VII. CONCLUSION
Anita Desai created a stir in the literary world with the publication of her first novel *Cry, the Peacock* and has gone on to garner world-wide critical acclaim for her undiminished concern with feminine psyche and inimitable poetic style. Her narrative technique, art of characterization, and use of images and symbols uniquely represent the inner world of her women in their anguish, abandon and despair. Her achievement as a novelist is stamped by her distinctive genius and differentiates her from her predecessors as well as her contemporaries in her single-minded focus on probing into the psychology of woman in exclusion of concerns with social, economic or political issues unlike other Indian novelists of English. The contours of her field of vision are not limited by her preoccupation with the consciousness of women alone; the same included the psyche of men as well. The problem of these characters, both female and male, is mostly psychological and/or spiritual. Moving between the poles of rebellion and acquiescence, they search for self-realization and meaning in life. Assaying them at the critical moments of their inner crisis through its development into the final resolution, Desai elevates their personal problems to universal proportions.
Her novels are peopled by an array of women of different age groups: old, middle-aged, late and early youth; of different nationalities: Indian, English and German; of different religions: Hindu, Christian and Muslim. Among them, they cover all familial relations: mother, sister, daughter, wife and mistress. There are women: married and unmarried; widows and spinsters; concubines and public women; scholarly and illiterate; urban and rural. Not only the females, the males are also a varied lot in age, profession and cultural attainments. In fact, Anita Desai’s novels present “God’s plenty” as in Chaucer’s Prologue to the Canterbury Tales. Joseph Conrad commenting on the novelist’s art in the Preface to The Nigger of the Narcissus (1914) makes a characteristic observation:

... it is only through complete, unswerving devotion to the perfect blending of form and substance: it is only through unremitted care for the shape and ring of sentences that an approach can be made to plasticity, to colour, and that the light of magic suggestiveness may be brought to play for an evanescent instant over the common place surface of words,... (p.70).
Anita Desai does invariably bring this “magic suggestiveness” through the interplay of syntax and rhythm, of imagery and symbol, to bestow “plasticity” and “colour” to the surface of her vocabulary in her novels. There is in her art “the perfect blending of form and substance”, which lends a unique pattern and rhythm to her novels that befit the depiction of her emotionally high-strung characters, thereby elevating her works to distinctive aesthetic height. Her style can best be described through her own statement:

It is the movement of the wing one tries to capture not the bird. That is, it is the image that matters...That is what a writer’s existence is all about-he connects, he connects, all the time he connects. It is a process that employs language but also transcends it (Desai: 1975, p.14).

The rhythm of her language rises and falls, goes into a crescendo and descends down, with the flow and ebb of the consciousness of her sensitive characters. Their despair arises out of their need to ‘connect’ to the world of people or with the society in general. But as the characters are “Nay Sayers” they “come in conflict with society. They do not fit smugly in the socially allotted slots...” (Tandon: 2008, p.143). This creates
the crisis of their consciousness and leads to alienation and isolation. However, reading Desai’s oeuvre reveals a steady growth of the central consciousness of her novels: from the early suicidal Maya and Monisha to the final self-realised, mature Bim, Lotte or Sophie.

Maya’s thwarted attempt to get her love reciprocated results in her failure to establish connection with Gautama and her unassuaged physical needs push her to the brink of insanity. In Cry, the Peacock Anita Desai’s treatment of this sensitive young woman on the verge of mental breakdown shows her deft handling of both the matter and manner. In order to project the consciousness of a woman haunted by prophecy of death and marital disharmony, Desai appropriates the rhythm and beat of the drum, exploits images and symbols, particularly the cry of the peacock which serves as the objective correlative of Maya’s cry for love. The novel presents a turbulent and troubled psyche in a mis-matched marriage highlighting that union between princess and plebeian is foredoomed. Maya’s situation in life is made more poignant by her obsession with death as prophesied by the albino astrologer during her childhood. Her violent instinctuality, her love-lorn daily existence coupled with the apathy and insensitivity of her husband, leads the drama of her
life to its predictable disaster. Desai’s dexterous handling of this tragic story in presenting Maya’s experiences in the form of a memoir wins the reader’s sympathy for Maya’s paranoia and divides the blame of the series of deaths equally between Gautama and the prophecy.

In *Voices in the City*, the three major protagonists are much like Maya. Hailing from the scenic town of Kalimpong they feel trapped in the dingy, dirty, Calcutta, the “city of death”. Crushed and maimed by their horror of the city, they reach the nadir of their feelings. While Monisha is destroyed in the process, her brother and sister could extricate themselves out of the mire. For, Monisha who is intellectually superior to her in-laws and even her husband, the washing-cooking-cleaning existence of a joint family becomes a veritable tomb. Her situation becomes all the more pathetic due to marital incompatibility, lack of time, for herself or privacy. The reference to the caged female birds in her diary serves as the metonym of her plight. Sadly her diary becomes the only vehicle of her freedom and her only companion. The detrimental effect of alienation and isolation drives her to suicide at last. Both Monisha and Maya do not feel the need to revolt or to break away from the family ties though their hopes and aspirations remain unrealized.
However, the death of Monisha becomes the moment of epiphany for her sister Amla. She is a life-affirming character who learns to follow the middle path between complete negation and total involvement. Though initially overpowered by the gloomy atmosphere of the city like others, her job as an artist saves her. Ironically she learns her lesson from two negative incidents: Monisha’s death and Dharma’s callousness towards his daughter. Hers is a movement from denial to participation in life revealing the dynamism of her character. In the characters of Maya and Monisha, Desai portrays the problem of marital life, disharmony in married life redeems none of the partners. It is implied that one who tries to compromise can rise above such limiting situation.

Sarah of *Bye-Bye Blackbird* is one such character who accepts the value of compromise and acceptance. Sarah faces dual crisis of social and psychological alienation. Her identity-crisis following her marriage to an Indian and her subsequent isolation in her own soil makes her situation all the more poignant. But once she accepts the dilemma of cross-cultural marriage, she takes a positive step forward. She decides to support and follow her husband and bid farewell to her English self. Thus here we see a woman, though not of Indian origin, behaving in a true
Indian fashion and giving greater stress on family value at the cost of her personal interest. In this connection, Anita Desai’s comment on Sita, the heroine of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, is pertinent enough:

Of course, if one is alive, in this world, one cannot survive without compromise - drawing the line means certain death, and in the end, Sita opts for life - with compromise - consoling herself with Lawrence’s verse, with the thought that she is compelled to make this tragic choice because she is a part of the earth, of life, and can no more reject it than the slumberous egg can or the heifer or the grain (Desai: 1977, pp.95-104).

*Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is a deeply moving psychological study of the modern man’s sense of isolation and rootlessness. Her husband fails to understand her need for love or her reverence of life. In frustration she turns to Manori, the magical island of her childhood. But the indifferent servants and the inclement weather therein make her realize the snare of illusion and she rejects it in favour of the reality. She acknowledges the value of such acceptance. Thus, her movement from alienation and ennui to revolt and escape reaches its crescendo in her
compromise and acceptance of responsibility and family value. The novel advocates the essential philosophy of Anita Desai: to compromise and to accept. Structured like D.H. Lawrence’s *The Woman who Rode Away*, the heroine Sita, of the novel, finds the resolution of her dilemma in Lawrence’s poem “End of Another Home Holiday”. Like Virginia Woolf’s *Waves*, the ebb and tide of the monsoon sea reflect Sita’s tumultuous emotion, the alteration between hope and despair, rebellion and acquiescence.

S.D. Sharma rightly observes that while the novel projects modern man’s sense of rootlessness, it upholds essentially Desai’s vision of life: “Life had no periods, no stretches. It simply swirls around, muddling and confusing, leading nowhere”, but one has to compromise between “what is and what ought to be” (Tiwari: 2004, p.69).

In the character of Nanda Kaul of *Fire on the Mountain* Desai plunges deeper into the analysis of the agony of isolation and marital disharmony. *Fire on the Mountain* also details the continuity of life inspite of all odds as in Tennyson’s poem, “The Brook”: “Men may come and men may go, but I go on forever”. The house of Carignano weathers time and its occupants at different periods undergo the same loneliness
and tragic fate. Nanda’s tragedy issues from her desire for elusive stillness which she has been searching for all her life. Even in this lonely mountain house, strange movements, noises and voices intrude into her domain. Desai captures the rhythm of movement in stillness through Nanda’s detachment and gradual obsession turning to the ultimate attachment for Raka. *Fire on the Mountain* recalls the title of the second chapter of Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* where the fire is used with symbolic overtone. Like the fire lit by the Golding-children unleashing their subconscious violence, here the forest fire started by Raka in *Fire on the Mountain* has the symbolic implication of exposing the false world of the adults. The story primarily deals with the aged, widow Nanda in her isolation. We see Raka and Ila Das from Nanda’s point of view. All their lives converge at Carignano and their individual stories highlight that all three women suffer from the debilitating impact of subjugation or abuse from a father or a husband. But they valiantly try to overcome their limiting situation as Nanda does by adjusting to her isolated existence pretending to merge with the pine trees and the craggy hills of Kasauli. This geographical contiguity and the house effectively present the wasteland motif of the fiction. The infidelity of her husband and the callousness of the children
have embittered Nanda in human relationship. However, the story charts her evolution through her relationship with Raka. Nanda has always tried to protect herself in a web of lies instead of trying to desert or expose her husband. But Ila Das’s violent death breaks down her “life-lie” and exposes the humiliation suffered by her all through her existence.

Among Anita Desai’s women Bim of Clear Light of Day is one of the most endearing characters. A working woman and a multidimensional personality, Bim suffers for twenty years the impact of desertion and the slight of her brother. But she shows capacity for introspection, for forgiveness and acceptance. As Seema Jena argues: “the plot succeeds in featuring the vision of the author which explains that love, understanding and forgiveness are qualities which triumph over despair and destruction” (Jena: 1989, p.75).

The most musical of all Desai novels Clear Light of Day, presents Desai’s achievement of her quest for an aesthetic solution to the problems she has been grappling with since Cry, the Peacock. Bim’s grievance, her isolation and her grouse come to an end once she recognises the essence of the meaning of life in togetherness and relationship. Clear Light of Day, thus, embodies Desai’s vision of life that
to forgive and forget, to transcend egocentricity and achieve inclusivity can alone make for an enlightened buoyant self. Her grouse and her defiance present the picture of universal woman, whose longing or needs are never taken care of by those with whom she shares her life. Nevertheless, woman like Bim possesses an all-encompassing love and a “seraphic vision” (Bande: 1988, p. 140), that sows the seeds of a growth-oriented, fulfilled character.

Though *In Custody* has as its central character a man, Deven, his wife Sarla and the two wives of the poet Nur make an interesting study of contrasted characters bringing subtle nuances of inter-personal relationship. While Sarla suffers from neglect and penury, which is so much at odds with her and her friends’ youthful dreams of “fan, phone, frigidair”, a short absence from home at her parental house makes her understand the value of compromise and acceptance. But both the wives of the great poet are shown to be mean, manipulative, without the capacity for introspection or growth. They use the poet only to promote their end. Thus Sarla in her attitude of surrender comes close to embodying Anita Desai’s vision of woman.
The same attitude of surrender and compromise is seen in the character of Lotte of Baumgartner’s Bombay, in Betty Jennings of The Zigzag Way and Uma of Fasting, Feasting. All of them accept their limiting situation in life which is mostly pecuniary in nature: though Lotte and Jenny also suffer from the impact of displacement from their native lands. Lotte is a strong character like Bim who sustains both herself and Baumgartner through the agony of their isolation being the displaced. She also attends on Kanti Sethia through his illness. While Betty is too young and inept to stave off the tide of change inundating their small mining community along with her family and decides to accept her fate, her counterpart Dona Vera is the opportunist who takes advantage of both her helpless husband and the Huichol Indians. In pretending to help them she advances her cause and lives the life of a free bird. A similar situation is presented in Fasting, Feasting. While the ugly Duckling and the unfortunate elder sister Uma shoulders all the burden of running the house for her parents, her younger sister Aruna controls her husband with an iron hand. But neither of these sisters is happy, though Uma tries to accept her fate stoically and comes out the better, as she discerns the “crease of discontent between her eyebrows” (p.112) marring the beauty
of Aruna. Initiated into the world of religion by her widowed aunt Mira, Uma could find spiritual and psychological solace.

A deviation in the Desai canon is the story of *Journey to Ithaca*. Here again Desai uses contrasted characters to present her vision of woman. Though it reiterates Desai’s usual theme of alienation, it also follows the quest motif where all the three central characters undertake multiple journeys to achieve spiritual enlightenment and in the process their lives converge in India. The Mother’s arduous journey itself brings her the realization that it is the quest that is the end in itself and she is now ready to spread her message of knowledge and peace. Sophie, without knowing the Mother’s influence over her husband, undertakes a journey to reveal the Mother’s supposed fraud. But her quest ultimately enlightens her and she goes on in search of her husband. Thus this novel resonates the Indian philosophy of *Ananta Jyatra*, endless journey, that provides one with the opportunity for self analysis and spiritual attainment. In this category are included quite a number of characters other than the heroines as Tara, Uma, Melanie, Betty Jennings, Dona Vera, Mira masi. All of them are in search of that elusive compatibility of relationships and happiness. Though this vision eludes them, they have
the innate strength and resilience not to cave under external pressure or hostile environment. Some of them may not have the same selfless devotion as in case of Dona Vera, or Imtiaz who wrest their happiness through subterfuge, but all of them confirm and accept traditional social value system.

All Anita Desai's characters feel the need to connect and on their failure or success to do so highlight the vision of the novel. Either they cave in under pressure and end their lives or they resist the onslaughts on their existence and show courage and grit to withstand the same and turn the situation in their favour. In their need to "connect" they introspect on their stance and re-evaluate it from the stand point of adjustment or compromise. Her novels trace the potential for growth of the women in acquiescence. All of them are alienated individuals, agonising over their incompatible marriage and isolation. Their abortive attempt to "connect" is challenged by the world around them. But the characters stand against the tide, raise their voice, only to realize "there could be no love more deep and full and wide" (Clear Light of Day: p.165) than their family and there could be nothing better than traditional values. Though marriage does not automatically provide a solution to feminine dilemma, or
alleviate the agony of their solitude, they learn to respect and abide by family values. Ultimately they learn to rise above their egocentric-self in order to compromise and accept family responsibility making the needed assertion of life.

But marriage is not shown to provide with a solution to compatible union and bliss. One cannot achieve harmony in marriage except in a few rare and stray cases highlighted by the picture of eternal, ethereal love that Maya and Sita chanced upon in a garden. As Maya observed for marital bliss “…where union and not communion is the answer…” (p.90). In Cry, the Peacock Maya and Gautama are opposite of each other echoing the significance of their names. In Where Shall We Go This Summer? Raman and Sita are like “…never the twain shall meet”. Crippling marriage has left Nanda Kaul of Fire on the Mountain deeply scarred and embittered till the child Raka heals her wounds and the nectar of love flows again in her veins. Voices in the City, Bye-Bye Blackbird, Journey to Ithaca almost every novel portrays the couple as intrinsically mismatched, suffering from incompatibility and isolation except when they give up their ‘own’ness and get completely merged in the other – as the ‘MamandPapa’ of Fasting, Feasting. In none of Anita
Desai's novels we meet a wife as the *sahadharmini* or *sahakarmini* as per the traditional Indian view. It is the tragic destiny of these women not to feel themselves fulfilled in that aspect because of the failure of their husbands. But none of them break away from the traditional Indian cultural mould to revolt, to desert or to abdicate familial responsibility. They feel the pangs of mismatched relationship, they cry in secret, sometimes they even exercise a brief stint at independence as Sita does, but never do they desert their husbands. This signifies compromise but all of them do not do so as Maya and Monisha are unlike the compromising type.

The feminist reading of Desai's novels does not confirm such a view of life in case of this novelist's works. Feminist writings are mostly concerned with portraying the predicament of women particularly in a patriarchal and patrilineal society, and the women's attempt to gain freedom and voice their existential quest. More and more women writers have been registering self-awareness of the women; hence it will be prudent to analyse the assumed framework of feminism / feminist writing.
Feminism presupposes woman’s equality with man in all walks of life and Rama Kundu in her study of *Fire on the Mountain* avers that one of the markers of feminism is to “identify the distinctive feminine subject matter in literature by woman-gestation, giving birth, nurturing, mother-daughter relationship” (Kundu: 2005, p.190). Simone de Beauvoir is of the opinion that women are not born as gendered but they are so made by society. Radical Feminism speaks of women as rebels, who try to overthrow the age-old dictates of society – the dictates laid down by an explicitly patriarchal and patrilineal society - and try to assert their rightful position in the society by subverting the existing social system. Desai, however, does not subscribe to such belief:

I think basically the problem is how to exist in society and yet maintain one’s individuality rather than suffering from a lack of society and a lack of belonging, that is why exile has never been my theme (Desai: 1979, p.65).

Her novels are feminist so far as the same concern with the problems of women. The story catches them at a moment of inner crisis grappling with their problems in isolation but never do they cry against the patriarchal society, not even the women of foreign origin who even
accept their lot rather than rebel against the same. Moreover in her later novels she has moved away from the stereotype of women's angst to the problems concerning male protagonists. So it can be appropriate to say that she concerns herself more with the inner recesses of the mind of all her characters than with the psychology of woman as feminist. Desai portrays women who cry against the injustice of husbands and other males or against the humdrumness of their daily existence but they do never attempt to subvert the traditional familial and social mould. On the other hand, her novels extol Indian tradition and family values. Hence it is incorrect to assert feminist elements in her novels.

On the other hand, Desai's novels can be read as dramatizing an Indian version of feminism completely different from the Western type: the partners look upon each other as equals who need to transcend their individual selves in order to get metamorphosed into a complete whole. Desai herself says:

Few Indian feminists really contemplate total change.

Working towards an adjustment through the traditional role is much less drastic, much more Indian. I think Indian
feminism is more practical than theoretical. It is expedient rather than ideological (Desai: 1994, p.168).

This androgynous or *Ardhanariswar* image is reiterated in many of her novels. This image in the shape of a symbolic figure first appears in *Voices in the City* where Niroda sells a sculpture of ‘Shiva-Parvati’ in a highly erotic posture to aunt Lila—ironically an embittered widow. This image reaches its culmination in *Clear Light of Day* and Baumgartner’s *Bombay* and later is verbalized as “Mam and Papa” in *Fasting, feasting*. However, in the earlier two novels the conjoined figure does not consist of lovers or husband and wife but highlight the unsullied, innocent and undemanding love between the siblings. Bim feels if she can sleep alongside Baba, she can be whole; Baumgartner and Lotte sleep on the bed fitting one’s concavity to the other’s convexity, feeling their wholeness. Here the symbol of *Ardhanariswar* is projected through unstinted filial affection and not passion or incest. Anita Desai seems to define such wholeness, the harmony and togetherness in existence more through brother-sister love than that of man-woman, husband-wife relationship. The same stress on wholeness and harmony in family life is made by the use of the
concurrent symbol of the idol of Nataraj or the reference to Shiva, the Hindu god of life and death, of love and familial harmony and bliss.

Desai does not speak directly in her personal self or uses a character as a mouthpiece in any of her novels. Nor does she use a character as her mouthpiece to communicate her message/vision as is done by other novelists. Hers is an essentially a dramatic and impersonal art: the foreground of the narratives is occupied by the narrator's, either the third-person or the autobiographical/first person. What the readers listen to is the voice of the narrator giving his/her account of the action, setting and personages of the narrative. The author's presence in the narrative is relegated to the background and the same works only as the designing intellect shaping the narrative through the means of the narrator, action and the characters with their dialogues, the descriptive details like setting, images and symbols-all into a unified whole.

The use of appropriate narrative voice helps to reveal the mind-style of the woman represented in the novel. In the autobiographical narratives of Maya's memoir and Monisha's diary, the narratives are so designed as to engage the readers' sympathy for their alienation, agony and suffering leading to their deaths. Both these novels in first-person
narration reveal extreme subjectivity of the narrative technique. Death is a foregone conclusion for these characters and is justified by the narratives of the novels. But all other novels use third-person narrators and deal with women of different types. These characters go through the usual process of emotional crisis, alienation and the resultant angst. But after a phase of struggle, their innate capacity for introspection leads them to compromise or acquiescence. Desai appropriately uses consonant psycho-narration as the major narrating device to engage the reader's sympathy with their struggle. In addition, Desai resorts to character parallelism and contrast as well as uses images and symbols for the representation of the women.

One of the most important images, in several novels is drawn from the world of flora and fauna. Maya is shown to love the flowers and fruits, the grass and the trees. She revels in their beauty, their scent revealing her sensuous, passionate nature. The perfectly groomed, scenic beauty of the Kalimpong house of the Ray children is in contrast with the ugly, dark image of Calcutta reflecting appropriately the jarring notes of the psychology of the Ray siblings. In Where Shall We Go This Summer? the turbulent sea and the violent monsoon become ‘objective
correlatives' of Sita's psyche. Likewise in Fire on the Mountain, the barren, deserted landscape of Kasauli is symbolic of Nanda Kaul's lonely, "pared" existence.

The use of animal imagery serves as symbolic representation of the violence lurking in the subconscious of the angst-ridden characters. In Cry, the Peacock Maya's vision becomes increasingly embroiled with dreams and vision of iguanas and reptiles, the metaphoric snake under the carpet, the carnivorous vultures, while Bim's story in Clear Light of Day is full of representation of dogs, doves and snails. The choice of appropriate animal images can thus represent the neurotic consciousness of Maya and the gentle, all-loving nature of Bim. Interestingly Nanda Kaul of Fire on the Mountain draws an analogy between her great-granddaughter with hen a bird which does not perch.

The 'House' is a reiterated image in several of the novels. A house normally symbolises shelter, love and peace. But in Anita Desai's novels they stand either for imprisonment or security. For Maya, her childhood house- a citadel of aristocracy and grandeur- is her real home on the other hand, the mediocrity of Gautama's house and the poverty-ridden house of the Lais' highlight in contrast Maya's depressing life with
Gautama and Gautama's failure to care, love and understand Maya as she desires. In *Voices in the City* the black-barred house of Monisha's in-laws in Calcutta is contrasted with the Kalimpong house of her childhood. It brings out the difference between the Prince and the Pauper which becomes the root cause of Monisha's suicide. In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Sita's initial experience of homelessness in the island of Manori during winter, 1947 dominates her psyche for her entire life and results in her failure to adjust in later life. In *Fire on the Mountain*, Carignano, with the history of housing only ill-fated individuals, serves as symbolic of Nanda's tragedy. Nanda never had really a house to call her home and she sublimates her desire for a home through her story telling to Raka which also reveals her secret desire for a loving husband and an adoring father. In *Clear Light of Day* the house is made the central symbol of the story. Bim's attachment to her brothers and sister, her grouse at Raja, and her freedom – everything moves around the house. In an interesting analysis R.S. Sharma states that:

... the entire action of the novel is divided between the house and the garden, the characters are either moving into the house from the garden or are going out from the house
into the garden, suggesting in poetic terms a contrast between the human and the natural, between life in domestic confines and life in the domain of nature (Sharma: 1981, p.145).

In Baumgartner's Bombay the house image stands for nostalgia and helplessness of the displaced. The beautiful, opulent house of Baumgartner's childhood is contrasted with his shabby and poverty-stricken rented quarters at the end of his life, thus symbolising the sad lot of the homeless or the rootless. Home with its spatial as well as psychological connotations, suggests the imprisonment of Anita Desai's women in their loveless existence inside the husbands' houses.

Like the house, the dust-storm razes through several of the novels symbolising the struggle of the women to surmount the problems accosting them. With the end of the storm the cool atmosphere brings in the ultimate resolution. The storm image gains in importance by being used at critical junctures in the characters' psychological upheaval. In Cry, the Peacock the storm outside symbolically represents the psychological storm razing inside Maya in her desire to survive and eliminate Gautama. In Where Shall We Go This Summer? the windy, stormy island along with
the dilapidated house objectify Sita's psychic upheaval. The rain and storm in *Fire on the Mountain* provide Nanda with the sought after opportunity to captivate Raka by her stories thus revealing Nanda's pent-up desire for love and companionship. The dust-storm and loo in the last chapter of *Clear Light of Day* covering everything with layers of dust serves as analogy for Bim's rage and fury when she is forced by Tara's constant query to revisit the past.

Apart from the images and symbols, Desai uses analogous naming device as in case of Maya, Sita, Raka, Bimla and Mira with mythological or historical implications. A character named Mira masi, the widowed aunt who provides the members of the family, especially the children, with love and care as well as spiritual sustenance to some, appears with the same name in different novels reiterating Desai's great regard for family values. Her novels thus affirm the Indian tradition of the family in which the woman is the backbone, the sustaining life-force in her roles as mother, wife, sister and aunt. Anita Desai's vision of the Indian familial relationship is not darkened by the tragic negation of the same in the cases of Maya and Monisha. Hers is rather a robust life-affirming vision as embodied in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and a host of other novels.
following the same. Rightly does S.D. Sharma observes that “She is an incorrigible optimist: for, she is used to see life “steady and as a whole” which the Greeks were usually wont to” (Tiwari: ed., 2004, pp.68-69).

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