

Exploration of Trauma and Identity from Anita Desai's Cry the Peacock

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S. Geethanjali

II M.A., English

Ayya Nadar Janaki Ammal College, Sivakasi

Abstract

The science of behavior and mind could be considered as psychology. And the study of conscious and unconscious phenomena as well as feeling and thought can be considered as psychological study. Anita Desai was an Indian writer. Her effort was to communicate to the world about Indian woman's bitter experiences. A woman's inner self, her agonies, her desires and her pleasures are depicted in her works. She honestly depicted Indian womanhood in her fictional works. Anita Desai holds a preeminent position as a contemporary Indian feminist novelist, with her major novels symbolizing the universal feminism of her hypersensitive, poignant knowledge, erudition, and inner psychological power regarding the real and natural everyday affairs of familial, societal, and economic dealings as minutely impacted. Her work Cry, the Peacock explores the psychological study of how a young, sensitive married woman named Maya is tragically damaged by marriage. In this novel, the central character assails through a strait of darkness, thoroughly confused and puzzle about her future. Alienation or disorientation plays a major part in all of Desai's protagonists and her mastery lies in redefining the very concept of 'Alienation'. Desai's tendency to dive into the psychological compartment of human nature makes identical as a novelist.

Keywords: Loneliness, Marital Discord, Isolation, Alienation, Abuse, Suffering, Dominance, Trauma and Memory

Trauma and identity in Anita Desai's cry, the Peacock

Anita Desai's Cry the Peacock is based on young sensitive girl Maya who is married, but troubled due to her understanding of the childhood impending doom prophecies. Her father was a wealthy advocate based in Lucknow. Following her mother's death, she and her siblings left for America, she being the last born, was left with her father. She was therefore raised in the world of feminism and learnt many things, it is said that such attention and love, no one will ever give her father. As a result, she never stepped out of the walls of her house and considered this whole universe as a game that was built just for her. Having come from a background where she had to do hardly anything and where her father's care was quite disproportionate, Maya wanted her husband Gautama to reciprocate the same level of care and attention. This stated that her husband, Gautama, who was an attorney by profession and often consumed by work, did not meet her expectations. She believed that her spouse would shower her with the triangular love that her father gave her,

but it turned out that she was wrong when it came to Gautama, who never even bothered to care for her. So, to the apparent dissatisfaction of her countenance, her husband cautioned her against becoming neurotic and accused her father of being overly indulgent.

Nevertheless, Maya's psychosis cannot solely be blamed on her father fixation which, although helpful, contributes to her downfall. It was the unceasing "prophecy uttered by the white astrologer of death in four years' time for either her or her husband" that drove her into paranoia. The ghastly prophecy echoes in her ears, giving her no peace, like the drumbeats of the mad demon of Kathakali ballets. She was aware that "a black and evil shadow"- her karma was stalking her, and the time had come: And four years it was now. Gautama or she would perish. Surrounded by the warm care of her father, Maya does not realize the impending danger; but all of a sudden her husband Gautama, who loved her so much, fails to fulfill her need for love and life, and she was left to the emptiness and quietness of the house which suffocated her. Maya was completely abandoned by her husband since Gautama was deeply influenced by the Bhagwad Gita's non-attachment philosophy and wrongly applied it within marriage. Maya was left deeply wounded and resentful upon realizing that he did not care for her physical beauty at all.

And also, she hadn't experienced normal childhood days. She was raised as a child without mother in a devoutly traditional as well as Brahmin family which they underwent a lot of changes culturally. Maya was fond of all pets. In the piece of work together with the peacock, several other animals are given illustrations. It was telling that the novel opens and ends with Toto's illness and eventual death, who was Maya's dog. That was the onset of the disturbance in the mind. She could not believe the pooch's demise and did everything to afford the burial, unlike Gautama who was indifferent to Toto's death. The wideness of the gap of communication between the two, Maya, and Gautama began and neither of them was able to purport the reason for the occurrence. A certain level of agony began to build up in Maya's bringing along mental fears which exaggerated every little thing. Because she has been raised in a make-believe scenario, a chasm between her expectations and reality, between her vision and the course of life exists due to her upbringing. This creates a need for a tension with the prediction made by the albino astrologer. An astrologer had told them that one of the spouses would die in the fourth year of their marriage. Terrified by the sense of death stalking her, she went berserk and developed a mental illness. Since for Gautama there was no difference between living and dying, she despaired of the point of it all. She is the one who appreciates what it means to be in existence and live. In desperation, she became violent toward him in the hope of grasping life for herself.

Anita Desai has given the character of Maya a distinctly feminine role in the novel. Conversely, Gautama was the embodiment of the 'masculine principle' to which he was always subjecting things to logical and analytical thinking. Gautama was calm and indifferent to the passing of the pet named Toto. To him, Toto was a mere pet whose role could easily be replaced. But Maya had an emotional bond to the pet which was only human nature for a woman without children. Her need of nurturing was manifested by excessive love of her dog. Maya and Gautama cannot be united. Their coming together was certain to bring devastation to their lives and bliss. As of now she was nearly positive that Gautama must definitely be killed and more tactfully. Maya believed that marriage would provide love and sex, but neither was afforded her by Gautama. In addition she always wished to spend some good time with her husband, but he didn't even wish to converse with her.

The book draws to a tragic close with Maya's suicide. She is extremely afraid that she is the one destined to die, as the astrologer had predicted. She is not like any Indian writer's ennobled creation of a character of a woman, shows M. P. Alice, the author of this book. She represents a class of women who undergo that inward torturous endurance because of men. The imagery of a peacock that Maya created exploring her imaginative as well as artistic capabilities, was the central focus

of the novel. The majestic bird dance embodied by Maya, whose 'dance of life' spoke of vibrant enthusiasm. A number of terrifying dreams that she encountered through which implies that her at the end of the narration, she does not wish to survive and she has the most intense wish to end her life. Because the fortune teller predicted that other will die, her or her husband. As each writer of Indo-Anglian novels, she has created, she was different from all other female figures. In addition, she longed to be accompanied by her mother-in-law, the quintessential Indian Woman. She also directed her scorn towards Maya. Even though she was an intelligent and empathetic young woman in the narrative, Maya found it impossible to express herself to Gautama and forge a bond with him. Each of the individual female characters in her writings plays a role in a better understanding of the material sphere. The protagonists of Anita Desai's works, quite the opposite, are additionally burdened with the knowledge of their femininity. They aimed to illustrate in their work not only the other ontological aspects of their gender but also the psycho-biological aspect of it. Among many typical neurotic traits presented gamma, was the presence of anxiety, or a constant fear.

There were irrational anxieties in the imaginative universe created by Anita Desai, which in turn caused underlying problems. Maya was forced to stay in a make-believe universe. On the contrary, she was married off to a practical man which after all she had detested so much. Looking at the age of Maya's husband, she tried to look for a defender who would provide her with the comfort and affection she got from her father. Even after marriage, however, she could not find any love. This particular inability tortured her most in her emotional realm. She was the subject of all the activities taking place at the borders of rationality. In one aspect, she was a victim of the prediction made by the astrologer, and in another aspect, things like her aspirations of having a child, her husband's conduct, the separation from her family added more to her despair. She was able to suppress this pain. However, bitterness crept into her existence. The book consisted of excessive interior monologues related to a woman's psyche. Discontent and disagreement which a person can encounter with on regular basis, may lead some people to turn against others and develop hostile, hating or angry feelings. Sometimes it relied on the damaging forces. This aggression, in turn, would come out in the form of more violent acts that culminated in murder or suicide. All criteria of normality have been exceeded in Maya, who has now turned into a psychotic. One evening after Gautama came back home and attempted to speak with Maya, she was uneasy because Gautama blocked her view of the moon which she held so dear. In an unsteady state of mind, Maya shoved Gautama off the terrace, resulting in his death. Though Gautama died, her insatiable psyche remained undiminished. The deep frustration she faced after the death of her spouse took a toll on Maya to the extent that she contemplated suicide without any second thoughts. Towards the close of the novel, she died by her own hand.

Conclusion

This novel described the entire tragedy of pathos of the pampered rich woman in order to demonstrate how the fragile but spectacular foundation of growing in such a lavish aristocratic culture cracks at the first experience of reality. The novel, *Cry, the Peacock* clearly and evidently suggested that the modern life with all its achievements and progress was doomed to disorderliness and destruction unless it was consider and nourished the tender feelings of the women who form the nucleus in any society. This story explored the themes of Alienation and trauma of the female protagonist.

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