

Redemption of Joy Through Death "A Study of Christopher Fry's *The Dark is Light Enough*"

*Fry calls the play *The Dark Is Light Enough* a winter comedy, by which he means, that despite a lightness of treatment, the content of the play is serious. His theme is that humanity has a value quite independent of its particular human example, that the champion of humanity must defend it on every occasion and not qualify his allegiance, according to the merit of the individual. In short, charity is absolute. The object of charity is Richard Gettner, who is thoroughly unworthy of it. The most welcome feature of the play is that it gives a great distance toward the elimination of the verbal eccentricities which impaired the earlier comedies. In considering this play there is to be perceived a clear distinction between its absolute artistic value on the one side and its formal characteristics on the other. The significance of its intention and the import of the stylistic changes require close scrutiny. Described as a winter comedy, it is a story of an incredibly wise and compassionate lady, who recognizes that the good in the worst of human behaviour is as valuable as the best of human behaviour.*

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Christopher Fry is a great playwright and poetic-drama revivalist of the 20th century. He has come on to the modern stage like a beam of spring sunshine after a hard winter. He has been an enigma to his critics. He was applauded as a 'word-smith'; a 'word-juggler'; a 'word-fancier'; a 'poetaster'; a 'relishing rhetorician'; and a 'varnisher of our language'. He has made great contribution to the poetic drama of the present century by inventing 'Comedies of Mood', 'The Theatre of Words', 'Seasonal Comedies'. He wrote religious plays, seasonal comedies, tragedy and history plays. Despite such varied production, his works display a remarkable unity of theme, 'exploration into God', 'exploration into the mystery of life and death.' Fry is a playwright with a philosophical bent of mind. He achieved harmony by blending the poetic and the realistic, to provide aesthetic delight and emotional gratification. He attached considerable importance to the practice of Christian qualities, on account of his intimate knowledge and association with Quakerism and the corresponding philosophy of life. Denis Donoghue has rightly observed that, "he saw a world in which we are all poised on the edge of eternity, a world which has deep shadows of mystery in which God is anything but a sleeping partner." (Donoghue: 181)

Fry's general themes are mystery and joy of existence, besides the regenerative power of life which can overcome existential alienation and despair. Fry reminds us that, full as life is of mystery and sadness, there exists comedy, and high-spirited characters who find enjoyment in the process of living. Fry's thinking about God is inventive and adventuresome. By emphasizing mystery Fry seems to be trying to say something more than mere good theatre can state. What Fry affirms is no paradise, however; it is the complex chaos and contrariness of human experience itself. Geoffrey Bullough admits, "He regrets that human life is largely getting used to the mystery of things, the domestication of the enormous miracle." (Bullough: 61). Fry offered mystery instead of a deterministic universe and verse instead of the naturalistic language of the stage. He had asserted the claims of diminutive man's freedom to think and will on his own without worrying about predestination. Fry's drama is inseparable from God and His creation. It fuses drama, poetry, religion, faith and philosophy together. Laughter and tears, Man and God, Mystery and Revelation, this-worldliness and other-worldliness go hand in hand in his plays. He enables us to discover a correspondence between appearance and reality. The quests for love and

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death in Fry are intertwined ambivalently, taking apparently contrasting forms which complement one another. All of Fry's plays approach a potentially tragic crisis near the end, a point of ritual death. Considering Fry's greatness and success as a dramatist, Derek Stanford quoted, "In a universe often viewed as mechanistic, he has posited the principle of mystery; in an age of necessitarian ethics, he has stood unequivocally for ideas of free-will." (Stanford: 5)

The function of Fry's comedy is not to expose social and economic evils, defects of personality and temperament, or moral vices and hypocritical codes of conduct. The stress in Fry's comedies is on the metaphysical and the spiritual. His comedy is the comedy of "religious faith" (Alexander: 80). It is not a drama with the addition of laughs, but 'an angle of experience where the dark is distilled into light either here or hereafter, in or out of time'. His comedies have two layers; the top is literal and comic, the bottom one symbolic and moral. His comic vision is not that of a jester or a satirist, but that of a philosopher and a healer of sick souls. Fry's comedy is not merely the tickling of thoughtless laughter with a romantic love story, varied with interludes of fun, but a spiritual exploration as well as means of salvation from pain and misery. From this it follows that Fry's comedy is a discovery of truth: it is 'a comment on the human dilemma'. In it the characters do not mock at the bullies and foibles of one another, but at the futility of death and pain, and also at man's spiritual hollowness. Fry's comedy, thus, is not a mere phantasmagoria of incongruities, eccentricities, oddities, witticisms, jokes, humours, love affairs, farcical events, or weddings; it cannot be pigeonholed as classical, romantic, psychological, naturalistic, domestic, or social; nor can it be called a comedy of plot, of character, of intrigue, of humours, of sentiment, or of social ridicule. In all his four comedies, life of man is traced in a cyclic pattern, his mood being governed by each season, designed to represent the spirit of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter respectively. This fact also goes to conclusively establish Fry as secular dramatist, who more than amply demonstrates a strong commitment to life and its celebration through peace, mercy and harmony. R.L. Varshney asserts, "In his comedies, Fry has combined the metaphysical, the mystical and the comic in a wonderful manner." (Varshney: 33)

The Dark Is Light Enough, Fry's another significant comedy, his 'winter play', written for Dame Edith Evans, opened on April 30, 1954, at the Aldwych theatre, London. The title of the play is taken from a passage by J.H.Fabre. Fry has chosen as an epigraph to this work by the same passage,

*"The weather was stormy, the sky heavily clouded,
the darkness it arrives in a state
of perfect freshness, its great wings intact....
the darkness is light enough....."*

(J.H.Fabre:64)

It is implied that the butterflies resemble souls guided toward a goal by a faith in something, but the precise identity of their guide and their faith is shrouded in mystery.

Fry calls the play *The Dark Is Light Enough* a winter comedy, by which he means, that despite a lightness of treatment, the content of the play is serious. His theme is that humanity has a value quite independent of its particular human example, that the champion of humanity must defend it on every occasion and not qualify his allegiance, according to the merit of the individual. In short, charity is absolute. The object of charity is Richard Gettner, who is thoroughly unworthy of it. The most welcome feature of the play is that it gives a great distance toward the elimination of the verbal eccentricities which impaired the earlier comedies. In considering this play there is to be perceived a clear distinction between its absolute artistic value on the one side and its formal characteristics on the other. The significance of its intention and the import of the stylistic changes require close scrutiny. Described as a winter comedy, it is a story of an incredibly wise and compassionate lady, who recognizes that the good in the worst of human behaviour is as valuable as the best of human behaviour. Timothy Light averts, "The winter play treating the way man's self-destruction in a war fought for justice and ending in reprisals and wholesale slaughter can be overcome by the power of life working through human dignity and brotherly love." (Light: 6)

The play is set at the Estate of the Countess Rosmarin, located near the border between Hungary and Austria at the time of the 1848-49 Hungarian revolution. The plot involves the story of the highly cultured Countess Rosmarin who dangerously overburdens her heart first to harbor the disreputable Richard Gettner from the Hungarians, and then to hide the Hungarian Janik from the victorious Austrians. At the center of the plot is a double triangle complicated by an Oedipus pattern. Many years before, the Countess had married her daughter Gelda to Gettner, a brilliant but unstable writer. Despite the probability that the marriage would fail, she had allowed her daughter to make her own mistakes without interference. After the unconsummated marriage fell apart, Gelda remarried Count Peter Zichy, a Hungarian who is highly placed in the Austrian government. The plot of the play, *The Dark Is Light Enough* embodies violence as self-assertion. As the play opens, one of the Thursday 'at homes of the Countess Rosmarin Ostenburg is in progress, but the atmosphere is discontented. The Countess lives in her Austrian Country house while the Hungarian Austrian war is in progress during the winter of 1848-49. She lives at the boundary between the two nations, and the atmosphere is restless because, with war going on all around, the Countess is strangely absent from her 'at home'. Unknown to friends or servants, she has left by horse and sleigh in a blinding snow storm to find Richard Gettner, the former husband of her daughter Gelda. Gettner is an Austrian who has joined the Hungarian army and has now deserted. Held in contempt by Hungarians, Austrians, and all of the guests, Gettner arrives at the 'at home' with the Countess, and their arrival coincides with the arrival of Gelda, who has been sent

for from Vienna become of the disappearance of her mother. Into the party breaks Janik, a civilian geologist turned colonel in the Hungarian revolt. He and a troop of Hungarian soldier have observed the Countess bringing Gettner to her house; they have also arrested Count Peter Zichy who is Gelda's present husband; and the Hungarians demand that the countess surrender Gettner as a condition for the release of Peter. All the guests advise the surrender of Gettner, whom they consider worthless, but the countess stands firm in protecting Gettner, and Peter remains a prisoner of the Hungarians and Janik.

Before Act II opens, the Hungarians have left, encountered the Austrians, returned from battle to the house, and occupied it as headquarters. The family and the guests of the 'at home' stranded by the war are in process of moving into the stables as the act opens. The atmosphere is as hostile as ever. Gettner has escaped from the house to the stable with a supply of liquor. On his way to the stable loft he meets Gelda alone, they discover that their marriage is not as deed as they had thought it was, and they kiss. As the others arrive Gettner makes his way into the loft. Colonel Janik, a civilian friend of the Countess, is in the awkward position of dispossessing her to the stable, eager to compensate for the crude necessity of war, he makes the concession of allowing Peter to join the company, the only in the presence of two Hungarian guards. No sooner is the company complete than Gettner, fortified by drink, and makes his way down from the loft. The Countess persuades the guards not to arrest Gettner, and Gettner, expansively successful, announces before Peter that Gelda still loves him. To prove it, he kisses her, much to the disgust of everyone present. To lighten the atmosphere, the countess suggests that the guards provide music. The guards take off their pistol belts to dance; and Stefan, the countess's son, disgusted by Gettner's reviving the feelings of the defunct marriage, steals the pistols and unnoticed by the others preoccupied with the dance, forces Gettner to step outside to fight a duel. When the shots are fired, the dancing stops abruptly; the embarrassed guards miss their weapons; everyone but the Countess rushes outside; and they return to inform the Countess that Gettner has shot her son. Even so, she refuses to be judgmental against Gettner.

Act Three opens with the Hungarians defeated, Stefan recovering from a gunshot wound, and the Countess in the bed with acute exhaustion. Peter, released as a Hungarian prisoner, stops in at the house of the Countess just long enough to establish a good relationship with Gelda again, but he must hurry off to Austria to persuade the victorious government to stop their wholesale slaughter of Hungarian officers. Gettner is not in immediate jeopardy from the Hungarians as deserter; he is, however still in Hungarian uniform and in jeopardy from the Austrians. So Gettner steals a horse from the stable and rides toward Hungary, but he hears rumors along the way that the Countess is dying, arrives at her house during a Thursday 'at home'. The Countess, ill as she is, manages to attend. Janik, who formerly pursued

Gettner as a deserter is now being pursued by the victorious Austrians. He arrives at the 'at home' just before Gettner and the Countess now grants Janik the same impartial asylum that she granted Gettner earlier. When Gettner arrives, he and the Countess have a long talk together, and Gettner proposes to marry her; the Countess is pleased but declines, and Gettner leaves, only to find the house surrounded by Austrians in pursuit of Janik. He returns to the Countess, but she has died during the few moments that he was gone. He calmly requests the servant to admit the Austrians, and for the first time in his life he does not run or hide. From beginning to end, in spite of counteracting influences from the Countess, dark is full of a hostile atmosphere, all the more ironic because the Countess intends the atmosphere to be 'at home' coziness. When Stefan, the son of Countess Rosmarin Ostenburg enquires Doctor Kassel about the disappearance of his mother which is a mystery, Kassel gives his view on mystery,

.....*In this world a mystery
Is only so out of extreme simplicity.*

(Fry: 67)

Like Shakespeare's problem plays, *The Dark Is Light Enough* presents difficulties, degraded heroes and contrived solutions. From a technical point of view it is admirably economical and skillful, carefully alternating suspense with revelation, affirmation with mockery, pathos with terror. Fry concludes the play condemning all war outright, not just some wars, a clear advance over *The Firstborn*. This is not an unmixed blessing, however, for the parable which the play develops nearly overwhelms the development of the action, providing neither fully articulated conflicts nor convincing support of its pacifistic thesis.

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Sexuality, Alternate Sexualities and Gender in Dattani's *Bravely Fought The Queen*

Mahesh Dattani is at the peak of his creative powers, continuously experimenting with new forms manners of expression. As a playwright he will never be stereotypical. The varied content of his plays seldom have his characters mouthing quotable lines, nor does thematic material rise to extraordinary heights. But what makes Mahesh Dattani one of India's finest playwrights is perhaps his manner of speaking to the audience with complete honesty. For the moment, he seems to have found the right combination where his art is not compromised upon and yet makes commercial sense.

D. RAMESH

Mahesh Dattani is an actor and director with his own theatre group and has an innate sense of dialogue that is vital, stimulating, lucid and effective. Dealing with compelling issues rooted in his milieu, he has dispelled the perception about English theatre being just gratuitous fizz. His audiences have been large and responsive, both to the spectacle and the language. Theatre is not a mute and mechanical representation of social dynamics but it is a lively representation of social dynamics and the voices resounding in context of totality of human experience that consciously or unconsciously affect the existing dynamics of human sensibility. Mahesh Dattani, one of the exponents of modern Indian drama, thematically shows about the areas where the individual feels exhausted. Dattani in the process of engineering the current of Indian drama by bringing it closer to the real life experiences tried to articulate the voice of the oppressed sections of the society whose identity is shrouded in the cover of myths and social prejudices. They have been dragged in darkness, doomed to survive in perpetual silence bearing the oppressive burden of the hegemony of the elitist class.

Drama is the most wide-ranging, the most polyphonic of all the arts: it both represents life and is also a way of seeing it. It can never become a 'private' statement - in the way a novel or a poem can - without ceasing to be meaningful theatre. As a play is staged, a multitude of signs are unleashed for the audience to react to, requiring considerable agility on their part. The performance is forever in flight, and in the wealth of signs and the perceptive capacities of the spectator. Dattani within the framework of dramatic structure tries to investigate the identities of those who occupy no space in social order. The social awareness, social discrimination in

the name of religion, humiliation of humanity in the aroma of social pride, irrational acceptance of prejudices, sacrificing the ethical code based on human love, are brought to the stage through the dramatic vision of Dattani. The social conventions often hamper the growth of individual and do not acknowledge the call of human love. The perpetual clash of the commitments of an individual for social order and the force of personal derives makes life intolerable. Dattani with the fine balance of stage and performance imparts an exceptional vehemence to such situations. In the traditional society of India, the identity of gays, lesbians, hijras and homosexuals has not yet been organized. Dattani dramatizes the crisis of those relationships that are not rigidly demarcated in terms of socially accepted gender constructions. All his works so far-plays, films, screenplays, focus on the marginalized entity. Mahesh Dattani is responsible for successfully launching the Indian theatre in English. The plays of Mahesh Dattani emerged as 'fresh arrival' in the domain of Indian English drama in the last decade of the twentieth century. With the coming of the Sahitya Akademi Award, Dattani is now considered an officially recognized part of the Indian literary establishment. Michael Walling, the artistic director of the multi-cultural theatre company Border Crossings in his introductory note to *Bravely Fought the Queen*:

His plays fuse the physical and special awareness of the Indian theatre with the textual rigour of western models like Ibsen and Tennessee Williams. It's a potent combination, which shocks and disturbs through its accuracy, and its ability to approach a subject from multiple perspectives. Post-colonial India and multi-cultural Britain both have an urgent

need for a cultural expression of the contemporary; they require public spaces in which the mingling of eastern and western influences can take place. Through his fusion of forms and influences, Mahesh creates such a space. This is in itself a political and social statement of astonishing force. (Dattani, ii)

In the larger context of contemporary Indian theatre, it is difficult to situate him as a part of a continuum in a given 'tradition' of Indian playwriting, or even as a break, within the larger framework of Indian dramaturgy. Dattani himself would locate himself as the 'change' in that strand, evolving out of his roots without needing to unnecessarily hark back to the past, or drawing from a milieu that no longer sustains him or his audiences:

... I do see myself as the change element of that thread. I'm not so sure even that I want to go back to my roots ... I don't need to revisit it. I'm more interested in pushing it forward. ... I am pushing, and I'm pushing the audience. (Vardhan, 2)

Bravely Fought the Queen has been critically acclaimed all over the world, including Britain's prestigious Leicester Haymarket Theater. The play is set in Bangalore of the 1980s and 1990s and charts the emotional, financial, and sexual workings in the lives of an urban Indian family of two brothers. The brothers are the co-owners of an advertising agency, married to two sisters - women who remain mostly at home and look after the men's old mother Baa. The play dramatizes the emptiness and sham in the lives of its cloistered women and self-indulgent, unscrupulous men, blurring the lines between fantasy and reality, standing on the brink of terrible secrets, deception and hypocrisies.

The script is in three acts, titled 'Women', 'Men', and 'Free For All'. The claustrophobic 'female' world of Act I is pitted against the 'male' world of business of Act II and the characters stand exposed in Act III where the two worlds clash and collapse, with the home as the site for the battle. The fissure between conventional and current cultures having thrown up a new social landscape, the play races towards a brave culmination, laying bare the gruesome truths that lie behind the pretence of conservative Indian morality. Questions of gender, sexuality and identity are raised and the unspoken is voiced, the unseen made visible. These are issues that we shall deal with in greater detail in later chapters. To focus here on the manner in which the setting coalesces with the themes, it must be noted that the trademark Dattani stage often uses the various levels to create theatrical resonance in a special way. For instance, the level where Baa is placed remains a constant in all the acts, and the time shifts that occur in terms of her memory carries the audience back and forth in time even as the present seems to parody the past. The men play out their part in the office in Act II, even as repeat performances of what has already ensued in Act I continue at the other levels. Such repetitive devices serve to undercut the issue itself, and reveal the facade for being just that - a facade. The prosperous business family,

the Trivedis, is finally stripped of its veneer and everyone stands exposed to unpalatable realities of abuse, alcoholism, adultery and homosexuality as fallout of the war on the home front. The multi-layered reality in the play suggested by the split stage levels move constantly into an internalized reality, as it were. Dattani writes with a dexterously veiled acidity, employing a language that uses both simplicity and serration, pressing the word to its limits, flanked by equally pungent, loaded silences. The play concerns itself with alternate sexuality, although the approach is more oblique and perhaps secondary to the more overt theme of gender differences and the rupture between the world of men and that of women. While the play also looks closely at the politics of the Indian joint family as the setting, it constantly points at the gender divide and the dominance of the one over the other. This is made obvious in the names that Dattani gives to his three acts: Act I is called 'Men'; Act II is 'Women' and it is a 'Free for All' in the third act.

As usual, the performance space that is used is spare and functional; a useful and telling resonance is created in the mise en scène utilizing the same set structure split into multiple levels in all the three acts. The level occupied by the silhouetted, ever tortured/torturing presence of Baa is common to both acts. The audience is ushered into the women's world, with the mellifluous thumri by Naina Devi in the background and the focus is on Dolly who sits filing her nails abstractedly. Enter Lalitha, the emissary from the male world, and immediately throws Dolly into disarray as she (for the men) upsets Dolly's plans for the evening. After a tense argument, Dolly exits and Alka enters heading almost immediately for the bar. Lalitha has had to answer Baa's urgent summons and as she meets Alka, Dolly's sister/sister-in-law, they start a conversation and share a drink. Dattani uses his very keen sense of dialogue to generate subtle undercurrents that now begin to slice through the tension-filled atmosphere as Dolly re-emerges, ready to go out for a party that has been cancelled. Dolly and Alka exchange hurtful words at times, each trying to score over the other and barely drawing the line at the dangerous zones in the references to Praful, their brother who manipulated Alka into marrying Nitin and Daksha, Dolly's daughter who turns out to be a spastic: a painful reminder of the violence wreaked by Jiten, Dolly's husband. Even as the bitterness in the sisters' relationship stands exposed through their apparent need to be one upon the other, Lalitha, the outsider, tries to discuss a masked ball that the men have arranged. Dolly resists the intrusion for sometime, warding off the pressures of the male world that bear down on and attempt to devour the women's spaces. The other constricting reminder of the male world is Baa, who insistently rings the bell to summon her daughters-in-law, rupturing the slowly evolving sense of intimacy among the three women. Lalitha, the interloper begins to belong in this world, with her revelation of her own emptiness that she fills up with her obsessive love for her bonsais. Through the small talk that the women make, Dattani puts in an element of

self-reflexivity - they make small talk about how to make small talk. The immensely significant semiotic referent -the bonsai - is introduced via this subtext and goes on to become the single most important metaphor in the play. The stunted growth, the bizarre shape, the grotesque reality of the bonsai becomes resonant in the existence of all the characters that people the play. This is especially torturous for Daksha's mother - Dolly - to whom Lalitha actually presents a bonsai. All the three women try to escape the confines of their claustrophobic world in various ways: Alka with alcohol, Dolly with her fantasizing about Kanhaiya and Lalitha with her obsession with bonsais.

Act II 'Men' transforms the sets into offices with the common component of the bar and Baa, and in a sort of parody, the entire sequence is enacted again, this time from the perspective of the men. With Jiten dominating the scene with his overbearing, egotistical and corrosive presence, Nitin seems almost ineffectual while Sridhar tries to be assertive in various ways. Apart from the repeated motif of the cancelled party, Baa's delirious ravings provide a sense of movement back and forth in time. Meanwhile, the men discuss the psyche of women and the 'ReVaTee' brand of lingerie that they are to market. Even as Jiten argues for a male perspective on the item they are trying to sell - women's underwear - Sridhar tries to argue for the female. One set of stereotypes is contested by another. Jiten forces Sridhar to fetch him a prostitute. Sridhar gets back at him by giving him his 'leftovers'. Nitin remains neutral, always. The reference that is made to Praful creates a matrix of significant suggestions that carries forward the play with increasing tension towards the 'Free for All' of Act III.

The men too, would escape: Jiten seeking to hide his weaknesses behind violent aggression, Nitin concealing his homosexuality behind the sham of his marriage, with Praful as his collaborator, and Sridhar, who covers up his own chauvinism with a politically correct exterior that he projects. While the women do it to create their own spaces, the men use escapism as a means to avoid unpalatable disclosures. Baa; the mother, partakes of both situations - she is both the persecutor and the victim. Abused by her own husband, she goads her son to hit his pregnant wife; but selectively - "No! Jitu, hit her on the face but not on the ... stop it Jitu! On the face, only on the face! Enough! Stop!" (Dattani, 311). Naturally, her escape is into senility and delirium and a complete divorce from reality.

When the two worlds converge violently in the last act, all the characters stand exposed, the sham and facade ripped apart. There are pointing fingers everywhere, the past and the future collapse into the present and the space of the stage is suddenly constricted and unable to accommodate the burden of the suddenly unloaded baggage. Dolly somehow emerges here as the strongest character, supporting a drunken Alka and roundly revealing the torturous truth about Daksha. Jiten, the aggressive oaf, is driven to guilty tears and he implicates Baa in his abuse of a pregnant wife

before he finally drives off, crushing the old ragpicker in the driveway, to death. Sridhar, who has already revealed himself to be every bit as egotistical as Jiten seems now to don the mantle of the stereotypes as he prepares to leave with Lalitha. The play ends with Nitin finally revealing his 'gay' relationship with Praful, and the closing spotlight falls on the pitifully huddled figure of Alka in her drunken slumber before darkness envelopes the stage.

The play zeroes in on an Indian joint family, with the eldest male as the undisputable head, raising a gamut of questions on the nature of the relationships between the brothers and their wives (also sisters) and the manner in which identities form and firmly entrench themselves within these structures. Following some of the discussion on the family in the preceding chapters, we have noted the location to which the women are tied down, following the diktat of their men folk - they remain at home most of the time, with their chief duty being to care for the men's ageing mother Baa. As the enclosed, cloistered female world of Act I clashes with the male world of wheeling and dealing, corruption and adultery of Act II, it becomes obvious that both the men and the women have assumed roles that ill-suit them, and hence all the characters have to seek solace in fantasy and the unreal. The veneer is ripped apart and the revelation is made as to the nature of their true selves in the confrontation of Act III, and the realities of their lives emerge. The braggart and wife-beater, Jiten is revealed to be another pathetic escapist and a weakling who literally runs away from the scene of confrontation in tears; Nitin homosexuality becomes apparent in his revelations about Praful, the absent manipulator of the entire situation, and even the apparently 'correct' and 'sensitive' Sridhar show himself to be one of the many male chauvinists in the play in his game of one-upmanship with Jiten.

At forty-five, Mahesh Dattani is at the peak of his creative powers, continuously experimenting with new forms manners of expression. As a playwright he will never be stereotypical. The varied content of his plays seldom have his characters mouthing quotable lines, nor does thematic material rise to extraordinary heights. But what makes Mahesh Dattani one of India's finest playwrights is perhaps his manner of speaking to the audience with complete honesty. For the moment, he seems to have found the right combination where his art is not compromised upon and yet makes commercial sense. His expectations of his audience are high, and he does not provide quick or expedient endings, only perhaps a kind of insight into their own lives.

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Depiction of Social Issues in "*The God of Small Things*"

Arundhati Roy appears to have widened the horizons of her portrayal. In addition to issues like sex, marriage and position of women in society which form the core point of discussion in the novels of De, Roy incorporates some more sensitive issues like ineffectiveness of laws to protect women and other vulnerable sections of the society, exploitation of vulnerable by authorities and even abusive tones of vernaculars. It may justifiably be concluded that Roy writes for all and De for the few.

DR. ANJAN KUMAR

“**T**he God of Small Things” is a story about love and brutality (B. Urvashi), the brutality against the Dalits. On one hand, the Human Rights and values are globally, seriously considered, on other hand, in rural India, this sort of atrocity against Dalits are going on. Her novel is marked by materialistic outlook. Roy has taken special care to cater for the demands of the modern public. There is 'sex' in chapter 21, 'violence' in chapter 19, a Joycean (James Joyce and Marquez and Roy's favourites) touch of language to make contextual sense, and sustained humour... In an interview she remarked : “My book is not the best book.... It is the luckier book” (p. viii, Rao, The Hindu Magazine, Nov. 23). It was luckier as it could fetch for her global acclamations and huge finance.

The novelist has portrayed the socio-political realism of democratic India, where still one community is becoming the victim of the brutality of the majority and the flatterers of the majority. The Ayemenem incident of killing Velutha is the microscopic vision of the orthodoxy's brutality against Dalits. In India, plenty legal protections are provided to remove the atrocity against Dalits but they are only on the papers. It wouldn't change until the social attitude would change.

“The God of Small Things,” the prestigious 'Booker Prize' awarded novel, depicts the cross caste conflict. As a matter of fact, caste and sub-caste based social divisions we find in the Hindu Society since long. Untouchables are only found in the Hindu religious works, not in Islam or in Christianity. Christianity is world- wide known for universal brotherhood and humanism but here, in this novel Arundhati has described the intense cross caste conflict, the conflict is not taking place between touchable Hinds and Untouchables,

its between Syrian Christians and Untouchable ! It shows that untouchables are not only suffering torturing and harassment from Hindus but also from other religious communities in this democratic India. Thus untouchables are sandwiched between the Hindu majority and other religious minority.

In this novel, Ayemenem, a small village in Kerala is very significant place. Ammu, a young woman whose father had worked as joint director in Imperial Etymology, Delhi, is very important person in the work. Being an orthodox, her father had not paid more attention on her education and selecting a suitable life partner for her. In the village like Ayemenem and the girl like Ammu has nothing to do except the household works and the waiting for the unknown bridegroom.

Nobody from her family was thinking about her wedding. Ultimately she made her own way by selecting a Bengali, working as an assistant manager in a tea estate in Assam. It was her first attempt to break the social barrier an inter community Love Marriage. In Rural India, even today, inter community love marriage is not accepted. It is considered as a disgrace on family and lineage.

In Kerala, the paravans are considered as untouchables. When nobody from her family took care for her twins, naturally she would fascinated towards that who will love her and her kids, that was Velutha, an untouchable Dalit. Velutha taught the twins, boating and fishing. The kids enjoyed their learning because they didn't know “what was untouchability.” Ammu also observed “the high delight” (TGST.175) on kids face, what else the rejected mother would expect than the happiness of her kids ? The friendly meetings

of the twins and Velutha had brought nearer to each other, the twins, Velutha and Ammu.

When we glance in the ancient literature of India, there are plenty evidences of that. According to the ban the untouchables were / are not allowed to love or marry upper caste women, while the other Varna's allowed to defile / rape the untouchable women. Actually the inter caste relationship was thus banned in the Matsya Puran, one of the old puranas.

"If a low caste man wants to marry a high caste girl, and does so, would be punished with death. Similarly a high caste woman marrying a low caste man, should be punished with death."⁽³⁾

Though the ban preached in past but even today practiced strictly in rural India. The deeply rooted hate for untouchable is still practiced. But Ammu and Velutha, both had overthrown the imposed law. Here lust kindled from the both sides, no one had trapped any one. And "her seven years oblivion lifted off" (TGST 337). An untouchable's affair with a touchble woman is not granted in rural India, in any community. Even untouchables wouldn't dare to do such things because they know the consequences. Velutha's father knew the consequences, so he rushed to inform about his sons's affair, with view to punish him but the lady of the house spat on his face.

Baby Kochamma, in her youth, who was fascinated towards father Mullingan, a handsome Irish Monk, has cunningly rejected the affair by saying thus : "How could she stand by the smells, haven't you noticed, they have a particular smell ? These paravants ?" (TGST 78). She had mainly opposed the affair because it was with an untouchable. Untouchability is not depicted anywhere in the Holy books, but to flatter and please the Hindu Society, the Christian, too practiced / cherish the notion. This incident was enough for the old Lady Baby Kochamma to remove an untouchable foever. It was due to the deeply rooted disgust towards touchable.

The only escape for Ammu, from the oppressive atmosphere was through marriage. While taking a break at an Aunt's place in Calcutta, she chanced upon a sober looking Hindu Bengali from the tea estates in Assam, and without looking back stepped into matrimony. Simone de Beauvoir again remarks,

"There is a unanimous agreement that getting a husband or in some cases a 'protector' is for her (woman) the most important of undertakings... She will free herself from the parental home, from her mother's hold, she will open up her future not by active conquest but by delivering herself up, passive and docile, into the hands of a new master..."⁽⁴⁾

Both Ammu and Chacko are in a similar position as far as their martial status is concerned. Ammu had been a victim of battering unproductive ways. But in Ayemenem, Chacko holds the reins of control, being a male and Ammu is at his mercy for her and her children's subsistence, She works in the Pickles factory which Chacko claims as "My factory, my

pineapples, my pickles" (TGST, 57).

The protagonist mother in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. Inheriets Hindu and Christian cultures. That kind of hybridity exhibits the aspect of growing multiculturalism here it would be wrong to point out that the vulnerability of women tends to make them succumb to the male annoyance and lust. In fact, the women of higher classes do exhibit more explicitly there utter disregard to socially established norms particularly regarding sex. In *Minari*, a novel of Nergis Daladl, the queen of Kunjara, Zora, challenges all the sexual taboos that are attached to women.

Shobha De, a noted feminist in India, claims to be "among the first to explore the world of the urban woman in India."⁽⁵⁾ She tires to dismantle the patriarchal hegemony. She has been condemned and denounced for her outspokenness and liberal views on sex and marriage. Her *Socialite Evenings* has been branded as "high society Pot-Pouri, bland and banal," bristling with orgy laced parties and "Voyeuristic servings of souped up, four wheel drive sex in all directions."⁽⁶⁾

Arundhati Roy appears to have widened the horizons of her portrayal. In addition to issues like sex , marriage and position of women in society which form the core point of discussion in the novels of De, Roy incorporates some more sensitive issues like ineffectiveness of laws to protect women and other vulnerable sections of the society, exploitation of vulnerable by authorities and even abusive tones of vernaculars. It may justifiably be concluded that Roy writes for all and De for the few.

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Anita Desai's Fictional World As The Manifesto of Female Predicament and Sensibility

Women as presented in the novels of Desai present a different picture of their inner life. Desai looks at the predicament of women and visualize life for a woman as a series of obligation of commitments. In addition to existentialists reality of life. she evokes the sentiments and sensibility of women of their role and respect in society. She sets herself to voice the mute miseries and helplessness of millions of married of women tormented by existentialist problem and predicament. Although she is preoccupied with the theme of incompatible marital couples yet we come across different kinds of women character in her novels.

PROF. U.Y.GANGURDE

Introduction :

Anita Desai is one of brave originality and uniqueness. Her novels are certainly reflective of social realities from psychological power relation perspectives. She closely examines the emotional world of womankind. In dealing with the interior landscape and psychic odyssey of her characters dealing with thoughts emotion and sensation at various level of consciousness. Anita Desai found the technique used by D.H.Lawrence and Virginia Woolf and Henry James i.e. 'stream of consciousness' and flashback in her novels.

Importance To Study Woman Characters And Their Sensibility :

Desai's novels have been examined as the manifesto of female predicament and creative release of feminine sensibility. Her feminism is not anti-male and her women need man's loving company and aspire for the bliss and thrill of life which is ever denied to them. She portrays women as not totally cut off from familial and social ties but women remains within these orbits and protest against monotony, injustice and humiliation.

In 'voices in the city' articulates monisha's plight and psychic life and intimately shows women as female bird in the cages monisha dies, screaming for the life; for the first experience of real feeling of pain awakens in her desire to live. She loves to see herself as an unfettered individual and not become at any stage a complacent, tame wife who adjusts herself to gilded cage.

Sarah in 'Bye-Bye Blackbird' is alienated from her parents. Desai treaties Sarah with sensitivity of women always aware of throe forces that change her destiny as a female. She is iaconic, reserved, self possessed, non-syllabic,

quiet and meek like gazelles. She lets her husband dominate her and take all decisions, even very important ones concerning her without consulting her.

The Power Relations Between The Characters Regarding The Sexes :

There are situation in her novels where reader finds confrontation between opposite sexes. The situation has not been deliberately imposed but it finds it natural way of happening. e.g. Sarala in the novel 'Custody' is usual ordinary compromising and a lady of a normal temperament. She belongs to lower income group as her husband Devan is a temporary lecturer in local college of mirapure near New Delhi. Sarala's material life is not at all happy. Her responsibilities as a mother makes her frustrated as she has no money in her hands. Her predicament is a lot of every second Indian women. Sophie in 'Journey in Ithaca' is devoted rational wife. As normal women Sophie becomes jealous of Mateo's affinity to her mother. She tries to isolate herself from matteo's world by listening to her old tapes and Stays her separate world of pregnancy. Here is protest regarding the power of sexes. She gives birth to girl Isabel. After the Isabel birth she is worried about her kids future. Here mother is found in tension. The suspicion in the mind of wife regarding the presence role of another woman in a man's life is authentically depicted. Desai tries to depict dehumanization of society.

In Desai's 'Feasting Fasting' Uma is a plain, simple uneducated, Spinster daughter from a close unit othodox Indian family. She is trapped at home Smothered by the over bearing parents and their tradition. Maya is depressed by her loneliness, manisha because of lack of privacy, Sarah because of alienation from her own people but Uma's

depression is thrust upon her from within.

***“We are not sending you back to School Uma.
You are staying at home to help with Arun”.***

Uma is kept confined to the house sans friends, enjoyment or entertainment. She is reduced to the Status of maid servant in the family. Her aged parents seems to be lucky to have an attendant free of cost.

Husband Wife Relationship :

In the Desai's novel manisha is an archtype of Indian woman and Suffers quietly to death. Her relationship with husband is characterized only by loneliness and lack of communication. Jiban is the prisoner of a conventional culture in which a woman's most roles are child bearing, cooking, cutting vegetables.

Gautama and Maya in 'Cry The peacock' have a fanatic adherence to their beliefs & ideas neither is prepared to relent Gautama's nationality silhouetted against Maya's fancies; Speaks inharmonious relationship between the two. Thus temperamental income patibility rules out the possibility of an intimate relationship between the husband and wife.

In 'Fire on the mountain' Nanda Kaul's relationship with her husband seen only through her own reminiscences and these are never pleasant. She managed to maintain a cool exterior and keep up the appearance of being devoted and efficient wife, in spite of being qware of her husband's liaison with miss David. Psychologically most subtle and most complicated is the relationship of Nur and Imtiaz in, In 'Custody' Two opposite elements compose the character of Imatiaz. She was a desire to compete with her husband. In 'Journey to Ithaca' the central issue is search for truth and the problem between husband and wife. There is spiritual incompatibility. Sophie, a German Journalist fallows her husband matteo to India and wanders him from one ashram to another. As a young wife she has desires to fulfill but this is not possible in the shifty and unruly environment of the Ashrams.

In the latest novel of Desai, The Zigzag way, through Eric and Em are not husband and wife yet though them Desai presents another man-women relationship.

Importance :

Each of Anita Desai novels tries to tackle the central aesthetic problem of Feminist sensibility. The problem of rendering “complete human personality” in an age of lost value, lost men and lost gods”. The twentieth century has been rightly called the age of Alienation and self exile”. The modern man is doomed to suffer the corrosive impact of alienation loss or gap. The compartmentalization of life, the stunning of personal development and the conspicuous absence of sense of meaning fullness of life and so on. As Edmund fuller suggests, in our age, “man suffer not only from war persecution, famine and ruin but from inner problem..... a conviction of isolation, randomness meaninglessness in his way of existence. The presents century has been the dissolution of old certainties. As Paul Brunton point out “never before were so many people

plunged in so much uncertainly. So much perplexity and unsettlement”. In Anita Desai`s novel has chartered this very crisis conclusion fermenting a sensitive soul.

Thus we find that women as presented in the novels of Desai present a different picture of their inner life. Desai looks at the predicament of women and visualize life for a woman as a series of obligation of commitments. In addition to existentialists reality of life. she evokes the sentiments and sensibility of women of their role and respect in society. She sets herself to voice the mute miseries and helplessness of millions of married of women tormented by existentialist problem and predicament. Although she is preoccupied with the theme of incompatible marital couples yet we come across different kinds of women character in her novels.

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Portrayal of Subaltern in Roy's *The God of Small Things* : An Observation

Arundhati Roy, a marvelous writer of Indian writing in English presented the pitiable situation of 'subaltern' or 'Dalit' in her masterpiece The God of Small Things by portraying the characters of Velutha and Ammu. She has painted that postcolonial Indian still faces the problems of caste, gender and sex. Discrimination against 'subaltern' is still prevailed in Post-independent India. Political, social, cultural, religion and economical factors are responsible in elevating these problems Roy has presented these factors very beautifully.

DR. MOHD. SHAMIM

Since the dawn of civilization human beings faced many problems. Discrimination against subaltern is one of them. The root of this problem lies in human nature itself. Men presented themselves as the greatest creature of God. They showed that they had power to overcome all difficulties. They got an idea that they can win anything. This very notion of men provoked them to show their dominancy over natural objects, animals, birds and weather. By the consequence, they made slave living and non-living objects. They applied this very formula (to make slave someone) among themselves. As a result, hierarchy, anxiety, unrest, and other negative elements took place. The established norms of society were violated. Jealous, fever of inferiority and superiority succumbed men. To fulfill their negative desires men misinterpreted the sacred books as the Bible, the Quran, the Geeta and so on. God's message of peace, liberty, equality and fraternity were demolished. Jesus Christ, prophet Mohammad and Lord Rama's preaching became fruitless for them.

To rule and run the world they made their own constitution which was based on narrow political, social, cultural and economical principles. It resulted in the form of caste, colour, race, sex, gender and many other forms of discrimination. It expanded the gap of 'self' and 'other' among men.

In India this problem can be seen with 'Dalits' the people of 'lower rank' who have been deprived from all facilities for a long time. To raise their voices literary men used their pen and words with positive approach. Roy did it in *The God of Small Things*.

Dalit Aesthetic Theory has similarities with the theories Subaltern Literature, African, American Literature as well as with Problem play and Drama of Ideas. Dalit Aesthetic theory

is indigenous and is firmly rooted in the history, politics and culture of Dalits. In Indian literature the use of untouchability as a theme is not new. Caste-consciousness is a motif in the writings of the 14th Century Saint poet Chokhamela, a village Mohar, Kabir, Ravidas, Jyotiba Phule, Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore. But it is the portrayal of agonizing reality, and the expression of a radical revolt against the age-old, time honored defective traditions, conventions, and dogmas of Hindu religion used as motif, which define Dalit Literature. Contemporary Dalit Literature portrays dreadful and humiliating events of Dalit world. It represents inequality, sorrow, and misery of the oppressed class. Dalit Literature tells us about the cultural conflict of the socially, economically, and culturally deprived and disadvantaged group of people. It requires literature to be revolutionary, didactic, and doctrinaire.⁽¹⁾

Arjun Dangle, while expressing his views on "New Connotations of the Word 'Dalit'," observes :

"Dalit literature is one which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India, is appalling nature and its system of exploitation. In other words, Dalit is not a caste but a realization and is related to the experience joys and sorrows, and struggle of those in the lowest stratum of society. It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science thus finally ending as revolutionary."⁽²⁾

The aim of this paper is to show how Roy has portrayed "subaltern" in her masterpiece *The God of Small Things*. Before giving it final shape, it is essential to know what "subaltern" denotes.

The "subaltern" has become a standard way to

designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse and internalized by colonial peoples who employ this discourse; "subaltern" is a British word for someone of inferior military rank and combines the Latin terms for "under" (sub) and "other" (alter).⁽³⁾

In one of her more provocative essays, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak maintains that the subaltern cannot speak for himself/herself because the very structure of colonialism prevents this speaking. However, Spivak argues that the intellectual project must try to make visible the position of the marginalized. The subaltern must be 'spoken for' (that is, represented), but not romanticized. There is also the warning that the term/category 'subaltern' is neither universally applicable, nor homogenous (though this, unfortunately, has happened).⁽⁴⁾

One thing is very clear that subaltern denotes the people of 'lower rank' who has been deprived from all rights. In Roy's *The God of Small Things*, this problem has been presented in a symbolical way. The terms 'Lantern' and 'Mombatti' of the novel are such terms which refer to the nature of God of Big Things and God of Small Things. As Mombatti is inferior to Lantern and unable to face the blow of the wind, in the same way the protagonist Ammu finds herself helpless in patriarchal society.

The story shows the battle between the rich, high and mighty and the poor and the weak. So is the image drawn of Big Man, called the Laltain and Small Man the Mombatti. The God of Small things are Ammu, Velutha, Rahel and Estha whereas the God of Big things are Pappachi, Baby Kochamma, Chacko, Thomas Mathew and Comrade Pillai.

The God of Small Things is the story of seven year old 'two-egg twins' Rahel and Estha, their Syrian Christian mother Ammu, who is divorced from their Bengali father, and her landowning family who live in their ancestral home near the banks of the Meenachal river.

Ammu and Velutha are the representative characters of 'subaltern' society in the novel. They are untouchable or Pravan. Velutha works at the Paradise Pickles and Preserves Factory owned by Ammu's family. Yet, because he is an untouchable, the other workers resent him and he is paid less money for his work. Velutha's presence is unsettling to many who believe he acts above his station. His own father notes this problem: "Perhaps it was just a lack of hesitation. An unwarranted assurance. In the way he walked. The way he held his head. The quiet way he offered suggestion without being asked. Or the quiet way in which he disregarded suggestions without appearing to rebel".⁽⁵⁾

When Velutha has an affair with Ammu he breaks an ancient taboo and incurs the wrath of Ammu's family and the Kerala Police. He breaks the rigid social rules of the caste system and therefore, the authorities must punish him. Roy describes the police men's violent actions as being done out of fear, "..... civilization's fear of nature, men's fear of women, power's fear of powerless" (292). The division between the Touchables and Untouchables is so ingrained in Kerala

society that Velutha is seen as a nonhuman. If they hurt Velutha more than they intended to, it was only because any kinship, and connection between themselves and him, any implication that if nothing else, at least biologically he was a fellow creature had been served long ago (293).⁽⁶⁾

Thus Ammu and Velutha prove to be true tragic figures who have been tortured and abused by self-motivated family. Through these characters Arundhati Roy has tried to portray the real plight of the Indian Dalits living in the present society. Roy, by attacking this self-motivated, also wants to prove that Dalits are the axis of the Indian society. They cannot be neglected and suppressed. The progress of society depends on the equal progress of each member of society.

To sum up, it can be said that *The God of Small Things* is a novel of Dalit's struggle for freedom. Dalits should be given their due share in all the spheres so that they may develop themselves and attain a distinguished place in the society.

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Study of Love, Sex and Marriage in Anita Desai's Fiction

R.S. Sharma aptly sums up "Anita Desai sees the world in terms of experience as it emerges from the encounter of the experiencing self with the world outside." Her growing involvement with the social, economic and political aspects displays a significant ability for adoption in her language and style. In the words of Mrinalini Solanki: "She displays a superb control over her material, a firm grasp and understanding of experience and complexity of human situation and an enviable command over her medium." Anita Desai's superb depiction of the psyche of her characters specially women characters in her novels, place her for above in the rank of psychological novelist in Indo- Anglian fiction.

ALOK KUMAR MISHRA

Anita Desai, a well known Indo-Anglian novelist of Post- Independence era . Her contribution is considered as more significant in the development of Indian novel in English. Most of her work deals with inner life which is crowded by psychological problems. Her novels highlight the themes of love, marriage and sex. Her characters are usually women who are haunted by a peculiar sense of doom, withdraw themselves into a sequestered world of their own be able to cope with their personal circumstances and adjust themselves to life and meet its problem loath courageously and adequately.

"Cry the Peacock" is Maya's story of her married life with Gautama, and almost the entire novel's story is "remembrance of things past" by Maya herself . Maya is obsessed with death and haunted by an astrological prediction that her marriage is going to end in its fourth year, with the death of either husband or wife. The cause of her mental derailment is not father fixation or libidinal instincts. Her child like helplessness and an intense longing for love that is nearly morbid is the root-cause of her trouble. In terms of Horney she is a "complaint person" for whom love holds the key to all the problems of life. And lack of response from her husband Gautama to her tender feeling of love leads her to neurotic fears. Maya finds a term endous difference between her father who was too worried about her likes and dislikes and her husband so practical So there is a clash between her childhood world of fancies and adult world of realities. It creates her mental imbalance, physic disorder. The following passage throws light on this-

"No one no one else, I Sobbed into my pillows as Gautama went into the bathroom, loves me as my father

does, ----- Where will your father send me another cheque, Maya? -----I knew I was not even one of those human being whose comfort and health she felt responsible for but merely one of those outsider who could be used for this purpose and were therapies necessary , through not necessarily concisely."

C.P, PP(46-47)

In "Voice of City" (1965) Desai tries to unsuccessfully to make her setting in this case, Calcutta "city of Kali", "Goddess of Death" a contributory faction in another tale of alienated individuals. Nirod and his two sister's Monisha and Amla are rebels against the stolid conventions of middle class family life and long of creativity and self-expression. Each comes to grief and Nirode ends up as as drifion fo bohemian, Monisha commits suicide and Amla is heart-broken when her love is rejected.

Monisha is totally dissatisfied with her present. So she adopts strategy of escape into the past. Like Maya she is also a miserable misfit amongst her in laws . So she weaves imprisoned in its privacy. She turns to "Gita" in search of a philosophical guidance. She feels alienated from her husband and ponders over the problems of attachment and detachment. Her neurotic pride creates an unhealthy self-esteem. In her isolation she is not free from the go involvement. She feel.

"My silence I find has the power upon others."

(V.C.P.130)

The marital disharmony between monisha's father and mother affect her character. Monisha and Jiban's marriage is the most pathetic illustration of maladjustment in marriage. It presents an intense involvement and soul crushing apathy.

Anita Desai depicts the theme of love and marriage very beautifully and minutely in her famous novel *"Where Shall We Go This Summer."* It seems to be an epitome of and irresistible yearning for a purposeful life. The heroine of the novel Sita is a highly sensitive girl. With the help of marriage one cannot revive the heart beating troubles or pains or the happiest moments of other's life. Marriage needs more faith. Anita Desai studies the marital discords resulting from the conflict between two untouchable temperaments and two diametrically different ideas represented by Sita and Raman (her husband). The conflict is going on from beginning to end between Sita and Raman. Thus Anita Desai has dwelt upon the problems of marriage, love and sex. In her own way she thinks that marriage alone does not provide a salutes of life's tension and chaos mental satisfaction and happy married life means better understanding between husband and wife. But Sita and Raman fail to come to a harmonious whole.

Women is Desai's novel are haunted by the desire to attain authenticity within the ordinary routine of duties, family responsibilities and social obligations. Anita Desai's novels shows that she delineates the inner lives of her characters, almost all her women characters Maya, Nonisha, Sarah, Nanda, Sita Bim, Amla, Lotte go through emotional deprivation. They are the victims of material disharmony. They are deprived of marital joys and satisfaction. In her novels we also find a true reflection of the situation of women in male dominated world.

Anita Desai's vision of life centers round the nucleus of internal state of mind of her characters therefore her images symbolic and myth are written in the language of interior thoughts. All these images reveals the inner nature of her character with their obsession, changing moods and physis aberration. Her novels bear the testimony of this fact all this illustrates her handling of situation and the problem of love. Marriage along with other human problems.

Most of Desai's character live in solitary confinements. Some of her characters like Mays, Monisha, Nirode, Nanda Kaul, Raka and Baumgartner live in their own world. They show their reluctance to face the realities of life. Whereas there is a difference of characters who compromise with life. They are, Sita, Sarah, Bim, Sarla, Deven, Hari and Lotte. They do have psychic conflicts but they are capable of solving their problems by self- discovery. Their self discovery reveals their potential growth as well as the developing vision of the novelist. Her vision of life shows a gradual transition form tragic vision to a compromising vision of life. Majority of Desai's characters belong to the fair sex. As a woman, she understand the problems of an educated woman deeply. At the same time she is also aware of the changing image of the educated women due to the socio-economic changes in the country. Her women protagonists go through the conflict between traditional and modern values. However Desai's denies a narrow feminist approach. Her portrayal of female psyche is not a movement towards feminism. She looks at her protagonists in the context of human struggle for survival

from which none is excluded. Her male characters like Nirode, Raja, Adit, Dev, Deven, Hari and Baumgartner show that she incorporates the modern sensibility of male characters also. And her successful portrayal of the anguish, despair and self-discovery of these male characters justifies her claim that she writes about the human condition-not the male-female condition. Her later novels reveal a marked change in her vision of life. B.Ramchandara Rao analyses for the early novels and observed. *"their problems are psychological or spiritual, not social of economical ---the ordinary problems of everyday life are never really touched upon ---Hunger, starvation and poverty, the mute misery of the millions of Indians are never touched upon by Mrs. Desai's however."* In her later novels Desai shows a remarkable awareness of social reality. Her novels, 'Village By the Sea,' 'In Custody' and 'Baumgartner's Bombay's present the crisis of the protagonists arising out of the social, political and economical aspects of life. The violence caused by II world war. Poverty, alienation, uprooted ness of German jews find place in her later novels. Moreover, Desai has shifted he focus from the urban to the rural setting in 'Village by the Sea'. Thus all these novels clearly reveal through characterization how time and destiny along with the social, emotional, psychologically and political problems enhance the already insurmountable misery in human life. R.S. Sharma aptly sums up: *"Anita Desai sees the world in terms of experience as it emerges from the encounter of the experiencing self with the world outside."* Her growing involvement with the social, economic and political aspects displays a significant ability for adoption in her language and style. In the words of Mrinalini Solanki: *"She displays a superb control over her material, a firm grasp and understanding of experience and complexity of human situation and an enviable command over her medium."*

Anita Desai's superb depiction of the psyche of her characters specially women characters in her novels, place her for above in the rank of psychological novelist in Indo- Anglian fiction.

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