

**THE LONGING FOR COMPANIONSHIP IN THE *CRY*,  
*THE PEACOCK***

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Anita Desai is a very famous Indian woman writer. She is a popular fiction writer. She is a skilled psyche reader. She unravels/unveils the hidden mind of her characters. She is expert in revealing the psyche of her characters, especially of women characters. She has paved the way for other writers. It is Desai who has established the norms and pattern for the psycho analysis of female characters. She has the eyes and heart for studying and disclosing the mind and longings of women. Her novels are replete with psychological explorations of women.

She can be regarded as the voice of the Indian women. She conveys the psyche, emotion, passion as well as the physical needs of women. In the patriarchal society these aspects are overlooked. Actually, these elements are out of consideration. The male dominated society has no value for them. These are rubbish things for male people. They consider women as the means of enjoyment, means of assistance, and means of appetizer. They view them as puppets or showpieces. So, they use and discard them according to their mood and need.

Therefore, the companionship is a utopian concept for them. They cannot feel or think about companionship. It is out of the coverage area of their thinking. Their bent of mind is so narrow that companionship is out of consideration for them. Companionship or friendship needs understanding, rational outlook, sensibility, un-prejudiced mind and compatibility of mentality. The cultural level, social environment as well as psychological environment play very strong role in developing and shaping the minds of human beings. The development is generally responsible for moulding the mind as well as the manner of mankind. When the society is already prejudiced and lopsidedly developed, the attitude of mankind is obviously too irrational, imbalanced and lopsided. Generally, mankind lacks proper and judicious judgement due to the environment.

The gender bias is the heinous outcome or by-product of this imbalanced and defective atmosphere of the society. The society plays double game and double standard for the treatment of people. There is lenient, blind and pampered way of judging and treating male members of the society whereas for the women there is a very narrow, biased and ego-centric mode of treatment. Women are always misjudged, maltreated underestimated, suppressed, tortured, and humiliated by the male members of the society. The perverted, selfish, pampered male members of the society behave with women very tyrannically and hypocritically. Even the male person of no-entity/no-cultural, social or economic background tries to dominate, humiliate and assault women. The society is so bounteous and partial towards its male people that a wretched and incompetent husband having no financial and social status behaves with his wife ruthlessly, aggressively and even assaults her as well as usurps her individuality, all her acquired assets and

properties and blames her falsely. This is only because of the wrong and perverted attitude of the society. The abnormality and misconception of the society are responsible for this.

Women, whether of low class or high class, bear these maltreatment and torture of the family/society only because they are emotional and they believe in devotion, compassion and sacrifice. They want to be the binding factor of a family. They play a constructive role. Therefore, they have positive attitude. But, this blind, selfish and brute society exploits women only due to their virtues. The women need understanding, friendship, and companionship from their family, from their society. They long for the companionship. It does not mean that they long only for physical needs or the sexual relation. It is true that in marital life the physical relationship imbued with friendly and emotional understanding is important. Without understanding and emotional attachment mechanical sexual relation is useless or meaningless for the real life partners. Only for breeding or licentiousness, a brute can enjoy and accept this kind of physical relationship.

Only a man with beast like tendency or a man who has no culture, no manner, no self respect, no understanding and no standard of mind can be satiated with the mechanical male-female relationship. Otherwise, a man with healthy mind and strong character cannot participate in this role without fellow feeling. In fact, the society believes in using and breeding formula. It lacks conscience and moral values. Dominating, torturing, underestimating, falsely blaming, soul less using of women are also immoral. They are against human values and moral values. These beastly and immoral attitudes and outlook of men make women frustrated, helpless, dejected, introvert, isolated and lonely. Therefore, sometimes they are forced to commit crime or cross the social barriers or commit suicide. These steps are condemned by the society vehemently. But, it is the society that compels women for doing this. So, actually, society is the real criminal. It should be punished. New structuring of the society, with reformation, is the need of time. Male and female, both are human beings. Obviously, there are some biological differences between them but from the humanistic ground they are equal. Human made lacunae and weaknesses must be removed for the well developed, healthy and prosperous human society.

Anita Desai is the mouthpiece of women. She has produced many famous novels such as *Fire on the Mountain*, *Fasting Feasting*, *In Custody*, *Voices in the City*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer* and *Cry, the Peacock* etc. She is a visionary. She understands the misery, plight and status of Indian women. Anita Desai is known for dealing with the theme of longing of her female characters for companionship. She exposes the bad consequences of the faulty adjustment in the married life. She demonstrates the depression, anxiety, frustration, sensitive mind, dormant or hidden desire of women through her fictional characters. She uses various nature images for expressing those thoughts, feelings, longings and emotions. The novelist tries to convey how the loneliness, lack of attention from the partner, negligence, and ignorance of the society develops depression, anxiety, frustration and detachment in the mind of a woman. This state of mind finally compels woman for a revolt from the family and society and also sometime provokes her for committing crimes and suicide. Her novels show the development of suicidal tendency and criminal attitude of women.

Anita Desai's first novel, *Cry, the Peacock* is the fine example of this step and outburst portrayed as a motherless child who is pampered by her father Rai Sahib. Rai Sahib is a rich lawyer. He gives full attention, affection and care to Maya. But, Maya suffers from an acute obsession of a prophecy by an Albino fortune teller. Later, Maya gets married with Rai Sahib's friend Gautam. Gautam is a choice of Rai Sahib. Maya loves Gautam. But, Gautam is a matured

and practical minded person. He is a typical traditional Indian male. He has no room for passion, emotion, romance while Maya is full of life and sensitive desires, imagination and romantic feelings. She expects care and attention from Gautam. Gautam ignores her demand and longings. He considers them as childish or rubbish. This attitude of Gautam hurts Maya's delicate, fragile mind. Maya is very attached to her pet dog Toto. The death of Toto makes her more lonely. She recalls her father's affection and cares. She longs for those considerations, cares and attentions. She is the prey of maladjustment in married life. Gradually, she feels herself alone and deprived of all kinds of pleasures and cares. She always thinks about the mythical story of the peacock. She herself cries for love and love making like peacock. The cry of the peacock in the novel is, actually, the cry of Maya. She becomes the prey of loneliness, gloominess, dejection, and obsession. Maya gets mentally and emotionally disturbed. She longs for all kinds of cares. She wants to enjoy all sensuous things. She needs a saviour. Therefore she cries in the following manner:

Father! Brother! Husband!  
Who is my Saviour?  
I am in need of one!  
I am dying, and I am in love with living. I am in love and I am dying  
( *Cry, the Peacock*,84)

Maya becomes frustrated and remains in her imaginative world. Sometimes she suffers from hallucination. Eventually she kills Gautam. Later, she herself commits suicide. Maya's this action appears unnatural and unethical to common people. But, the sufferers have no alternative. The unbearable loneliness, deprivation from care, gloominess and lack of attention and consideration from people mould the mind and psyche of human beings. So, they are forced to do something untraditional. It is condemnable for the society. But it is the natural reaction or phenomenon. It is like, as you sow so you reap.

Thus, Anita Desai handles the women psyche with special attention. Her novels are the explorations of the family problems. They reveal the lack of warmth and companionship in marital relationships. Generally, women become the prey of all the sufferings in the male dominated society. Therefore Desai feels for women. She has great concern for them. She wants to reform their condition in the society. She advocates for the equality of man and woman. She forces the society for granting women the right of equality and proper status in the society. For this, she exposes the mind and attitude of women. In this way, the novelist tries to make familiar the society with the miserable and helpless condition of women of the Indian Society. Desai wants to convey the message to the society that a woman is also a part and parcel of the society. She is also made of the same stuff as the man is made of. According to the novelist, a woman plays very pivotal role in the family and in the society. She must get an equal recognition, position, treatment and status in the family and the society. They should not be ignored or maltreated. Their demand, desire, and longing are natural. Hence, they should be & nbsp; fulfilled. If they are overlooked, it is necessary and natural for women to take a revolutionary step and to escape from the family ties.

### Work Cited

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