

## Pessimism in Desai's cry, the peacock

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### Abstract

Anita Desai is one of the eminent, and prolific personality in the twentieth century of Indian English fiction. She has given an elite direction to Indian English fiction. Cry, the peacock is a debut novel by Desai, which was officially published in the year of 1963. She has brought a new literary tradition including issue such as hybridity, contemporary bourgeoisie issues, exploring the communicative gap between different generations etc. she has written a number of novels, short stories, and articles throughout her life. The present research paper aims at depicting the pessimistic elements of the psychological conflict of protagonist state of mind, sense of despair, disillusionment and deep frustration. Desai gets succeeds in revealing the pessimism through the techniques of symbolic imagery, flashback, proper chronological chain of events, narrative techniques, dialogues, characterization, plot of the novel etc. which are also some important elements of fiction.

**KEYWORDS :-** Pessimism, Psychological Conflict, Turmoil, Insane, Neurosis

### Introduction :-

Desai opens the novel with a crucial event of the death of Maya's pet dog, Toto while protagonist, Maya is a sensitive childless woman hunted by Albino's prophecy. Which has made to protagonist during her childhood incident . Maya is protagonist of the play, who was very much attached to her pet dog, Toto and considered Toto more than her own child, his sudden death made her feel with certain restlessness and hysterical. The whole novel is concerned with pessimist themes of marital discord, communicative gap, superstitions, hallucinations, dissonance and disharmony between Maya and her husband Gautama, which also depicts the contemporary Indian society of writers time. Desai portrays the novel as a psychological fiction and most of the actions has been takes place in protagonist's state of mind. Her psyche increase and appealed to readers as the plot go forward in the novel. Infact, each incident gets woven in such a grotesque way of manner which merely seems to be a fiction. Psychological turmoil prevails throughout the novel right from the beginning to end. Most of the conflicts are happened in the mind of flux of protagonist Maya. Constant to and fro motions of the past and present can be observed through the characters of protagonist Maya. She used to get lost in the past happenings. Hence the incidents of the novel has invicinity with present and past events.

Ramesh Kumar Gupta remarks that,

“The man women relationship becomes more important due to rapid industrialization, growing awareness among women of their rights and individualities and westernization of attitudes and lives of the people”(i)p 156

Maya was a young girl hunted by fear that was of the Albino's prophecy. She never thought that the prophecy should reveal to her husband. Infact they both failed to understand each othersminds, wants, desires, and requirements, which resulted into the end of disastrous marital harmony.

"I knew them to be real, Too real or is it madness? I gone insane ? Father! Brother! Husband! Who is my savior? I am need of one. I am dying and I am in love with living god. Let me asleep forget rest."(ii)p 84

Anita Desai succeeds in portraying the symbols and imagery which exploits the hidden propulsion of protagonist psyche. She remained a childless women after four years of her marriage. Thus the death of Toto deeply influence her and she has felt disturbed and alienated. Her husband, Gautama's carelessness has been revealed by his eccentric attitude towards the death of Toto.

" But he did not less than that, he retreated to the outposts of his flat civilization and asked vaguely, half interestedly",

'Toto? Who was that?' (iii)p 170

These above words were as grim as any death sentence, absolute and nonredeemable, Which extremely hurts Maya indifferent and sordid attitude by Gautama reflected through the incident. Gautama fails to understand Maya's neurotic mental state of mind and to satisfy her physical, sexual urge. Hence Maya remains sexually starved and never gets physical satisfaction from her husband. She aspires human love. She want to be loved by Gautama and his family members but it does not happened throughout the novel

Maya's pessimism, loneliness,panic psyche, prepossessions, unfulfilled desires and solitariness resulted in making her the victim of neurotic disorder. she get tortured by the sense of neglection, loneliness. She became more and more insane, which develop into full bloomed, lunatic madness.

"The doctor has already diagnosed her illness." (iv)p 185

Maya became fully pessimist about her future in the novel. She was unable to hope for having a child. Her madness mounded by the intense sentiments of pessimism. Gautama was startled by an eccentric conduct of neurotic Maya, which broughtperilous end of her husband.

" Gautama! I screamed in fury, and thrust out my arms towards him, out at him, in to him and past him, saw him then, pass through an immensity of air, down to the very bottom." (v) p 179

At last novel ends with disastrous death of Gautama when Maya gave him a push and then saw him fall, pass through an infinitude of air down to very bottom. In the madness after admitting to asylum Maya also kills herself the same way which she had done with her husband.

### **Conclusion :-**

Anita Desai depicts the reasons and consequences of separation in the relationship between husband and wife. They both had diverse view points towards

their life which alienates them from each other. This alienation brought a perilous and tragic end of Maya and Gautama's life. Thus, we can say that the novelist Desai gets succeeds in canvassing the pessimism through the disastrous relationship of husband and wife.

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