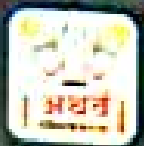
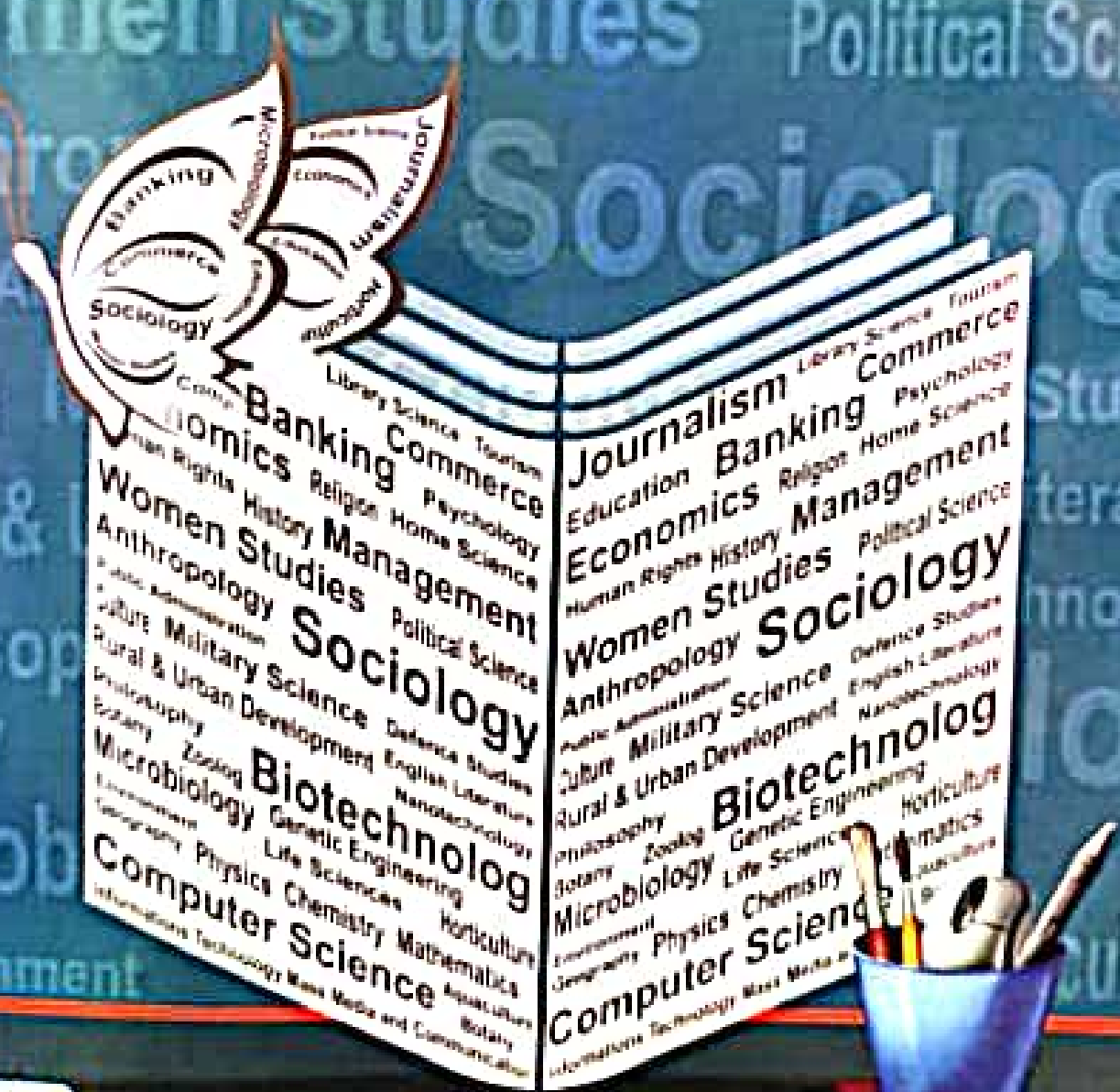


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“Women Empowerment : Issues and Strategies”

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Bim's Journey towards Self - Discovery in 'Clear Light of Day'



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Abstract

Anita Desai is a celebrated Indian author who has made a significant contribution to the world of literature. She is known for her insightful exploration of human relationships, particularly those involving women. Her works focus on the lives of women in India and the challenges they face in a patriarchal society. Desai's novels are powerful commentaries on the cultural and social norms that govern women's lives in India, and they provide a voice for women who have been traditionally silenced.

One of the central themes in Desai's writing is women's empowerment. Her novels explore the ways in which women can assert themselves and gain control over their lives in a society that is often hostile to their aspirations. Through Bim's character, Desai depicts the struggles and triumphs of women who are trying to break free from the constraints of tradition and social expectations.

Introduction

Anita Desai's 'Clear Light of Day' is a four-dimensional novel. The novel is about, "Time as a destroyer and a preserver and about what the bondage of time does to people". The main kernel of the story deals with the life of four members of the family - Tara, Bim, Raja and Baba. Their parents are indifferent and disinterested for their needs. Both the sisters struggle for living and identity. Here the parents are totally neglect their four children for their happiness. It was because of the utter neglect, which the children suffered from their parents that made them welcome the arrival of aunt Mira Masi. After the death of their father, being the eldest member of the family, Bim assumes the role of a father, taking care of brothers and sisters and later marrying them. So it is the story of Bimla, referred to Bim in the novel, who shoulders the responsibility of the family due to an irresponsible father and a diabetic mother.

In her childhood, Bim finds herself in the image of a great heroine. Her real life heroic figures are Joan of Arc and Florence Nightingale. She wants to achieve something in life. But due to the family responsibilities she remains

unmarried to look after her mentally retarded brother Baba and sick Meera Masi. However, she realises that the world does not recognise her as Florence Nightingale or Joan of Arc. She knows life is a full of reality. She realises that Raja, her brother is not a hero and she is not a heroine either. She is so preoccupied with family responsibilities that she has no time for her own love and life. She feels lost and inferior to Raja and Tara her sister who achieve what they wanted. But in case of Bim, she is totally different from the other Indian girls whose only ambition is marriage. She rejects Dr. Biswas, a family doctor, with a good position in the society. She becomes angry when Dr. Biswas, who wanted to marry her, behaves in the typically patriarchal way of keeping woman down, by misunderstanding Bim's refusal. "Now I understand why you do not wish to marry. You have dedicated your life to others, to your sick brother and your aged aunt and little brother who will be dependent on you all his life. You have sacrificed your life for them." Dr. Biswas does not understand the real reason for refusal because his justification for her refusal is she is a woman who wants to serve her family and sacrifices her life for them. He is not able to visualise Bim as a strong woman who wants to be independent. The irony of the novel is that in spite of her sacrifice the familiar alter everyone is busy in his or her family and she gets nothing but acrimony and bitterness. So there is a suffering in the mind of Bim regarding the futility of her desire. She loses her sense of co-ordination within herself and with others.

In the second part of the novel, there is an anger and bitterness, but there is also an effort to reconcile and accommodate. We find anger and bitterness in the novel due to the relations between brother and sister (Raja and Bim) have been soured and embittered on account of small matters. According to our Indian culture, it is the son who carries the family responsibility, but here Bim's brother Raja instead of sharing the family responsibility, marries their hindoo and neighbour's Hyderabad's daughter Bena and goes to Hyderabad to live there. When Bim received a letter from Raja informing her that he had inherited Hyderabad's property and he assured her that she could

stay in the house for as long as she wanted, he could never dream of increasing the rent or asking her to vacate the house. She is frustrated regarding the action of her brother. She refuses to go to Hyderabad for Raja's daughter's marriage. But in the course of time, in her maturing consciousness, Bim realises that she was narrow in her love to her brothers and sisters and forgives all. Bim who had always believed in the past, matures now and begins to look a fresh in the 'Clear Light of Day'.

So, Bim the chief protagonist of the novel is admirable and make her personality outstanding. Although she is often unsteady, oscillating between the struggle, in the end she discovers the structure of her own consciousness and achieves wholeness. The melancholia that shatters her balance for twenty years is a measure of her sense of failure of life and to honour her aspirations. But nonetheless, her courage and intellectual strength remain unaffected. At times she appears to be a "failed quester" who desires to conquer the world but who ends up by conquering herself. What is remarkable about her is that she develops the awareness of time and its importance in human life, and strives "to be whole" and to be sane in the midst of "decay, destruction and death."

In this way we can say that women faces many problems and struggle for their identity and at last prove themselves. Empowerment has opened up broader communication lines and brought together different

worldwide organisations. These provide opportunities for man and woman, which promotes equality between the sexes for which Indian women having struggling in their lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, We find Anita Desai's writing as a powerful testament to the struggles and triumphs of women in India. Her novels provide a voice for women who have been traditionally silenced and offer a vision of empowerment and liberation. Through her work, Desai has helped to raise awareness about the challenges that women face in India and has inspired many women to assert themselves and pursue their dreams. Her writing is a testament to the resilience, strength and creativity of women and it serves as an inspiration to all those who seek to create a more just and equal world.

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