



Conflict Between Realism And Romanticism In Cry, The Peacock

Minakshi Chauhan Deptt. Of English D.N.College, Hisar.

Abstract: Anita Desai has incorporated novel elements into her writing, such as the study of human behavior. She is endowed with psychological insight and frequently looks within the mind rather than just presenting the world's surface attractions; her unfailing reserve is the imaginative realm. Cry, the Peacock, Anita Desai's work, has been hailed as an innovator in the area of psychoanalytical realism. It explores Maya, the protagonist, and reveals her insecurities, anxiousness, and peculiar behaviour. She paints a picture of an unfamiliar, lonely, and painful world. Maya is characterized as a frantic figure whose coming tragedy is repeatedly and suggestively hinted at. This article aims to illustrate the conflict between realism and imagination.

Keywords:- Realism, Imagination, fantasy, Introspection, Introversion, and Psychological analysis

Introduction:- The first person to write psychological novels was Anita Desai. She delves deeply into the psychological makeup of her characters and examines their motivations. Her characters stand out for having traits like self-reflection, introversion, and a refusal to compromise who they are as individuals. Characters that are not ordinary but have withdrawn or been driven to despair and as a result turned against or pushed to stand against the general trend of society pique my interest. It is simple, effortless, and requires no effort to go with the flow.

However, those who cannot follow it, whose emotions scream the huge nay, and who swim against the river are aware of the expectations and the price of meeting them (1983:21–23). The protagonist of the story, Maya, is powerfully psychologically analyzed in Anita Desai's debut book, Cry, the Peacock. The author does a good job of capturing Maya's claustrophobia, loneliness, and exasperation. Maya is a highly emotional young woman who is stalked and tormented by the idea that an albino astrologer's prediction of a premature passing would come true.

She commits murder, goes insane, and ultimately commits herself as a result of her lonely, pointless battle with fate. The privileged daughter of a prosperous nobleman, Maya is an introvert who is married off to Gautama, a man several years her older. In a state of anguish and sadness, she remembers the albino astrologer's prediction that death either her or her

husband will strike in the fourth year of their marriage. The novel's overall framework incorporates fantasy, which is constantly projected alongside and in opposition to reality.

Childhood, marital life, and the last stage, in which she completely gives herself over to the world of insanity, are the three stages through which her relationship with reality progresses. Maya has an unbalanced perspective on life because of her father's obsessive devotion to her. She perceives the world as a personalized toy that is animated to her favorite songs and is painted in her favorite colors. Maya wants her husband Gautama, a father substitute, to treat her with the same attentive attention she received from her beloved father while she was growing up. She feels abandoned and miserable when busy, successful lawyer Gautama, who is overly preoccupied with his professional affairs, fails to satisfy her needs.

Her husband warns her against becoming neurotic after noticing her morbidity and accuses her father of spoiling her. The dreadful words of the prophecy ring in her ears and unnerve her, like the mad demon's drumbeats in Kathakali ballets. She is aware that "a black and evil shadow" is haunting her, signaling that the time has come for her fate to be fulfilled. Four years had passed. Now, it would either be Maya or Gautama. Maya is unaware of the fatal shadow because of her father's tender care, but because her husband Gautama cannot satiate her tremendous desire for life and love, she is left to the house's isolation and quiet, both of which prey on her. As her name implies, she is a representation of the universe of senses. Contrarily, the name Gautama is associated with penance and a detachment from life.

He is rational and pragmatic. He follows the Bhagwad Gita's advice to live life without attachment. Marriage discord is inevitable when two people have such fundamentally dissimilar temperaments. Maya's nagging concerns of "shadows and drums and drums and shadows" could have been avoided if Gautama had shown sympathy and paid attention to her. She is left alone to ruminate on the macabre ideas of the albino astrologer's prophecy due to the communication distance between them.

She visited Mrs. Lal's party, her friend Leila and Pom's house, the restaurant, and the cabaret, she tries to distract herself, but she is unable to stop the enveloping fear. She appreciates her little reprieve from her busy life in their company when Nila and Gautama's mother come to visit. But once they leave, she is left alone in the house with her nightmares and fears. Maya is so taken by the vision of the albino astrologer that she remembers hearing him discuss the legend about the peacock's cries. She learns that she should never sleep in peace after hearing the peacocks during the rainy season. She is ensnared in the web of impossibility.

She becomes hysterical over the enveloping fear of death while being madly in love with life, asking, "Am I going crazy? Father! Friend, husband! My savior, who is he? One is necessary for me. I love living even though I know I'm dying. I'm dying and I'm in love. God permitted me to restlessly sleep. I won't sleep again, though. She thinks about the horror of all that is about to happen in her gloomy dwelling, which she perceives as her grave.

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Suddenly, during her brief period of clarity, she has the thought that since the albino had foretold their deaths, it may be Gautama and not her life that is in danger. As a result, she transfers her desire to die to Gautama, reasoning that since he is cold and uncaring of life, it won't matter to him if he misses it. Gautama is still so preoccupied with his job that Maya discovers him to be unaware of the dust storm that had been raging earlier in the day.

He follows her, mind wandering, as she invites him to go with her to the roof of the home so they can enjoy the cold air. As she leaves the chamber, Maya asks the Lord of Dance to protect them after spotting a bronze Shiva dancing. She sees her cat suddenly rush past them as she climbs the stairs, clearly in tremendous panic. Gautama stands in front of her, obscuring her view of the moon, and she pushes him over the parapet to "pass through an immensity of air, down to the very bottom".

In the end, it is up to Gautama's mother and sister to remove the tragic scene of her father's house and remove the fully deranged Maya. She endures a variety of social and psychological hardships. Her social status has a profound psychological impact on her, making her a vulnerable target for numerous known and unknowable interior traumas. It cannot be disputed that Maya had a nice childhood. Despite having plenty of material comforts, she meets a horrible end due to the severe mental suffering she endures. After four years of marriage, Maya's astrologer predicted that one of the two—her own or her husband's would pass away. She also suffers from other obsessions.

Desai employs Maya as her spokeswoman to express her views on women. "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women back to writing," said Cixous, "from which they have been driven as violently away as from their bodies." (78) It's crucial to tell Maya's story since she is torn from both her own body and parent affection. In Maya, one can thus find a declaration of her desire, a protest of social norms, and a lamentation of the loss of one's own identity.

Maya's situation is related to her inability to find solace in her family or marriage. She loses confidence in herself because of the personality split. May has become isolated because she is infatuated with her father's role, her divorce from her mother, and her inability to relate with Gautama. She is constrained by her fear of the prophecy of the albino. She is unable to overcome the restrictions imposed on her by the conventional society's belief in astrological forecasts and fortune-telling since she is caught in a world of superstitions. She cultivates both a love and a dislike of the unknown.

Maya is unable to get over her anxieties, even though her father disproves these untrue notions. She is observed in the fourth year of her marriage escalating this worry to the point where it causes an unanticipated eruption. Maya finds the grim situation intolerable. She thus releases her anxiety by imagining how a peacock breaks a snake's body by grabbing it and stamping its feet against a rock to lessen its suffering. Her consciousness is severely impacted, and she yearns for an immediate emotional outlet. She murders Gautama because of the delusion's hold and then hangs herself. Her subconscious urge to kill

her husband is a reaction to her underlying problems, including an unhappy marriage, unfulfilled desires, and resentment at her husband's icy indifference.

She finds satisfaction and relief from the stress of her past and present problems through this murder and suicide. Although Anita Desai explores her characters' inner lives, she never lets them lose sight of their social and familial connections. As she appeals to her father, brother, and husband for help in escaping this psychological condition, Maya cries out, "Father! Brother! Husband!" Who is my saviour, exactly? I only need one. Despite knowing I am going to die, I adore life. I'm in love and I'm dying (84). In Desai's book, the main character is on a quest that isn't just a woman's, but a human being's, need for compassion and acceptance of their circumstance. Maya is not the only woman in this book; yet, her story is the most sincere. The two women that represent strength and positivity symbolically are Nila, Gautama's mother, and sister. Nina can overcome the challenges that she faces in life. According to the novelist, she has "learned to do everything myself after ten years with that rabbit I married" (135). Pom and Leila, two of the book's other major female characters, are Maya's pals. Leila and her consumptive partner eloped, making their marriage a union of love. She has heroically battled through all of life's challenges as the wife of a patient battling for their lives. She accepts her situation in life as her fate rather than feeling resentful or sorry for herself. She expects more from Mrs. Lal and the other ladies at the party, and she is severely retaliated against.

Another character who addresses problems that Indian women face frequently is Pom. She has a lot of restrictions that dictate how she lives with her in-laws. All the time, she is surrounded by an intricate web of numerous dos and don'ts. Through Pom, Mrs. Desai describes how women are forced to lead a restricted lifestyle and obtain approval from their in-laws for all tasks. She describes her way of life as being "like two mice in a small room, not daring to creep out for fear they'll pounce on you, ask you where you're going, when you'll be back, why you aren't wearing the jewelry they gave you." (55) Through Mrs. Lal's persona, Anita Desai hopes to convey the idea that a woman and her family are not regarded whole and important in the absence of a son.

Mrs. Lal puts on a good front by having four daughters, but she secretly wishes for a son. Daughters are still viewed as a liability in our society even though we may laud and rationalize them due to the negative effects of dowry. In addition, sons are the only ones who are truly regarded as their parents' successors. Women in the Desai culture frequently contrast the homes of their fathers. Women continue to depend on the house in their quest for a sense of fulfillment. They decide to withdraw once it is obvious that the house cannot cover their emotional and spiritual void. Withdrawal has become one of Maya's symptoms. Understanding how Maya's life is divided between her husband's and her father's homes is crucial to understanding her position. Her lovely body, fostered by the standards of her class, is reflected in both places, and she also develops into a danger to that very system.

Among the book's female characters, Maya stands out. Of all the female characters created by Desai, she is the most intriguing and psychologically mysterious. She represents a group of women who experience men's quiet abuse. Her actions and answers would not always be met with compassion and might be dismissed as the privileged mind's idle speculations. Although Maya also experiences opulent suffering, the novelist's calls for societal transformation cannot be disregarded. The trend of moving away from the family home, the mother leaving the kids alone, and an increasingly hectic lifestyle are a few examples of the changing trends.

As a result, the story's author has highlighted a variety of aspects of women's oppression. When it comes to expressing the terrible predicament of mentally and extremely sensitive women who are tortured by neglect and solitude, she excels. Undoubtedly, Maya is the main character of the novel, but there are also a lot of supporting characters, such as Nila, Pom, Leila, the mother, etc. Take part in the complex discussion of women's concerns. Maya's identity is called into doubt by these disparaging remarks about her and her father, creating a chasm between her ideal and true selves. Her repeatedly broken perception of her ideal self leads to an identity problem.

Maya's father has a major share of the blame for her delicate mental state, which prevents her from developing a healthy sense of self-worth. Maya has made an unconscious admission regarding her previously held awareness of the discrepancy between what he did and what he ought to have done. In this way, her capacity for independent thought and action is diminished. Maya gradually loses touch with her true self, becomes more uneasy, and finally suffers from identity loss, which lowers her self-worth and esteem.

Conclusion: - Anita Desai's writing is an endeavor to "discover, underline, and ultimately convey, the true significance of things," she concludes. She shares with readers her perspective on the complexity of interpersonal relationships as a major problem of our time. She therefore uses her books to project and depict shifting human connections as an analysis of this issue. She is a contemporary author because she takes into account modern topics like alienation and detachment and has a masterful understanding of how to address them. While maintaining a strong traditionalism, Anita Desai uses important modern concerns as the basis for her novels. She investigates people's suffering in contemporary society. She addresses the intricacy of interpersonal relationships, a global problem that draws readers from all around the world to her books. She makes an effort to present this issue unimpeded.

On the other hand, she gives her readers the freedom to evaluate her characters and their actions in a neutral and unbiased manner. The identical thing that makes Maya more prone to emotional resentment and sadness due to genetic and social programming is also its Achilles heel. Maya experiences the sharp sting of the gap between ideology and reality more acutely if her emotions are strong and passionate. She experiences terrible sorrow because of the contrast between her aspirations and goals and the harsh realities of life. She

therefore struggles to gain some insight from a highly private world of personal feelings, making her a loner and unavoidably a loser. To meet the needs of the plot, Desai employs a variety of creative techniques, including the use of stream-of-consciousness, fantasy, opposing characters, and symbolism to create a mood. Anita Desai has done this by using the power of her writing to make these characters mirror our own desires. Desai, like Virginia Woolf, highlights a personal subjective view of reality while revealing the twentieth-century obsession with flux and the centers of human identity. Her use of fantasy is founded on the realism and romanticism of narrative tactics, the connection between fantasy and reality, the conscious and unconscious fulfillment of desires, and fantasy as a tool for character development in the novel.

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