

# *The Criterion*

**December 2012**

ISSN 0976-8165

**Vol. III. Issue IV**

**An International Journal in English**

Quarterly Refereed and Indexed Open Access Journal

*Editor-In-Chief*

**Dr. Vishwanath Bite**

**Managing Editor**

**Madhuri Bite**

[www.the-criterion.com](http://www.the-criterion.com)

[criterionejournal@gmail.com](mailto:criterionejournal@gmail.com)

## Use of Images, Metaphors and Symbols in Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and *Voices in the City*

**Monica Balyan Dahiya**

Ph.D. Scholar  
Department of Humanities, D.C.R.U.S.T . Murthal  
(Sonapat) Haryana- 131027.

### **Abstract**

This present paper attempts to explain Anita Desai's superiority over her contemporaries in balancing the aspects of image metaphor and symbols in her novels. The range of images is one of the special features of these two novels, *Cry, the Peacock* and *Voices in the City* based on 'subjective objectivity' i.e. the subjective experiences of the protagonists are objectified through concrete images. She strikes a balance between language and theme. With such tools of image metaphor and symbol Desai makes the reader aware of the inner struggle of the character. All the characteristics of symbolist style, musicality, pictorialness and synaesthetic experience are found in her writings. The use of symbols and images thus imparts a suggestivity and subtlety to the narrative. By keeping aside of historical romances and themes of social and political realism Anita Desai took up exploration of the psyche of individual characters. Her use of images laid bare the confused emotions of individuals wandering and struggling for their identity. So she always relies on artistic devices like images, symbols and metaphors to convey in a subtle, though effective manner the working of the mind of the characters in the novel.

**Key Words:** image , metaphor, symbol, objects, language, style and psyche.

During the last two and half decades, a large number of women novelists in Indian Fiction in English has attracted a great deal of favorable comments. Anita Desai is one of those significant fiction writers. She refuses to accept traditional and idealistic approach in her work; rather she excavates the disturbed psyche of modern Indians. She uses a different set of language to depict

the inner crisis in the lives of the characters. She writes about helplessness, agony, struggle and surrender. It is her style which gives dress to the inner psyche of her characters. It is the use of images, symbols, metaphors and the narrative devices which provide a good deal of peep into the disturbed psychology of characters. It is her modern sensibility which lays stress more on style than on theme. She gives up the age-old practice of giving importance to theme and structure. This takes her style at its zenith. In *Cry, the Peacock* the symbol of the peacock's cry fits into the negative aspects of albino's prophecy. Peacock not only represents an emotional and ideal love, but it is symbolic of life-in-death and death-in-life. The images and symbols in this novel are traditional but they are functional. They are the tools which make the reader aware of the inner struggle of the character. Maya compares the dance of the peacock with "Shiva's dance", a symbol of creation and destruction. The metaphor of the "mute horror" becomes symbolic of the novelists inability to compress the altitude of human emotions into language. In *Voices in the City*, Anita Desai uses a number of images which are related to birds, animals, colors and plants. The images of birds are used in positive and adorable terms and animal imagery for defining the negative bestial equivalents in character. The urge for freedom of Arun is compared to "a bird on the roof's edge poised for flight, each feather alert and trained for it." (7)

Nirode, Monisha and Amla are considered to be king kites flying so far in vast sky but Dharma and David are described as marsh birds who hop along the ground. Nirode perceives his mother using animal imagery, saying that "her voice was like the thick fur of a winter beast." Anita Desai is imbued with modern sensibility; she takes up an exploration of the psyche of individual characters. She moves out of the historical romances and themes of social and political realism. She cultivated artistic devices like images and symbol to work upon the mind of characters, which are conveyed in an effective manner. Anita Desai adopted this pathway relying upon these devices and got success. No painter can paint without a brush and palette, so is the case with Anita Desai. Besides culminating in the artistic and aesthetic value of the novels, images in

Desai magnify the critical and interpretative magnitude of her art. To Anita Desai, “it is the image that matters, the symbol, the myth.”<sup>1</sup> There is in her a constant search for the most appropriate symbols and images in the expression of the subterranean and the subconscious. Image may be an epithet, a metaphor, or a symbol or a simile in the form of a mental picture. It derives its origin from Latin ‘imago’ which means image in English. It is an ‘artificial imitation of the external form of any object, while ‘symbol deriving its origin from symbolism is something which stands for, represents or denotes something else (not by exact resemblance, but by vague suggestive or by some accidental or conventional relation).’ Anita Desai’s mastery over words is impeccable which brings out her felicitous and deft use of images. In Anita Desai’s novel, characters are found to be ‘thinking in images’ i.e. images which strike the mind as the projection of other minds in immediate contact with social realities. Thus Maya’s (*Cry, the Peacock*) character is projected through Monisha (*Voices in the City*), Monisha’s through Sita’s (*Where Shall We Go This Summer?*) and so on. Anita Desai set out on a sort of journey through images and symbols to describe “the human condition”. Imagery plays an important role in moulding this design. She appears to be preoccupied with the human condition for which forces of nature often furnish apt metaphors. When the language is unable to express some new ideas or state of mind then images are painted to help in expression. A critic like Hulme says that images are not unlike symbols as both are, “solid analogies, but whereas symbol, presenting itself, suggests something indefinite, image suggests something as definite as itself.” But according to C. Day Lewis, who holds a different opinion, symbol, standing for one thing alone, is denotative, image is “indefinitely resonant.” Anita Desai’s symbols are potent and spontaneous. All the characteristics of symbolist style, musicality, pictorialness and synaesthetic experience are found in her writings. As she takes us on a psychological trip into the mind of her

<sup>1</sup> Shrivastava, Ramesh K., ed. *Perspective on Anita Desai*. Ghaziabad: Vimal, 1984, p. 4

characters so she merges poetry and prose with the web of images. Baudelaire, commenting on the achievement of the symbolists, says that an image, the principal part of symbolism, should be the source of relationship i.e. both concealed and revealed. He remarks in his article on “Richard Wagner and Tannhausen” (1961), “What would really be surprising would be if sound could not suggest colour, if colours could not convey the idea of melody and if sound and colour were not translating.” Anita Desai has captured this technique and her novels have many such examples of synaesthetic experience which in turn prove her mastery of symbolist technique. The emotional facts of Desai’s fictional world are originated through bound images invoking the layers of impulses running through the grey matter. These are most difficult and complex than free imagery which consists of visual images. She presents gestures and movements to suggest inside revolutions and concentrates on human action with a view to understanding the reality of association floating in the mind. The conversation between imagery and thought is essential. It points to the idea that imagery cannot stay in isolation. In Desai’s fiction, an image, a metaphor or at times just a simple reference to something can be understood exclusively as it functions within the novel as a whole. In this sense image is an essential constituent of the part of the whole. It explains the text, paints setting, characterizes, foreshadows and reinforces the theme. Anita Desai seems to believe that all experience is symbolic. She presents the abstract through the concrete, the general through the particular, the idea through the image. Imagery, an essential feature of her style, reflects her creative individuality. Further, most of Mrs. Desai’s characters suffer from the stress of soul and their submerging emotions have to be expressed only in metaphorical prose. She revels in the sound and rhythm of words which is both her strength and weakness. Shiv. K. Kumar’s criticism takes it rather too far and sounds unfair. Mrs. Desai’s extensive use of metaphor is a means of penetrating the boundaries of moods and the allusiveness of the external world. Anita Desai is professedly the most powerful imagist novelist in whom images communicate a poetic and lyrical colouring to the problem of human mind. *Cry,*

*the Peacock*, Desai's maiden novel, swarms with numerous striking images illuminating the dark and shadowy realms of Maya's consciousness and her deteriorating psychic states. The botanical image of petunias and lemon blossoms suggest the temperamental isolation between Gautama and Maya. Unlike Gautama, she is able to distinguish the smell of petunias from that of lemon blossoms. To Maya, Gautama's hand appears as cool and dry as the bark of an old and shady tree. "The blossoms of the lemon tree were different, quite different: of much stronger, crisper character, they seemed cut out of hard moon shells, by a sharp knife of mother-of-pearls, into curving, scimitar petals that guarded the heart of fragrance...."<sup>2</sup>.

Of the different kinds of images, zoological imagery insistently infringes on the reader's consciousness in *Cry, the Peacock*. The images of dead Toto, besides introducing the death motif, serves as the symbol of an abandoned self, doomed to loneliness:

*All day the body lay rotting in the sun. It Could not be moved onto the verandah for, in that April heat, the reek of dead flesh was overpowering and would soon have penetrated the rooms....Crows sat in a circle around the corpse, and crows will eat anything , entrails, eyes, anything.Flies began to hum amidst the limes,Driving away the gentle bees and the unthinking butterflies*<sup>3</sup>.

Gautama, the fly, is driving away gentle bees like Maya and the dead Toto, to utter desolation and isolation. The image of dead Toto is projected in different forms to describe Maya's psychic derangement and her ineluctable obsession with death. Several disturbing and horrifying images of slimy, creeping, crawling creatures such as rats, snakes, lizards and iguanas figure in close succession in a crescendo till Maya pushes Gautama over the parapet. The image of rats suckling their young symbolizes Maya's harrowing obsession with her childlessness: "Rats will suckle

<sup>2</sup> *Cry, the Peacock*, p.22

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p.7

their young most tenderly. I know this, as now I lived quite near one, with seven young ones nestling between her legs...”<sup>4</sup>. The image of the domestic cat is metamorphosed into the horrifying iguanas. On seeing it, she wails out: *‘Iguanas!’ My blood ran cold, and I heard the slither of its dragging tail even now, in white day light. ‘Get off – I tell you, get off! go Go!’*<sup>5</sup>. Maya stands for the domestic cat who under pressure goes wild and neurotic like the iguanas. The iguanas suggest her neurosis and melancholy. The animal images in Maya’s mind indicate her submerged instinctive drives. The image of the caged monkeys on the railway platform stirs and excites her agony. She too is caged with her nostalgic remembrances. It signifies her loss of privacy, her isolated life, a life of domestic imprisonment. It is her self-image. The monkeys boisterously struggling inside the cage for liberation and release remind Maya of her own alienation and estrangement. She is sensitively prone to self-reflection which dismantles her emotional stability and self identity. The image of the peacock and its anguished shriek for mating call “Piya, Piya” reaches out to Maya. She responds woefully to it, but not Gautama: *“Can you hear them, Gautama? Do you hear them?” “Hear what?”*<sup>6</sup>

Gautama remains listless to the cry. He is isolated from the milieu. He has no sexual urge. Maya the ‘pea-hen’ fails to get a response from Gautama, the ‘peacock’. Desai’s use of colour symbolism, which bears a special significance in the novel, shows undoubtedly the deep impact on her of Joseph Conrad and D. H. Lawrence who have wonderfully capitalized colour symbolism in their works. In the novel Desai has adopted colour symbolism to magnify the various levels of Maya’s consciousness. The frequent use of red and white colour indicates

<sup>4</sup> Cry, *The Peacock*, p.107

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.108

<sup>6</sup> Cry, *The Peacock*, p.146

Maya's diseased psyche and emphasizes her certain preoccupations. Her passion for the colourful, life around her is manifested in many coloured objects, all red, such as "red ruby", "ruby red" as blood, "red roses", "red vine", "scarlet-coloured glasses", "scarlet-striped kites", "mandarin oranges", "gul-mohurs", "red melon", "red bangles", "drops of blood", etc. White, for Maya, comes to acquire an association of evil, The difference between life and death is conveyed through the difference between the fluffy whiteness of Toto alive and its "white corpse" left rotting in the blazing sun. The "pale opaque" eyes of the albino astrologer remind Maya at once of "a sluggish white worm". White figures very effectively in the cabaret scene in which the body of the contortionist appears to Maya as "a mass of soft, pulpy tallow" and "hundred fish-eyes" "slithered over it, feeling it with quivering antennae, sliding along it as slowly as snails that dribbled white slime over the white flesh." Besides, "queen of the night", "jasmine", "white petunias", "white oleanders", "tuberoses", "white smoke", "white cloud" and "white muslin"- all convey a sense of weirdness; "albino rats", "white lizards", "saliva of lizards" and "white bones of the lizard"- all symbolize a sense of morbidity in the novel. Grey, the variant of white, is also invested with a significant symbolic connotation in the novel. It invariably symbolizes drabness and dullness that torments her. Gautama's face appears to Maya as "grey and drawn upon the white pillow". He looks like a "grey shadow stalking". Maya herself says, "Grey, grey, all was grey for Gautama, who lived so narrowly, so shallowly". And eventually it is "his figure as ugly, crooked grey shadow" that comes between Maya and "the worshipped moon" and she throws him down to death. The most unforgettable image that appears repeatedly with a frightening frequency in the novel, creating a terrible commotion in Maya's consciousness, is the image of



the albino astrologer. This image occurs are an important recollection of Maya's encounter with the astrologer in the early past. "He had been – large or small? I cannot remember, but his eyes I do: they were pale, opaque, and gave him an appearance of morbidity, as though he had lived, like a sluggish white worm, indoors always, in his dark room at the temple gates, where the central lingam was painted a bright, vicious red, as though plunged in sacrificial blood, and light burned in a single lamp from which oil spilled into a large, spreading pool. Just as his shadow spread and spread, a stain edging towards me who stood, clutching my ayah's hand, in paralyzed terror and even fiercer fascination, my toes curling away from the oil, from his shadow."<sup>7</sup> This image of the albino astrologer surfaces in Maya's consciousness at certain critical moments and helps a lot in developing the central theme towards its climax. One such instance is noticeable in Chapter Three of Part II:

*Upon this bed of hot, itching sand, I summoned up again the vision of the tenebrific albino who had cast his shadow like a net across me as I had fled down the corridor of years, from the embrace of protection to embrace of love, yet catching me as surely as a giant fisherman striding through the shallows of moonlit seas, throws his fine net with one brief, expert motion and knows, as it settles with a falling whisper upon the still water, that he will find in it a catch: I had not escaped. The years had caught up, and now the final, the decisive one held me in its perspiring clasp from which release seemed impossible.*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cry, The Peacock, p.29

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.82

The image of caged monkeys on the railway platform, as depicted in Chapter Six of Part II, again signifies Maya's existentialist loneliness and loss of freedom:

*Cage upon cage of them. Long furred bodies swarming upon each other, till limbs and tails were twisted together, the elegant lines of their muscles contorted nightmarishly ---the work of some fiendish maniac. And one that I saw was perfectly still and quiet, backed into a corner by the frantic bodies of its companions, and gazed out with eyes that had melted into liquid drops about to slide down its pinched, indrawn cheeks. Its brow was lined with foreboding and the suffering of a tragic calamity, and its hands, folded across its thin belly, waited to accept it... It was only a monkey-nut shell, empty. A small whimper broke from the animal as it dropped the shell, then was silent again, waiting.<sup>9</sup>*

The dance images have been very artistically employed in this novel. The first powerful dance image that repeats itself in the novel, conveying a sense of growing fatality in Maya as well as adding to the very rhythm of the novel, is that of the Kathakali dancer:

*It was the mad demon of Kathakali ballets, masked, with heavy skirts swirling, feet stamping, eyes shooting beams of fire. It was a phantom gone berserk, and, from, a body of absolute white, assumed terrible colours, rose out of realms of silence into one of the thunderous drumming.<sup>10</sup>*

The dance of the peacocks, portrayed in Chapter Three and later on referred to in Chapter Six of Part II, is indeed the most poignant of all the images used in the novel. The title of this novel also refers to this very excited dance of the peacock at the advent of the monsoon :

*"Pia, pia", they cry. "Lover, lover. Mio, mio – I Die, I die ... How they love the rain---these peacocks. They spread out their splendid tails and begin to dance, but, like Shiva's their dance of*

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp. 129-130

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.29

*joy is the dance of death, and they dance, knowing that they and their lovers are all to die, perhaps even before the monsoons came to an end.*<sup>11</sup>

This image, bearing a sinister significance, is remarkably relevant to the very theme of the novel. Gautama, though a father-substitute for Maya, is also her lover who miserably fails not only to feel the intensity of her innermost cravings but also to listen to the pathetic cry of her anguished soul and thus when she commits suicide in the end she, in a way, symbolically substantiates this very agonized cry of the peacocks. The image of the dust-storm, an important extension of the dance image, is depicted very elaborately in the novel. It denotes not only the fierce storm raging in Maya's subconscious mind but also her desire for "release from bondage, release from fate, from death and dreariness." In the novel, Maya welcomes the storm with the pleasure of a dancer and notices in it the source of both agony and ecstasy.

In *Voices in the city*, Anita Desai uses botanical images in a most artistic manner. The image of the 'weed' is used to portray the dehumanization of Nirode. He is "a dripping gargoyle, grotesque, offensive, comic"<sup>12</sup>. Nirode is wearied by his own incertitude in which "he swept back and forth like a long weed undulating under water, a weed that could live only in aqueous gloom, would never rise and sprout into clear day light..."<sup>13</sup> Plant imagery is used when David is compared to a sensitive plant and Nirode is likened to a weed. When taunted, David's face retreats like "the leaves of a sensitive plant". But these leaves would open up soon thereafter. The decadence of Bengal aristocracy is conveyed through the image of the old Mahogany tree that is struck by lightning. Looking at Amla's reaction to Monisha's withdrawal and confinement:

*This sister had wandered away into some unholy garden of her own, stood there now like one of those lifeless statues on the stone fountain, and seemed not to realize that the fountain was dry*

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp.182-183

<sup>12</sup> *Voices in the city*, p.54

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.63

*and what confronted her was no ripple and tickle of cool water but only dry, hard flag stones.*<sup>14</sup>

There is also Aunt Lila's garden which with its oppressive spirit of melancholy preys upon Amla and her thoughts. Aunt Lila has allowed it to "run wild" with its "dark unbreathing atmosphere", its "unmown grass" and "its infertile trees, contrasting sharply with the garden in Kalimpong."<sup>15</sup>

The garden is a veritable picture of abandonment and neglect with none to domesticate it with mown grass. The predator image forms an integral part of the zoological imagery. Amla's longing to flee is expressed through the image of the horse bursting forth to release itself from the massed impatience and the lust of the mob. The horse symbolizes the possibility of isolation and escape from the pressures of conformity. The prey-and-predator image occurs in the racecourse scene in which a horse, while running fast, falls on the ground hurt, and then a flock of hungry birds swoops down. The characters in the city live corpse-like, isolated from the general current of life, going their own way. Calcutta itself is imaged as an ugly, ghastly monster in whose lethal grip the three desperate preys- Nirode, Monisha and Amla - gape and gasp for breath. Images of putrefaction, like filth, squalidness and adversity create in Monisha a distaste and dislike for the city. Amla keenly feels the demonic, ogre-like presence of the city, its throbbing pulse attracts as well as repels:

*... this monster city that lived no normal, healthy and red-blooded life but one that was subterranean, underlit, stealthy and odorous of mortality, had captured and enchanted – or disenchanted- both her sister and brother....*<sup>16</sup>

Washed in the monsoon, Calcutta presents a moving picture of desolation and dissolution, decay and disintegration:

*... watching the sodden walls of unlit houses peel away in the wet, film posters dissolve and fade, seeing motor-cars and trams stranded hub-high in water, noticing how the crowds had melted*

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.148

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.148

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.150

*away, vanished and only a solitary rickshaw - heroically mobile amidst all the waterlogged vehicles- churned and splashed nobly through ....*<sup>17</sup>

There are certain images suggesting the sense of imprisonment- as escape is the key note of the novel. The river, the only external setting that makes Nirode feel peaceful looks like “a tiger cage” in a kind of subdued uproar as he identifies himself with it. He feels the entire city to be a big prison where there are “white, cell-like suburban houses with their barred windows and kites wheeled with effete, listless grace”. Amla turns to art as a means of escape for she too feels stifled by life around her. In addition to these images, there are also images and symbols among others. Examining all these in detail would not be possible within the confines of the present format.

To Monisha, the house is a prison. In the first few pages of the novel, the concept of her husband’s house as a cage comes across very strongly. She does not belong to it, does not relate to it. Monisha feels trapped behind the barred windows of Jiban’s narrow-minded family. Her husband, on the other, continues securely in his own cage. To him, the house is a symbol of safety and shelter. The four tiered balconies with mental railings were so intricately criss-crossed that one could not so much thrust one’s head through them. “Enclosing shadows like stagnant well water”<sup>18</sup>, it was enough to depress her. She longs to thrust her head out of the window but the bars are too closely set.

Nirode, “stared across the road at the white, cell-like suburban houses with their barred windows”<sup>19</sup>. To Nirode these houses in Calcutta where “there are no ethics”<sup>20</sup> serve as the symbol of a lacerating and disintegrating sense of anguish and agony. He says to David, “And have you taken a room at that robbing house again”<sup>21</sup>. To him they are “slaughter houses”<sup>22</sup> that

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.54

<sup>18</sup> *Voices in the City*, p.109

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.72

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.117

ruin our sensibility but to Dharma his house was “as quiet as his face”<sup>23</sup>. Desai uses the image of the house to portray men and women leading scattered and disunited lives in this city of commerce :

*Lives spent in waiting ... always behind bars, those terrifying black bars that shut us in, in the old houses, in the old city*<sup>24</sup>.

In *Voices in the City*, colour imagery (especially images of light and dark) is functional. The image of darkness in Part-II of the novel projects the forlornness of Monisha’s broken heart in the face of the dark and dangerous forces of life:

*I’ll have only the darkness. Only the dark spaces between the stars, for they are the only things on earth that can comfort me, rub and balm into my wounds, into my throbbing head, and bring me this coolness, this stillness, this interval of peace. Even sleep has not this sweet, swaying stillness as these immensities of night sky, to which I top my face, allowing them to fall into my eyes, and fall. Sleep has nightmares. This, this empty darkness, has not so much as a dream. It is one unlit waste, a desert to which my heart truly belongs.*<sup>25</sup>

Light and dark imagery, an extension of colour imagery explores the dim and dark corridors of the souls of Nirode and Monisha. It suggests their emotional estrangement and their abortive desire for a life of detachment in the deafening cacophony of Calcutta. It also reflects the caged isolation, psycho-physical torture, phantasmagoric and paralytic life, bogged and defeatist attitudes and dim apprehensions of failures, of darkness and stillness of Nirode, the bohemian artist.

It is Nirode who discovers that his mother is a Kali – persona. Monisha’s death is a creative

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.66

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.42

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.46

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.120

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p.137

triumph symbolically as both Nirode and Amla feel a mystic union with her. In their moment of vision they both see that Monisha has done a sacrifice to save both of them. A parallel may be drawn with Virginia Woolf's **Mrs. Dalloway** where Septimus Smith's death gives Mrs. Dalloway an insight into death in a heightened moment of vision. Nirode sees a Kali – persona in his mother, who had given them life but who is now the destroyer. Despite Amla's repeated protests, Nirode sticks to his vision which incorporates an understanding of the duality of existence, night and day, good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, creation and destruction as two facets of the same experience. Nirode sees in the mother a sense of triumph, a strange glow on her face which he links to her reaction at the 'sacrifice' of Monisha. She now has a 'legitimate' cause to nurse her grievance with life. It is the Goddess who is, in a way, operating through her. The Goddess who is also active through another means. viz., the city of Calcutta. Having already got Monisha to offer herself in sacrifice, the mother now looks up to Nirode to be next **pharmakos** or sacrificial goat. Amla although has been shown to be rather skeptical. The ending is thus a subtle conveying of Nirode possibly seeking release following in Monisha's footsteps while Amla, having discovered art as an escape, disagreeing with him.

The use of symbols and images thus imparts a suggestivity and subtlety to the narrative.

Brushing aside of historical romances and themes of social and political realism Anita Desai took up exploration of the psyche of individual characters. Her use of images laid bare the confused emotions of individuals wandering and struggling for their identity. So she always relies on artistic devices like images, symbols and metaphors to convey in a subtle, though effective manner the working of the mind of the characters in the novel. Anita Desai is a practitioner of such fiction and *Cry*, *The Peacock* and *Voices In The City* are good illustrations of this type. Desai's images are neither unnatural nor unrelated. Images in the novels of Anita Desai fuel the fictional world which derives the psyche of the protagonist. She is a master craftswoman in situating her use of nature as, "objective correlative." Her unusual peeking into modern man's

life is clear in her use of images which serve as a metaphor of man's existence. If the images are unable to surprise, they do not enthrall either. So, Anita Desai chisels the images with evocative power which are fresh and alive. Imagery is understandable and satisfactory, which helps in the narration of incidents in a subtle and suggestive manner. In this way, the spectrum of imagery is another special feature of Desai's novels based on 'Subjective Objectivity' i.e., the subjective experiences of the protagonists are objectified through concrete images. Though she is often criticized for excessive use of imagery yet she has successfully countered this criticism and has become the avant-garde psychological novelist through her mastery of imagery.

### Works Cited:

1. Desai Anita, *Cry, the Peacock*. New Delhi: Orient Paperback, 1980.
2. Desai Anita, *Voices in the City*. New Delhi: Orient Paperback, 1965.
3. Aristotle, Horace, Longinus. *Classical Literary Criticism* Middlesex: Penguin Books. 1987.
4. Bande, Usha, *The Novels of Anita Desai*. New Delhi: Prestige Books, 1988.
5. Belliappa, Meena, *Anita Desai: A Study of Her Fiction*. Calcutta: Writers Workshop, 1977.
6. Desai, Anita, "Replies to the Questionnaire" *Kakatiya Journal of English Studies*, Vol.3, No. 1, 1978.
7. Desai, Anita, "Statement", *Contemporary Novel*, ed. James Vinson. London: St. James Press, 1972.
8. Fowler, Roger. Ed. *Essays on Style and Language*. London: University College. 1967.
9. Shrivastava, Ramesh K., ed. *Perspective on Anita Desai*. Ghaziabad: Vimal, 1984