



Female Sufferings and Alienation in Anita Desai's novels "Cry The Peacock" and "Voices in the city".

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ABSTRACT:

This research paper attempts to examine and explore female sufferings and alienation in Anita Desai's novels "Cry The Peacock" and "Voices in the city". Maya is the main Protagonist of Desai's very first novel "Cry The Peacock". The novelist presents the sufferings and alienation after her marriage and also presents the happiness before marriage at her father's house. Maya wants to see the image of her father in her husband Gautama, but Gautama is busy in his vocational affairs. Gautama could not give too much time to Maya. He was indifferent towards Maya's pain, misery and sufferings. Gautama's indifferent behavior became the reason of Maya's alienation in this novel. She was deprived from husband's Love and care. On the other hand Monisha the main character of Desai's novel "Voices in the city" is also suffering from the same problem. Like Maya, Monisha is also a married girl, Monisha live in a large joint family with her in-Laws. After that she feels herself completely alienated and isolated from her husband, from her in-laws and from the outside world. Anita Desai's female characters are suffering from isolation, social isolation, and cultural isolation from family and self isolation. This paper attempts to highlight, thought the study of the novels, how Anita Desai's has portrayed the problems of Alienation and sufferings of female characters in her novels. Anita Desai's is concerned about the status of Indian women in our society. Being a female novelist she knows very well about the complexities of Indian women. Indian women struggle for freedom, existence and equality with men Desai presents in her novels the real condition of Indian women.

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Introduction:

Anita Mazumdar Desai born on 24th June 1937 is an Indian English novelist. As a writer she has been shortlisted for the Booker prize 3times. She is a winner of **Sathiya Akadami Award**. She had four children and Anita Desai's daughter Kiran Desai's is also a winner of Booker prize.

Anita Desai's is a well known feminist. Being a female she actually feels the isolation of women. Anita Desai's portrays all the female characters very sensitively, and her female characters are best appreciated in their psychological depth. Her characters do not belong to one age group but are from different age groups. Maya the heroine of Anita Desai's novel is a suffering soul. Anita Desai's portrays the suffering, isolation, frustration and helplessness of her female characters. There sufferings are not external but internal. Anita Desai's goes in deep to find out the real pathetic conditions of women. Anita Desai's bring out the suffering of women as a daughter, as a wife, as a sister, as a mother, and in the four walls of the house hold the women are force to live a life of isolation and misery.



The heroine of the novel “**Cry The Peacock**” is forced to live a life of isolation and frustration. The protagonist actually feels the reality of the life after her marriage with Gautama. The dream world of Maya is totally vanished at her husband’s house. Where she loses her identity and her marriage becomes the reason of sufferings, Monisha the heroine of the novel “**Voices in the City**” is also the sufferer in novel. The novels presents the misery, pain, sorrows of the female characters very minutely. Anita Desai’s presents in her novels the big houses, garden is portrayed very nicely. Flowers, trees, seasons belongs to the so called women’s world. The women characters presents sensitivity to this type of scenes.

“Cry, the Peacock” (1963) is the first novel of Anita Desai’s. Maya is the neurotic and hypersensitive heroine of this novel. Maya is a mother less child but her father brought up in the environment of Love, Care and Protection. Maya is a pampered child. Her father used to go to Darjeeling or any hill station of Maya’s choice because her father wants to protect her from the hotness of summer. Her childhood period was the Golden period of her life.

She got married with Gautama an advocate and a middle aged man. Maya’s suffering starts from the point of her marriage. Maya wants to look the image of her father in to her husband Gautama but she always fails. They both her indifferent to each-other. Sometimes Maya thinks that Gautama is indifferent towards her pain and misery. She feels herself isolated because her husband does not have time for her. Maya and Gautama do not share a mutual understanding. Gautama is always busy in his vocational affairs and Maya suffers in isolation. Both husband and wife do not share any compatibility, Maya is romantic, sensuous, nature lover on the other hand Gautama is not romantic and does not have any in nature. Maya has love for Gautama but she fails to satisfy Maya’s wishes for Love.

“**Oh, you know nothing about me and of how I can love.** How do I want to share my love? How important is it to me? Only you, you’ve never loved and you don’t **love me.....**” (96) The novel begins with Toto’s death, pet dog of Maya. Maya was a motherless child and she had no children she had an emotional bond with Toto’s. Toto’s death is a great reason of misery for Maya and she suffered a lot. Gautama did not understand the emotional bond between Maya and Toto. He consoled Maya to bring a new dog for her.

“**Showing how little he knew of my misery or of how to console me only then, he knew nothing that touched me.....** His coldness, his coldness and incessant talks of cup of tea and philosophy in order not to hear me talk and talking, reveal myself. It is **that My Loneliness in this house hold.**” (9) Maya was leading a life of isolation at her husband’s house. She felt herself alone. Throughout the novel the neurotic heroine Maya suffered sometimes mentally and psychologically. “**Cry The Peacock**” has been considered as “The first step in the direction of psychological fiction in Indian writing in English. Her isolation is because of lack of communication between Maya and Gautama & it is the obvious reason of Maya’s was leading a very rich life but a women need something more than clothes and food. In Gautama blamed Maya’s father for spoiling her. Maya’s sufferings were not mentally and physically but she was suffering from a childhood prophecy of disaster by the Albino Astrologer. She was much influenced from the prophecy. She had lost her mental peace and she was not even able to sleep in peace, after listening the peacock cry. She trusted in the prophecy that one of them must die.



Maya's isolation and frustration was at the peak and at the end of the novel she pushes herself from the parapet. At the end she killed Gautama and she herself committed suicide. The novel ends with Maya's total mental destruction.

“Voices in the city” is a pessimistic novel. Anita Desai has portrayed the life of Calcutta. Nirode and Monisha are the two main characters of this novel. They find it very difficult to cope-up with the environment of this city. Nirode is the male protagonist made himself suffering loneliness. On the other hand Monisha Nirode's sister is also suffering Alienation. Monisha is a real female sufferer of this novel like Maya. Monisha's husband Jiban was completely indifferent towards her. Jiban does not care for Monisha's feelings. They both do not share any bond of love and care. There is a lack of mutual understanding and lack of communication. The type of love Monisha wants for herself from Jiban, he was unable to give her. Monisha was an unsettled depressive housewife who lived in a joint family with her husband and in-laws but in a joint family she considered herself isolated. Anita Desai portrayed Monisha's loneliness emptiness, and despair. Monisha was like the female protagonist of Anita Desai's first novel “Cry, The peacock” Maya, childless ill-matched husband.

She felt herself completely alienated from her husband and in-laws. She had no mental peace, no love and concern from her husband's side. The result is that she became completely lunier and committed suicide. She pours kerosene over her body and burns herself. Amha Monisha's sister is another female character. The novelist also presents her suffering. She was the victim of circumstances made by her own. She attended cocktail parties, dance parties, clubs etc. she had an affair with Dharma, who was already married. So Amha was forced to live an unhappy life. The novelist presents the loneliness of the characters in this novel who in the crowd of Calcutta feel themselves isolated.

Conclusion:

Unlike Maya in “Cry, the Peacock” and Monisha in voices in the city are the real sufferer. They both commit suicide in the end. Anita Desai's novels are the mirror of the world. The female characters portrayed by Anita Desai are dissatisfied with their routine existence, dissatisfied with their status in their society. Desai presents that it is hard for women to understand their real existence. Being a woman Anita Desai herself understands the real sufferings of women. She realistically presents the female characters with their real sufferings. The present novel is a study of the sufferings of Maya and Monisha, the alienation of their lives finally leads to death.

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