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Complexity of Human Relationship in Anita Desai's Novel "Cry the Peacock"

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Abstract:

Anita Desai is one of the most powerful contemporary Indian Novelists in English. She is concerned with the inner world of her characters. She tries to look for the deep desires, emotions and feelings felt by her characters and shows them as the influencing factor behind their action. She portrayal of man-woman relationship is influenced and conditioned by complex social milieu. She basically portrays the plight of modern woman in the existing man dominated society where she makes an effort to voice herself. She basically portrays the disparity in temperament as affecting the man woman relationship. This paper puts forward the portrayal of women in man woman relationship. Mostly woman are culturally as well as emotionally dependent on man and any disruption in relationship proves to be a loss of self. It is through ones relationship that one evaluates his/her worth.

She published her first novel *Cry, the peacock* 1963. It presents an incompatible marriage of the protagonist, Maya. She is married to Gautama, a reputed lawyer, nearly twice of her age. Though Gautama is confident husband who takes care of Maya and loves her in his own way yet Maya is not satisfied and happy and this leads to an impression of marital incoherence and encountered conjugal life. *Cry the peacock* is an implication of Maya anguished cry for love and life of involvement.

Key Words: Marriage, Unhappiness, Conflicts, Feminine Psyche, Loveless Life

Introduction:

Anita Desai is one of the best-known contemporary women writers of Indian fiction in English. She was born in 24 June 1963. She has been shortlisted for the Booker prize three times. She got the Sahitya Academy Award in 1978 for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*. She presents a new dimension to English fiction through the exploration of troubled sensibility, a typical neo-Indian phenomenon. Best known for her studies of Indian life, Desai has written exclusively in English since she debuted in the mid-1960s.

The theme of man-woman relationship in Anita Desai's novel reveals their consummate craftsmanship. She is sincerely brood over the fate and future of modern woman more particularly in the male - dominant society and her annihilation at the altar of marriage. Her novel however does not challenge the futility of marriage as an institution but discloses the inner psyche of characters through their relations. When two souls combine through their wedding some kind of distinction is bound to be there. But their marriages established blindly and without viewing the attitudes, feelings and viewpoints of the bride and bridegrooms are bound to be failed. Proper conscience of each other, a sense of knowledge and love for each other can make their conjugal lives successful

Loveless life of Maya in Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*:

In the present novels marriage is proved to be unions of incompatibility. Men are considered to be rational where as women are sensitive and emotional. She has explored different aspects of feminine psyche which also includes man woman relationships. *Cry, the peacock* is a family play mainly concerned with the theme of marital discord between husband, Gautama, and wife, Maya. The play is about Maya's cry for love and life of involvement. The husband is too much engrossed in his own affairs to meet the demands, partly temperamental, partly spiritual, of his young wife. Gautama's sensibilities are too rough and practical to suit Maya. He is a faithful husband who loves and cares her in his own way. Maya is never satisfied about marriage life. UshaPathania, a noted critic, remarks: "Marital relationships are established with the explicit purpose of providing companionship to each other. However, the element of companionship is sadly missing in the relationship between Maya and Gautama." The novel exposes an impression of marital incongruity and unhappy married life. Maya's marriage with Gautama was more or less a marriage of comfort and convenience. Whatever marriages are referred to in *Cry, the peacock* is not contend marriages in real sense of the term. Maya is deeply scattered at the insensibility, hypocrisy and contempt exposed through other marriages around her.

All these relationships between man and woman point out the plus and minus points of brides and bridegrooms. Wedding is a union of two souls and two bodies. It is to be established very consciously and carefully. General situations in society are such that no apt time or notion is offered to these affairs. Its outcomes are the clashes, desperation, obsession, alienation and loneliness. "In Indian Society, if marriage is successful then credit is seldom given to female for her contribution to make it successful. In fact, it becomes successful because of her grace, love, wisdom and a sense of understanding, tolerance and sacrifice. If a marriage becomes unsuccessful then the woman is sometimes held responsible for the same. But these notions are not accepted by the self-conscious and self-respecting woman in our society. The title of the book,

Cry, the peacock is about Maya's cries for love. The cry of peacock symbolizes Maya's agony for love and life. Maya starves for husband's companionship and spends sleepless nights consuming with this starvation. The thought whichever more impresses her is that his companionship is necessity. He makes no attempt to take any interest in things which attacks her. She pines to satisfy her physical starvation and when it is not satisfied, what else can she do? She would lie awake the whole night suppressed by the starvation, she felt not merely for Gautama but for all that life represented. She began to look upon her relationship with Gautama as a relationship with death. The foreteller albino is merely a literary device used to reveal her concealed awe. Under the emphasis of this awe she becomes insane and argues that since Gautama is not involved with life and does not care for it, it is unimportant to him whether he is alive or not. So she kills Gautama in a fit of frenzy and soon she avows and meets to her own death. In order to place Anita Desai in proper perspective it is essential to compare her with the other woman novelists who has more or less the same thematic and theoretical exposure and who, in their own way deal with the commonly shared theme of human relationship.

Conclusion:

She is present the unhappy situations of women in Indian society. She handled the issues of violence against women artistically and veraciously. She primarily concern with the fate of married women in Indian society. Indian women novelist are still exploring their feminine identity and trying to establish it as something worth possessing. Anita Desai is so much concerned with the life of young men and a woman in Indian cities.

Anita Desai presents to reader her opinion about complexity of human relationships as a big contemporary problem and human condition. So, she analyses this problem due to shows changing human relationships in her novels. She is a contemporary writer because she considers new themes and knows how to deal with them. She takes up significant contemporary issues as the subject matter of her fiction while remaining rooted in the tradition at the same time. She explores the anguish of individuals living in modern society. She deals with complexity of human relationships as one of her major theme, which is a universal issue, as it attracts worldwide readers to her novels. She strives to show this problem without any interferes. In other hand, she allows to her readers who have their judgment about her novel characters and action.

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