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EXISTENTIAL CRISIS AND ARTICULATION OF WOMEN: AN EXPLORATION IN ANITA DESAI'S 'CRY, THE PEACOCK' AND 'CLEAR LIGHT OF DAY'

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ABSTRACT

Anita Desai is one of the significant voices in the modern Indian English fiction. She uncovers themes as alienation, loss of identity, desire for masculinity, father fixation etc. Expression of the journey from suppression to self-discovery among women is an important contribution made by Desai. She reflects the inner struggle of such women, their desire to break the shackles and assert themselves as human beings. In this struggle they often get alienated from the real world. Anita Desai has tried to probe into the depth of women's psyche through the portrayal of the neurotic characters like Maya and Bim from the novels *Cry, the Peacock* and *'Clear light of Day'*. Both these women present sensitive individuals in their moments of intense combat and their efforts to seek neurotic remedies. Present paper aims at exploring these characters in detail as well as the themes of identity crisis, alienation, father fixation etc. in the two novels *'Cry, the Peacock'* and *'Clear Light of Day'*.

Keywords: Identity, Alienation, Father-Fixation, Masculinity, Existentialism.

The question of women is seen as launching themselves into the patriarchal society and a quest for their identity. Be it Western or Indian literature, it is a common contemporary issue facing every country. The marginalised women struggle to realize their own existence in the web of patriarchy. The works of Indian women writers, in all its intensity, uncover this existential struggle to establish one's identity, to assert one's individuality and the desperate fight to exist as a separate entity. This assertion after a long journey has led to the emergence of 'New woman' who struggles to bring changes in society through the abolition of sexist attitudes and patriarchal domination.

Exploring self identity is very important for women in Indian society, Anita Desai is one of the prominent Indian women writers who lays stress on the existential concerns of life among

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112

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