

## **THE NARRATOR'S VOICE: A STUDY OF ANITA DESAI'S STORYTELLING METHODS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The way in which Anita Desai delivers her stories is filled with a certain something that is both commendable and attractive. Just as much as she cares about the outside lives of her characters, she is also concerned about their inner lives. When compared to the actual surrounds of the world, she places a higher priority on the inner workings of the mind and finds greater curiosity in understanding them. To our surprise, Anita Desai is exceptionally skilled in the field of psychological analysis. She employs methods such as stream-of-consciousness, inner monologue, flashback and flashforward, and other modes of storytelling in her novels. It is necessary for a novelist to discuss the feelings of the characters while they are discussing how they feel on the inside. This is because the characters' feelings are equally as significant as their thoughts and ideas. When it comes to the majority of situations, the emotional aspect is more significant than the cerebral side, which is somewhat insignificant and difficult to see. Attempts are made to discuss the craft and technique that she employs in the telling of stories in her works.

**KEYWORDS:** Craft and technique, Emotional aspect, Flashback and flashforward, Inner monologue, Psychological analysis, Stream-of-consciousness.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Anita Desai is one of a kind among diasporic post-colonial women writers who have made a name for themselves in Indian English literature. The new ways of using language, putting together words and pictures, different ways of telling a story, and changing up the codes are just some of

the methods that make the Indian English Novel unique and well-known around the world. As a result, post-colonial women writers add to the Indian English novel and give it its unique style and themes. Anita Desai is famous for revolutionising the art of book writing by creating a new style and a new sense of what it means to write. She has significantly influenced the literature of the Indian diaspora through her books, which show the subtleties and nuances of fictional art. Along with code-mixing as a way to tell a story, her style is defined by imagery, literary licence, and the stream-of-consciousness method. Being very original is her strong suit, and the subjective style she likes to use is made up of speeches, flashbacks, soliloquies, fantasies, experiences of the past, and specific historical locations where the individual was at a specific time in history. Her style of writing is part of a new movement of Indian writers who write in English. This movement began in the 1930s or 1940s.

## **II. NARRATIVE DEVICE**

The ways that Anita Desai tells her stories help us understand how people struggle inside. The stream of consciousness method is one of the main tools. American psychologist William James first used the method in his famous book *The Principles of Psychology*. He also used it in his writing and in psychology. He says that awareness is "a constant flow of thought." "The time gaps are filled by memories and thoughts of the past that come to mind in the present" (*The Principles of Psychology* 224–225). The most obvious way to describe it is as a "river" or "stream." Every thought is put into a phrase, so the flow of a language shows how people are feeling. Each moment that we experience in awareness is like a clear picture. Interior monologue tells the reader what a character is thinking in full, logical language as if the character were conversing with the reader. Stream of consciousness, on the other hand, tries to show what it's really like to think, with all of its chaos and distractions. James Joyce and Virginia Woolf were the first writers to use this style. A flashback is when a writer adds details from the past to a story that is currently happening to help the plot or show why a character is acting the way they are. But a flash forward is when something that hasn't happened yet in the present story time shows up. It gives hints about what will happen next in the story or plan.

## **III. ANALYSIS OF NOVELS**

The first book that Anita Desai wrote, "Cry, the Peacock," made it into the Hall of Fame. It's amazing that this book, *Cry, the Peacock*, is, along with Raja Rao's *The Serpent and the Rope*, the

most gorgeous and poignant Indo-English book ever composed. When looked at in a bigger picture, it's a critical look at how people live in a dangerous world. Some of the things that make this book stand out are its poetic style, internal conversations, and lively, colourful descriptions of the Indian landscape-not just because they are beautiful, but because they are "objectively correlative" to the characters' moods. Desai skillfully uses many writing techniques in the book, such as the "stream of consciousness" method, the "world of memories and nostalgia" method, the "flashback and forth" method, symbolic and psychological language, and more. A close study of some key parts of the book reveals the features of the stream of consciousness and other literary methods that give us a good look into the mind and personality of the main character, Maya.

There is a big fight going on Maya's soft, gentle, and artistic feminine self and Gautama's practical, philosophical self, who is separate but has to do what is right. This type of storytelling uses flashbacks to bring Maya's pain to light: Not a single one of my friends could hold me down anymore, and everyone I turned to for comfort had let me down. I could only think of the albino performer whenever I lay down. It looked like the truth. I remember every detail, but God, Gautama, Father, it can't be true, can it? I cried. I would be fine again after the oneirodynia night was over. During the day, I would know that everything I had been going through was just a bad dream. Shouldn't I? (54). Desai's first book, "Cry, the Peacock", set a trend and is about the mental health of its characters instead of their physical health. It's about a marriage that doesn't work out for the main character, Maya.

Three important facts are hints in the text above that need our attention. Maya feels alone and alienated, and she remembers pictures of her old life with her father, husband, and God. During this time, she thinks that her dreams are making her more and more crazy. The "night of oneirodynia" comes to represent the forecast that is hidden in her thoughts. Anita Desai's unique way of writing fiction is shown through her rich poetry style, which is used to show how the main character's mood changes and how strongly they feel about things. This is shown through Maya's speech. "Fall, fall, long fall into the soft velvet wall of the primordium, of original instinct, of first-formed love!" she yells out. This one-sided speech paints a beautiful picture of Maya's desire for love, which has been at the heart of human life since the beginning of time. This different section sums up the feeling in a repetitive way. In fact, Anita Desai's use of inner talks and discussions shows that she is trying to be realistic and that she wants to explore what it means to be feminine.

“Voices in the City” is an interesting book, and the title is a clever use of language. It is told in a way that makes use of pictures, metaphors, symbols, figures of speech, and the stream of consciousness technique to repeat important words over and over again. A big part of how this book is told is through the city of Calcutta's organic role. The part that Calcutta plays is very important because it affects the back-and-forth method of telling the story. In fact, Voices in the City is mostly about people in Calcutta. But more importantly, it becomes a "character" through the "Voices" of Nirode, Monisha, and Amla, who are siblings whose parents have broken up.

As a result, they look for their real names in Calcutta. As a result, the city has a big effect on the lives of these three main characters. The ugly parts of Calcutta fully show Nirode's hopelessness. He can't do anything because of the city. In her book Voices in the City, Anita Desai uses the polyphonic story style to explore the idea of feeling alone in cities after independence. The book shows how dangerous it is to be alone through the mistakes made by Nirode, Monisha, Amla, and their mother. In this case, you can't ignore how important it is to communicate. Voices in the City is a book about philosophical ideas. It's what Anita Desai calls "the terror of facing alone, the fierce assaults of existence." Nirode, Monisha, and Amla are all from a wealthy family. Nirode doesn't have any money troubles or stresses. So is Amla. Monisha, on the other hand, is married to Jiban, who comes from a wealthy family. They are upset because they don't like Calcutta, which is a dirty city. The unpleasant thoughts are the dirty, violent, and just plain dull things in the real world. In this book by Desai, the characters fight against the dirty or ugly truth that is hidden in capitalism.

What Anita Desai does in her book Where Shall We Go This Summer? is called "stream of consciousness." The main character, Sita, a sensitive woman in her early forties, goes through a very serious identity crisis in the book. This book has a framework a lot like Virginia Woolf's "The Lighthouse," and it shows how time changes. It's split into three parts, just like The Lighthouse: part I, Monsoon 67; part II, Winter 47; and part III, Monsoon 67. The three-part framework shows how the novel's themes run through it even more. The main character, Sita, stands for a time as both the protector and the killer. The novel's three parts show how time moves in a circle, with the past, the present, and the future. The chaos inside Sita's mind is like the rain outside. More importantly, the book looks into Sita's mind psychologically. She is pregnant but doesn't want to give birth. Instead, she travels to the mystical island of Manori, where she experiences a joyous childhood, with the belief that it will somehow halt the biological process of

giving birth. In this case, Bombay stands for the real world, Manori Island for the dream world, and Sita's return to the real world for Manori Island. In her books, Desai has focused more on the people than on the society they live in. In “In Custody”, on the other hand, neither the main character nor any other characters are sensitive nor highly strung. In this case, Desai makes a change. According to Meenakshi Mukherjee, in “A Broader View: A Review of ‘In Custody’”, things are changing because people are becoming more concerned about a wider range of issues and are ready to include specific historical and cultural aspects in the design of indoor landscapes. The book is about a young man who wants to do the right thing but can't. His problems are not just personal and private; they are also public and social.

Fire on the Mountain, Anita Desai's book that won the Sahitya Akademi Award, is another example of her skill. When writing the story, the author uses symbols and flashbacks to help tell it. In Fire on the Mountain, the female characters of the author reveal their authentic, sane selves and seek refuge in the secure havens they have established in a society that is governed by males. Despite the chains that society has put around them, they want to be free. The book does a great job of showing how Nanda Kaul, Raka, and Lla Das are all unaware of being alone and alienated. From the 1940s to the 1970s, “Clear Light of Day” (1980) follows an Indian family that has become more English-speaking and is from the top middle class. Bim Das is the main character. She is the older sister who has never been married and, as a young woman during Partition, has to take care of her brothers and watch over the family home in Delhi while her parents are away.

One of Anita Desai's most renowned works is Clear Light of Day. The fact that this book shows how good Desai is at writing fantasy is important. It's a strong book that's well-thought-out, beautifully written and has some funny parts. One of the most important things in Anita Desai's work is that she uses the pace and tone of Indian speech in a way that has never been done before in this book. The driving force behind the start of the book is memory. Using the stream of consciousness method, the author wants to show what's going on inside her characters, which means she peeks into the deepest, most secret parts of the human mind. After her trip to the now-distressed family farm in an area of Old Delhi, where Bim still lives and cares for their younger brother Baba, Tara thinks about her visit. As the story starts, the dazzling white light of the summer sun and the sound of birds singing in the woods signal that it is now daytime. At this point in the story, remembering an event is based on the tiny details of what Bim and Tara, her sister, are doing as they try to get back together. Because of the way the novel is structured, the past and present

are brought together through flashes of memories from the past. This lets the events in the novel continue. When Tara walks into her old house room, she feels emotional because she remembers the good times she had as a child. When she and Bim were teenagers, this room was theirs. Between the back of the house and the row of workers' rooms, there were thick guava trees that it opened up to. Early in the morning, they produced sounds such as a bicycle bell clanging, an infant weeping a cock crowing, and a water tap flowing. Parrots that couldn't be seen screamed and fought over the fruits (77).

In her book, Desai knows how to use flashbacks perfectly. The present and the past mix because of her. Desai has not kept track of the events in the way they happened. She told us a few words about places like the Lodi Gardens, which is near the old house where the Das family lives. Desai has used the interior monologue and what is now known as the stream of consciousness techniques to show how the characters, especially the main character Bim, feel inside. There are a lot of complex words that Anita Desai has used to make her language more useful. A lot of clever complex words are used in this piece, such as "jungle of rag-ten" (122), "pink-flowered cushion", "birdboned. Wrists", "a fine-shelter egg", "the papal-tree lined street", "blue-tinged skin", and "shell pink edged" (123) to use impressive and symbolic language. Additionally, the author has intentionally incorporated Indian elements into this work. Words that have been changed to sound more Indian, like "Mausi," "Bhai," "Mithai," and "Mubarak," show how important she was to making Indianness more real in Indo-English literature.

Anita Desai's work has reached a new high point with *Clear Light of Day*, which shows that she has a clear grasp of the language and how to employ the rhythm and tone of Indian language. Based on the author's own life, *Baumgartner's Bombay* is about how the violent past of the Holocaust and the split of India and Pakistan changed his life in terrible ways. In the book, Anita Desai looks into the mind of the main character, a man, who is not bound by family responsibilities or ties. Not only that, but she moves away from her previous obsession with the inner lives of overly sensitive and nervous women. *Baumgartner's Bombay* is mostly about how men think and feel. The novel's story shows how lonely, rootless, homeless, and detached people can feel, especially those who are exiled or who have moved to a new country. Desai creates a powerful and moving drama about the strange situation of a wanderer without a country in a foreign setting. In this book, the story is told through Hugo's stream of consciousness as he remembers different events from his life. It is amazing how Anita Desai used letters, literary

references, songs, nursery rhymes, and trip stories to connect different texts in her book. Baumgartner's Bombay is split into seven uneven parts that don't have names.

His mother had a big impact on Baumgartner's personality, so the mother-consciousness serves as the most reliable source of information for the story that is told in this book. Baumgartner's personalities are always going back and forth between German and Indian, and in the end, he can't have either: Their faces scowled and said, "Firangi," which means "foreigner," but they were nice and didn't mean anything bad. Still the world, the name hit him hard, and he winced. He hunched his shoulders and tried to avoid touching something dirty. In India, people called him the firangi because he was fair. The unacceptable happened in both places (150). In the telling of this story, the author has used both flashback and flashforward techniques. Flashbacks and flashforwards are used in this book. Flashbacks are memories and stream of consciousness; flashforwards are dreams, fears, and instincts.

So, Anita Desai's ideas are unique and not at all like those of other Indian English writers writing today. Her ideas often get in the way of other authors' plans. All of the parts blend together, and there are times when several ideas are linked together. The author is able to make her characters into a meaningful whole by building on these themes. Desai's writing style is unique because it can combine different feelings into a complex framework, which has an impact on symphony. Desai is without a question a great artist whose precise skill is truly amazing.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Anita Desai's mastery of the book as an art form shows in how well she writes them. There is no end to the magic she can weave into her writing, and it is this talent that has enabled her fictional works to transcend the confines of time and space. It has already been said that Anita Desai has given modern Indian English fiction a new depth. Because of her new methods and themes, she has earned a special and important place for herself. In general, she works with female taste. She is interested in getting to know her characters better and showing what's really going on in their heads. In the end, we can say with certainty that Anita Desai's approach to telling stories is really admirable, despite what we said earlier that wasn't so nice about it. All of her books are popular because of how she writes about characters and how she tells stories.



In short, Desai's books are technical innovations that take parts from both novels and lyrical poems. Language is the most important part of Desai's writing style. Her inventive use of words and conversation is one of the things that makes her books so interesting. Desai also freely uses Indian parts, mixed words, and changes in syntax and language from one code to the next. Without a question, the way she writes her stories is meant to reveal the hidden parts of people's minds, which is something she does very well.

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