

Ageing in Literature: Global South and Global North Perspectives
“Tattered Coat or Magic Stick: Imagining Old Age through Literature from Global South and Global North”

Anita Desai, ‘A Devoted Son’

Discussion Points

1. What is a 'decline narrative'?
2. How does Anita Desai characterise the dynamics and tensions between tradition and modernity, and is this configured as an intergenerational tension?
3. How does Anita Desai depict the agency of the older generation?
4. What is the role of the family in the lives (and deaths) of and caring for the older generation?
5. How does Anita Desai use colour symbolism (red and white) to make us aware of the subtextual meaning?
6. How are women portrayed in the story?
7. How does the old man's interpretation of the son's 'care' serve as a caution about systems of care for the ageing?