



# EMOTIONAL SUFFERING OF A WOMAN IN ANITA DESAI'S *CRY THE PEACOCK*

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## Abstract:

The paper tries to explore the psychological suffering, frustration of woman in Anita Desai's cry, the peacock. Anita Desai is one of the famous Indian novelist. She gives new dimension in her first novel "Cry the peacock" and focused the unexplored realm of the female psyche. She portrays their rebellion against the entire system of social relationship. The novel is unhappy, unfilled and neurotic woman. She exhibits the inner emotional world of the protagonist Maya, her mental upheavals, her inner struggle, her desire for warmth, love and companionship and her obsession with death.

The women characters of Anita Desai undergo a strange psychic experience and suffer from failures and frustrations. They undergo trauma due to their hypersensitive nature and their insensitive husbands. Most of the female characters of Desai are either women with affluent background or are mere house-wives.

In the novel, Cry, the Peacock, Maya is the pivotal character whose father's excessive care and concern makes her behave abnormally in her later life. Maya's sorrow begins with her marriage to Gautama who is a rational, middle-aged, busy lawyer and the protégé of her father. Gautama is insensitive to the desires of his young wife and therefore she feels lonely, isolated, alienated, neglected and frustrated.

The title of the novel is highly symbolic. It symbolizes the agony of an unfulfilled desire. Peacocks know their death before hand and they also enjoy their last day with dance. Maya also loves her life when she knows about her death.

Maya is born of an upper middle class Brahmin family. Having grown motherless, she was pampered by the father, Rai Sahib. Although sensitive and well educated, she is treated as a child rather than a mature, willing to be heard and spoken to. She has been reared in a protective atmosphere. Her father tries to fill the loss of her mother and creates a fairy world full of dreams. This is the reason why he marries Maya to Gautama, his own middle aged lawyer friend. But both prove to be poles apart.

Maya is childless even after four years of her marriage. She naturally gets attached to her pet dog, Toto. The death of Maya's pet dog, created an emotional upheaval in her life and she becomes inconsolable. Childless women do develop fanatic attachments to their pets, they say.

Toto's death is the first sign of her abnormality which evokes a series of consequent reactions. The usual decaying flesh seems unusually terrific to her and it is this peculiar insight that suggests her highly emotional and hysterical response to worldly events. Soon after the incident, the agony of missing the pet lurks in the blank spaces of her mind, making her more and more restless.

Maya wants Gautama to love her very intensely. Gautama advises Maya to practice detachment, because attachment leads to self-destruction. Gautama's indifference towards her desires and above all the albino astrologer's prophecy that either of the partners would die in the fourth year of their marriage results in the psychological trauma in Maya. Both Maya and Gautama have opposite views on life and are not able to see beyond their own points of view.

Maya her psychological frustrations and abnormal sensitiveness led her to the act of homicide and self-annihilation. Thus Maya in Cry, the Peacock kills her husband, Gautama because of the albino astrologer's prophecy. Her only solution to escape from these mental agonies is death and she immolates herself.

Desai uses the imagery to objectify the psyche of characters in the novel. Maya's dark house expresses her inner emotional world. Cry, the Peacock, is a novel which depicts the neurosis of Maya who becomes a

psychic and pathetic figure and in the end kills Gautama as she thinks that he is the cause of her suffering.

The women characters in Anita Desai's novels are shown to have sensitive and emotional nature which is too fragile to cope with the dehumanised and artificial urban surroundings and with the hardened unfeeling nature of the in-laws. It is a difficult situation for these sensitive women to adjust themselves to the changing scenario. It is reflected in the novel *Cry the peacock*, Maya's intense longing for love and life. She is left to the solitude and silence of the house which preys upon her husband's lack of love for her.

### Conclusion:

Anita Desai finally leaves it on to the readers to complete the story. The oppression and depression, the anxiety and fear, the frustration and foiling of the female protagonist set against a typical Indian scenario brings out the very best of the writer in a coherent way. She discovers a rare imaginative awareness of various deeper forces at work and a profound understanding of feminine sensibility as well as psychology.

### References:

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