

Characterisation and Analysis of 'Maya' The Protagonist Of Anita Desai's Novel "Cry, The Peacock"

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Abstract: Anita Desai is a Sahitya Akademi Awardee (1978) novelist. She has done her mastery over women issues and we can find this in almost all her works. Anita Desai is a standout amongst other known contemporary women writers of Indian fiction in English. Anita Desai has been writing some of the best English language fiction in India for almost four decades. She's been shortlisted for the Man Booker prize thrice. Family relationships and their evolution have been the main themes of Desai's fictions. This paper deals with Feminism and loss of hope in life. The novel "Cry, The Peacock", is mainly concerned with the theme of disharmony between husband-and-wife relationship. Desai looks in to the reasons for marital discord and illustrates how such discord affects the family. Sometimes, the inability of an individual to be responsive to the behaviour patterns of her partner leads to strain and tension in the relationship, while sometimes it is on account of varied levels of sensitivity that strained relationships occur. In this novel, Maya and Gautama have strained relationships because of their incompatible temperament. Maya is dreamy, sensitive and emotional, while Gautama is in the role of passive, inert, supine. Anita Desai has showed the feminine mind of both a girl and a woman. The issue of female, a hot subject in feminism, is addressed by Anita Desai with sensitiveness. By Maya's role, Anita Desai carries a new aspect of feminist publishing. Maya stands separate from every female character in the novel. Realistic, insensitive and rational. The female protagonist Maya is a very emotional person because of her father's unconditional love, affection and care towards her. Maya's nurturing like this by her Father made her the villain of her own life. And Maya's immature behaviour leads her to a life which she never desired of. I have dealt with Maya's character in this article".

Keywords: Life, Illusion, Catastrophe, died, Emotion, Affection, Love etc.

Article

As the name of the female protagonist of "Cry, The Peacock" 'Maya' means illusion and we can find the illusions each and every part of the novel. "Only a dream. An illusion. Maya--my very name means nothing, is nothing but an illusion." Maya was an adorable child of her father because she was the one who left with her father, Maya's mother has died. Her father gave all his love, affection, care to her to sympathise her and himself as well. But in this process of nurturing a child Maya's father never taught her of any reality of the world and not even made her a mature person and the result is that Maya became a woman but without maturity. Maya was highly emotional and adorable child of her father. But Maya didn't get the same intense love and care from her husband (Gautama) because he was enough mature to do so. Gautama was very practical in his nature. He was feasible and workaholic person. With the character of Maya I find that marriage becomes hell if there is no understanding and caring of mind for one-another. Marriage is nothing but a compassion over anything else.

Through this novel the novelist has beautifully presented the feminine psyche of a common woman personality. She saw the world and surroundings as her own convenience. She just couldn't face the world with an intellectual eye, on the other hand Maya got married to a person, who was not only aged but also a matured person, Gautama. Both were very different in their nature, and it's hard to be with each other in such a situation but they were living without any co-ordination between them. Where Maya's husband 'Gautama' used to deal with his mind in every phase of life, where Maya with her heart, which was full of only unfulfilled desires. The desire of being loved and loved by her husband but she was getting nothing but disillusion. And the very disillusion made her crazy to a great extent. She was poetic by her nature and a nature lover too, for some time she used to get herself involved in nature but another time she started to relate her life with nature and find nothing poetic in her life. And again she found herself in deep grief. And all these chaos of her life led her to a life of existential despair. She found herself alone just like an alien. Because the person, who was with her was not able to be with her as she wanted to be. Maya's behaviour became like an alien towards herself too. Loneliness that produces anguish in herself.

With the very opening of the novel we find that Maya was at high of her emotion because her dog had died and she stood full sunny day outside so that she can minimize her pain in process of being with that dead dog as long as the dog was not taking away, when in the evening Gautama came and arranged dog's cremation, said her to take tea and forgot about the dog. She just started crying and crying and started blaming Gautama "you need a cup of tea; he said. yes I cried, yes, it is his hardness--no, no, not hardness, but the distance he coldly keeps from me....". Her loneliness was also a pain for her because she had not child yet and so used to attach with any nonliving things like dog, cat, flowers etc. "Childless women do develop fanatic attachments to their pets, they say..... I promised, with parted lips and clasped hands, never, and was immediately made aware of the moments trickling past. "She didn't like the thoughts of Gautama like" As though it didn't matter whether people

lived or dead." Literally Maya was begging for the love of Gautama like her father used to do her "Oh, you know nothing of me and of how can I love. How I want to love. How it is important to me. But you, you've never loved. And you don't love me This shows how much amount of intence care and love she deaired of ,because from the very beginning we see that Gautama's fault is not much.His fault is only that he was enough mature to deal with intence love,care.

Maya was afraid also because , A forcaster had said her before her marriage that it may a catastrophic end of your marriage as in the four years of your marriage either you or your husband will die. Her father hidden this from everyone and so Maya do but the Maya didn't forgot that prophecy.She used to think about the matter"Gautama, what does it mean when you dram of the dead?I dreamt about my mother this afternoon--about the photograph father has of her,on his desk.She is all in grey.It is such a clear photograph, but everything look grey in my dream.What could it mean?"

Sometimes Maya's illusions take her to the next level hhy ,pressing my hands to my ears.¹Arjuna.I believe I am ill.Something has gone wrong." Arjuna's character was a hidden character as reader's didn't know who actually he was.He was mentioned after receiving his letter from New York. Then we as reader let be known that Arjuna is Maya's brother.Who left the home many years before.And Arjuna 's letter shows the hattered towards her from their childhood ,he used to hate her because their father's love was only for Maya and most of the time Arjuna was scolded by him.And after recieving the letter Maya started to thinking of him as well. And all the encounters Shows that her mind game had taken her in another verse and sometimes she wasn't in her senses." Stop screaming, for God's sake,Maya.Maya¹¹

what happened to you,Maya?". "Madness?I screamed,leaping up at him, to strike him, stab him,have done with it,his voice and mocking body. 'How dare you?How dare you?My outraged heart pounded against my ribs, till I choked,till I saw night about me, and began to cry hysterically."All these sentences shows her grief towards her own self. Maya belongs to an orthodox Brahmin family. She trusts in astrology. The astrologer prophesized that one of the couple would die soon in unnatural way. She cannot get herself away with the thought of astrologer. The disturbed Desai has showed the feminine mind of both a girl and a woman. The issue of female, a hot subject in feminism, is addressed by Anita Desai with sensitiveness. By Maya's role, Anita Desai carries a new aspect of feminist publishing. Maya stands separate from every female character in the novel.

And the illusions made her so crezy that she killed her own husband Gautama" And then Gautama made a mistake-- his last,decisive one.In talking,gesturing,he moved in front of me,thus coming between me and the worshipped moon, his an ugly,croocked grey shadow that transgressed its sorrowing chastity.¹Gautama! ¹I screamed in fury,and thrust out my arms towards him, out at him, into him and past him,saw him fall then,pads through an immensity of air, down to the very bottom."

Like the very novel,Maya's character is also uncertain. And we find Maya as ,the crying peacock.In the conclusion i find that Maya is a fragile character. Because maya has a sense of understanding of flora and fauna but she didn't use it by her own but she want to do so by Gautama.She has to be strong enough for dealing with herself.She just let go herself in the wave of her illusionary world and the so the result we find as a catraprophe.Here ,we see Maya as a symbol of failed marriage,disturbed mind,unfulfilled desires and alienness.

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