

ECO FEMINISM: AN ILLUSTRATION OF WOMEN NATURE COLLIGATION AND
PSYCHIC TUMULT IN ANITA DESAI'S *CRY, THE PEACOCK*.

ZAINAB SIDDIQUI^{1*}, Dr. MOHAMMAD AHASHAN²

¹Research Scholar, ²Research Supervisor

C.M.P. Degree College, constituent of University of Allahabad, Prayagraj.

*Email: zainabsiddiqui26@gmail.com



ZAINAB SIDDIQUI

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ABSTRACT

Eco-feminism is the intersection of gender and the environment. We are all aware with the concepts of environmentalism and feminism. But there is a union of two ideologies that actually combines, called Eco-Feminism. It's an ideology and movement that sees climate change, gender equality, and social injustice more broadly as genuinely related issues, all tied to masculine dominance in society. Eco Feminism draws our attention to the fact that women are disproportionately affected by environmental issues, because women worldwide typically hold less financial wealth and rely on the natural environment more, they are more likely to be displaced by climate change and have to travel farther for resources, like water, as dry seasons extend. We find the essence of Eco Feminism in Anita Desai's Novel *Cry, The Peacock*, the psychic tumult of a young married girl Maya, is a creation of Anita Desai depicts the impartible relation between women and nature. Maya, the female protagonist in the novel shows great ebullience and fondness for the external landscape of nature. The transcendental insight of the character in the propinquity of the natural surroundings reaffirms the close communion shared by Maya with nature. She is a motherless child who receives utmost care and affection by her father who leaves no stone unturned in the upbringing of his beloved daughter.

Maya is manifest as a fast-disintegrating woman under the pressure of marital strife and elucidation of the psychosomatic growth of a female character, who cannot cope up with the practical world of her husband and feels woebegone. It is very tough for her to set a healthy relationship with her husband. She was aware of her deteriorating mental condition and eventually suffers from headaches and experiences rages of rebellion and terror. As she moves towards insanity, she sees the vision of rats, snakes, lizards and iguanas creeping over her.

The psychic tumult of Maya stems from the cold and indifferent human world represented by Gautama unlike the world of nature that keeps her alive. Nature in the form of a peacock's cry foreshadows the approaching danger that is to arrive in the world of Maya. As a creature of "song, dance and flowers" meets with the situation which is beyond her control, and consequently goes mad.

This paper focus at scrutinizes the character portrayal of Maya, the protagonist of Anita Desai's novel *Cry, The Peacock* to locate the causes and consequences of Maya's neurosis and how her inimical marital alliance

aggravates it and leads to an advance mental ailment. This paper also examines the use of bird's imagery in the representation of Maya's neurotic behavior that eventually creates a complete disjuncture between her private and public egocentrism.

Eco Feminist insight of Anita Desai:

The natural landscape remains the central point in Anita Desai's work and the characters especially the female characters who share their strong bonding with the natural surroundings. Women in the fictional world of Desai feel at home in the lap of nature. Indeed, she is one of the leading voices who has given the description of psychic tumult of women's state of mind, her sensibility, her frustration and the storm raging inside her. So, it can be said that Desai's external landscapes portray as well as influence the interior states of mind (personality of women). Her protagonist's mainly Indian women, belong to different age groups are in constant conflict with the society. She has written novel after novel about the miserable condition of women suffering under their insensitive and imprudent husband. If we examine her protagonists, we will find that Desai's focus is on the emotional breakdown of her women characters. In this patriarchal society, women are not considered as equal partner. They have been treated as the second – rate members in the family and society. Simon De Beauvoir's observation is very illustrating and cited in Feminism.

Criticism, Analysis

"The situation of woman is that she – a free autonomous being like all creatures – nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the tatus of the other." It is therefore logical to make the statement that nature and women share a common history – one of oppression, exploitation and degradation by the dominant patriarchy.

Operation of the natural world and of women by power structure or patriarchal force must be examined together or neither can be confronted fully. The western thought and literature, one of the oldest binaries has been nature versus culture. (Raymond Williams 1973, 1981), further the two sides of the binary carry gendered values; Nature is feminine and culture masculine. Thus, women's function are seen as 'natural' to her. Together, these two dimensions ignore the role of culture and society influencing the behavior of women. In other words, it can be said that nature is like a mother who can be defined as the sustainer and provider for the human face. As a result, men dominate both women and nature for the fulfillment of its need and luxury.

In Desai's novel Nature become a metaphor, for happiness hope and fulfillment in the midst of crisis and desperation in the protagonist's life. She explained very clearly that women, nature and in their inner self age inseparable and she reveals in her novel women is the manifestation of nature.

Women and Nature colligation in selected novel:

In her first novel, Cry the Peacock, Anita Desai has given the portrait of a highly sentimental and cultural woman, Maya has gone deep into the feminine psyche from childhood through youth and to death. Maya shows a great exuberance and affection for natural surroundings. She filled with despair and in a restive state, observes the flowers in the garden and recalls "I was drawn away from pain into a world that knows no pain" The transcendental insights of the character in the impendence of natural surroundings references the close connection shared by Maya with nature. Being alone in the family, with her mother being dead and her brother gone to America to fulfill his own independent destiny, she gets the most of her father's affection and attention, and in her moments of affliction exclaims to herself: "No, one , no one else, love me as my father does".

As a child, I enjoyed, princess like, a sumptuous fare of the fantasies of the Arabian Nights, the glories and bravado of Indian mythology, long and astounding tails". Having lived a carefree life under the kind attention of her loving father, Maya don't have similar attention from her husband Gautama, a father surrogate. Gautama is not double her age but temperamentally quite different her. No doubt he is brilliant, ambitious – minded lawyer but on the other hand he is emotionally bourn, cool headed and rigid person. ". Under the influence of her sadness, she perceives the scent of flowers differently: "I bent to them, breathing in the mist of the sad soft fragrance, merging with the mood sensation, until nothing remained but that mist." This marriage turns out to

be an unequal match. Where Maya represents pleasure, celebration and strength on the other hand Gautama shows rigid and cold attitude. The age difference also added incompatibility in the temperaments of both.

Maya has a strong affection for animals. In the novel beside the peacock, there are many descriptions of animals. It is notable that the novel opens with the death of Maya's pet dog Toto which provokes her mental condition. It makes her increasingly conscious of the mysterious working of destiny. As Maya is a childless woman, she loves Toto more than people in general love their pets. She "saw its eyes open and staring still, screamed and rushed to the garden tap to wash the vision from her eyes, continued to cry and ran defeated into the house". She is so much possessed by the vision of an albino astrologer that she recalls his talk about the myth surrounding the peacock's cry. Listening the cries of peacocks in the raining season she realizes that she should never sleep in peace.

She was torn by the phobia of predicted death given by astrologer. She says, "Am I gone insane? Father / Brother / Husband! Who is my savior? 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. She looks suspiciously at the lizards as if they are trying to give her a clue and says, "Of the lizards, the lizards that come upon you, follow you silently, when cold, fingers slide in and out of tongues, in and out an audible hiss and death rattle. , slowly moving up, closing in on you...rubbing their cold bellies against you...rubbing and grinding". Finally, when Gautam asks Maya about the behemoth lizards known as iguanas, she says, "Iguanas...! My blood ran cold, and I heard the crack of his tail still in the white daylight. Get off—I say, get off!". These events bring to life the terrible fear of Maya in her subconscious mind. There is no rest any more – only death and waiting". Maya receive no consolation or comfort from her husband Gautama and this further intensifies her sense of loss and loneliness.

Anita Desai correlates the feminine trauma with nature imagery. Maya's situation is to come to terms with the astrologer's prediction. His hand appears, "as cool and dry as the bark of an old shady tree". "Wild horse, white horse, galloping up path of tone, flying away into the distance, the wild hill. The heights, the dizzying heights of my mountains, towering tapering edged with cliff-edges, founded on rock Danger! " Gautama's indifference and insensitivity to the different sights and sounds of nature make him similar to the character of Mr. Ramsay in Virginia Woolf's to the lighthouse, Maya reflects, "Already we belonged to separated worlds, and his seemed the earth that I loved so, scented with Jasmine, colored with liquor, resounding with poetry and warmed with amiability. It was mine that was hell. Torture, guilt, dread, imprisonment – these were the four walls of my private hell, one that no one could survive in long. Death was certain". This language is clearly filled with natural imagery and communicates the pathetic condition of Maya and the impending misfortune that is to come in her life.

A psychological effect in Maya's character:

Anita Desai reflects the theme of self, identity crises and psychological effect upon her main character, Maya. Maya suffers from headaches and experiences anger of rebellion and terror. Maya, who is totally abided to the psychological state of mind, finds her way to the inner psyche and explains about that region from where the original ideas of human mind came into operation. In this regard, she explores the various mental states and human psyche based on the various things surrounded her.

The regular conflict between this married couple in this novel takes the form of anger, hatred and aggression. Sometimes Gautama is over powered by destructive tendencies. He turns to turns his invasion, which manifests itself in murder and suicide. Maya has crossed all the condition of sanity and has now become a victim of psychosis. One night when Gautama came back home and tries to talk to Maya, she feels restless at that moment because Gautama is standing in the way, in between her and the worshipped moon. In the chaotic state of mind, Maya pushes Gautama down to terrace to his death. Gautama death could not balance her imbalanced mind. Maya's intense frustration compels her to kill herself and she commits suicide.

Conclusion

Conclusively, the resent study on *Cry, The Peacock* is based primarily on feminism and beyond question; one can say that, *Cry, The Peacock* is imbued and colored with the spirit Eco – Feminism. The whole tragedy of pathos of pampered rich woman is described in this novel in order to show how bright but destructible foundation of upbringing in such a pampering aristocratic atmosphere crumble at the first encounter with reality.

In order to checkout social realities in the male dominated society, Anita Desai creates a small world and then she goes deep to those places in the heart and mind where we can see the reality in a different form and character, In actuality an eco-feminist perspective is the coming together of eco-feminism and eco-criticism where it is recognized that the exploitation of nature and oppression of women are bound together with the notion of caste, race, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Cry, The Peacock clearly and evidently suggests that the modern life with all the materialistic comfort and Luxurious lifestyle is doomed to disorderliness and destruction unless it considers and nourishes the soft feelings of the women who form the nucleus in any society. Eco-feminism was born of motion that the liberation of women cannot be achieved in isolation from the larger struggle for preserving nature and life on this beautiful earth. But it has to be achieved through a cooperative exercise between the two.

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