

# THE THEME OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICT IN ANITA DESAI'S CRY ' THE PEACOCK'

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## ABSTRACT

Anita Desai is one of the leading Indian women novelist writing in English. She is one of the most prominent Indian novelists. There are more than dozens of novels to her credit. Beside this, collection of short stories and articles too. She is status of women in the male dominated society. In her first novel, cry the peacock(1963) Anita Desai portrays the psychic tumult of a young and sensitive married girl maya who is haunted by a childhood prophecy of a fatal disaster.

## KEYWORDS

Hypersensitivity, consciousness matrimonial silence, psychology, sexual obsession, fear psychosis and existentialism.

## INTRODUCTION

The Indian writing in English in the background of more than a century, has passed through various stages giving priorities to different perspectives at different times. Till lately, the landcaps of Indian fiction remained laden with the themes of freedom struggle and it's after effects. But with the coming up of new writers like Anita Desai, a new direction and a new vista has been opened up with different visions and forms in the field of Indian writing in English.

What distinguishes Anita Desai from other writers is her preoccupation with the individuals and his inner world of sensibility inside the mind. Anita Desai is a dominant figure in the twentieth century Indian English fiction. She stands above of all contemporary writer.

## A Psychological study

Desai spotlights an extremely complex nature of life. The real life has an infinite variety. It may take as many forms as there are individuals. Her notion of reality of life seems to have been greatly influenced by Virginie Woolf.

Life is not a series of big lamps symmetrically arranged life is a luminous bole, a semitransparent envelop surrounding us from beginning of consciousness to the end. (woolf 177)

Desai prefers the inner reality to be outer insight to sight.

We can say that Anita Desai is the first novelist among the Indian women writers who introduced the word Psychology. As an Indian novelist in English. Anita Desai is one of the major voices in modern English fiction and her works added a new dimension to the achievements of the Indian women writers. Her dimensions can be considered as follows.

In Anita Desai's novels, there is a Shift from the collective to the personal from the communal to the individual unlike Markandaya, Anita Desai's novels highlight individual characters, that is, their inner world and sensibilities. Desai's heroines represent not ordinary mainstream women but are mostly from of fluent families and do not have to worry about daily subsistence. They are more concerned with their emotional needs.

As Anita Desai's main emphasis is on the inner world rather than on the outer world, she uses the technique of stream of consciousness to explain the problems of the characters. Their emotional world is reflected in syntax and imagery.

*Cry, the peacock* is a psychological novel which involves the study of a hyper sensitive, children, young married woman Maya, who is obsessed by a childhood prophecy of disaster, kills her elderly husband in a fit of anger, goes mad and finally commits suicide.

The novel very skillfully reveals Maya's search for an individual's identity. Being motherless, she engages herself in the battle between her individual self and her social role in search of human love. She is a daughter of a rich advocate in Lucknow and being alone in the family, she gets most of her father's love and affection. Her brother has already escaped from the boundaries of house. That's why she gets the excessive love of her father. This excessive attention and affection of her father make her feel that she is a toy made for her father. When she gets married, she desires the same love and attention from her husband Gautama, a father surrogate.

We can say that Maya's unconscious mind never reconciles with her conscious mind.

In psychological findings, if the level of anxiety enters the unconscious level of human psyche, it makes a person to keep apart what actually belongs to him together. Thus, this constant anxiety makes her to develop a separation of idea and emotion. She develops a negative approach towards life and finds its entire essence as useless and meaningless.

This loneliness makes her a psychosis patient. The disenchantment goes so deep in her unconsciousness that she loses the equilibrium of her mind. She makes an unconscious journey through her dreams to an unknown world in psychology, human mind when faced with the worries and the anxieties of life traces its existence in certain unseen and unfelt objects from the deeper recesses of pre conscious level of human psyche.

Maya marries a father like man who is without sentiments and emotions. He fails to come to the level of Maya's sensitive nature. Goutama understands deeply the causes of Maya's obsessive nature. At this stage, Iol meets the Ego level in Maya's mind. The Freudian concept of sexual obsession is analysed when Gautama points out the father fixation in Maya's mind.

That's what happens with Maya and Gautama in the novel. The relation between them starts unfolding layer by layer both husband and wife have a big age gap and are in total contrast with one another in their temperaments and attitudes. Their married life is punctuated all along by matrimonial silence.

Maya is none other than one of the women with the early difference that in actual life one is aware of the trap which makes one the victim. Cry, the peacock is the greatest attempt of Anita Desai to reach to the depths of psychological problems of the alienated persons. A man-woman relationship can be seen from various angles of human emotion. That is, father-daughter, brother-sister, girlfriend-boyfriend, lovers and husband – wife. Now a days, relations are just a formality with which we have to live. At a higher level, everyone is someone's father, mother, brother, sister, husband, wife etc. but at the lower level, they are all deserted and alienated from their loved ones.

Conclusions:

Anita Desai, as a novelist, has a least concern for revealing the social and economic problems in her novels. She has devoted her creative energy completely to the psychological states of human mind. She finds her way to the innermost region of human psyche and explains about that region from where the original ideas of human mind come into operation. She has opened before us a new world which gives us an excellent study of human relationship and the psychology of the human being.

## REFERENCE

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