



POST-COLONIAL FEMININE PERSPECTIVES IN ANITA DESAI'S CRY, THE PEACOCK - A STUDY

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Abstract:

Anita Desai is interested in the emotional world of women. She is a pioneer in writing psychological novels. Anita Desai's themes are of self-identity, inner confrontation, existential crisis, conflicting relationship, alienation and search for identity in her characters. She made a place for herself in writing about the long term effects on the psychological aspects of women in the family and outside of the family and their attitudes. Her discourse is mainly focused on women and finds human dignity in a little corner of life not the powerful. She interprets the reality of women in a post- modern period. This paper attempts to examine post-colonial feminine perspectives in Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock. She is more concerned on life and desire to arrange into a credible shape. Her novel Cry, the Peacock mentions the feminine sensibility which is caught in the existential crisis of patriarchal society and represented by the classes of people between upper class and middle class. The identity of women, which has moved away from the families to society to social criticism in literary studies it, has given new identity, liberty, and new individuality.

Key Words: Feminine Sensibility, Alienation, Patriarchal Society & Identity.

Introduction:

Women always have been the centre focus for writers and researchers. Whether in the form of the silent sufferer, sacrificial mother or a domestic angel, she has occupied the attention of one and all. Many regional novelists have provided us with examples. Most of the early novels by men, though sometimes their perspective may be quite different from that of women writers, deal with child marriage, the suppressed life of widows, widow remarriage, and women's attempts to break the patriarchal clutches and norms.

The post-colonial novelists of India have through political and social issues. The social and psychological issues became their chief concerns. When writing the novel the novelists were concerned about the inevitable changes in Indian society. Some writers dealt with some changes in Indian society to compete with the West. They wrote the novels that depicted the contemporary trends. The diasporic literature mentioned about the issues related to race and feminism. Indian novelists show remarkable awareness of these issues and deal with them effectively.

In an interview Anita Desai puts it: "In my twenties when I first began to work seriously and consciously on my novels, it was D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, Henry James and Marcel Proust that influenced me more strongly" (qtd. in Tripathi 8). David Daiches perceives the difficult struggle of the modern novel with the empirical, existential truths and its endeavour to elusive inner core of human mind: "Every human being is the prisoner of his private consciousness, his unique train of association, which results in turn from his unique past" (8).

Anita Desai not only has a language of empowerment having international reach; but also language of identity of Indian experiences. Her writings made in English desire to find new and different territory to the tradition. In an interview, Anita Desai considers the view that her writing is westernized: "If my writing is westernized there is a whole section of Indian society that is westernized whole range of people brought up in urban areas have been exposed to Western ideas through literature" (Uniyal 251).

In the interiority of her characters, Anita Desai discerns unimagined dimensions and relates them with elegiac compassion and tenderness. Even though she admits in an interview her intense self-consciousness in translating some ethnic Indian rituals like a wedding ceremony or a funeral. Her grasp of typically Indian rituals, cultural practices, social codes, education system, and the configurations of class, gender and caste in Indian society testifies to her ability to imaginatively participate in diverse social practices and beliefs.

Anita Desai's ability to get down to brass-tacks comes to terms with what it means to be a woman in India especially in relation to the domestic and familial space. It serves both as a nurturer and destroyer of feminine lives. The growths of feminine lives from infancy through adolescence to old age people occupy the interest of Anita Desai's works. Her feelings of women writings bring to the fore a salutary challenge to most male Indian writers who have dealt with women. She dares to offer her correctives to the male convention of depicting that and that femininity is beyond culture. Even though quite a few of her novels assign pivotal roles

to male characters, women are always the sub-text or unconscious of the text inevitably. Because it is the woman writer whose perspectives define the characters like Gautama, Nirode, Adit and Dev are susceptible to the writer of women novelist who in feminist perspectives takes an ironic view of their superior assumption of themselves.

Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* has emerged as one of the most prolific assertive depictions of social and cultural life of modern India. It has brought for the nation and its sub-cultural groups with such a vibrant elegance. It is recognized as the most articulate and eloquent of all the literary genres in India. Novelists continue to articulate different sections of Indian contemporary society. While portraying a variety of lives and colours from the wide spectrum of Indian social, cultural, economic and political realities, novelists not only experiment with stylistic techniques and linguistic nuances but also delineate the psychological issues like sense of alienation, anxiety and search for identity in their works.

Anita Desai's novels have added a new dimension to the Indian fiction in English. In her novels, one can find a shift from the objective to the subjective and from the communal to the personal. Her thematic preoccupation is the exploration of the sensibility. In *Cry, The Peacock*, she deals with the theme of marital incompatibility and discord, the predicament of a delicate housewife unable to cope with the lethargy of the laws and dehumanized and urban milieu. She deals with the theme of sexual union without sexual communion. She depicts the dissolution and disintegration of the feminine sensibility in marriage. The protagonist Maya's psychic confrontations with the albino priest and husband are essays of identity assertion. Quest for identity and its meaning is Anita Desai's sole concern in this novel.

K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar says, "Some Inner Fury is a tragedy engineered by economics and politics both in novels the chief characters transcend the bludgeoning of this mischance and assert the unconquerable spirit and humanity. Of all the characters in *Some Inner Fury*, Premala is the sweetest, even the most heroic, whose sadness is potent her mother's love whose silence is stronger than all rhetoric and whose capacity for resignations, the true measure of her measureless strength. She more than the sophisticated kit and Mira, more than the rebel Govind and the reckless Roshan is symbolic of the mother India whose compassion and sufferance, which must indeed suffer all hurts and survive in all disasters" (Iyengar 440).

Anita Desai produced novels related to the social issues of Post-colonial India. She found that moral support was based on equal rights to women the socio-cultural issues did not conform to India. "She creates a reluctant character, Ila Das in *Fire on the Mountain* against the backdrop of this divided society. Her novel *Cry, The Peacock* is the product of whims and fancies of the affluent society" (Rao 44). Her novels are a continuous search for human self. The major characters have been suffered by existential pains. "Desai's characters are caught in an existential predicament rooted in the awareness the death is the ultimate fact of life" (Srivastava 18).

Cry, The Peacock is the story of Maya, and her married life with Gautama. Almost the entire story is the remembrance of things past by Maya herself. The action of the novel takes place in Delhi. The brooding darkness is more potent than the outer forms and noises. It deals with Maya's pet dog "Toto." It has its effect on Maya and leads her to despair. Her husband Gautama is a buddy, rich middle-aged lawyer. She approaches an astrologer who prophesies death either for the wife or the husband four years after the marriage celebration. Three years they have lived together. The crucial fourth year is still upon them. The sense of spiritual reflection is keenly depicted. One day in the course of a dust storm, they are apart and they go up to the balcony and there Maya is in a fit of frenzy pushes him and he falls. Three days later, Gautama's mother and sister take her to her father's house at Lucknow. It is understood that she will have to be put in an asylum.

One of the determining causes of Maya's tragedy is the astrologer's prophecy and another is the myth surrounding the peacock's cry. The peacocks are said to fight before they mate. Living they are aware of New Delhi. Dying they are in love with life. Maya's hated imagination jumbles prophecy and myth into a night marsh certainty. But this novel is less satisfying than the previous one, although the canvas here is large and the details are fuller and diction is richer. It lacks such controlling forces as the Maya-Gautama combination. There is a sense of incompleteness in action and characterization, idea and symbol. But, still it is a novel with great amplitude than its predecessor and is quite characteristic of Anita Desai's specific talent.

The authoress deals with the feminine sensibility through the reactions and responses of the heroine to the events and situations in *Cry, The Peacock*. Maya is a young, beautiful, intelligent and sensuous woman who has been married to a lawyer Gautama for four years. She lives with him in his house alone for they do not have any children. To understand their nature is to understand the nature and mode of domination, repression and oppression.

Women writers think that the situation calls for a concerted attempt to affirm the dignity of woman in the family as well as in the wider social life. A close study of the novels of Anita Desai reveals that they have the feministic perspective in portraying their characters in their respective novels. Though they cannot be branded as feminist writers belonging to any particular group they have much concern for women in society. They are neither satirists nor social reformers to bring about a change in the structure of society. What is striking

in their writings is their probing into the mind of the characters. Generally, women in their novels are the victims of the patriarchal society. They do not get due recognition or regard in society.

In Anita Desai's novels, there is some violent between the desire to love, live and desire. In all her novels there is a gap or desire on the part of central character towards finding to striving at a more authentic way of life than they lived. Maya and Sita desire the above all. Even though they are also resisting in this involvement, problem and issues in this involvement or individual freedom has got psychological aspects. Maya's unhappiness in *Cry, The Peacock* is not the originality of her environments. It is a product of her imagination, while she confronted with originalities of her life. She gets disturbance and she is incapable of doing away with it. In every situation, Maya likes for a child-like consolation. She wants to be assured all will be in her life. She feels lonely. She finds nobody understand her feeling. She says that Gautama is a third gender and she has to suffer lot. There are a lot of incidents in her life to force her to be neurotic. Her fears and thoughts crowd her mind. Her inner feelings are disturbed by her patience. "Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* in which Maya's story, the story of her married life with Gautama and the entire story is 'remembrance of things past'" (Singh, Existential 30). The prophecy of the albino priest acts upon Maya with the same force of inevitability as the three witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. She is a girl like Mrs. Dollaway and she has been influenced by Virginia Woolf's novels.

The present study reveals that a synoptic view of Anita Desai's novel in terms of her major themes and techniques. It aims at evaluating her novels given the shifting sensibilities and changing attitudes as a form of traditional social order to a liberal and open socio-cultural ethos. Her concern is with the predicament of the individual and the social forces that try to human identity. This paper examines the narrative mode of Anita Desai in the context of socio-psychological implications of the novels. It is suggested her emphasis on the study of the individual as an aggregate of psychic and emotional concept leads her to write about the characters. The nature of city and childhood memory plays a vital role in shaping the form and vision of Anita Desai. The urban milieu provides an artistic backdrop to her novels and the city assumes a symbolic dimension. It reflects the existential anguish of the tormented souls who are in constant quest of self-hood. It is suggested that the city not only reveals the view of life. But also becomes the very irony of existence. Nature is presented in the novels as an awareness of reality. It provides a symbolic dimension to the total meaning of Anita Desai's novel and becomes a shaping element of her form and style. The memories of childhood help the characters to understand and evaluate their form.

Maya lives in a state of fear and hallucinations. Fear is only a projection of her mind as it is baseless and abnormal. She senses the cruel trainer behind the bear dance seen in her childhood and has nightmarish experiences during the night. The image of the Kathakali dancer comes to her as a "phantom gone berserk" (Dash 15). She considers Gautama as an "unreal ghost" a "body without a heart" (15). There are several uncanny references like this throughout the novel. There is a constant interaction between illusion and reality in Anita Desai's fictional world.

Anita Desai is a pioneer in writing psychological novels. She explores the psychic depth of her characters and analysis in detail motives in *Cry, The Peacock*. She portrays the human psyche of young and sensitive married girl "Maya." This novel which is Anita Desai's maiden venture in her writing is divided into three parts. The first part introduces us to Maya. Here, the narrator wins our sympathy for Maya. It makes us believe that her husband is cold and indifferent towards her whereas Gautama appears to be shrewd, calculating and the fact about gravest mother. She seems to be innocent and sensitive.

In the second part, Maya elaborates the root cause of their incompatibility, it is told of her past life and her encounter with the albino priest who had once told her that either she or husband would die within four years after her marriage. The third part shows how Gautama's death, does not affect the daily routine. There is, however, whispered conversation daily Maya to a lunatic system. The story of Maya's life seems to be three events that can be concluded as deprivation, alienation and elimination respectively. In the first place, Maya has been deprived of love mother, brother, sister and father. Secondly, she is alienated from her husband. In the end, she brings about his elimination from life and herself from her family and society.

In *Cry, The Peacock*, Anita Desai tries to delineate a picture of the diseased human psyche of women almost on the verge of insanity. She creates her characters that inherit her own experiences or seek to solicit meaning from the experience. All the women characters are suffered by neurosis. They are guided by fear, guilt, jealousy and their psyche loses of their position. However, the tendency is to take them to consciousness and transport them in terms of some images and moving them backwards to forward. Her narrative style explores the past and the present. *Cry, The Peacock* is a symbol which is not adequate to the more realistic emotion. Maya's consciousness has been deeply disturbed by her nightmare and human existence. Her image has a dual existence with certain variations. The image of the storm suggests the complexity of emotions and terrifies Maya to develop the feeling of guilt and insecurity.

Every wife desires intense intimacy with her husband. But in *Cry, The Peacock* the protagonist Maya receives indifference rather than affection. In this novel, Anita Desai presents the solitude, melancholy and dark world of shadows in Maya's life. *Cry, The Peacock* is concerned with its chief protagonist Maya's

psychological problems. Based on the mythological and typical images and symbols, this novel explores the hidden and latent urges of Maya's psyche. As a young sensitive girl, Maya desires to love and to be loved. She marries the friend of her father, Gautama, who is much older than herself. She belongs to a traditional Brahmin family which believes in Astrology and other prophetic strains of their order. Gautama's family represents the rational side of life. Thus Maya is haunted constantly by the rationalistic approach of her husband to the affairs of life. Maya loves Gautama passionately and desires to be loved in return. But Gautama's coldness disappoints her. They are different from each other in tradition and modernity, trust and distrust in human relationships, Brahmin and non-Brahmin order of the society. The prophecy of an albino priest creates a fear psychosis in Maya's mind. The priest's prophecy proves to be true in the case of Maya's brother, Arjuna. Gautama as a rationalist fails to understand Maya's emotional mental state. In the first part of the novel, the death of her pet-dog Toto serves as the symbol of an abandoned self doomed to loneliness: "All day the body lay rotting in the sun. . . would soon have penetrated the rooms. So she moved the little string bed on which it lay under the lime trees, where there was cool aqueous shade; saw its eyes open and staring still, screamed and rushed to the garden tap to wash the vision from her eyes, continued to cry and ran, defeated, into the house" (CP 7).

Maya's unconscious mind never reconciles with her conscious mind. Her conscious level of mind signifies the associative approach to human behavior whereas her conscious mind forces her to realize her identity as a woman and wife. When her husband was unable to soothe her burning heart; at that point, anxiety enters her mind. Toto's death is the first sign of Maya's abnormality that evokes a sense of chain reactions in her life. She becomes hysterical to worldly affairs. Maya feels lost, frustrated, alienated, neglected and shattered to pieces. Gautama's lack of caring and attention towards her too adds to further fear and tensions between two and makes Maya drift even more away from him. She is unable to balance between her inner life and the realities of the outer life. The prophecy of the priest also haunts Maya who portends that either she or the partners would die in the next four years of their marriage. This childhood prophecy remains closely rooted in her mind and becomes one of the reasons for her abnormal behavior. The astrologer, that creeping magician of my hallucinations, no, of course, they were not hallucinations. Maya has nothing to do in her idle time after Toto's death. She has nothing to do to kill the lonely hours. She feels isolated and neglected by her husband. She reflects: "Telling me to go to sleep while he worked at his papers, he did not give another thought to me, to either the soft, willing body of the lonely, wanting mind that waited near his bed" (CP 14).

The second part of the novel reveals Maya's psychic depth and narrates the tragic death of Maya's husband Gautama. Maya and Gautama have different approaches to life. Gautama is a lawyer. In his family one did not speak about love and affection and discussed parliament, cases of bribery and corruption revealed in government while Maya's family Champions human values and rights. She is very sensitive and cannot ignore her feelings. Maya wants her fulfilment as a woman and wife. But her father like husband does not soothe her burning heart. She opts for an ideal love. Maya symbolizes the pangs of the peacock mating, narrates the secrets in the following lines: "Do you not hear the peacocks call in the wilds? Are they not blood-chilling, their shrieks of pain? 'Pia, Pia,' they cry. 'Lover, Lover. Mio, mio, -I die, I die'" (CP 82).

The tormented scream for mating, the crying and yearning for the male peacock reaches out of Maya but not Gautama. She asks Gautama to hear the call "Pia, Pia," but he remains languid to the cry. He has no sexual and passionate urge towards her. Maya, the "pea-hen" fails to have her instincts fulfilled from Gautama, the "peacock." She feels loneliness, isolation and desertion. Gautama is self-controlled, reasonable, dutiful and worldly-wise man. He did not try to soothe her. Maya knows about the insensitive and indifferent nature of her husband. Maya yearns for human love. She desires to be loved by Gautama's family members. But the cold behaviour and indifference of Gautama's family members disappoint her.

In the third part of the novel she also dies. Thus this alienation and solitude in the husband-wife relationship bring about their death. The novel *Cry, The Peacock* describes the reasons and consequences of alienation in the relationship between Gautama and Maya. Maya's neurotic behaviour is due to her intense alienation. Both husband and wife have different attitudes towards life. This alienates them from each other. Maya's isolation haunts her no more as she kills her husband in a fit of maddening fury. It is alienation which brings a disastrous end to their life.

Maya compares Gautama to her father at every step and thus ruins her marital life completely perhaps, Gautama would have been better able to handle her if he had been told of her weak mental states her father perhaps had father wished to keep this a secret not only from Gautama but from others as well, because such revelation might have reduced his daughters chances of marriage for who would willingly marry a psychic case. The death life into sharp contrast the dog's carps bring no foolish sentiments in Gautama's mind Maya reacts differently. She remains nervous and disturbed until long after the episode.

One of the crucial remarks Anita Desai makes in the novel to know where she stands in the loneliness of time, impossible vastness of space. Her desperate struggle to have an identity of her own is threaded by the presence of Gautama. She, therefore, looks upon him an antagonist and her psychic problem become an existential one. Maya would like Gautama to meet her at the level of her inner life which to him is a closed book. The trouble with Maya is that while she realizes she is different from all, she fails to realize that each one

is a different individual who necessarily things act and behave different manner from others. Maya is not prepared to give anything to achieve a mutually happy relationship. She says that said loves Gautama, rarely shows her love in deeds. Gautama on the contrary, is gentle and patient with her expect those times when she is too unreasonable. Even then he blames her father and not Maya herself.

Even the novelist seems to play down Gautama's death which is mentioned euphemistically and evasively, reminding one of Virginia Woolf, in whose novels also death is underplayed from this view. The authoress attention solely on Maya, what she feels, how she feels about what she does and what she has gone through for Maya it is only for a push, for Gautama it is death. Gautama is a faithful husband who loves and cares her in his way yet Maya was never satisfied and happy. The novel *Cry, The Peacock* exposes impression of marital incongruity and unhappy conjugal life. No other writer is so much concerned with the life of young men and women in Indian cities as Anita Desai.

There is little analysis of Maya's mind and more of the conflict between Maya and Gautama. The novels are uneventful and even an important event, like the death of Gautama is not treated with the usual importance. Just one paragraph is devoted to the tragedy. Dialogues are monotonous and the narrator oscillates between description and edition. All that can be said is that the novelist has tried to give the verbal form of a situation, which seems to be troubling her and to which she has found has a solution. Her novel is a seemingly imperfect attempt to understanding. Maya has a narrow life with limited interests and hardly any inter-personal relationships. Even in her childhood, she was a lover. Though she is fond of possessing books by Tagore, Keats, and Shelly, she hardly ever reads them. This tendency continues after marriage and Gautama points out to her, that she never reads the newspaper or a book neither does she involve herself in any extracurricular activity. She rarely gives anything especially to Gautama and always expects him to understand and love her.

Cry, The Peacock explores Maya's desire to live life to fulfill but as soon as possible. She moves away from the protection of her father, the harsh realities of life bewilder her. This novel is a psychological study of hypersensitive, childless young woman, highly strong, suffering from a father fixation. She is obsessed with a childhood prophecy of disaster, kills her husband in frenzy. She goes mad and finally commits suicide. There is something in the theme of the novel which links it's with the aspects of Indian life and reality. Her relationship with reality passes through three phases. The first is in which her childhood where she is cosseted within a limited time, the second is life with Gautama while she makes attempts to recede into her post and equally it reach out to others. The third and final is her surrender to the world of her fears and insanity.

The most tremendous thing that happened during the span of Maya's life was nothing. The prophecy was a lengthy one. On hearing it, Maya is affected and psychologically disturbed she had mental stress in her mind. It mingled into her blood which after many years gave some fear and tension in her life. The astrologer says: 'Death,' he finally admitted, in one such moment, 'to one of you. When you are married-and you shall be married young.' The light suddenly sank, and his eyeless' face assumed the texture of a mask above me. 'Death-an early one-by unnatural causes' . . ." (CP 30).

In Anita Desai *Cry, The Peacock* deals with the feminine sensibility through the reactions and expressions of the female characters and situations in the novel. A highly, emotional and sensitive woman Maya, has an obsessive love for getting a good life. She is perfectly normal and healthy woman. She is a young energetic, dynamic, beautiful, intelligent and sensitive woman. She has been married to a lawyer Gautama. She lives with him in his house alone that they don't have children. Maya grew up in a big house with a beautiful garden where she lived her princess-like childhood. Although such activities like breakfast was to her a special for the breakfast at her home with her father were in her mind eye as good splendid parties of fairies and elves. In the centre of her world way Maya's father, the "Taj Mahal," (CP 41) the benevolent despot whose treasure she was. Rai Sahib was a strict man with others, expecting from them a lot by his sense of perfection. Nevertheless, he adored his daughter, paying a lot of attention to her and what she liked and disliked. Always she letters her to do what she wanted and tolerating her laughing in it. There was a strong discrepancy between Maya and others and how she treated with others including her brother Arjuna.

Maya was very unlucky to marry someone like Gautama because he is her complete opposite: Maya is all about feeling and her love of nature while Gautama knows only logic and ignores natural beauties. She wants to love and be loved, she seeks closeness and wants to touch while Gautama despises it and is very cold; she craves attachment, she preaches to her philosophy of detachment, trying to change her ignoring Maya's "But I am not like you, I am different from all of you" (CP 100).

Maya's loneliness was due to her imagination. Gautama was rational, philosophical and detached and he never gave time for Maya. He always shook to the Bhagavad Gita and constant in the philosophy of detachment of their indifference are mainly due to their different attitude, Gautama was always a performer. He never conjured his thought in loved and attachment. Maya loved him. She wanted to fulfil his requirement and desire; whenever he became indifferent. She was shattered inwardly. After the Vulgar Lal's party when she said it was horrible Gautama said, "Facts are made to be studied. Not to be wept over." This made Maya distressed. She felt that he was devoid of decency and was moving away from her. His negligence and way of metallization disintegrated her into psychological effect. She substituted the factors and a happening around her she was

trying to say something. Arjuna's letter and the remembrance of the prophecy were also fate. Summer season began and it destroyed all the beauty of nature. The heat of the sun, made the flowers, birds, insects, green leaves to disappear. As the heat suppressed all the beauty, Maya too felt suppressed. The dust storm is not more violent than the storm inside Maya's heart. "If you knew your Freud it would all be very straightforward, and then appear as merely inevitable to you - taking your childhood and upbringing into consideration. You have a very obvious father-obsession - which is also the reason why you married me, a man so much older than yourself. It is a complex that, unless you mature rapidly, you will not be able to deal with, to destroy. But then, it will probably destroy itself in the end, since the passion of this sort is almost always self-consuming, having no object with its range that it can safely consume" (CP 122-123).

In psychological findings, if the level of anxiety enters the unconscious level of the human psyche. It makes a person keep apart what belongs to him together. Thus, this contrast anxiety in Maya makes her develop a separation of idea and emotion. She develops a negative approach towards life and finds its whole essence as useless and meaningless. Therefore Maya says: All order is gone out of my life, all formality. There is no plan, no peace, nothing to keep me within the pattern of familiar, everyday living and doing that becomes those whom God means to live on earth. "My body can no longer bear it. My mind has already given way. See, I am grown thin, worn" (CP 149).

This illness creates her a psychology patient. The detachment goes deep into her unconsciousness which she does the equilibrium of her mind. Her dreams become suggestive to her fear psychology and a simple dream becomes a nightmare for her. "She makes an unconscious journey in her dreams to anxiety of life traces for its existence certain unseen and unfelt objects from the deeper recesses of preconscious level of human psyche she says: . . . for there were countless nights when I had been tortured by a humiliating sense of neglect of loneliness, of desperation that would not have existed had I not loved him, so had he not meant so much" (CP 167).

The marriage is a union of two minds and there is bound to be adjustment or maladjustment. According to the authoress most marriages prove to be union of incompatibility men are apt to be more rational and women are emotional. Their attitude and interests are different. A woman is expected to adjust the surrounding which becomes the reason for the deletion of her individuality. It affects her psyche and behaviour which destroy her sensibility and there is a gradual erosion of the marital relationship. Maya and Gautama are the victims of poignant of maladjustment in marriage. Being emotional and sentimental, her favourite pet Toto's death upsets her so much that she finds it difficult to endure the existential pain.

Anita Desai prefers to explore the private to the public world. Her real concern is the exploration of the human psychic, inner climate and her un-reveals the mystery of inner life of her characters like Maya. Her female characters are alienated from the world, society and family because they think of themselves as individuals. Her characters are self-centered who want to change either the situation or things on themselves. Out of guilt, Maya committed suicide, when Nila's mother heard footsteps climbing the stairs, Sheran to stop Maya but it was too late. She could only ". . . where she stopped and watched the heavy white figure go towards the bright, frantic one on the balcony and screaming" (CP 184).

Anita Desai analyses Maya's psyche from different aspects the overall view of her consciousness from the narrator a distant view from Gautama's self-still more focused personalized new from Maya's lips. She was always bored, wanted to be alone and she did not feel anything. Maya and Gautama belong to separate worlds but she is unable to grow out of the confines of her inner world. The relationship is disappearing day-by-day. Nowadays the relations are just a formality with which has to live. If we see the top level, everyone is linked with their relatives like father, mother, brother, sister, husband and wife. But at the low level, they all suffered and alienated from themselves. This novel explains how to suffer from existential pains with their family surrounding.

Anita Desai is different from other Indian English novelists. She pays her special attention to the inner sufferings of her female characters. The description of psychological problems becomes the base of her writings. She does not pay more attention to the external actions and characterization of her novels. Anita Desai's stories are concerned with the inner life. They are not commentaries on social conditions or even political conditions. Man indeed is a social being, having married in society. Therefore the life of each individual is in itself a commentary on social conditions. For example, Maya's problems are psychic. But they have risen from the fact that she was pampered by her father while her husband never had the chance even to look like a zoo. The wide gap in the upbringing of these two persons was the cause of their failure to strike an attitude of reconciliation. Her style is remarkable for her poetic images. She has used to communicate her feelings. Thus it can be well noted that her novels have shown her special mastery over a new kind of theme, which can be compared only with that of Virginia Woolf. Her themes are highly related to the psychological problems of common people, particularly women who feel neglected because of certain reasons.

Maya is none other than one of us with the only difference that in actual life. It may aware of the trap which makes to her the victim. But Maya is not at all conscious of this trap and becomes invoke it. Therefore, Cry, The Peacock is the greatest attempt of Anita Desai to reach to the depths of an existential crisis of the

alienated persons. Through her novel, she tries to describe the complexities and working of human relationships in the modern scenario. A man-woman relationship can be seen from various angles of human emotion which is father-daughter, brother-sister, girlfriend and boyfriend, lovers and ladylove, and husband and wife. But in modern period these relationships have come under the darkness of suspicion, distrust in communication and on the top of all silence.

Conclusion:

Anita Desai closely presents the emotional world of her heroines. She powerfully highlights their traits, peculiar and tender instincts as crushed by the customary of the society. Her heroines feel not having the qualities of man, leave unprotected and utterly isolated. They feel and shake the bars of their cage which is their home. But they do not mediate leaving the level or point of which something is about to begin off their cage-home even in their desert, painful moods as they are family women. But no doubt Anita Desai's heroines are supremely proficient. Modern man and woman face the most agonising problem the existential problem. They fail to perceive today, the very purpose behind life and the relevance of their existence in the world. They suffered from inner problem a conviction of isolation, meaninglessness in their way of existence. The existential problem is so pervasive that it threatens to erode every sphere of life. Anita Desai sets herself to voice the mute miseries of married women fortified by existential problems and predicaments. She explores the emotional world of women, and a profound understanding of feminine sensibility as well as psychology.

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