

BOOK REVIEW

Choudhary, Dr. Arpna. *Souls in Search of Selves in the Major Novels of Anita Nair*. New Delhi : Adhyayan Publishers and Distributors, 2022, Price : Rs. 900.00, Pp 166. ISBN: 978-93-91943-05-9

Dr. Arpna Choudhary, in *Souls in Search of Selves in the Major Novels of Anita Nair*, offers a captivating analysis of the literary works of one of India's most celebrated authors, Anita Nair. With a keen eye for detail and a deep understanding of Nair's writing, Choudhary delves into the intricate exploration of identity, self-discovery, and the human condition that permeates Nair's major novels.

The book serves as a comprehensive guide to Nair's significant literary contributions, providing readers with a holistic view of her works and the underlying themes that tie them together. Choudhary's expertise shines through as she navigates through the pages, offering insightful interpretations and shedding light on the subtleties and nuances of Nair's storytelling.

One of the outstanding qualities of this book is Choudhary's ability to bring the characters to life and unravel their complex journeys in the select novels which she has taken for her study – *Ladies Coupe*, *The Better Man*, *Mistress* and *Lessons in Forgetting*. In these novels Nair portrays almost all the shades of women we can fantasize on the earth but Choudhary with her insight dissects their thoughts, actions, and struggles, allowing readers to develop a profound connection with these fictional individuals, whether it is a gentle and compassionate Paru Kutty turning into an aggressive and bold one in *The Better Man* or the strong-willed Akhilandeshwari from *Ladies Coupe*.

Furthermore, the author seamlessly interweaves the cultural and social context of Nair's novels into her analysis. Choudhary explores the impact of gender dynamics, traditional societal norms, and the constant clash between tradition and modernity in Nair's narratives. This integration of sociocultural elements adds depth and richness to the understanding of Nair's works, elevating the book beyond a mere literary critique.

Choudhary's prose is both engaging and accessible, making the book a pleasure to read for both academic scholars and general readers interested in Anita Nair's novels. The author's meticulous research is evident throughout the book, with references to critical theories and scholarly discussions, providing a solid foundation for her analysis.

However, one minor drawback of this otherwise exceptional work is that it assumes a certain level of familiarity with Anita Nair's novels. While the book provides summaries and contextual explanations, readers who are new to Nair's works might feel slightly overwhelmed at times. Nonetheless, this does not significantly diminish the overall impact of the book.

In conclusion, *Souls in Search of Selves in the Major Novels of Anita Nair* by Dr. Arpna Choudhary is a must-read for any fan of Anita Nair's writing. With its insightful analysis, thoughtful interpretations, and comprehensive exploration of Nair's novels, this book offers a valuable companion to readers eager to delve deeper into the captivating world of India's one of the most esteemed authors.

Reviewer : Dr. Nibha Singh, Professor & Former Head, P. G. Dept. of English, Magadh University, Bodh-Gaya

Hamid, S.A. *The Alchemy of Ageing*. New Delhi : Authorspress, 2021. Price : Rs. 295.00, Pp. 107, ISBN : 978-93-90588-96-1

The Alchemy of Ageing is a collection of thought provoking poems by Dr. Syed Ali Hamid. The poems tell tales of past and present memories. They address dark themes like death, pain and grief but also cover life, love, freedom and family. Dr. Syed Ali Hamid is a retired professor and Head, Dept. of English, Kumaun University Campus, Almora (Uttarakhand) India. Having spent forty years in Kumaun, the land of hills, rivers and temples and being born and brought up in the city of Nawabs, he is an amalgamation of twin cultures and secular thoughts in the truest form. Till date he has published four poetry books, *Autumn Rainbow* (1993), *No Man's Land* (2003), *Desire, Ultimately* (2013), *The Ontology of Desire : New and Selected Poems* (2015) and his latest *The Alchemy of Ageing* (2021). Besides he is an acknowledged translator of English, Urdu and Hindi literature.

The poet has penned down various Noods in his inimical style giving the book feel of bouquet of poems. The uniqueness and charm of this book of poems lies in the addition of ghazals in English :

When I look deep inside my heart, there is silence.
In my room the walls, the door there is silence...

You have lectured too much Hamid, we're all fed up
For God's sake stop this nonsense we wish there is silence.
(There is Silence)

When the rains come
farmers rejoice,
...But in another land
the fury of the floods
carries away houses, people...
(The Land in Monsoon)

The poems explore many of Dr. Hamids' aesthetic and philosophical concerns, the meaning of existence, the nature of love, the relationship between the individual and society. Poetry compare to novel has fewer readership, may be because of the use of symbols, myths — the complexity of meaning and language. When I picked *The Alchemy of Ageing*, I went on reading till half the book was done. Buy a copy of this and enjoy.

Reviewer : Dr. Sarita Veerangana, Professor & Head, P.G. Dept. of English,
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