that the technique of Anita Desai is a technique of discovery. He further finds that Anita Desai uses reconstructive devices as part of her narrative framework. In his article Anita Desai's technique he finds Anita Desai imposing a design on raw material of life by means of the existentialist framework of her novels.
Jain, Jasbir.

Stairs to the Attic: The novels of Anita Desai/


p.xii, 176.

Jasbir Jain starts the discussion with a general note on Anita Desai's works and an interview with her. The second chapter is entitled 'Assent and Refusal'. Maya's unhappiness in Cry, the Peacock, as the author says, is not related to the reality of circumstances; it is a product of her own consciousness. The central image of the novel is the confrontation between life and death and Maya's inability to accept them as they are. Voices in the City also takes the message of the Gita for its central theme but it is developed on different lines. Sita's coming back to Manori in Where shall We Go This Summer? is an act of rejection. The conflict between the need to withdraw in order to preserve one's wholeness and the need to be involved in the painful process of life is again presented in Fire on the Mountain. Bye-Bye Black Bird is a novel of a different kind through the theme of loneliness is explored in this novel also. The technique and the intention are different. The chapter entitled 'Stairs to the Attic' discusses how fantasy works at different levels in the novels of Anita Desai. The next chapter is 'Airing the Family Ghosts', is devoted to fathers and husbands. "Men
are either marginally present or entirely absent, but the physical absence does not entail an absence from the minds and lives of their women relations" (p.56). The author opines that adequate attention has not been paid to the men in Anita Desai's novels. She discusses in detail character, like Gautama, Cry, the Peacock Nirode and Raman. Chapter five, 'A Leap of Recognition' discusses various images employed by Anita Desai in her novels. The different ways of approaching life as presented through various characters in the novels is discussed in "Not a Blaze but a Stupor". The next chapter, In Pursuit of wholeness shows how Desai's characters are continuously engaged in trying to find out their hidden selves either through expiation or reexamination. The last chapter discusses the psychological revelation and analysis, a dominant interest with Anita Desai. The framework does not limit itself to the character's mind. It permits a multifaceted delineation and provides room for parallel narrations of the same event. There is also a select bibliography.

Jena, Seema.


p.ix, 88.

This short book, a Dissertation briefly discusses the various aspects of Anita Desai's fiction: Her Plays among
Indian Women Novelists in English, Characterization, thematic patterns and plot-structure in her novels. Discussing characterization, the author shows how Anita Desai employs a variety of techniques to show the fear and anxiety neurosis that the women characters suffer from. Anita Desai's conception of a theme is connected with her concept of characterization. Her themes are so organized as to enable her characters who suffers from self-alienation to fully mature and portray themselves.

Anita Desai's technique is her natural outcome of her preoccupation with the individual's psychology combined with her vivid awareness of the external world. The author concludes the discussion by quoting Anita Desai's statement, "All my writings is an effort to discover ... one must find a way to unite the inner and the outer rhythms, to obtain a certain integrity and to impose order on chaos".

Kanwar, Asha.


75 p.

According to the author, in the novels of Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai, the present is being continuously invaded
and interrupted by the past. She devotes the main body of the book into three chapters, chapters two, three and four containing a discussion of Mrs. *Dalloway* and *Cry, the Peacock*, *To the Light House* and *Clear Light of Day* and *The Waves and Fire on the Mountain*. The Last chapter, 'conclusion' discusses the common features of the works of Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai.

**Madhusudan Prasad.**


139 p.

This book highlights what the author considers to be the obsessive existential concerns in all the novels of Anita Desai. The author claims to lay adequate emphasis on the narrative technique and the symbolism of the novels. Dr. Madhusudan Prasad devotes one chapter for each novel. In spite of the word symbol being used loosely Dr. Prasad makes perceptive observations on the characterization at the thematic progression of Anita Desai's novels. The book, starting with a definition of existentially some as made by F.H. Heinemann, discusses the existentialist aspect of Anita Desai's fiction at some length. In the process the book reveals to us the sophisticated texture of Anita Desai's novels.
Madhusudan Prasad, Ed.

An Anthology of Critical Essays./edited by
p. viii, 240.

The book contains articles on Anita Desai, Arun Joshi, Bharathi Mukherjee etc., Jasbir Jain has contributed an article on Anita Desai to this Volume. Hers is rather a prolix discussion of Anita Desai's merits as a novelist.

Paul, S.L.

A Critical Study of Anita Desai's Cry, The Peacock:
p. 83.

The book attempts to discuss the universality of the vision of Anita Desai but falls short of that expectation. One of the author's promises is that literature is at bottom Philosophy. Literature as Anita Desai sees it is embodied by individual vision as the content for which the form is provided. The book deals with characterization in Anita Desai's novel, Cry, The Peacock. The significance of the title of the novel and other issues relevant for undergraduate consideration.
Rajendra Prasad, V.V.N.

The Self, the Family and Society in Five Indian Novelists: Rajan, Arun Joshi, Anita Desai/V.V.N.

Rajendra Prasad.—New Delhi, Prestige Books, 1990.

172 p.

The book contains a chapter on Anita Desai in which the novels of Anita Desai are examined in terms of their lyrical texture unravelling complexity associated with women burdened with the problems they confront while negotiating a network of family relations. The author deals with the images of wounded self in Anita Desai's fiction dramatising the world of women. The account of Anita Desai's fiction as presented by V.V.N. Rajendra Prasad stresses the value for the self of a search for an emotional centre within accentuated relationships of family disharmony. Anita Desai's fictions, as the author portrays, not only give shape to separateness and connectedness that emerge from a family saga, but dramatise the way in which the self receives wound, which are either aggravated or healed by the socio-cultural matrix, which is its soil and sustenance.

Sarma, Gobinda Prasad.


391 p.
The book contains essays on a number of Indo-Anglian writers who have dealt with the theme of nationalism of special importance are the scattered references to Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai. Nayantara Sahgal's *Day in Shadow* is discussed in terms of the theme of the new leadership ousting the old. The account of the novel quotes profusely from the novel and recognises it as a form of powerful exhortation to the Nation *A Time To Be Happy, This Time of Morning and Storm in Chandigarh* are also discussed.

Anita Desai's novels *Cry, the Peacock, Voided In The City, Bye-Bye, Blackbird, Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and *The Foreigner* are also discussed. The novels of Anita Desai, according to the author, do not make use of any public machinery but rely upon the portrayal of an introspective quality in order to outline the essential loneliness of modern man. Aspects of Indian nationalism are only incidental to the novels of Anita Desai. The ancient Hindu ideas of non-involvement and *Karma* are placed against the modern malaise of loneliness, anguish and death-wish. The account of the novels cited above therefore trace an implicit nationalistic concern.

Sharma, R.S.

*Anita Desai/R.S. Sharma.—Indian Writers series, New Delhi, 1981.*

175 p.
This is a critical work on Anita Desai analyzing in seven chapters different aspects of Anita Desai's fiction. Each chapter is devoted to the critical evaluation of a novel. If the author examines the psychological motifs and architypal designs in Anita Desai's earlier work, and examines the patterns of movement and music, are rather the poetic texture of the later work.

Dr. Sharma repudiates the charge against Anita Desai that she lacks social awareness by saying that she probes deep the forces that condition the growth of the female in the patrilinear Indian family. He further emphasizes that, though not a feminist, Anita Desai writes about women and their predicament with psychological insight.

The third full length study of Anita Desai's work, Dr. Sharma's book contains an useful bibliography.

Srivastava, Ramesh, K., Ed.


p. ix+xiii-xivii+239.

This book includes articles by some of the welknown critics of the Indo-English novel. In all there are twenty articles on the various aspects of Anita Desai including one
Shyam Asnani's article discusses Anita Desai's theory and practice of the novel. M. Sivaramakrishna's article, "From Alienation to Mythic Acceptance: The ordeal of consciousness in Anita Desai's Fiction", is aimed at examining Anita Desai's fiction in terms of the ordeal of consciousness perceptible in the central characters. Harish Raizada discusses the haunted protagonists of Anita Desai. According to the author "Anita Desai is the most prominent among the Indian English novelists who have tried to portray the tragedy of human souls trapped in the adverse circumstances of life. . . . (The protagonists) are always haunted by the deadly nightmares of imagining apprehensions conjured up by their flawed nature..." (pp. 31-32). Madhusudan Prasad discusses the imagery and B. Ramachandra Rao, the technique in Anita Desai's novels. There are also articles by F. A. Inamdar (Anita Desai's Prose Style), Vinod Bhushan Gulati (Structure in the novels of Anita Desai). Darshan Singh Maini (Anita Desai's novels: An Evaluation), Som P. Sharma and Kamal N. Awasthi (Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock: A Vindication of the Feminine), Ann Lowry Weir (The Illusions of Maya: Feminine consciousness in Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock), S. Krishnamoorthy Aithal, A. V. Krishna Rao, Charmazel Dutt, G. S. Balarama Gupta and Evelyn Damashek Varady. There is also an interview, Anita Desai at work. The book contains with a selective bibliography.