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A detailed illustration of a quill pen resting on a scroll of parchment. The quill is positioned diagonally across the frame. The scroll is tied with a red ribbon and has a red wax seal. In the background, a lit candle in a brass holder and an inkwell are visible, creating a warm, historical atmosphere.

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Case Study of Maya's character in Anita Desai's "Cry the peacock" in the context of silent suffering of female in male dominated society**Vimal B. Patel***Research Scholar, C. U. Shah University, Wadhwan City, (Gujarat) India***Dr. Audrey. E. Barlow***Saurashtra University, (Gujarat) India***Abstract**

The present paper aims to study the problems faced by the woman in Indian society which, undoubtedly, is marching ahead at the path of development but still assigns traditional roles to the woman. Woman cannot come out of these customary roles because of conservative outlook of the male dominated society. She is imprisoned in the four walls of the house where there is no one else to share her grief. Even if she is provided with the material comforts, she tries hard to let others listen to her agony which goes unheard in most of the cases.

Anita Desai is a very distinguished female Indian novels. Her literary work is remarkable for her presentation of the inner life of her female characters. Cry, The Peacock, published in 1963, is Desai's first novel. It broke new grounds and is considered to be a trend-setter in feminist writing. Through the character of Maya, Anita Desai tries to penetrates into the feminine world of pain, pathos, inner fear and anxieties.

In 'Cry, the Peacock', we see differences between the gender in even the ways of looking .For instance, when Maya's pet dog dies, the dog's death shatters Maya beyond measure. She is left alone in the world of frustration and disappointment, while her husband Gautama, consider the pet dog insignificant and replaceable.

Family Relationship and Cry, the Peacock

In her very first novel, 'Cry, the Peacock', Anita Desai is mainly concerned with the theme of disharmonious and unfulfilled family relationships. Born in an old orthodox family, Maya enjoyed life which provided her love and pleasure alone with discipline in her father's house. As a young girl, living under the protected roof of her father's house at Lucknow, She has the affectionate and kindly care of her father who is over indulgent towards her. She feels like a princess living in a fairly-land. Moreover, she

is motherless and suffers from deprivation of the maternal. A difference is seen in the nature of Maya and Gautama, while Gautama is a realistic, insensitive and a man of philosophical nature, Maya is poetic and high strung. The problem with him is that, he cannot poetically express feelings of love and concern for her. Maya's life is tragic one because of two egoistic men. She suffers both from the excessive love showered on her by her father and total lack of it from her husband. She sees towards her husband as a father substitute and here lies an irony. It increases her miseries condemned to live a

life of emotional, mental and spiritual loneliness.

Treatment of women in society and Cry, the Peacock

As Rajeswari Sunder Rajan attempts to do in her remarkable study of contemporary Indian culture, "Read and Imagined women, which along with 'woman writing in India is a classic of Indian feminist theory and criticism. She says that, women have always been subjected to discrimination and exploitation in the male dominated society. Ever since the society came into existence women have been considered as inferior to men. Maya felt inferior before Gautama's materialistic approach. She feels unsatisfied, unfulfilled with her marital relationship.

Maya's Alienation

On another occasion, in spite of her seductive postures, Gautama remains rigid and cold. She does not remain emotionally but physically dissatisfied too. Maya herself describes her predicament in these words:

"I turned upon my side, close to him, conscious of the swell of my hip that rose under the white sheet which fell in sculptured folds about my rounded forms."(CP: P.39-40)

Maya's intense feeling of loneliness is expressed like this:

"His coldness, his coldness and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy in order to hear me talk and thinking, reveals myself. It is that my loneliness in that house."(CP: P.14)

And each time she tried to adjust herself with the situation, she felt rather dejected, she

feels alienated from the self and the world. We become fully aware of Maya's hypersensitive and highly disturbed state of mind. In the very beginning of the novel, we see her reaction on the untimely death of pet dog. Throughout, we felt the absence of rapport between husband and wife. She muses:" Had there been a bond between us, he would have felt its pull...but, of course, there was none...There was no bound, no love, hardly any love."

She feels defenseless.

The alienation of Maya is rooted in Gautama's philosophical detachment. It culminates in a kind of schizophrenia.

"A body without a heart, a heart without a body."(CP: P.163)

Thus, the novelist skillfully presents the psychological problems of an alienated person. Her powerful expression is seen in Maya's uneasiness, obsessions, abnormality and infantilism.

Matrimonial Concern

Anita Desai focuses on the matrimonial concerns in her novels. The man woman relationship is based on different types of social, personal and emotional needs. Marriage as Anita Desai shows is merely an adjustment rather than an involvement. She projects on her experiences, her awareness of man, society, human and moral dilemmas. The purpose of her novel is to study the matrimonial crisis. As a novelist she doesn't represent the futility of marriage but explores the psyche of the female characters through marriage. She portrays the inherent disparity in male and female characters. Females are emotional whereas men rational. Women

have shown to be emotionally as well culturally dependent on their mates; any loss in relationship becomes a total loss of self. Anita Desai has explored man woman relationship in "Cry, The Peacock".

Maya's Desires and Outlook of Gautama

Anita Desai's novel shows very effectively, why healthy intimacy is important in relationship and loss of faith, loss of rapport threatens to the human relationship. And the modern world is haunted by this. Now a day, the world seems too small to us due to globalization. We communicate anywhere to anyone easily. But the funniest thing is, we can't have a rapport under the same roof of four walls. Absence of a healthy communication brings dark shadows of distrust in the family.

The novel threatens us that how lack of communication and mournful silence is driven the modern man towards the tragic death. To Gautama, Maya is just like a child. But Maya realizes that she is not as helpless and dependent as a child. She is as much

competent as man. Gautama's treatment of Maya as a child pains her much because she wants to liberate herself from the ages of old guardian-child chain.

Gautama is a busy, prosperous lawyer. He fails to understand Maya's demands so she feels neglected and miserable. It leads her into depression. He blames her father for spoiling her.

Conclusion

Maya seeks Radha Krishna's ideal in her relationship with her husband. In reality, her marriage life is coloured with materialistic shade. She is the victim of her own imaginary ideal world. Hence, her journey starts towards the loneliness. M. K. Bhatnagar observes: "In dealing with the interior landscape and the psychic odyssey of the characters, Anita Desai has extended and enlarged the thematic horizon of the Indo-Anglian Novel." Thus she beautifully presents character of Maya in male dominated society.

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