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# A STUDY ON DOMESTIC AMBIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS IN ANITA DESAI'S *CRY THE PEACOCK*

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## **Abstract:**

This research focuses on the domestic ambience and events that led to psychological trauma of the protagonist in Anita Desai's most acclaimed work *Cry the Peacock*. The mindset of the protagonist is discussed in detail with respect to her psychological conflicts. The article also highlights the role of multi-disciplinary research in enhancing the quality of the discussion. The impact of trauma in the unconscious mind and the psychological imbalance which was an effect of it are also dealt in-depth. Thus, *Cry the Peacock* is analyzed in terms of psychological and domestic elements which could possibly generate a fresh perspective.

**Keywords:** Domestic, Imbalance, Psychological trauma, Unconscious

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Anita Desai is known for her works which portrays the contemporary societal conditions. She brings out the same to light through her unique descriptions. In the novel *Cry the Peacock*, she has dealt not just with psychological mindset of the protagonist but also described the domestic setup of her family which also paved the way to all the major incidents in her life. This is her first novel and it got published in the year 1963. Her other major works include *Voices in the City*, *Fire on the Mountain*, *Fasting Feasting* and an anthology of short stories. The novel, *Cry the Peacock*, is all about Maya, her husband and her father. The novel deals exclusively with the psychological conditions of Maya and to what extent did it affect her life. Anita Desai has also made vivid descriptions about the childhood days of the protagonist along with existing conditions in the family. This research aims to explore the domestic ambience of Maya along with her trauma which plays a crucial role in her characterization.

## **MAYA'S PERSPECTIVE OF LIFE:**

Anita Desai brings out the clear picture of Maya's mindset right from the beginning of the novel. She was portrayed as a sensitive girl who was brought up by her father. She also frightens of a prophecy from her childhood days. Her father was an advocate and shows more care and concern towards his daughter.

Maya just believes that she would receive same love and affection from her husband after her marriage. Maya had imagined that the world would treat her in the same manner her father had treated her these many days. However, she realizes soon that it does not happen. Her husband Gautama, held up in his work most often, could not spend enough time with Maya and she worries a lot.

Maya was slowly deteriorating in her mental condition and this was also because of a prediction which declared that either her or her husband would die within four years. Maya has love for beautiful and colourful, she enjoys by just looking at flowers but Gautama is entirely the opposite (Srivastava). She listens to the cries of peacocks in the nearby surroundings and lost her peace. She believes that the one who should die is Gautama and not her. Once, she asks Gautama to come along with her to the roof of the house and she starts enjoying the beauty of moon. When Gautama comes in between, she was frustrated and pushed him away which led to his death.

#### **EXPLORATION OF DOMESTIC AMBIENCE:**

Maya's domestic ambience also led to the deterioration in her mental health. This has begun right from the days soon after her birth. She was alone in her family as her mother died when Maya was young. Maya's brother left to America to be independent which made Maya to be with her father. Due to such factors, Maya's father showed immense care and concern towards his daughter and made her feel like the world is too good and she would receive whatever she needs in her life "No one, no one else, loves me as my father does" (Srivastava). Her father's attention towards his daughter is beyond one could ever possibly think and she expects the same from her husband after marriage which unfortunately did not happen. Gautama, her husband tells Maya that she is gradually becoming insane and also mentions that it was her father who made her become this way due to his over caring attitude. Maya also feels bad when Gautama was not ready to show his attention as much as she demanded. Most of the times, she feels alone in her house and such domestic ambience also affected her to a certain extent (*Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock: A Psychoanalytical Study*). Thus, such domestic ambience and her psychological condition from her childhood days affected Maya's life as a whole and she suffered a lot due to such factors.

#### **PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT IN THE LIFESTYLE OF MAYA:**

Maya, had undergone psychological trauma and this was reflected throughout her life. Anita Desai has portrayed the inner world of Maya through her characterization. Her loneliness from her childhood and lacking attention from people close to her increased the impact of psychological trauma. Anita Desai had discussed on the unconscious mind of Maya and how far she got affected. This made a mark in her psyche throughout the novel. There was so much anxiety which also led to psychological imbalance (*Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock: A Psychoanalytical Study*). The psychological problems that occur to a self who has been isolated and alienated is vividly portrayed in this novel. Therefore, such interdisciplinary approach helps a lot in analysing a literary work. Maya has always struggled to differentiate between the self and her role in the society. Anita Desai has also described Maya's dilemmas and obsessions which reveals her psychological condition. "Am I gone insane? Father! Brother! Husband! Who is my saviour? I am in a need of one. I am dying, and I am in love with living. I am in Love and I am dying. God let me sleep, forget rest. But no, I'll never sleep again. There is no rest anymore- only death and waiting" (Srivastava). Lack of communication also paved way for deteriorating mental condition of Maya which affected her psyche.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Therefore, domestic ambience and psychological conditions of the protagonist Maya affected her life to a greater extent. The alienation and obsession led to a psychological conflict. Thus, similar to other works of Anita Desai, *Cry the Peacock* also have got certain elements that could be analysed well with psychological approaches. There was no compatibility between Gautama and Maya from initial stages and there are few factors like communication that contributed to this existing condition. Thus, both domestic ambience and psychological conditions played a vital role in Maya's life. Such psychological concepts could be analysed through such multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary approaches which helps to achieve a better understanding.

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