

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A READING OF ANITA DESAI'S NOVEL CLEAR LIGHT OF DAY

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ABSTRACT

Empowerment is a process in which a certain poor and disadvantaged class is raised on social, economic, and political levels via the efforts of others. It is a multi-faceted social practise that aids individuals in taking responsibility for their own life. Womanhood empowerment is a massive issue that has to be addressed on a global scale and at every level. This document aims to provide an overview of the Women's Empowerment Compact. Anita Desai's work, particularly her beautiful novel Clear Light of Day, is a must-read. Anita Desai depicts Indian women as disadvantaged characters who must deal with the obstacles and obligations imposed by a patriarchal culture in her novel clear light of Day. This study demonstrates how these women cope with their difficult circumstances and stand up to a patriarchal culture that they do not understand. This research examines the lives of these women in order to determine the many methods in which they establish their presence.

KEYWORDS: Women, Empowerment, Clear, Light, Patriarchal.

I. INTRODUCTION

Authority over material resources, academic resources, and one's own belief system are all examples of empowerment. It encompasses the concepts of power to, power with, and power within. Some define empowerment as a process of mindfulness and conscientization of infrastructure building that results in more prominent involvement, compelling fundamental leadership force and control, and ultimately transforming activity. This involves the ability to obtain what one requires as well as the ability to influence others over one's problems. Specifically, the power link that

includes women's lives at many levels, including the family, network, community, and the state, is discussed. Significantly, it involves the mental level of women's ability to assert themselves, and this is a development similar to that seen in India. A woman, like any other individual, holds a great deal of status position at any given point in time and assumes a variety of functions, such as those in the kinship system, family framework, and the more extended social system, among other things. Her public image is typically not defined by any one single status position that

she has, but rather by her composite status, which is the consequence of the convergence of several different statuses that she possesses. It has been observed that the position of women in India has undergone a variety of transformations throughout the course of the last several decades. From having equal status with males in ancient times to having less communication, which was typical in the mediaeval period, women have progressed through history. In order to bring their stance up to date, a number of reformers in India had reserved the battle for women's rights for the future. Women have held prominent positions in recent times, particularly in countries such as India, where the positions of President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, and Leader of the Opposition are all held by women individually.

Anita Desai's straightforward *Light of Day* (1980) introduces Bim, a woman who is neither befuddled by her history nor insane about any part of her existence. Bim is an intriguing study of the 'Self' as she transitions from infancy to adulthood; she treasures and maintains the feelings and beliefs that lead her to a life of social duties and obligations to others. She has not experienced any psychological trauma, in contrast to Maya and Monisha. The only traumatic experience she has is coming to terms with the cyclical nature of time. Tara is her sister, while Raja and Baba are her two brothers. It is difficult for them to grow up with their fairly apathetic parents, a diabetic mother and a father who is nothing to the children other than a master of entry and exit. In this storey, we follow the development of two sisters, Bim and Tara, as well as two brothers, Baba and Raja. Their parents are completely unconcerned and uninterested in their well-being. Both sisters are fighting for their lives and their individuality. During the daytime, the protagonist Bim is a single woman who lives with her mentally

challenged brother Baba in an ancient house that they built for themselves. The plot revolves on an Indian family living in ancient Delhi. When Tara and her husband returned to their house, Bim was tasked with the responsibility of looking after Raja. As the tale progresses, Tara and her sister Bim begin to reflect on their upbringing. Tara is a submissive lady who makes no attempt to establish her gender identity. Bim and Tara are engaged in a battle against patriarchal society. In this storey, Bim is shown as a lady who is very different from the other Indian females, all of whom have a single goal in life: marriage. Despite the fact that Dr. Biswas is a well-regarded member of society, she rejects him. She becomes enraged when Dr. Biswas, who had shown an interest in marrying her, behaves in a patriarchal manner, attempting to hold Bim down by misinterpretation her unwillingness to marry him. The reason you don't want to get married is now clear to me. You have committed your life to others—to your ailing brother, to your elderly aunt, and to your younger brother, who will be reliant on you for the rest of his days. "You have laid down your life for them," Dr. said. Biswas is perplexed as to the true reason for her reluctance, because his rationale for her refusal is that she is a lady who wishes to serve her family and is willing to give her life in their service to them. For some reason, he cannot picture Bim as a strong woman who aspires to be self-sufficient.

II. ANITA DESAI: LIFE AND WORK

It is unquestionably true that Anita Desai is one of the most powerful current Indian authors writing in English. Anita Mazumdar was born on June 24, 1937, in Mussoorie, a hill station in Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. Her father, D.N. Mazumdar, was a successful businessman of Bengali descent, and her mother, Toni Nime, was of German descent. She began writing in English when she was

seven years old and released her first tale when she was nine years old. Deena Desai received her education in Delhi, where she attended Queen Mary's Higher Secondary School and Miranda House, Delhi University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English literature in 1957. She learned to speak German as a youngster." Several of her works were included as favourite pieces in the children's magazine, and when she was in college, she also contributed short stories to the publication on a regular basis. She was motivated to be a writer, and she wrote in prose, primarily fiction, to achieve her goal. Desai's first novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, was published in 1963, marking her debut as a novelist. This novel was published in the United Kingdom by Peter Owen, a publisher that specialises in writing from the British Commonwealth as well as continental European literature. Desai is a native English speaker who solely publishes in English. Her choice of English was, she has stated on numerous occasions, a natural and unconscious one for her: "I can state categorically that I did not choose English in a deliberate and conscious act, and I'd say perhaps the language chose me, and I began writing stories in English at the age of seven and have been doing so without pausing to consider why for the past thirty years." She is widely regarded as the author who brought the psychological novel in the manner of Virginia Woolf to India, having done so in the 1960s. Her reputation as a trailblazer in the writing of feminist concerns is included in this. Anita Desai is a role model for a generation of talented young authors. By starting with her own daughter, Kiran Desai, she was able to influence her own writing career. Her novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* was an acclaimed debut in 1997, and her second work *Inheritance of Loss* was awarded the prestigious Booker Prize. Kiran dedicated this work to her mother, 'Anita Desai,' who passed

away recently. Desai prefers to live a simple and uncomplicated life. Her coworkers from the 1950s recall her as passionate and isolated, which is consistent with her personality. She enjoys reading novels that are about the view of human nature. Chekhov, Henry James, Lawrence, and Dostoevsky are some of her favourite authors, as are many more. According to Professor Alan Lightman, dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, her novels are distinguished by her attention to the inner lives of her characters and her concern for those who had been marginalised in Indian literature, primarily women, children, and the elderly. In 1978, Anita Desai was awarded the Winifred Holtby Prize by the Royal Society of Literature for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*, as well as the Guardian Award for children's fiction for her novel *Village by the Sea* (1986). (1984). The Indian government also presented her with the Padma Sri Award and the Taraknath Das Award, both for her work in promoting Indo-American ties. She also received the Sahitya Academy Award and the National Academy of Letters Award, among other honours. *Clear Light of Day*, *In Custody*, and *Fasting and Feasting* are the three novels she has written that have been nominated for the Booker Prize. As a member of the Advisory Board for English of the National Academy of letters in Delhi, she also has fellowships with the Royal Society of Literature in London, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Crichton College, Cambridge, and Clare Hall, all of which are in Cambridge.

III. FEMINISM AND ANITA DESAI

The term 'feminism' refers to a philosophy that is associated with women. "Feminist" was first seen in late nineteenth century, according to the "Oxford" English Dictionary, and it was described as possessing traits associated with females. Modern feminist consciousness fosters an increased understanding of the

woman's place in today's complicated society. "Feminine," according to the Oxford Dictionary, is defined as "of women, womanly." The emergence of feminist consciousness has undoubtedly infused a new zeal and enthusiasm into the field of literary studies. Anita Desai's works are mostly aimed towards female readers, as her name implies. She investigates their issues, whether they are those of a mother, a daughter, a sister, or a wife. While doing so, she investigates the inner lives of their creations and their connection with the rest of society, among other things. Devdas Desai is a female novelist who stands out from the rest of her generation as well as from other female novelists of her generation. Her novels are mostly directed towards and concern female characters. Having found satisfaction in delving deeply into the inner workings of the characters, she is now able to bring forth the hidden depths of the human mind. She has been known as a pioneer of Indian feminism and has received several awards. She does an excellent job of exposing the terrible repression of women in India. Her characters are made up of women from virtually every age range. She has also hit on a very important component of female consciousness, which is that of femininity as a whole. Anita Desai has been hailed as a pioneer of Indian feminism and has received several honours. In her writing, she concentrates on the traumas and issues of middle-class Indian women. She has authored a number of books, each of which depicts a distinct element of the human feminine psyche in diverse ways. She has written about women, and the majority of her works revolve on female protagonists. She has attempted to investigate the psychological elements of the characters and to depict the difficulties that might arise in a man-woman relationship.

IV. WOMAN AS A SYMBOL OF STRENGTH

In contrast to the first stage of partition, which included literature published in English by women writers, books created in the second phase (1980s) depict the violence committed by partition on the female body. Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* is a feminist depiction of partition violence that examines the issue from a female perspective. Desai is concentrating his attention on the unrest in Delhi. Her writing explores issues such as female subjugation, the desire for a self-affirming personality, and the relationship between a woman and her family. Her protagonists are characterised by a certain amount of meekness, yet they also possess unique heroic traits. However, even in the face of such heroic tendencies, they are frequently met with catastrophe. This book relates the narrative of India during the period of partition-marred independence, and the impact of political instability and civil war on a family. It also shows how a family is intertwined with its ties. This essay argues that Indian women's subordination continues today as a result of their construction as the cultural symbol of the nation—a repression that the protagonist of *Clear Light of Day*, Bim, refuses to accept—and that, in doing so, she demonstrates her inner strength by exploiting the contradictions within the patriarchal structure to her own advantage. An aristocratic family's battle even against causes of dissolution is the subject of this novel. The two sisters, who are divided by their way of life and geographical distance, look after their own lives as well as the lives of their families. Tara, a beautiful and sophisticated woman, has come home after spending the previous year living overseas as the wife of a diplomat. Bim, a traditional and efficient woman, has never left Old Delhi, where she looks for Baba, their elder brother, Raja, who as a kid dreamed of becoming a

hero and who has now married a Muslim woman and established himself as a wealthy businessman. Tara and Bim are both dealing with the conflicts that exist between the past and the present. They are attempting to reinvent themselves and break out from the constraining confines of their home and early environment. Allegorically, this attempt is represented in India's national fight of women for the achievement of a new political and social position in a post-partitioned and independent India. In Tara's case, she is reliant on her husband, and Bim is in charge of Baba. Desai captures the sense of powerlessness with which Tara and Bim attempt to cope with a suffocating, unpleasant situation in this short film. The characters Tara and Bim appear to be diametrically opposed at first glance: Tara is youthful and contemporary, whilst Bim is older, responsible for the care of their younger brother, Baba, and still residing in the family home. But for modern-looking Tara, who actually chooses to be under male patronage, the apparent binary does not hold true, whereas traditional-looking Bim, who is "politically informed," as Miriam Thaggert rightly observes, and whose assertions "mark[...] historical events occurring in India with the events taking place in her own family," does not hold true (92). Tara and Bim both make sacrifices in their own manner in order to escape and achieve freedom.. Tara marries in order to get away from Old Delhi, but she becomes reliant on her husband. Bim, on the other hand, refuses to give up her duty for her younger brother, and as a result, she loses up an aspect of freedom that she would have otherwise gained. This complicated fight for autonomy and independence takes place against the backdrop of a freshly partitioned nation. In Desai's work, she critiques the sense of helplessness, and the novel eventually calls for a new position for women in post-independent India, one that goes beyond conventional household responsibilities and

into a new degree of political and social authority. Desai pays homage to Delhi's heritage in his painting Clear Light of Day. The storey allows the reader to experience the depths of a family that is absorbed in its own issues, despite the fact that the family members believe that nothing is wrong inside the family structure. The novel's core is centred on the heartwarming connections that develop among the members of the Das' family, who had grown up apart from one another. Bim works as a teacher at a women's college, where she is unsatisfied yet ambitious. She continues to reside in her childhood home, where she takes care of her mentally challenged brother, Baba, and her mother. Bim and Tara are attempting to reconcile their childhood fantasies with their adult realities in this short film. These individuals' battles for individuality and independence are mirrored against the backdrop of a freshly partitioned country. When Tara returns to Bim and Baba's home, old memories emerge and merge into a household drama that is both immensely beautiful and leads to a profound knowledge of one's own identity. However, the storey is largely concerned with Bim and takes place around the time when the siblings were youngsters.

Women trapped between colonial and patriarchal institutions have a variety of difficulties, as Desai observes in her writing about the perplexities of women bound between colonial and patriarchal frameworks. In her books, female characters frequently resort to English education in order to achieve economic independence and, as a result, obtain some influence in the conventional patriarchal institutions in which they live. As described in the book, education is a process that pulls women out of their homes and into the public arena as "economically competent subjects who progressively develop critical knowledge of the forces controlling their existence as

women in postcolonial nations (Rajeshwari Mohan 102). *Clear Light of Day* weaves together the stories of three women—Mira, Bim, and Tara—as they battle with maturity and the responsibilities that come with it, as well as the tragic events of India's independence and its subsequent division. Because of its engagement with both personal and social memory, the novel invites a comparable, if not symbolic, interpretation of the history of the nation and the status of its women. Bim, the main character, is a lady upon whom the burden for the family is subconsciously thrust, despite the fact that such a task should have been assumed by her brother, Raja, on the basis of moral principles. A significant societal critique emerges from Bim's predicament, which occurs in a culture where tradition guarantees males the roles of patriarchal ruler and defender of women, with such protection coming from the weaker sex. While the independence war was a period of time during which patriarchal limitations on women were redefined, the narrative of the novel presents an entirely different picture of the time period in question. Bim stays securely contained and imprisoned in her house, despite the fact that women were increasingly joining the independence movement and emancipating themselves at the time. Despite the fact that she is a highly educated modern lady with high aspirations for the future, her horizons remain restricted. This significant setback is created by the family turmoil, which has a negative impact on her future chances to a significant degree. Even when the country is engulfed in violent partition riots, Bim is left at home with his family. She finds herself alone and completely unprepared to run the family's modest company, plan a professional future for herself, and care for her younger brother and her father, both of whom have Down's Syndrome, all at the same time. The chance for Raja, her older brother, to engage in the battle is provided; but, he is unable to do so due to

his illness with TB. Bim, the self-taught sister, never ventures out of the house.

The division of the Das family is analogous to the division of British India into two independent sovereign states. The Das family's violent internal upheavals mirror what is described in the novel *Clear Light of Day* as "rioting all throughout the nation and slaughter on both sides of the border" (rioting and slaughter on both sides of the border) (Ray 71). As a result, Sangeeta Ray correctly observes that "certain important domestic episodes are inextricably linked to crucial historical events [in such a way that there is] the reflection of the macro political in the micro political" ("certain important domestic episodes are inextricably linked to crucial historical events") (138). While the novel does not include a detailed depiction of the partition riots themselves, the novel's focus on the upheaval in the Das family micropolitically represents the macropolitical dimensions of the brutality of the partition of 1947. As the analysis has shown, this oblique representation comes through from the womanist perspective, which exposes the appropriation of women at a time when a momentous event, such as the partition of the country, was taking place. The novel *Clear Light of Day* by Anita Desai depicts history as it intertwines with the lives of her characters: it demonstrates how individuals, despite their differences, are bound to one another. Above all, it demonstrates the ambivalences of people's sentiments about the futility of their existence when they become entangled in a web of events and coincidences. After reaching the conclusion of the storey, Bim can view life in its true light: that she is living for her siblings and that she plays a very important role in their lives. The storey comes to a close with a more clearer and more positive outlook for the future. Pre-partition India saw women's sexuality as a function of their compliance

with traditional family norms, which was determined by patriarchal standards. Things, on the other hand, began to shift dramatically in the aftermath of the 1947 partition violence. As a result of the abolition of the strict distinctions between the private and public spheres, women, particularly those who were directly affected by the historic event, began to strive for an identity that was forged from the dissolution of the strict distinctions between the private and public spheres. Women's admission into the visible realm, on the other hand, merely represented an expansion of their responsibilities as caring and self-sacrificing sex. It extended their obligations, on top of their normal home duties, to a greater extent. Women did not get the ability to examine their everyday concerns, which were deeply ingrained in the patriarchal social system, until much later in their lives. Through the type of inner power that people like Bim demonstrated, a breach in the established order was created.

V. CONCLUSION

Some of Bim Character's noble characteristics are commendable, and they contribute to her exceptional personality. After much trial and error, bouncing between the battle and the discovery of her own awareness, she eventually finds the architecture of her own awareness and reaches completeness. Something unique about her is that she grows in her understanding of time and its significance in human existence as she struggles "to remain whole, to remain sane, amongst the midst of decay, devastation, and death." Bim is able to obtain all she desires in life without the assistance of male-dominated forces because she has faith in herself. In Bim, we see the emergence of a new and self-sufficient female figure. Throughout this sense, we may conclude that in this storey, women encounter numerous difficulties and fight to establish their identities before finally

proving themselves. The empowerment of women has widened communication channels and brought together a diverse range of international organisations. Both men and women may benefit from these initiatives, which promote gender equality—a goal that Indian women have been striving to achieve for most of the country's history. There is nothing wrong with incorporating positive aspects of western culture; nevertheless, this does not imply that we should fully embrace and falsify our own identity. To some degree, this is acceptable; nonetheless, our own culture must be appreciated and maintained.

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