



ISSN 0976 8165

# THE CRITERION

An International Journal in English

OCTOBER 2019  
VOL. 10 | ISSUE - 5

10<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF OPEN ACCESS

Editor-In-Chief  
Dr. Vishwanath Bite

[www.the-criterion.com](http://www.the-criterion.com)



About Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

Contact Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

Editorial Board: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

**Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal**  
[www.galaxyimrj.com](http://www.galaxyimrj.com)

## **Feminism as an Extension of Existentialism: A Study of the Women Characters of Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee**

**Kalpana Mishra**

Reader in English,  
Sonepur College, Sonepur.

**&**

**Dr. Sthitaprajna**

Associate Professor,  
Dept of HSS,

ITER: SOA University: Bhubaneswar.

**Article History:** Submitted-30/08/2019, Revised-06/11/2019, Accepted-07/11/2019, Published-20/11/2019.

### **Abstract:**

Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee are internationally acclaimed writers. Both the writers give importance to their women characters' quest for meaning in life. Their quest is the universal human quest for emotional satisfaction. They explore the disturbed psychology of their characters by diving deep into their psyche and explore the inner actions and reactions in their sensibilities. They deal with the inner problems of their women struggling internally for their existence. Anita Desai places her women within the context of Indian families, representing their roles as wives, mothers and daughters. The main causes of the suffering of her women characters are therefore the hostile situations and the unfavorable social conditions which obstruct the path of their lives for a meaningful existence. Feelings of loneliness and homelessness contribute to their existential predicament where as Bharati Mukherjee's women experience these feelings abroad. Being an expatriate herself, Mukherjee often deals with the plight and conditions of the immigrants and expatriates. In her novels the problems of displacement and cultural crises are the main causes of the suffering of women. This article intends to study the problems of existentialism and its subsequent effects on the women protagonists in the selected novels of both the writers.

**Keywords:** Absurdity, Alienation, Exile, Existentialism, Expatriate, Feminism, Immigrant.

### **Introduction**

Existentialism has been derived from the word 'exist' and 'existential'. Exist means 'to be real or present'. Existence denotes the stage of being existing in the universe and existentialism is the philosophical theory which maintains that man is a free agent responsible

for his own action who tries to give meaning to his existence in this absurd world. His basic concern is to search the self which is a perpetual challenge that requires immense courage to assert their existence.

'Existentialism' is a philosophy which is centered on the analysis of existence and the way human beings find themselves existing in the world. The existentialists lay emphasis on man's free will in a universe which he sees as without meaning or values. The existentialist intends to make his own choice because he disbelieves the conventional and the established ways of discerning right from the faulty social, philosophical, religious and moral structures which make the world a complicated place. The existentialists give importance to human choice and freedom. As individuals have their freedom, they have their responsibilities thrust upon them. When the individuals realize that they are completely responsible for their own actions, decisions and beliefs, they are able to accept full responsibility for their behaviour and deeds. It believes that man is the only known being who defines himself through his act of living. According to Jean Paul Sartre, a representative of Existentialism, man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. For him human life is a futile one and the human beings life in the world is irrational and absurd. All values, morality and ethics are human made and everyone is free to create his own values according to his own choice. Kierkegaard, the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher also maintains that the individual has the sole responsibility for his meaningful existence in this world.

Quest for a meaningful existence is a challenge for the women characters of both Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee. As both the novelists are exposed to the broad world as international figures, they have depicted their characters with immense courage and determination who could fight intensely against all odds and absurdities on the way of their existence. Both the writers have dealt with the existential predicaments of their women characters and explore their feelings and emotions along with their actions and reactions. An endeavor has been made to study some of the characters of Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee to see the impact of 'existentialism' on their women characters in different spaces.

Human society is basically patriarchal. Women are oppressed and suppressed under social codes and norms. They fail to survive in their societies meaningfully. Going against tradition, rules and codes often leads them to isolation, loneliness and frustration. The women characters of Desai and Mukherjee are entangled in the absurd situations constantly trying to find meaning in life and are often considered as abnormal. They feel empty, fearful and

depersonalized by the society. The real problem for the existentialist philosophy is not alienation, angst and suffering but it is the problem of overcoming these problems to make life meaningful as Sisyphus does in the *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Sisyphus is conscious of his own situation and its reality, still instead of sitting silently and accepting the set rules and the codes, he revolts to exhibit his courage and boldness to face and fight his problems without caring for the result. It keeps him active. For Sisyphus “the struggle itself towards the summit is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.” (Camus 22).

The women characters of Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee in their selected novels suffer existential alienation and angst. Anita Desai places her women protagonists within the context of domestic spheres, her protagonists do not go beyond their domestic world. Anita Desai has in her fictions sensibly adhered to the limitation of her culture and created her own distinct world. Her women suffer internally as they sought freedom which is restricted by the constraints of society and culture.

Anita Desai's serious concern is with "the journey within" of her characters. The recurring theme of her novels are the agony of existence in a society that is taboo-ridden. The novelist admits of her preoccupation with the "essential human condition" (Dalmia, 8).

Madhusudan Prasad observes:

Desai is always preoccupied by an eternal quest for meaning and values, freedom and truth that can sustain us in this chaotic and seemingly meaningless world (Prasad 2).

Prasad further feels, "Desai delves deep into human psyche and tries to explore very adroitly the deep domains of the conscious and the unconscious minds of the major characters in her novels" (Prasad 22).

Bharati Mukherjee reflects the distorted psyche of the diasporic women who have been struggling to survive in alien lands. She has depicted the contemporary women's struggle to define herself and attain an autonomous selfhood in cross-cultural crises in the present world of globalization. Edward Said has pronounced in his book *Culture and Imperialism* that "survival in fact is about connection between things" (Said 336). Mukherjee's fictions prove the above statement as they hold the predominant themes of survival by assimilation and acculturation as the basic techniques of diasporas.

The treatment of the existential quest in Anita Desai's novels is the form of probing into the inner psyche of her characters and presenting their inner conflicts and turmoil. They are entangled with the absurd situations of their domestic worlds where they constantly try to find meanings in their life. Some of them fail and succumb to their situations because of the trauma of lonely existence and some find meanings through their trials.

The women characters of Anita Desai's novels starting from Maya in *Cry, The Peacock* to Bim in *Clear Light of the Day* are put in hostile, absurd situations, against unfavourable societal forces. They suffer from emotional isolation, alienation and therefore they are unrelated to others. They are unable to communicate with others around them and suffer from a sense of existential insecurity.

“Anita Desai exhibits a strong inclination towards the existential interpretation of the human predicament. In particular, she voices the mute miseries and helplessness of married women fermented by existentialist problems and predicament,” claims Prasad (Prasad 139).

Primarily interested in exploring the psychic depth of her female characters, Desai may be said to be doing something unique among the contemporary Indian English novelists. She portrays her characters as individuals “facing single handed the ferocious assaults of existence”(Dalmia 8).

Desai's women characters represent their traditional roles as daughters, wives and mothers. Therefore the main causes of their suffering are the unfavorable domestic and social conditions. Desai's characters find an abysmal barrier between themselves and the world, consisting of others, the natural environment and its life. They are unable to relate to the space around them. Space in existential context does not mean the physical area but “the human environment, and every other that provides the setting in which human life is to be lived” (Macquarrie 79).

Anita Desai tries to explore the psychological conflicts and dilemmas of her women characters. They strive for their space, territory and identities as they feel alienated in their own families. Her women characters are highly sensitive. They want change but are not sufficiently empowered to challenge the strong and established system of patriarchy. Anita Desai's characters are burdened by their uniqueness. They want to exercise their liberty and refuse to compromise. Anita Desai's serious concern is with “the journey within” of her characters. Therefore the recurring themes that we come across in her novels are the agony of existence in a hostile society that is conservative and taboo ridden.

In an interview with Yashodhara Dalmia, the novelist admits of her preoccupation with "the essential human condition" (Dalmia 8). The most recurrent themes in all her novels are "the hazards and complexities of man-woman relationships, the finding and nurturing of individuality and the establishing of individualism" of her characters (Narasimhan 23).

They feel their 'self' being separated from their worlds. Desai's projection of feminine sensibility marks a new age when women start to rebel and fight for their 'self' to survive in a world very much hostile to them though they do not know whether they would win or lose.

Desai claims in a conversation with Yashodhara Dalmia:

"My characters who appear like losers and victims show a kind of heroism of survival. I think, if you came through the experience of life with the heart and mind intact, without compromising yourself, to me, is a heroic act that needs to be celebrated" (The Times of India 8).

The protagonist of her first novel *Cry, The Peacock* is symbolic of the existential problem of a modern woman. Maya's feelings of isolation, alienation and meaningless existence due to the maladjustment with her husband and obsession with death, are the symptoms of her existential crisis. She searches meaning and value of her life in her in-laws house, the place of her confinement. She is extremely sensitive and sensuous. She fails to get love and attention of her husband and rebels against his relationalism and his philosophy on Vedanta. Repression, anxiety, fear and insecurity lead her to a state of insanity and in a hysterical outburst; she kills her husband and then commits suicide. Maya is unable to realize the reality of her existence and unable to cope and adopt herself to her circumstance.

In her second novel *Where Shall We Go this Summer*, Sita is another hypersensitive, over emotional woman who faces problems because of the ill effects of parental neglect and marital disorder. Sita realizes that living for her family at the cost of her freedom, self respect and personal choice is the cause of her suffering, stress and strains. Conflicts arise within her whether she would go on tolerating all these codes of patriarchy or escape from these rules. Sita spends most of her time sitting on the balcony of her Bombay apartment smoking and looking at the sea. She decides to escape to an island called Manori, a place of her fancy, to give birth to her fifth child there, so that the child would not be contaminated

with the complexities and absurdities of the world. Sita feels depressed and dejected accompanied by feelings of hopelessness. She has lost interest in her life. She says, 'All order is gone out of my life. There is no plan, no peace, nothing to keep me within the pattern of familiar everyday life (*WSWGTS* 79). She hopes to get relief from her state of isolation and loneliness in Manori island. After going there, she comes back again to her previous world and tries to face the harsh realities of life without escaping from her situations. She rises above Maya, the former protagonist, for acceptance of reality in a positive way. Through the character of Sita, Desai projects a new concept of womanhood that a woman can dare to step out of her domestic sphere to go against the existing system of patriarchy to search her own selfhood. Instead of submitting herself to the long lasting social mores, Sita could say 'No' to what she does not like.

Usha Pathania states in her article "Human Bond and Bondages":

'Desai thus stresses the individuals and individuality. In her novels the protagonists desire and strive for a more authentic way of life than the one offered to them' (Pathania 12).

A gradual development is seen in the sensibility of Desai's women. Sita is more mature than Maya as she dares to come out of her house to accept the changing atmosphere of her age and time. Elaine Showalter talks about three phases of feminine traditions: limitation, protest and self-discovery. Women characters of Anita Desai move from weakness to strength. Gradually they become stronger.

In the next novel *Fire On the Mountain*, Anita Desai focuses the existential angst and struggle of three women characters. They are Nanda Kaul, Ila Das and Raka. All the three characters came to Carignano of Kasauli on the foot of the Himalayas in different times and situations.

Nanda Kaul was the wife of an Ex-vice Chancellor of Punjab University. She had tolerated a lot of miseries in the name of societal show and prestige. After the death of her husband, she decided to cut all relationships and collected courage to live alone in Kasauli (what Sita did not do). Nanda's rejection of socially appropriate behaviour of a widow and her standing in favour of her own values and choice reflects her conflicts and her courage to get freedom from the socially imposed values for women.

Nanda rebels against her life of responsibilities and obligation. She searches the meaning of life in the secluded Kasauli which was suddenly interrupted after the arrival of

her great grand-daughter Raka. Raka is a child of disturbed marriage and broken home. She has seen the suffering of her own mother in their home being beaten by her father for silly things. Raka's existential angst is marked from her rebellious and unapproachable nature. Desai says, "If Nanda Kaul was a recluse out of vengeance for a long life of duty and obligation, her great grand-daughter was a recluse by nature, by instinct she had not arrived at this condition by a long rout of rejection and sacrifice-she was born to it, simply" (*Fire On the Mountain* 52-53).

The story of Ila Das is another example based on the philosophy of Existentialism. Ila Das was a friend of Nanda Kaul .She was a deformed spinster. Though she belonged to an affluent family, her drunken brothers caused her intolerable pain and suffering for which she decided to leave home and started working as a science teacher by the help of Nanda's husband. Subsequently she left the job and started working as a social worker in Kasauli. She was very old but still striving hard to survive alone with the intention to do well to others. She symbolizes the existentialist's concept of struggle. Her story shows the desperate attempts of a disabled, unmarried old and lonely woman who strives to survive against all odds of life. Her struggle represents the universal angst of oppression and injustice. She dares to exercise her freewill and acts according to her own choice. She makes her life meaningful by fighting against injustice though her life ends with the tragedy of rape and murder. As Raka has witnessed the assault given to Ila Das, she sets fire to the forest out of rage.

The forest fires seem to her the empirical manifestation of her inner conflicts. The fire created by her is the result and manifestation of her existential angst. It is an affirmation of her search for values in an otherwise futile existence. It is an elaborate expression of her free-will, and demonstration of her ability to choose and act she sets the forest on fire.

In the novel *Clear Light of The Day*, Bimla, the protagonist proves herself to be a very strong woman. She is a practical minded woman who seeks solutions of her problems through her constant efforts and struggles within her limited spheres. She is courageous enough to face life alone and on her own terms despite of all her familial, financial and emotional problems. After the death of her parents she took all the responsibilities of her family including the responsibility of her mentally retarded and tubercular brother Baba and the old widow Mira Masi along with two other younger siblings Tara and Raja. They live in an absurd world overpowered with indifference, disease and irrationality. Tara moves out



with her husband, goes to abroad and hence escapes responsibilities. Raja also follows her path. But Bim fights the battle with courage and confidence. She remains unmarried and has decided to be independent in her life. She has decided to be economically independent. She prioritizes her career, individuality and responsibility. 'I shall work-I shall do things- I shall earn my own living and look after Mira Masi and Baba and be independent (*CLD* 140). In this respect she is different from the earlier protagonists like Maya, Monisha, Sita and Nanda Kaul. Through Bim, Anita Desai wants to highlight the economic independence of women. Bim realizes that acceptance of existence and constant strive for achievement would lead to get meaning in life. She is a courageous woman like Ila Das who could wade through all the difficulties in her life as she is able to make her own choices which are above the traditionally accepted rules and codes.

The features of Anita Desai's protagonists have their parallels with some of the protagonists of Bharati Mukherjee's novel. As an expatriate herself, Mukherjee often deals with the diasporic agony, isolation, alienation of the Indian women expatriates and immigrants living in the USA. Bharati Mukherjee's women characters suffer from existentialist angst in a diasporic environment. Therefore exile, homelessness, rootlessness, identity crisis, cultural dislocation, conflicts are the major themes of her novels. Mukherjee has depicted the contemporary women's struggle to define herself and attain an autonomous selfhood in cross-cultural crisis. She endeavors to dive deep into the distorted psyche of the immigrants who have been struggling to survive in the hostile atmospheres of the alien lands. The Indian socio-cultural values, habits, traditions, customs are so deeply ingrained in the lives of the woman characters that they experience existential angst of various kinds in the alien land. Psychological turmoil, anxiety, restlessness, fear, worry, feelings of insecurity are very common in them. Bharati Mukherjee's women characters often oscillate between two different spaces. They feel rootless. They are neither able to uproot from their ethnic culture nor able to re-root themselves in the alien culture. Therefore they feel exiled. Anguish, confusion and nostalgia dominate their minds and make them imbalanced.

As Edward Said states:

"Exile is the unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and the true home, it's essential sadness can never be surmounted, the achievement of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever"(Said 1).

In her first novel *The Tiger's Daughter*, Tara is projected as a dutiful daughter of the Bengal Tiger who has sent his daughter to the US for higher studies. She marries an American and stays there for seven years but could not adopt herself with the American society. She likes to be a dutiful wife in the traditional mould and obeys every word of her husband David. As Tara is not in a position to think herself other than an Indian, she feels rootless there in the U.S. and in order to relocate herself in her motherland, she returns to India and searches everything what she has been missing for years but she fails to find in India that has been changed both socially and culturally. Tara suffers from the existential terrors of loneliness, rootlessness and psychological conflicts as she could not link herself to either of the cultures. Her long stay in the foreign land does not allow her to lead a life in India which is full of constraints. She decides to return to the U.S. which she thinks, would be better for her where she would get more freedom and opportunities to exercise her choices of living. So Tara is a step ahead of Dimple as she is able to take a decision of her own when the question of choosing a space for oneself is concerned. It may be a compromise but at the end of the novel Tara realizes the reality in India, returns to her husband with a resolution to be an American putting her Indian identity behind.

In her second novel *Wife*, Mukherjee tries to reflect the plight of an expatriate Dimple Dasgupta who suffers from repression due to the existential angst of alienation and exile. She has come to the U.S. after her marriage with Amit Basu, an engineer. She fails to adopt herself in the foreign land and feels nostalgic, rootless and lonely “like a star collapsing inwardly” (*Wife* 44). At the beginning she tries to become Americanized and follows American life style. She does not hesitate to keep an extra marital relationship with a foreigner named Milt. Though outwardly she likes to be an American, inwardly she always feels and thinks herself as an Indian. She feels guilty for her extra-marital relationship because she has violated the codes of a Hindu wife. She remains lonely within the confines of her apartment and becomes abnormal. Like Anita Desai's Maya, Dimple stabs her husband and commits suicide at the end. She has no individuality of her own besides the identity of a wife. She comes to the U.S. with a dream to get freedom and happiness that she does not find in India but her inability for realization and experience of reality does not allow her to adopt with the changing situations. Her feelings of rootlessness and insecurity are caused by an inherent psychological trait for which she fails to accept her surroundings or adopting herself to them and succumbs to her troubles. She commits suicide after murdering her husband whom, she thinks responsible for all her sufferings.

In *Jasmine*, Jyoti is a village girl of Punjab who faces the complexities of the world very boldly and chooses her own destiny all alone. After the sudden death of her husband, Jyoti came to the US as an illegal immigrant with forged papers with little knowledge of life in the outside world. Her life was filled with dangers, fears and uncertainties, challenges and shocks. Life seems to her like a whirlpool:

“I feel at times like a stone hurtling through diaphanous mist, unable to grab hold, unable to slow myself, yet unwilling to abandon the ride I am on” (*Jasmine* 139).

She was raped; she murdered her rapist and decided to live. Instead of becoming a ‘Sati’ for which she had come to US, she marched forward to live treating ‘every second of her existence as a possible assignment from God’ (*Jasmine* 46). Her struggle for existence was entangled with her diasporic conflicts; conflict between her past values and present needs. Once she was thrown into the world outside, she was responsible for everything she did. Jasmine took several identities in order to adopt and assimilate herself in the U.S. She lived her life with her freewill and made her own choices. She had learnt to live for herself. She did not intend to return to India and therefore tried to re-root herself in the adopted land with her courage and an attitude of taking risks.

Jasmine tells, ‘I changed because I wanted to. To bunker oneself inside nostalgia, to sheathe the heart in a bullet proof vest was to be a coward’ (*Jasmine* 185).

Jasmine’s journey of life as an immigrant was full of hazards and horrors still she succeeded to survive by perpetual struggle. As Edward Said has pronounced in his book *Culture and Imperialism* that "survival in fact is about connection between things"(336), Mukherjee's fictions also hold the predominant theme of survival through assertion, assimilation, acculturation and transculturation.

The study of the women characters of Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee traces a development in the feminine consciousness of women when the question of their struggle for existence comes. Both the writers converge in the point that their characters seek independent, autonomous existence of their own. Being ingrained with Indian values the writers do not advocate for the “western concept individuality” but they are against socio-cultural taboos and against patriarchy with its subsequent effects on women. In many novels their women characters are under the spell of existentialism though the novelists diverse in their cultural spaces. Women characters of Anita Desai rebel within the Eastern cultural

spaces whereas Bharati Mukherjee's women are influenced more by the Western values. Mukherjee's women characters are more courageous and bolder than that of Anita Desai. Though Anita Desai questions the age old traditions and wants her women characters to seek their individuality to affirm their positions as wives, mothers or daughters by confronting the 'ideologies of womanhood' as presented in their societies, they are subdued. They are rooted and restricted to tradition and culture and are not ready to discard their own ethnic values to assimilate western modes of living as Mukherjee's women do.. Desai has not put them in cross-cultural environment. Though Desai and Mukherjee do not prefer any special affinity with feminist theories and do not like to be labeled as feminists, their works are expressions of feminism. They do not like to depict their women characters with traditional pictures. Both want to liberate their women from the shackles of traditions and customs. They want their women to get freedom from dependence syndromes.

According to Chaman Nahal:

“Feminism is a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. There is a dependence syndrome whether it is the husband or the father or the community or whether it is a religious group. When women free themselves from the dependence syndrome and lead a normal life, my idea of feminism materializes” (Nahal 17).

Women were given a subordinate place in home and society in both east and west. As women writers, Desai and Mukherjee have reflected the inequality to women with men as well as their inner powers and potentialities that help them to fight the assaults of existence single handed. For them self assertion is the key to realize their immense hidden power which would enable them to lead a meaningful life anywhere in any situation.

Both Bharati Mukherjee and Anita Desai have given importance to education and to the economic independence of women in their later novels through the characters like Bimla in *Clear Light of the Day* and Jasmine in *Jasmine* and Anjali in *The New Miss India*. Economic independence empowers women to face challenges of life and helps them to live independently with self dignity. Both Bim and Jasmine crave for economic independence and accomplish it through education where as their earlier protagonists succumb to their external hostilities as they are not economically independent.

Simone de Beauvoir delineates that, "Once she(woman) ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence crumbles; between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator" (Beauvoir 31).

## Conclusion

Feminists, especially the existential feminists, accentuate the significance of the autonomy of women; they emphasize an abstract concept of individual human rights and rejoice in the pursuit for personal liberty, dismissing all socially defined roles. Beauvoir remarks, "one of the primal and seminal concerns of feminisms to announce that a woman is an individual being, she is neither the 'Other' nor an addition to man. She is an autonomous being, capable of finding her own way of salvation" (Beauvoir 48).

In an age of growing intellectual crises women are now able to give meaning to their life. They are beginning to emerge as independent personalities. The writings of both Anita Desai and Bharati Mukherjee reflect their changed sensibility.

## Works Cited:

- Alam, F. *Bharati Mukherjee*. Twayne Publishers, 1976.
- Bande, U. *The Novels Of Anita Desai*. Prestige Books, 1988.
- Beauvoir, S. *The Second Sex*. Pan Book, 1988.
- Camus, A. *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Knopf, 1995.
- Dalmia ,Y. "Interview with Anita Desai." *The Times of India*, 13 Oct. 1979, pp.8.
- Dhawan, R.K. *Indian Women Writers*. Prestige Books, 2001.
- . *The Fictions of Anita Desai*. Bahri Publications, 1989.
- Desai, Anita. *Clear Light of the Day*. Harper and Row, 1980.
- . *Cry, The Peacock*. Orient Paperbacks, 2010.
- . *Fire On the Mountain*. Penguin Books, 1977.
- . *Where Shall We Go This Summer*. Vikas, 1975.
- Genovese, E.F. *Feminism without Illusions*. University of North Carolina Press, 1991.
- Iyenger, K.R.S. *Indian Writing in English*. Sterling Publishers, 1983.
- Macquarrie, J. *Existentialism*. Pelican Books, 1927.

Hancock, G. An Interview with Bharati Mukherjee. *Conversations With Bharati Mukherjee*. Ed. A.C. Bradley. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009, pp. 10-24.

Narasimhan, R. *Sensibility under Stress*. Ashjanak Prakashan, 1976.  
Mukherjee, Bharati. *Jasmine*. Penguin India, 1990.

---. *The Tiger's Daughter*. Penguin India, 1990.

---. *Wife*. Penguin India, 1975.

Nahal, C. "Feminism in English Fiction- Forms and Variants." *Feminism and Recent Fiction in English*, Ed. Susila Singh, Prestige Books, 1991. pp. 17-23.

Nayak P.M. and S.P.Swain. *Feminism and Indian English Fiction*. Prakash Book Depot, 1996.

Pathania, U. *Human Bonds and Bondages: The Fictions of Anita Desai and Kamala Markandaya*. Kaniksha Publishing House, 1992.

Prasad, M. *Anita Desai, The Novelist*. The New Horizon, 1981.

Ram, A. "An Interview with Anita Desai." *World Literature Written in English*. vol. 16, no. , 1977 pp. 16.

Sethuraman, N. (2005). "Existentialism in Anita Desai's Fire On The Mountain." *The Indian Review of World Literature*, vol.1, no.1, 2005.

Said, Edward. *The Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Harvard University Press, 1967.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. Chatto and Windus, 1993.

Showalter, Elaine. "Towards a Feminist Poetics." *Women Writing About Women*. Ed. Mary Jacobs. Harper and Row Publishers, 1979.

Webber, J. *The Existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre*. Routledge, 2009.