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Treatment of Neurosis in Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock*

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Treatment of Neurosis in Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock*

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by

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This thesis entitled **Treatment of Neurosis in Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock*** submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Rabindra Kumar Paudel Chhetri has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Cry the Peacock is a story of psychological disintegration of a young wife who murders her husband. Maya, the central character of the novel is an intense young girl obsessed by the childhood prophecy of disaster. According to prophecy either she or her husband will die during the fourth year of their marriage. Maya's suffering emanates from her essential struggle to make her relationship meaningful with her husband and desire to experience life with all pleasure. Because of her failure to establish a fulfilling relationship, she inhabits a world full of morbid, fears and turns neurotic. Maya's sensitive nature makes her alienated character in the novel. At last, she kills her husband by proving the prophecy, a true. The title *Cry the Peacock* symbolically represents the agonized 'cry of Maya' and her desire for life of involvement. In the novel, Anita Desai has been very artistically presented the disturbing portrayal of an individual experiencing life and love.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Anita Desai: Life and Works

Anita Desai is one of the prominent voice of Anglo-Indian literature. She has been known as Indian Virginia Woolf. She uses a new era called 'psychological realism' in her novel. She is specially noted for her sensitive portrayal of female characters and the alienation of the middle class women in India, and praises as one of the finest of her generation of Indian writers writing in English. As her biography shows, she was born in Mazunder in June 24, 1937 Missouri India to a Indian father and German mother. She spends much of her life in New Delhi. Growing up in Cross-cultural situation, she spoke German at home and Hindi to friends and neighbours. She was educated at Queen Mary Higher Secondary School, New Delhi and was graduated from the University of Delhi in English Literature. She married Asvin Deasi, a business executive in 1958 and they settled in Bombay. After marrying at the age of 21, Desai not only continued her further study but adopted writing as her profession and began to produce novels in a great number.

Anita Desai has served as a Visiting Fellow at Griton College, Cambridge (1986), as a Visiting Professor (1987) at Smith College Massachusetts and as the Purington Professor of English (1988) at Mt. Holyoke College Massachusetts. She is the fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, London, and the member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Since 1972, she has been the member of the Sahitya Academy English Board, India. Desai has won several awards including Winfred Holtby Prize 1978 for *Fire on Mountain*, Sahitya Academy Award 1979, Guardian Award 1982 for child fiction, *The Village by the Sea*, Handssah Magazine Award 1989 for *Baumgartner's Bombay*, Tarak Nath Das Award 1989, Padam Sri Award 1989, and Literary Lion Award 1993. Her novels *Clear Light of Day*, *In*

Custody and *Fasting Feasting* were short listed for Britain's highest literary award, the Booker Prize. Since 1993, Desai is contributing as a Professor of writing and humanistic studies programme in Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Her first novel *Cry the Peacock* (1963) tells a story of the psychological disintegration of a young wife who murders her husband. Maya loves her life in the novel but her husband gives emphasis on the greatness of detachment and practicality. Maya's suffering emanates from her essential struggle to make her relationship with Gautama meaningful and her desire to experience life with all pleasure, it is capable of offering. Because of her failure to establish a fulfilling relationship with her husband, she inhabits a world full of morbid fears and turns neurotic. The novel is a disturbing portrayal of an individual experiencing life and love.

Her next novel *Voices in the City* (1965) tells the story of a woman who being unable to stand the strain of living with her husband, commits suicide. The central character Monisha's dislike of attachment and involvement is born out of fear. Her self recoils in disgust when her private self is dissected, discussed and analyzed by her in laws to find out the reason for her inability to conceive. Her bruised self withdraws into her private world where darkness is the natural element. She flutters like a caged bird seeking freedom, privacy and trust. When she finds that it is a choice between death and existence, her decision becomes easy.

Bye Bye Blackbird (1971) deals with the furies that haunt woman trapped in matrimony. It deals with the problem arising from cultural difference, tells the story of Indian immigrant to England, their problems and there desperate longing for home-native land. The novels covers different aspects of the East-West encounter between the British and the Asiatic immigrants in Engalnd. Adet Sen, a young man from India, lives in England with his wife Sarah. For few years, he has been there

working as a travel agent. Like his fellow immigrants, he quietly pockets insult and humiliation to which he is continually subjected.

Fire on the Mountain (1977) tells the story of a remote isolated woman and her equally withdrawn great grand daughter as they are forced together in hills surrounded by violence and fire. The novel projects the conflict between the need to alienate in order to retain one's identity and the wish to be involved in the painful struggle of life. The novel begins with Nanda Kaul's withdrawal from the world. She desires nothing. She struggles for a life of asceticism, free from all worldly desires and cares. Her alienation is self-imposed and self-willed which takes nowhere. Her quest for stillness is thwarted by the unwanted arrival of Raka, her great-granddaughter. Residing in the mute milieu of Carignano, she seeks an identity from all worldly values and passions. Even the sight of a postman irritates her. In contrast Raka is alive to the environment around her. Nanda Kaul, betrayed by her own children, refuses to involve herself in a child's world again – real or imaginary.

Clear Light of the Day (1978) is the first novel to gain responses on wide range, which gives the impression of being about its male characters and then its focus shifts to various problems and about to the disillusionment of women. This novel projects the woman's quest for selfhood through the story of a family, the home which has its own unique problems, where Tara, Bim and Baba occupy a small world. Bimla is the eldest of the four children who suffers various psychological strain. Though enlightened and emancipated heroine of the fiction, Bimla is weakened by the violent conflict both within and without. Though Desai is less concerned with the political turmoil followed by the partition of India, the horrendous events of the Hindu-Muslim enmity serves rhetorically to externalize the traumas of the characters. Bimla is highly individualized. She believes in her self-sufficiency and to

attain that sufficiency she denies the help from her brother, her sister Tara and her husband, who is in a foreign service. Here, the concern of the novelist is with the discovery of an identity that emerges out of the seemingly rootless and meaningless life in a small Hindu family. In this ability to see meaning in an apparently abused existence, Desai offers the strong note of hope and affirmation.

In Custody (1984) she explores the 'quest for self-identity' of the protagonist Devan where the quest culminates in value discovery in his positive identification with the hostility of life and the existential problem of man. This novel depicts the cultural encounter, not between the East and West, rather between the Hindu and Muslim cultures. The novel is set at the time of partition of India and the problem is the preservation of the great Muslim tradition of Urdu poetry in India. Deven, the protagonist of the novel, who belongs to the Hindu culture, is a true lover of Muslim Urdu poetry. He has to teach Hindi literature written by Hindus and does so poorly and without spirit. For him the Muslim poet Nur is an ideal whose poetry as Deven believes contains all the enchantment and romance he had ever experienced in his life. But, he is victimized by Muslim friends like Murad Beg and finally by his ideal Nur. Deven fails to interview Nur, but he feels relief and gratitude at his failure because it relieves him from further suffering. He even destroys the poetry written by Nur's young wife without even reading it. But, this poetry offers him the material for the beginning of a revival of Urdu poetry. Hindu speaking, Hindu India is now responsible for the preservation of the great Urdu culture of its former Muslim rules.

Baumgartner's Bombay (1988) is to some extent autobiographical. The book is a portrait of loneliness, of alienation and of immigrants' existential problems. This novel is a moving account of the painful efforts of a simple and submissive Jew. It narrates the life of Hugo Baumgartner from his childhood days in Germany to his

death, at the age of about seventy, in India. Hugo is from well to do family in Germany. Because of the failure in business, his father, Heer Baumgartner, commits suicide. He was forced to leave Germany because of the political upheavals under Hitler. He escapes to India to conduct the export of timber. But he faces difficulties because of the lack of both the education and the experience of a businessman. When he enters India, he finds it to be completely different from what he had imagined. Fed up with human company, Hugo prefers to live in the company of his cats in a dark, dingy and shabby flat behind the Tag Hotel in Bombay. His financial resources are so meager that he has to collect left overs from Tarrokh's cafe to feed his cats. Though he is living a lonely, miserable life, one day he takes pity on a drug addict German boy Kurt and brings him home for rest and food. But the boy whom Hugo pitied once kills Baumgartner and runs away with his silver trophies.

Journey to Ithaca (1995) tells a story of two Europeans on their visit to India what follows is the detail description of their confrontation with alien Indian culture. They visit different places, ashrams, holy places – confronts alien milieu repeatedly, and finally succeeds to come to India and decide to stay and make further journey to the North-Himalayas. Matteo is the son of wealthy Italian parents, raised in the Luscious countryside around lake Como, and restless since childhood. He has been introduced by a tutor to Hermann Hesse's book *The Journey to the East* and it opens in him a desperate longing for India. Sophie the daughter of equally rich German parents, meets Matteo in Italy and marries him. Despite the protest, unwillingness of his parents, Matteo is determined to leave for India and Sophie is ready to accompany him.

Desai's latest novel *Fasting Feasting* (1999) depicts the cultural gap and fragmentation at deeper level through the story of a traditional Indian family and their

son Arun, who has gone to America for higher education. The novel is divided into two parts: part first, which can be termed as 'Indian half' deals with the problems of relationship between male and female within the family and their respective roles in traditional Indian society. The norms, values and traditions of Indian society are contrasted to the second part, which may be termed as 'American half' where their son Arun is confronting the culture, which is alien and completely different from his own. The Indian half is, in a way, story of Uma, the eldest girl of the family.

Apart from these ten novels Anita Desai has written several short stories. Her short story "Games at Twilight" is the story of a child who shows sign of growing into an autistic and a very private individual. Young Ravi has within him the seeds of an adult, familiar in the world of Anita Desai, who develops a microcosms within himself. *Diamond Dust* (2000), the second volume contains nine radiant new stories. In this collection, stories are different in plot and treatment of characters, but they have thematic unity or homogeneity regarding the novels and previous collection of short stories. Her child fictions are *The Peacock's Garden* (1974) *Cat on a Houseboat* (1976), *The Village by the Sea* (1982). Desai is also an essayist. Her essays some about Indian culture, others are on politics have appeared on newspaper like *Dedalus* *The New Republic*, *The New York Review of Books* etc.

Critics on Anita Desai and Her Novels

Anita Desai is one of the major voices in the modern Indian English fiction. She uses a new era called psychological realism in her novels. Her style is indirect in action and movement. Writing for her is a process of discovering truth but this truth for her is not metaphysical reality. She is less interested in external reality or the absolute truth existing outside of human situation. In *Contemporary Novelists*, Desai acknowledges:

Writings is to me process of discovering the truth – the truth that is, nine tenth of the iceberg that lies submerged beneath the one tenth visible portion we call reality, writing is my way of plunging to the depths and exploring this underlying truth. All my writing is an effort to discover, the underlie and convey the truth significance of things.
(Vision, 348)

The search for 'truth' for Desai consists in the life of mind and the soul the inner life and not in the life of body – the outer life. She is little concerned with the ordinary, traditional notion of reality, the physical facts of the thing.

The writing style of Anita Desai is different from her contemporaries. What distinguishes Anita Desai from other writers is her preoccupation with individual the chaos inside his mind. Like her contemporaries Ruth Prawar Jhavala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantar Sahagal, she does not focus on social, political, cultural problems alone. Concerned exclusively with the personal tragedy of individual, Desai brings cultural, political and economic aspects in order to show how individual's life is conditioned above all tragic. In *Critical Response to Indian English Fiction*, Ashani states, "her forte is exploration of inner world, plunging into the limitless depths of mind and ringing into relief the hidden contours of the human psyche" (143). Dealing with the thoughts emotions and sensation at various level of consciousness, Anita Desai uses the techniques used by D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner and Henry James. She uses 'stream of consciousness technique', flashbacks and interior monologues in her novels. She does it with a view to capture the "prismatic quality" of life. As the critic S.P. Swain states, "She uses memory, in a series of internal monologues to give us an access to the characters' mind. Through the psychology of association, the reader is made to participate triumphantly in the

characters' movement back and forth in time" (119). As a result of this eminent use of flashbacks and stream of consciousness technique, the form of Desai's fiction becomes coincident with consciousness, it soaks over the entire work. The plot becomes not some discernible separate story but discreetness of character or traditional pattern of story are thrown over board.

Anita Desai's mastery over words is manifested in her felicitous and deft use of images. Her imagery is always in characters which suits the lone plight of characters. In Desai's novel, the struggle of the alienated self takes place through a dialectic of images, through an intricate pattern of imagery. Her novels are based on the texture of a such and splendid medley of images which is functional rather than decorative. The core image of alienation are found enmeshed with other images arising out of it. Each image holds within it the seeds of the self's own destruction, and Desai's dialectical method is a constant building up and splitting down of the images that come out of the characters' alienated experience. The images do not conflict or contradict each other but are in perfect harmony and accord with the nature of the characters' alienation. Sometimes these images become congested and dense. Desai doesn't make use of scientific and Biblical imagery in her novels. Most of the Desai's novels deal with images, suggesting identification of human beings with the forces of isolation. The critic S.P. Swain states:

Anita Desai uses symbolic and functional imagery as the sole ingredient of her art. Her images are literal, metaphorical and frequently symbolical. Imagery in Anita Desai may be considered to constitute the poles of an axis on which her fictional world revolves. The symbolic world of her fiction, the themes of despair, death, desolation and socio-psychic fragmentation have been picturesquely

presented through telling and testing images. Imagery in her novels besides articulating the estranged sensibility and changing modes of her introverted characters, reflect their mental isolation. (132)

Through imagery, Desai achieves the polarization of the opposites. In her novels, there are a number of symbols which have a contextual signification. In Anita Desai's novels characters are found to be "thinking in image" i.e. images which strike the mind as the projection of other minds in immediate contact with outer realities.

Anita Desai lays no special emphasis on plot construction, on the well made novel with the traditional notion of – beginning, middle and end. Plot development in her novel is not a spatio-temporal progression. It leads to the protagonist self-discovery. A letter, a telephone call and a forest, fire, triggers a chain of situation and incidents that intricate and complicate the plot. For her the plot is just an idea occupying ones subconscious mind, a fragment of her imagination and a flash of vision. Desai prefers pattern and rhythm which is natural to plot. In such organic whole fragments are so integrated and interrelated that together they lend artistic unity and picturesque intelligibility to the work of art. In Desai's concept the form, pattern rhythm, perspectives and the singleness of vision are of utmost value to the novel.

The most important feature of Anita Desai's art is the delineation of character. The female protagonist of her novel struggle against the oppressive environment assumes the form of a patriarchal domination in one or other visage, revealing her feminist prediction. She cares more for the individual, in comparison with plot as pointed out by many critics, with an amazing insight into her psyche. Her female protagonists cannot amalgamate themselves into society around and undertake an inner usage for the purpose of discovering their own selves. The critic Ramesh Kumar Gupta states:

Anita Desai's women are all reflective about their condition. Their protest is not for equality but for the right to be acknowledged as individuals – capable of intelligence and feeling. They do not look for freedom outside the house but within, without painting their lives in various artificial shades of sentiments. (280)

Her female characters are dynamic, always growing and changing viable and mutable. They are portrayed as engrossed with present look backward in time, and visualize future as well. Anita Desai differs from the other feminist in that she concentrates on the individual's salvation theory, self-exploration by depicting its motivation. Her novels do not strongly deal with problems of the 'Third World' feminism, though setting is entirely in India.

Anita Desai has incontrovertibly added a few rich dimensions to the thematic spectrum of Indian English fiction. Her novels are deeply moving stories of individuals on thorns of socio-cultural and existential dilemma. Her novels also constitute an artistic success formally through deft deployment of images, symbols and other poetic devices. In dealing with the interior landscape and the psychic odyssey of the characters, Desai has extended and enlarged the thematic horizon of the Indo-Anglican novel. Her major novels tend to disappoint the reader due to their one-dimensionality, turning the characters wooden and insensitive. They are not kaleidoscopic in their thematic projection. In most of them there is a repeated and dull harping on the isolation of self. However, they are deeply moving in their existential and socio-psychic import. Microcosm of man's endless struggle for survival, they voice the anguish of the caged bird that symbolizes modern man. Emblems of remonstrance and psychic protest, they strive for protection and preservation of their dignity and self-esteem in a patriarchal society. Her characters

are indignantly promiscuous and inordinately self-conscious, they long for mutual understanding and reciprocation of love and respect. The critic Dr. C.V. George states:

Looking at the sensitive portrayal of characters, it can be concluded that she cares for the individual human beings irrespective of their being male or female. Her characters appear to be exceptionally talented but constantly disturbed by family ties. As a result, they experience discomfort and feel trapped in an oppressive environment. In most cases the hostile environment frustrates the aspirations of the individual's either leading them to their annihilation or a humiliating compromise. The process of her character construction includes a soul searching self-exploration – may be male or may be female, a struggle for realization and an exposure to agony. (159)

The another aspect of her novels is the depiction of the problems of immigrants of 'Third World' in European countries. She herself came from half-European descent and now residing in USA. Therefore, her novels are dealing with the encounter between east and west especially India, USA and Europe that becomes the recurring theme in Indo-English literature. These novels are dealing with common themes of characters' isolation, their longings toward their homelands, marital disharmony and difficulties of adjustment in foreign country.

Novels: Dealing with Neurotic Characters

The protagonists of Anita Desai are seen as neurotic and crazy. She is dramatizing the inner world of characters in stead of narrating the events with objective realism. In dealing with psychic maladies, Anita Desai strike a new note. Her characters suffer from various complexes and mental diseases, which impede the

healthy growth of their personality. A particular trait in a character, a tragic flaw develops into a psychic malady making the character neurotic and hysterical which in turn breeds a morbid and contrite temperament. They are presented mostly as seekers, questers of love, questers of identity. Emotionally and physically perturbed, they are relentlessly and maniacally driven by undefined hunger and feverish lust which brings about their own fall. Incapable of silent submission and ungrudging suffering, they somehow, pull the load of life. The critic Sheetal Thakore states, "her novels reveal inner realities and psychic reverberating of her characters. Each of Anita Desai's novels tries to tackle the central aesthetic problem of the modern writer – the problem of rendering complete human personality in an age of lost values, lost men" (43).

Anita Desai's women move outside the realm of reason. The cause is of course their obsessive loneliness and their solitary musing add to their morbidity and quicken the process of their disintegration. Her characters are near to neurotic quality. Their loneliness is not something that they hanker after rather it is imposed upon them. The neurotic quality is not the cause but an effect being left and humiliated.

The protagonist in *Cry the Peacock* is Maya, an intense young girl married to Gautama, who with his academic and detached nature is totally antithetical to her. The interplay of emotions between the opposing temperament becomes a major ground for their marital conflict. Maya in a stage of craziness speaks, "yes, I cried yes, it is hard but the distance he coldly keeps from me. His coldness and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy in order not to hear me talk and talking reveal myself. It is my loneliness in the house" (9).

Maya's conflict though a major theme of the novel are not of mere social and domestic. It is discarded within the framework of marriage strongly rooted in memory and fantasy of childhood experience with the prophecy of albino astrologer foretelling

the death of one of the partners four years after marriage. The critic Purvi N.

Upadhaya explains that:

Maya is sensitive and solitary to the point of being neurotic. She from her childhood regards the world as a 'toy' specially made for her painter in her favorite colours and set to dance to her favorite tunes.

Thus Maya has strange childhood from which she develops a negative self image and aversion. The immediate result is her fragmented psyche to view the world as a hostile place. (47)

The disturbing memory of Maya surfaces in her unconscious when she mourns the death of a pet dog, Toto. Since then, death becomes an obsession and it turns her into a brooding introvert being thrown into a fearful neurosis. After having passed through mental hell, tortured by hallucinatory vision of rodents and reptiles, she murders her husband transferring the prophecy of death onto him in a demented moves towards self-preservation. She believes that she is free from suffering. But this freedom is meaningless as hers is an insane mind and cannot recognize it.

Desai's another novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer* also deals with a type of maladjustment which the central character suffers from. Sita is a protagonist of the novel, who is greatly disillusioned with life. Her marriage to a Bombay industrialist is not a success in any sense of the term in spite of children and financial security. As a child she happened to live a life close to nature on an island where her father wielded great power through his supposed magic on its populace. The incompatibility of the down to earth life of Bombay and her repressed childhood wishes centering on her father plays havoc with her sensitivity. She is never quite successful in mastering her situation. During her fifth pregnancy, an unconscious urge leads her to the island where she seeks to live her childhood all over again.

Anita Desai's women, be it Maya, Aunt Mira or the child Raka are rendered by their cultural orientation, upbringing, dominance and lack of love of others. What ensue is the total dependence, lack of confidence, harassment and the ultimate insanity and crazyness.

Summary of the Text

Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock* is the sad story of the hypersensitive Maya, married to a cold intellectual Gautama. Gautama, her husband, is several years older and eminently successful in life in the worldly sense. Maya's sensitive nature finds it hard to live happily with this man. She cannot dissolve the relationship either. Every known social and moral code is in the favor of an adjustment. In spite of the terrible demands of her conscience, she is driven into a desperate situation where her sense of reality is totally lost, leading to harsh consequences. She kills Gautama who has all along personified insensitivity and all that is determined to a life faithful to instinctual forces operative within her to an unusual degree. Brought up in an environment of fatalistic intents and attitudes, she realizes the forces of fate are stronger than anything else, and would perhaps be like this in future too. In the abnormal mood she expresses her agony, "And in camera of insanity I saw a future insanity. I saw a future insanity projected before me, beyond the window in a world where guilt, sin, crime, punishment all stock still, struck into threatening by a ruthless force of fate" (185).

Maya is haunted by the idea of early death prophesized by an albino astrologer. Because of her failure to establish a fulfilling relationship with her husband, she inhabits a world full of morbid, fears and turns neurotic. The novel is a disturbing portrayal of an individual struggle to experience life and love.

The main objectives of this research is to analyze familial and social causes which are compiling Maya to be a neurotic character. Gautama is not only person who

is responsible for her neurosis. In the novel Maya's neurosis arises out of various reasons. She doesn't get love from mother because her mother had already died. As a child she doesn't play with the children of her age group. In the house she remains alone and her father is a guardian, protector and everything for her. Therefore, she develops a type of negative self from the very beginning of the life.

After the marriage with Gautama, she wants to fulfill the gap of her father but it is impossible for her because of Gautama's coldness and intellectuality. Maya's dissatisfaction in sex is one of the major causes to make her neurotic character. Maya wants to fulfill her instinctual desire but it is impossible for her because of Gautama's old age and his attitude toward sex. Maya remains childless and the dog Toto becomes the major substitute of her child. After the death of Toto she becomes alone and crazy.

The role of fate is very powerfully presented by Anita Desai in the novel. Like Sophocles' Oedipus, Maya is also doomed for her disaster from the very beginning. The predication of albino astrologer that either she or her husband will die during the fourth year of their marriage which remains in her unconscious and at last it becomes true for her. The above mentioned causes are responsible to make Maya neurotic and anxiety overridden women.

II. DISCUSSION OF TOOLS

NEUROSIS, PSYCHOSIS AND HYSTERIA

Neurosis

The term "neurosis" was coined by Englishman William Cullen and was first used in his system of "Nosology" published in 1769, to refer to disorder in the sensation of nervous system. It reflected the long held belief that neurological malfunction must be involved in neurotic behaviour. This belief endured until the time of Freud, himself – a neurologist who postulated that "neurosis" stemmed from inter-psychoic conflict rather than disordered reaction in the nervous system. This view becomes widely accepted, however, it broadened the scope of neurotic behaviour – that in any non-psychotic disorder that might have psychological conflict as its base, could be neurotic.

"Neurosis" is a functional mental disorder. The symptoms are the result of compromise between gratification of libidinal impulses. It is differentiated from "Psychosis" in that it involved appreciable loss of reality, sense primary mood disturbance or consistent deterioration in intellectual function. It is a term used in a number of ways in the field of mental health. The term is related to both to certain type of mental disorder and to a particular type of psychological mechanism. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia* defines it as:

A mental illness often associated with high level of anxiety and fears which the sufferer understands are irrational and representing exaggerated or unconscious way of dealing with conflicts. The symptoms are distressing to the individual and considered to be unacceptable. The condition is enduring and throughout reality remains

in the examples include hypochondriacs, obsessive compulsive disorder and phobic disorder. (775)

It was largely owing to Freud who organized the term 'Psychoneurosis' to indicate a neurosis of mental origin that attention was turned from the brain and nervous system to that of the emotional life of individual as the genesis of neurosis. Freud who believed almost without qualification that the causal factors in 'neurosis' could be found roughly in the six years of life when the personality or ego is weak and afraid of to sensure attributed neurosis to the frustration of infantile sexual drives such as eating and toilet habits and parents-child relationship. These infantile conflicts remaining unsolved appeared in adulthood under the condition of stress as neurotic system. *The World Book Encyclopedia* explains:

Freud showed the various unconscious mental process may be the most important factors. He pointed out the many childhood desires do not fit in with acceptable adult behaviour. He thought that primitive desires were repressed into unconscious mind. That repressed wishes cause unconscious mental conflict. But they also produce conscious worry and anxiety that a person cannot explain. (740)

Whatever the basic cause, "neurosis" has a crippling effect upon individual expressing itself in such symptoms as tenderness, persistent, fatigue, feeling of emotional unrelatendness, constriction of intellectual faculties and somatic disorder. Normal neurotics and psychotics are no longer regarded as distinct and clearly differentiated entities rather are believed to differ on a quantitative basis. Individual suffering from "neurosis" live in a relatively constant state of tension worry and diffuse uneasiness. They are oversensitive in interpersonal relationship and frequently feel inadequate and depressed. Usually they have difficulty in concentrating and

making decision dreading to make a mistake. The high level of tension they experience is often reflected in strained postural movement, overreaction to sudden or unexpected stimuli and continual nervous movement. Individual with "neurotic" anxiety are chronologically apprehensive and anxious. Their vague fear and fantasies combined with their general sensitivity keep them continually upset, uneasy and discouraged. Not only they have difficulty in making decision, but after decision have been made, they worry excessively over possible errors and unforeseen circumstances that may lead to disaster. In the book *Maladaptive Behaviour* Benjamin Lahey describes the symptoms of neurosis as:

The most prominent effective or emotional component of anxiety is an unpleasant sense of apprehension and distress. This may be a vague, diffuse feeling without an understanding or it may be focused in the fear of a specific object or situation. Irritability and depression are also common emotional components of anxiety. These feelings are often accompanied by a host of negative cognition. Most common are beliefs that one is inferior, that one is at the mercy of external events, are that one must be perfect to be accepted by others. (191)

Neurotic disorder seldom disable a person totally. Individual who have a neurotic disorder recognize the symptom as unacceptable and strange. People with a neurosis cannot distinguish between reality and imagination. Neurotic disorders do not include mental problems that seems to have physical cause. One such problem is the loss of memory that sometime occurs with aging. Obsessions and compulsions are common symptoms that a person feels and is forced to repeat.

Neurosis as a Psychological Mechanism

'Neurosis as a Psychological Mechanism' forms part of the theory developed by Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud and his followers. In this theory, the term "neurosis" means a neurotic process that produces certain symptoms. The process begin with an unconscious conflict between opposing desires or between a desire and prohibition. For example, an unconscious feelings of aggression, such as desire to harm someone physically, might conflict with feelings of guilt. The unconscious awareness of guilt produces a mental barrier called a defense mechanism. This barrier keeps unwanted feelings out of a person's conscious awareness. To avoid feeling of guilty an individual might repress a desire to harm someone. The *World Book Encyclopedia* explains:

Freud used the term 'defense mechanism' for the methods by which individual handled painful memories. Freud believed that patients used vast amount of energy in forming "defense mechanism". Tying up energy could affect a persons ability to lead a productive life, causing an illness that Freud called neurosis. (457)

Such a "defense mechanism" in turn produces a symptom. For example the person might have abnormal fear of object that could be used to actually carry out the repressed desire to cause harm. Freud believes that such disturbing experience that occurred during childhood.

Psychosis

It is a psychiatric term with a variety of uses. It is most rarely used when referring to psychotic illness in which there is loss of contact with reality in the form of delusion and hallucination. Loss optimally, it is an indication that a psychiatric illness is severe rather than mild or moderate in its impact on individual. It is also

used with reference to two main groups of psychiatric illness. 'Organic Psychoses' are caused by diseases affecting the brain, 'functional psychoses' do not have known physical cause. The term may in addition be used for illness in which there is a quantities change in emotion, those in which there is regression to immature forms of behaviour and situations, of marked withdrawal and lack of relating to others. In the book *Abnormal Psychology* James Page defines the term as:

Psychoses are major personality disorder marked by profound mental and emotional disruptions that render a previously normal individual incapable of adequate self-management or adjustment to society. Two terms that are closely identified with psychoses are insanity and dementia. Insanity is a legal term denoting that the individual is so confused and deranged as a result of a mental disease that he is not legally responsible for his actions. At one time, the term "dementia" was applied to most mental disorders, but it is now generally interpreted as synonymous with gross mental deterioration. Some but not all psychoses are accompanied by dementia. (209)

The individual who is suffering from it is incapable of adjusting realistically to his environment. The symptoms may include, either separately or in combination, disturbance of reality, appreciation, lack of or inappropriateness of apparent emotional response and severe distortion of judgment. In legal usage the term "insanity" not used in psychiatry, is applied to those psychoses in which the moral judgment of individual is considered impaired. Among the more common of the organic psychosis, so called because of the structural damage of the brain, are general paresis, senile dementia, and certain late and neglected stage of genuine epilepsy. All psychoses, such as "schizophrenia", "paranoia" and "manic depressive psychosis" which display

no observable organic damages are termed functional. Some psychiatrists, however, hold the functional psychosis, like the organism is the result of structural damage as yet unknown. *The world Book Encyclopedia* explains:

Some psychoses have obvious physical cause. For example the brain may be diseased as the result of an infection such as general paresis, which is caused by syphilis, a venereal disease or a physical illness of another part of the body may affect the brain, as in delirium due to pneumonia. These are called organic psychoses. In toxic psychoses a harmful or poisonous substance affect the brain. An example of this is psychosis caused by lead poisoning. Other psychoses have no obvious physical cause. The most common psychosis is "Schizophrenia". (831)

Psychoanalysis has tended to emphasize the role of emotional conflict. New technique psychosurgery and the administration of shock therapy have proved valuable in the treatment of certain type of psychoses.

Hysteria

The term "hysteria" was derived from Greek word meaning "uterus". It was thought by Hippocrates and others ancient Greeks that this disorder was restricted to women and that it was caused by sexual difficulties. Thus, the uterus might lodge in the throat and cause choking sensation in the spleen. Hippocrates considered that marriage is the best remedy for this type affliction. The *Webster College Dictionary* defines the term as:

A psychiatric condition variously characterized by emotional excitability, excessive anxiety, sensory and motor disturbances or the unconscious simulation of organic disorders, such as blindness

deafness and any outbreak of wild uncontrolled excitement or feeling such as fits of laughing and crying. (704)

A person with hysteria may have any sort of physical complaint. The person may complain of heart disease, paralysis, sexual problems, stomach pain, vomiting and weakness of the arms and legs. In this way hysteria may imitate many physical illness. Sometimes the complaints are too frequent and severe. Hysteria is readily used to describe a group of states of altered consciousness – a situation where patients may suddenly wander away from what they were doing and subsequently have amnesia for that period. In the book *Text book of Abnormal psychology* Carney Landis describes the symptoms of hysteria as:

The individual suffering from hysteria is usually rather childish in personality and desirous of getting attention. He is talkative, sociable and inclined to dramatize himself. The numerous physical complaints appear, disappear, and shift to other forms without any demonstrable organic basis. The physical complaints are called conversion symptoms on the assumption that psychological disturbances are converted into physical disturbances, the physical symptoms replacing the emotionally charged ideas. (87)

This concept of the relationship between sexual difficulties and unfounded body ailments was later advanced in modified form by Freud. He used the term "conversion hysteria" to indicate that the symptoms were an expression of repressed and deviated sexual energy – that psychosexual conflict was seen as converted into a bodily disturbance. For example a sexual conflict over masturbation might be solved by developing a paralyzed hand. This was not done consciously, of course and the process was not aware of the origin or meaning of the physical symptoms.

Freud and Psychoanalysis Theory

The term Psychoanalysis has three different meanings. It is first, a school of psychology that emphasizes the dynamic psych determinants of human behaviour, and the importance of childhood experiences in molding the adult personality.

Secondly, Psychoanalysis refer to a specialized technique for investigation unconscious mental activities. Finally, Psychoanalysis is a method of interpreting and treating mental disorder, especially the Psychoneurosis.

Freud's Theory on Behaviour

Freud observed that many patients behaved according to drives and experiences of which they were not consciously aware. He thus concluded that the "unconscious" plays a major role in shaping behaviour. He also concluded that the "unconscious" is full of memories of events from early childhood. Freud believes that if these memories are especially painful, people kept them out of conscious awareness. *The World Book Encyclopedia* explains:

Freud showed that various unconscious mental process may be the most important factor. He pointed out that many childhood desires do not fit in with acceptable adult behaviour. He thought that primitive desires were repressed into the unconscious mind. Desires first appearing in adulthood may also be repressed. For example, a married man may repress his love for another women because he has strong moral views. Freud's theory suggest that repressed wishes cause unconscious mental conflict. (740)

He used the term "defense mechanism" for the method by which individual handled painful memories. Freud believed that patients used vast amount of energy in forming "defense mechanism". Tying up energy could affect a person's ability to lead a

productive life, causing an illness that Freud called "neurosis". In the book *Lives in Progressive* he describes "defense mechanism" as:

Freud was aware of two stages in the development of his thinking: one in which the chief interest lay in unmasking the patient's unconscious strivings, another in which focus of inquiry shifted to the defense set to check and control these strivings. This advances was necessary in order to understand the neuroses, many of the symptoms of which represent the effects of overworked defenses rather than disguise expression of impulse. The "defense mechanism" that Freud first recognized in his work with patients such as repression, projection, and reaction formation were gradually expand to accommodate some of the more complex aspect of personality organization. (10)

Freud also concluded that many childhood memories dealt with sex. He believed that his patient's report of sexual abuse by a parent were fantasies reflecting unconscious desire. He theorized that sexual functioning begins at birth, and that a person goes through several psychological stages of sexual development. Freud believed that the normal pattern of psychosexual development is interrupted in some people. These people became fixated at an earlier, immature stage. He felt such fixation contribute to mental illness in adulthood. The *Encyclopedia Americana* explains:

Neuroses are rooted in early childhood experiences and conflict which remain largely unconscious and hence inaccessible to modification by appeals to reason. Since conflicts can always be traced to painful emotional experiences that gave rise to anxiety attempts to explore them are met with resistance. Persistence operate in the service of

powerful defense mechanism, such as repression, projection and reaction formation. Typical neurotic symptoms include anxiety depression, phobias and sexual dysfunction. (720)

Neurosis and certain Psychoses in adult life are not analogues to "disease" in the medical sense. According to Freud "neurosis" are the unfortunate outcome of a person's developmental history particularly of adverse experiences in early childhood. The human infants prolonged period of helplessness and dependence on love and support coupled with the child's native aggressive and sexual strivings, create a fertile soil for personality, malformation and neurotic conflict.

Division of Mind

Freud divided the mind into three parts: "the id" "the ego" and "the super ego". He recognized that each person is born with various natural drives that he called "instinct" such as the need to satisfy sexual desires and the need to be aggressive. The desire for sexual pleasure comes from "id". The "ego" resolves conflict between instincts and external reality. For example it determines socially appropriate ways to obtain physical satisfaction or to express aggression. The "superego" is person's conscience. A person's ideas of right and wrong learned from parents, teachers and other people in authority become the part of person's superego. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia* explains:

The "id" represents the most primitive aspect of the personality: basic biological drives eg. hunger, anger, sex and elimination. The "superego" represents conscience and values an individual acquires from parents and society. The "ego" represents the middle ground in which a compromise between forces maximizing pleasure and those minimizing displeasure are reconciled. (370)

All people have some conflict among three parts of the mind but certain people have more conflict than others. For example the "superego" might oppose angry behaviour. In that case the "id" and "superego" would clash. If the part of the mind strongly oppose one another than physical disturbance result.

Dream Interpretation

Sigmund Freud's another great contribution to psychoanalytical theory is the systematic study and analysis of dreams. In his classic book 'The Interpretation of Dream' (1900), he explored the dynamic role of the unconscious mind and he described dreams as 'the royal road to the unconscious'. To Freud, dreams represent disguised desire; wish fulfilling expression of unconscious and unacceptable thoughts. According to Freud, dream represents those wishes, demands and desires which are repressed into unconscious and their instinctual gratification is fettered in conscious state of mind. In an *American Image* Jay R Lentzer and Donald R. Rose explain:

As Freud argues, when the act of dreaming becomes the subject of dream itself, the material is of special significance: what is dreamt in a dream after waking from the dream "within a dream" is what the dream – wish seeks to put in the place of an obliterated reality. It is safe to suppose, therefore that what has been "dreamt" in the dream is a representation of the reality, the true recollection, while the continuation of the dream on the contrary, merely represents dreamer wishes. (110)

Freud views that dream is also a mental process like others and it is meaningful, purposeful and symbolic. In his early stage of dream analysis he believed that dream is simply wish fulfillment of those wishes of the "id" and "superego", which could not be gratified in real life and they are fulfilled in the sleeping stage

when the "ego" is in relax. Those dreams create violent inner conflict for the gratification of unconscious "id", which is threat to "ego". The unacceptable thoughts and wished appear in symbolic form in dreams.

Development of Personality

Freud believed that each individual passes through a number of stages from birth to adulthood. These are referred to as the psychosexual stages as each represents a progressively more mature transformation of sexual energy into appropriate outlets. These stages are: oral, annal, phallic, latent and genital express the libido or sexual energy of a person, and the pleasure derived from each stage reflect the physical and cognitive development of individual. The psychosexual development begin shortly after birth with the oral stage. Sucking is a child's first responses and serves both as a survival function and as a source of pleasure is also derived from biting and chewing. The oral stage typically lasts until about the age of two.

About this time, many parents are anxious to get the child toilet trained, and a major emphasis is placed on excretory functions, commencing the anal stage. This is one of the first societal controls placed on instinctual behaviors. Children become aware of their annal region and of the control located there. That is children that they have power to please or upset their parents through control or lack of control over their bowels.

With successful toilet training the child moves on the phallic stage. This stage may last until about the age of six, although each stage occurs at different ages for each individual. The important thing to remembers in terms of stage timing is that each stage flows directly into the next. In the phallic stage, the child discords his or her sexuality and pleasure is often derived through masturbation. At this stage, the Oedipus Complex arises. Freud believed that a little boy in discovering his genitals as

a source of pleasure views his mother as sexually attractive. If the boy's image of his father is strong, the boy fears punishment from his father for his desire. Thus, instead of acting on his incestuous desires, he will identify with his father to avoid disapproval or punishment. If this resolution of the oedipal situation does not occur, the boy may never relate adequately to members of the opposite sex. Freud postulated a similar Electra Complex for girls in which the little girl wishes to possess her father but ends up identifying with her mother to avoid reproach and rejection. From about the age of eight to adolescence, the child passes through the latency stage, during which most of the child's energy is consternated on developing social and intellectual skills. The libidinal energy is weaker and has less need for direct expression at this time. The genital stage begins with puberty. In this phase, the sexual energy which was previously focused on one's self is turned toward others. This energy is expressed through love and other relationships.

If a person has released an adequate amount of energy at each stage, Freud felt that the person has a good chance for a well-adjusted life. A person's experiences at each developmental stage contribute to overall personality make up. Energy can be blocked at any stage, however, and the resulting tension and anxiety will be reflected in the person's character. In the book *Maladaptive Behaviour* Benjamin Lahey explains, "The blocking of energy at particular stage of psychosexual developments is called fixation. When a fixation exists at a particular stage, the adults may return to that stage when he or she feels threatened or in difficulty" (100).

The stronger the fixation at a particular stage, the more easily the person will return or regress to the behaviour of a childhood stage. Problems encountered while passing through psychosexual stages, therefore, are considered to be a major source of maladaptive behaviour.

Two Basic Instincts: Eros and Thanatos

According to Freud, there are two basic instinct or urges: Eros and Thanatos. In his earlier work, he made most of the instinct or Eros the life instinct or love instinct. Freud said everything was due to sex. It is true that the Eros or life instinct, is the source of sexual behaviour in the wide meaning which Freud gave to the term sex. The life instinct is also the source of all forces which impels us to build up to construct to preserve ourselves and the species. Thus the building of houses or the taking of nourishment are as much to be delivered from the instinct of Eros as is the sexual life.

In his later investigation, Freud discovered that human beings were not only basically constructive, preservative and motivated by the instinct but that under circumstances at least men hated as well as loved, destroyed as well as constructed, tore down as well as build up. He discovered this chiefly from the observation that individuals hated and wished to destroy other individuals at least almost as frequently as they loved them and wished to make them happy. And so he posited the instinct of Thanatos as the death instinct or the hate instinct. In the book *Abnormal Psychology* James Page explains:

Freud recognized two fundamental motivating forces the constructive life urges and the destructive death urges. Drawing upon Greek mythology he christened the life forces Eros and the death forces Thanatos. These psychic drives find physiological representation in the anabolic or building up and catabolic or destructive processes of body tissues. The aim of the death urges is to injure, destroy and kills manifested in hate, aggression murder and suicide. (112)

Oedipus Complex

A fundamental concept in the psychoanalytic theory of "personality development" by Freud is the Oedipus Complex. It is a term describing the erotic feelings of a son for his mother and an associated sense of competitiveness toward the father. The Oedipus Complex may well be the most intense emotional experience of one's life and includes all the characteristics of a true love affair: height of passion, jealousy, rages and desperate yearnings. Ultimately, however, the Oedipus Complex leads to severe conflict. The boy fears that his illicit wishes cost him his father's love and protection, which Freud characterizes as a child's strongest need. The boy also inevitably learns of the physical difference between the sexes, concludes that girls originally possessed a penis but had it taken away as punishment, and fears that his seemingly all-powerful father will exact a similar penalty if the Oedipal wishes persist. To alleviate this intense castration anxiety, the boy eventually surrenders his conscious Oedipal strivings. *The World Book Encyclopedia* explains:

Freud believed that the Oedipus Complex is a normal part of human psychological growth. The Oedipal phase of development is commonly considered to last from the age of 2 ½ to 6. During this period, children experience intense feelings, love and hate, yearning and jealousy, fear and anger that produces emotional conflict. Most people outgrow the Oedipal phase, but some mentally ill individuals have a strong Oedipus Complex as adults. According to Freud the principal reasoning for the weakening of the Complex in boys is the fear of punishment from father. (413)

The whole Oedipal experience is so frightening that it is thoroughly repressed and cannot be recalled without the aid of psychoanalytical therapy. Its effect may well

become obvious, however, as when a man makes a woman how closely resembles his mother.

Electra Complex

Like the boy the girl forms a powerful attachment to her mother during infancy. At the age two to three years she lacks a penis evokes strong feeling of inferiority and jealousy. She responds by intensifying the envious attachment to her father, who posed the desired organ, and by resenting the mother who shares her apparent defect, who allowed her to be born in this condition and who now looms as a rival for her father's affection. Thus, while the girl is also inherently bisexual and has two fold attitudes towards both parents.

The girl eventually seeks to compensate for her supposed physical deficiency by having her father's baby, preferably a boy baby who will bring the longed for penis with him. Because the girl lacks the immediate and vital threat of castration anxiety, she remains oedipal longer than the boy, and the "superego" that forms as a result of her less traumatic Oedipus Complex is weaker than the boy's. Thus the girl has greater difficulty in sublimating her illicit starving, and is more likely to become neurotic.

In the novel, *Cry the Peacock* the Oedipal relationship between Maya and her father has been discussed by Anita Desai. In the house, Maya is very close with her father. Her father is a guardian protector everything to her. Maya's overprotected childhood and adolescence which makes it difficult of rather to face the realities of adult life, the Oedipus Complex for excessive love and dependence on her father which makes her seek a father substitute in her husband Gautama, which obviously is not possible. This "father fixation" becomes one of the major cause for Maya's neurosis.

III. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Structure

Cry the Peacock is the sad story of failure of married life of Maya and Gautama. The novel has three parts in it. The first and the third can be considered as the prologue and epilogue of the novel. In the prologue the author describes the agony and depression. The atmosphere of gloom reminds her of the albino astrologer's prediction that in the fourth year of her marriage there will be a death, either of her or of her husband's. The novel is mostly in the first person narrative, told by Maya the heroine. She relates her own story and often gives details of her own happy days as a child. The author uses the stream of consciousness technique to explain cause and growth of her despair.

The second section of the novel reveals the gradual stages by which Maya moves from sanity to insanity. But even here there are occasional flashes of sanity. She provides full length pictures of the hero as well as the heroine although the central theme revolves round Maya. The section come to a close with the death of Gautama. The final section which acts as the epilogue provides a powerful picture of the effect of the calamity on the important characters and concludes suggesting some possible ending for the novel is located in Delhi.

But the city's presence is neither obtrusive nor obsessive. There are number of references to places in this city much as Birla Mandir the Ridge, the Red Fort, and Jama Masjid, but the sense of inner space, with its deceptive half-light and the brooding darkness, is more potent than the phantasmagoric outer forms, shadows, noises and silences.

Conflict of Mind in the Novel

The novel *Cry the Peacock* portrays the inner emotional world of central character Maya. This novel deals with Maya's mental upheavals, her inner struggle, her desire for warmth, love and companionships, and her obsessions with death. Thus, *Cry the Peacock* is the externalization of the Maya's private world. Maya is sensitive and solitary to the point of being neurotic. She from her childhood regards the world as a "toy" specially made for her painter in her favorite colours and set to dance to her favourite tunes, "the world is like toy specially made for me, painted in my favourite colours, set moving to my favourite tunes" (35). Thus, Maya has strange childhood from which she develops a negative self, image and aversion. The immediate result is her fragmented psyche to view world as hostile place.

Maya is a spoiled and pampered daughter of an aristocratic Brahmin of Lucknow. Being alone in the family, her mother being dead and brother having gone to America to crave his own independent destiny, she gets the most of her father's affection and attention. Maya is married to Gautama, a rather insensitive pragmatic and rational advocate who fails to understand her sensitive nature. Maya suffers from "father-fixation" because of the excessive love she gets from her father. For her Gautama is not loving husband but a father substitute a medium to reach her father in the unconscious. In the agony, Maya expresses her disappointment:

No one, no one else I sobbed into my pillow as Gautama went into bathroom, loves me as my father does: the curtain fell to behind him, in tragic-folds. He did not hear me the tap was running. The Vacuum into which I spoke made me more frantic and yet he was not really meant to hear. (43)

The reason for Maya's neurosis is, however, not her father fixation, though it aids to hasten her tragedy, but persistent obsession of the prediction by the albino astrologer of death either for her or her husband within four years of their marriage:

Death, he finally admitted, in one such moment, to one of you. When you are married and you shall be married young. The light suddenly sank, and his eyeless face assumed the texture of a mask above me.

Death an early one – by unnatural causes, he said softly, sibilantly and gently lowered his arms till they dropped his side, then become furiously mobile once more, casting his robes once this way. (30)

The tragic effect in this novel is intensified because the external conditions not only oppress the protagonist from outside but also flow her nature from within. Maya is always haunted by the deadly nightmares of imaginary apprehension conjured up by her flawed nature and in the process disintegrate herself gradually. Being sensitive, Maya is deeply affected by her astrologer's predication of the death of one of them. Associating herself with the peacocks and their knowledge of life and death she begins to fear her own death:

In the day-time, amidst companions, I could force myself into believing that it was only a nightmare, no more. But in the night, under the stark gaze of moon, in that waiting silence my memories came to life were so vivid, so detailed, I knew them to be real, too real. Or is it madness? Am I gone insane? Father ! Brother ! Husband ! Who is my savior? I am in 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 and more – only death and waiting. (84)

Maya's death-wish comes largely from her frustration. Temperamentally there is no compatibility between Maya and Gautama. Maya has a romantic love for the beautiful, the colourful and sensuous; Maya is "a creator of instincts, a wayward and high strand child" (53). Gautama is coldly rational and unemotional and his terse and brief reactions to the death of the pet dog reveal his inability to understand his wife. Here, we find that Maya is alienated from Gautama. By marrying a man twice her age, she probably had already minimized her chances for a good husband-wife relationship. Besides, their incompatible temperaments, make it difficult for them to stay in a warm relationship. When Gautama works on his papers inconsiderate of her soft, willing body or the lonely, wanting mind, she realizes his coldness, painfully becomes aware of her loneliness in this house, and whispers, "I am alone" (9). Their line of communication is quite blocked. Such irreconcilability, different temperaments are bound to have marital disharmony. Thinking of her happy marriage, Maya reflects with deep concern:

It was discouraging to reflect on how much in our marriage was based upon a nobility forced upon us from outside and therefore neither true nor lasting. It was broken repeatedly the pieces were picked up and put together again, as of a sacred icon with which, out of the pettiest superstition we could not bear to part. (38)

Maya is constantly haunted by her fatal flaw which is activated by her hidden fears or inhibitions created by her relationship with others or her circumstances of life. Her attempts to seek refuge in her loneliness worsen her situation still more, for her solitary musing adds to her morbidity and quickens the process of their disintegration. When Maya looks at night, the dark spaces between the stars frighten her, "Death lurked in those spaces, the darkness spoke of distance, separation, loneliness" (24).

Even joy, absolute joy, so overwhelms her that she is filled to the point of destruction and the moon in the sky is not the gentle man of ballads and fairy tales but, "demonic creature, the fierce dancer that had all day been trying to lead the threshold of my mind and home" (31). Further, the "cry, of the peacocks" is a symbol used poetically throughout the novel and after which it accentuates her death and anxiety.

The mysterious memory which frightens Maya is that of albino priest. This phantoms from the mists of her past casts a dark and evil shadow on her life and this remembered image finally decides her destiny. This once forgotten episode of her early life colours her married life and distorts her perspective. The image of the albino foreteller creates a terrible commotion in her consciousness. This crucial event of Maya's childhood which has such a traumatic effect of her life is described in very vivid and lurid colours. Maya remembers that the priest was an albino:

He had been large or small? I cannot remember, but his eyes I do: they were pale, opaque, and gave him an appearance of morbidity, as though he had lived like a sluggish white worm, indoors always in his dark room at the temple gates, where the central lingam was painted a bright vicious red, as though plunged in sacrificial blood, and light burned in a single lamp from which oil spilled into a large speeding pool. (32)

In her neurotic state of mind, she sees something sinister about the priest. She believes in his prophecy that when she is married she or her husband would die soon. Her nervous imagination magnifies everything out of all proportions and everything she sees or hears or touches reminds her or symbolizes, her approaching death. Every time she attempts to communicate she fails and then withdraws into herself. The world which sometimes appears familiar and comforting suddenly becomes

something menacing and frightening. Maya translates everything in the world outside into her own intensely personal idiom. The carpet, the bear dancing, the monkeys in the cage, the orchids kept in a basket in the verandah of the Lalas all remind her of death:

Then Gautama came back and took me out again, and I looked back upon the monkeys. Ah! gentle large-hearted, small-bodied friends send me a message now to calm me. A forest message, cool with dew and fresh with spring water. Hand me a message, a fruit. Why will you not stay? Stop, wait for me. But you, in columns of moth-warm, mother-soft gray and fawn and, sparkled, are leaving me, vanishing like mist down a jungle path, to be loaded onto the rattling vans of the Bombay mail. (131)

The predication of the horoscope is no doubt a major factor emerging out of this encounter and determine the ultimate fate of Maya and Gautama. Nevertheless, it is proper to comment here that Maya is not clear in her mind about the outcome of the predication in that she doesn't know who will be the victim out of the two. Maya suffers from headaches and experiences rages of rebellion and terror. Rebuffed by her husband and badly mauled by society, Maya is torn between her love of life and her fear of death. Then suddenly, during her interval of sanity, an idea hopefully draws in her mind that since that albino had predicted death to either of them, it may be Gautama and not she whose life is threatened. She is able to resolve the tangled boughs of her consciousness, of her fear of death – she want to be free with the relationship with Gautama, "the man who had no contact with the world, or with me. What would it matter to him if he died and lost even the possibility of contact" (175).

Cry the Peacock as a Cry of Alienated Self

As the very title suggests, *Cry the Peacock* is about Maya's cry for love and understanding in her loveless marriage with Gautama. The "Peacock's cry" is symbolic of Maya's agonized cry for love and life of involvement. Names of the characters in the novel are also symbolic. Gautama, as his name suggests believes in the philosophy of detachment. Gautama is a dry type of matter of fact person who shuns all sentimentality. On the other hand Maya, as her name suggests is too much in love with life. She rejoices in the world of sounds, senses, movements, odours, colours, tunes. Thus, Maya and Gautama stands poles apart in their attitude to life.

The very beginning of the novel highlights the husband-wife alienation theme by unfolding the relationship of Maya and Gautama. Maya an introverted favourite daughter of a wealthy artistic father, is married to an older man, a detached, sober, industrious lawyer. Their married life is punctuated all along by "matrimonial silences" and Gautama's hardness, his coldness and incessant take of cups of tea and philosophy. What pains Maya most is her utter loneliness. She fails to understand the total lack of communication on the part of Gautama, "how little he knew of my misery of how to comfort me to go to sleep while he worked at his papers, he didn't give another thought to me, to either the soft willing body or the lonely, wanting mind that waited near his bed" (14).

Maya is not able to get over the trauma of a predication. An albino priest had forecast death for Maya or her husband in the fourth year of their marriage. The novel opens with a third person narrative depicting, Maya's shattered mental balance at the death of her pet dog, Toto. But soon she realizes another sorrow, unremembered perhaps as yet not even experienced that fills her, with an unnamed terror. On his return from her work Gautama finds her grief over a mere 'pet' too unrealistic.

Unaware of prophecy working on her, he tries to pacify her neurotic outburst by preaching her the virtue of non-involvement.

Maya's rootlessness keeps on increasing everyday. It culminates in a kind of schizophrenia. Ultimately, Gautama begins to appear to her as an "unreal ghost".

Maya's alienation leads her onto utter desolation:

All order is gone out of my life, all formality. There is no plan, no peace, nothing to keep me within the pattern of familiar, everyday living and doing that becomes those whom God means to live on earth. Thoughts come, incident occur, then they are scattered and disappear. Past present future. Truth and untruth. They shuttle back and forth, a shifting chiaroscuro of light and shade, of blood and ashes. And I am tired of it. My body can no longer bear it. My mind has already given way. I am grown thin, worn. (149)

This is the typical condition of an unfortunate person who is alienated through and through. Her observation drives her to a curious insanity. She herself admits, "I dropped my head into my hands, yes I am going insane, I am moving further and further from all wisdom, all calm and I shall soon be mad if I am not that already" (92). The artificiality of her life keeps on haunting her.

Maya hungered and hungered and she was not satisfied with life. At that condition, neither she could protest nor accept the reality. She would lie awake at night stifled by the hunger. She felt not only for Gautama but all that life represented. She came to look upon her relationship with Gautama as a relationship with death. The albino is only a literary device used to manifest her hidden fear. Gautama came between her worshipped moon, his figure an ugly, crooked, gray shadow that transgressed its sorrowing chastity. It was Gautama's detachment that come in the way

of her involvement. Under the stress of this fear she lost her senses and argued that since Gautama was not involved with life, it was immaterial to him whether he was alive or not. She killed Gautama in a fit of madness and soon jumped to her own death.

Thus *Cry the Peacock* is a pioneering effort toward delineating the psychological problems of an alienated person. Maya's moods, observation, dilemmas and abnormality are conveyed very effectively in it. The novel is a profound study of human psychology. Much of its success lies in its working about the configuration of her inner world.

The Role of Fate in *Cry the Peacock*

The fate plays major role in the novel. The central character Maya believes in fate. She believes the albino astrologer's warning regarding her future. She lives a life of horror and fear at the prospect of the astrologer's prophecy being fulfilled. Her heart craves for love and understanding, solace and support from her husband. Gautama tries to lay his finger on the exact problem that bothers her but Maya is too secretive to allow him to learn the cause. He is a normal gentleman interested in his profession of an advocate perhaps too practical and materialistic to allot time for expressing his love. Maya does not tell him about the albion's prophecy for fear of hurting him. At the same time, she is unable to bear the oppressive burden of the secret.

Gautama is the representative of the second attitude to fate in the novel. He doesn't believe in fate at all and he is of the view that no educated person ought to believe in such thing. Pom, a close friend of Maya is anti-theatrical to her in character. She has no thought of fate or tradition or superstition in her life.

Maya goes through very strange experience in her life. Her hallucinations and the repetitions rearing to and from sanity and insanity are responsible for her unhappiness. She feels frightened because she recognizes a demoniac creature dancing to the deafening rear of silent drums. She thinks it is the mad demon of Kathkali Ballets. Then she identifies the white body of the dancer. She concludes it is the "limpid appellation of the noon. It was I remembered it new, Fate" (28). The strange part of it is that her hallucinations are essentially solipsistic and consequently she cannot share her thoughts with anyone.

She visualizes her fate. She remembers the eyes of albino astrologer that were pale, opaque and gave him a look of morbidity. She recalls the experience of her childhood when she met an astrologer who was an albino. She went with her ayah and held the lady's hand in her trembling fingers afraid of being left alone. She remembers her prediction by astrologer, in this way, "Death , he finally admitted, in one such moment, to one of you. When you are married and you shall be married young" (30). The ayah and the child trembled in terror but the albino continued: "for there is only a chance, a faint possibility that her life should take this path. The sign is there. The stars prophecy it. But we are in the hand of God and here his voice dropped, softened, began to quiver with emotion" (31).

It is the fourth year since Maya and Gautama were married and Maya feels certain that one of them has to die. She never thinks of the possibility of averting the calamity by accepting the advice of the albino and seeking the grace of the all merciful God Almighty. She dare not speak of it to Gautama and there were no friends with whom she could share her fears. The albino become a nightmare and his prophecy haunts her repeatedly, "It seemed real, I could recall each detail, and yet – God Gutama, surely it is nothing but an hallucination, surely not, I sobbed" (64).

Maya and Gautama go out one evening to attend a dinner party. She feels wretched because the party, the hosts as well as guests, did not measure up to her conception of refinement. This reaction Gautama observes, is the result of her excessive involvement in the party. Mr. Lal, the Sikh friend of Gautama was also his classmate once. He made a reference to the word "fate" saying he had wanted to meet the brilliant lawyer Gautama but, "it was not written in our fate to meet again, till tonight" (74). The word triggered off a valley of experience from the past for Maya.

Maya had always believed in the perfection of her world but after learning Gautama's views on astrology and fate she felt that her life was tainted with fate. The mental conflict that resulted gets reflected in her physical condition as well. She feels very hot in her bed as she turns over in her mind the experiences of childhood. She avers, "upon this bed of hot, itching sand, I summoned up again the vision of the albino who had cast his shadow like a net across me as I fed down the corridor of years" (91). She remembers the astrologer's words again, "Do you not hear the Peacock's call in the wilds? Pia Pia they cry meaning leaver, leaver. Mie, mie – I die, I die. The peacock tear each others to strips before they mate. Living they are aware of death. Dying they are in love with life" (96). Maya heard the peacock and imagined that she could feel the mortal agony of their cry for lever and for death. She is afraid that she will also die like the peacocks. She weeps for the lot of the peacock's and also her pathetic condition.

During day time she manages to forget the Damocles sword that she believes hangs over her head and sets it aside as hallucination. But the nights are unbearable and she starts wondering whether she had lost her sanity. She avers, "Am I gone insane, Father! brother! Husband! who is my saviour? I am in need of one" (98). Maya associates Gautama with a different world a world scented with jasmines

resounding with poetry and amiability. She yearned to be a part of this world. But she was certain she could never become part of it because her own world was hell torture, guilt dread, imprisonment these were the four walls of her private hell, one that no one could survive in long. Death is certain. She is convinced that Gautama is one fated to live in the world that she loved more and more as days passed and she was one to die. It never occurs to her to allay her fears through prayers to the Almighty.

Maya loved not only the world but also her husband, she loved the very presence of Gautama, the very thought of being with him. She loves him too much to leave him, separate from him even in death. She tries to locate the mark on her forehead that prophesied what the albino detected, "a relentless and fatal competition between myself and Gautama" (106). She never thinks of carrying out the final injunction of the astrologer.

Maya becomes aware of the fact that she is gradually going insane. She avers, "I am moving further and further from all wisdom, all calm, and I shall be mad, if I am not that already" (108). Her brother Arjuna's letter comes as a reminder of what she wanted to forget. Gautama, wants to know the significance of her brother's words. With great effort she restrains herself and says that she doesn't remember the incidents.

A poetry session is arranged in Gautama's house where several poets and lovers of poetry gather together. Maya wishes to join them as she has done in her father's house during such occasions. But Gautama does not seem to relish her entry and therefore, she quickly quits from the place. Later on when, she comes in after the session is over, Maya complains, "You didn't want me there" and he retorts, "Not want you? Did I say so? Did anyone say so? Why all this melodrama?" (111). She explains to him that all she wanted was to be with him but he had failed to recognize

her presence. His indifference literally forced her to rush inside. Gautama tries to clarify things by quoting from *Bhagawad Gita*. He states:

Listen, thinking of sense objects, man becomes attached thereto. From attachment arises longing and from longing anger is born. From anger arises delusion, from delusion, loss of memory is caused. From loss of memory the discriminative faculty is ruined and from the ruin of discrimination, he perishes. (112)

The words "he perishes" reminds Maya of death and the prophecy. She wonders whether Gautama may be the target of fate. Maya and Gautama go out for a stroll. Their cat crosses them and it appears disturbed. They come up to the terraced end. She watches the moon's vast, pure surface, touched only faintly with petals of shadow, "as though brushed by moth's wings, so that it appeared a great multi-folio rose waxen white, virginal, chaste and absolute white, costing its reflection upon the night with a vast, tender mother love" (208). At this juncture Gautama moves over to the front of Maya and hides the view of the moon. She thrusts out her arms towards him, to push him aside so that she could enjoy the beautiful sight of the moon. She saw him fall them, down to the bottom and that was end of Gautama.

Maya is taken to her father's house. She gets lost in the joy of getting back home perhaps because her temporary insanity made her forget the death of her husband whom she loved with her heart. Her mother-in-law and sister-in-law Nila had gone with her. Nila insisted on treating her brother's death as an accident, not a murder. For, Maya said in all playfulness, "so then I pushed him, hard and he fell. And when I went down the stairs to the terrace he was lying there don't you like your tea?" (214). Even in such a mental condition Maya accepts that she is the cause for her husband's death.

Anita Desai has given very powerful role to the 'fate' in the novel. Maya believes in fate and she is doomed that during the fourth year of her marriage either she or husband will die. And at last this prophecy becomes true. Though Maya wants to escape from it but she fails to do so. The novel ends tragically with death of Gautama and Maya's insanity.

Treatment of Neurosis in the Novel

In the novel Maya's 'neurosis' arises out of various reason such as her growth and development without maternal love. The heartbreak house in which she grows up under the care of her father which develops in her a sense of loneliness. Moreover, her neurosis increases as a result of her father's conflict with her brother Arjun. As a child she doesn't play with the children of her age group. This also adds to her neurosis. Added to these, the basic factors of her neurosis is her encounter with the albino in the temple and his horoscope about the marriage. After her marriage with Gatuama, she finds her life empty without children. She aspires for love and life. Toto has been substituted for children in her life. Therefore, Gautama says:

As for death – Toto's dying you will find, will become a matter of missing the games you played with him, finding empty time heavy on your hands and ultimately, a search for replacement. It is rather shocking to reduce one's ideals to mundane superfluities, and equally shocking to realize that these superfluities are the ideals themselves.

(24)

Maya's 'neurosis' arises out of her need for Gautama's concern for either her "soft willing body or the lonely wanting mind that waited near his bed" (8),but he is not bother about either of these yet, as a husband, he tries to help her avoid worrying. But her mind always finds something to worry about. Her hopelessness arising out of

neurosis is gnawing her. Moreover, she is certain that in Gautama's family "one did not speak of love far less of affection" (40). This makes her lonely and dejected. She craves for her father and his consoling words. Similar consolation, she tries to get from her husband, but he is unable to give all these. Therefore, her neurotic behaviour heightens. As a result of this she says, "I wish I could see father again. It always help 'It must be so' he said to me, come now, we mustn't fret. If it must be so, we must learn to accept" (46). But Gautama can only express his annoyance for her sad mood by asking her "help what? Whom, he asked puzzled" (46).

Maya's world is one of the delusions and hallucinations. In her world along with albino there emerge the lives of the women such as Pom and Lila. She thinks that her neurosis has intensified as a result of her recalling the episodes connected with these women. She is unable to give up the thoughts of albino. Therefore, she consoles herself by bursting out, "God Gautama, father, surely it is nothing but an hallucination" (55). The significant cause for the maladjustment of their married life is that they converse without communicating. Gautama doesn't understand Maya's internal trouble she vocals about it, "You were board ? Bored ? Didn't you feel anything more ? Can't you feel except boredom? You weren't stifled in that house? You didn't want to weep when you saw the pregnant woman? You were just-bored?" (58).

This agony is felt only by her. She craves to be understood. But Gautama is ignorant of Maya's mind. For Gautama, Maya's psychic trouble is too strong to be handled. We hear not replies to his practical reaction but Maya's psychic outbursts. His sensible suggestion that the sight of pregnancy should not reduce one to tears makes her jump to lean over the bedstead and throws back her head to scream at his. She appears to him as if she is preparing to plunge off a cliff. Then only he is able to

realize his mistake. Therefore, he says, "I don't even understand what you are working yourself up over" (57). Through this Anita Desai is unique in probing the depth of the mind diseased.

As a neurotic she momentarily calms down, realizes her mistake and sees herself in the mirror. Gautama pacifies her as does a father figure "you are a grown woman now, Maya, no light-headed child. You mustn't allow yourself to grow upset. What if they live in a grubby house? What if she is pregnant again?" (58).

Gautama's diagnosis of her neurosis is correct. He says, "From a passion of wonder and excitement you are led surely to a passion of unhappiness in its loss, depression and disillusionment" (103). From *Gita* he could advise her to remain detached. Gautama detects the physical symptoms of Maya's neurosis. She has temperature and a damp hand. Moreover, her meaningless waiting for the postman confirms Gautama's conviction about her neurosis. When Gautama goes to office, her comfortable house appears to her no more than "a tomb" (111). This feeling of Maya is a major achievement of Anita Desai's as a psychic portrait of Neurotics. For a neurotic, an ice-cream bar during summer night appears no less than a hell full of demons drinking blood. The neurotic prefers to run away from that place. The morbid thoughts crowd in upon her leisure as when Gautama is with her. When he returns home from office in the evening, her thoughts dwell on their lonely future existence, "one of us would be left alone to always pour out his or her tea, in loneliness and I felt the shroud of death blur my vision" (122).

The fear of Maya is another corner in the region of fear of a neurotic heart. Neurotic always fear death, loneliness, poverty, destruction. Convinced of this, she says, "There is something weird about me now, wherever go, whatever I see, whatever I listen to has this unnaturalness to it. This is insanity. But, who, what is

insane ? I myself or world around me?" (125). Maya's abnormality is best understood through Freud's psychoanalytic theory in which he classified the ideas of the original undifferentiated mind, the repository of inherited urges and instinctual energy. It contained the instinct of Eros the life or sexual instinct and Thanatos – the death instinct. Maya is guided by death instinct as a result of the astrologer's horoscope. Therefore, she lives in the present as if she were living in the past. Gautama pertinently remarks:

If you knew your Freud it would all be very straightforward and then appear as merely inevitable to you – taking your childhood and upbringing into consideration. you have a very obvious father obsession – which is also the reason why you married me, a man so much older than yourself. It is a Complex that, unless you mature rapidly, you will not be able to deal with, to destroy. But then, it will probably destroy itself in the end, since passion of this sort is almost always self-consuming, having no object within its range that it can safely consume. (122–123)

She destroys of course, not her neurosis but Gautama and herself. The episode of the laboratory monkey increases her uneasiness. She identifies with their plight as the cages contain a bowl of water even though they were thirsty and hungry. Therefore, she appeals to Gautama, "Let me out ! I want to live, Gautama, I want to live !" (134). A simple thing like walking home from station makes her lose control over herself. Ultimately, she cries out, "You have left me deserted" (135). She doesn't feel like saying goodbye to her husband after her mother-in-law decides to go with her daughter. "God, to be alone with him, again my unknowing, unsuspecting and steel – hard on this battle, all night, all day" (140). This ultimate aim of woman's existence for Maya,

turns out to be hell. Thus neurotics find hell in heaven; turn a bed of rose into nails of torture.

Maya's mid-summer madness heightens during the month of May. The heat glues her hair to the skin with perspiration. The heat oozes into the room and pours like thick warm oil. It swells and expands till it becomes physical, a presence that presses against her body. This external heat relates itself with her psychic state which causes Gautama's fall. The outside heat is revealed as a parallel to the inside heat. Similarly, the dust-cloud cloaks her vision. It predicts her future death and destruction. It becomes for Maya the final vision of her final fate. It is the inside insanity objectified. It makes Maya burst into a rhetorical flourish encompassing the events of her life. Her encounter with dust passages her violent act of killing Gautama. It is a common belief that neurotic people loose control over themselves under full moon. Maya behaves madly when the summer moon is full. Under its influence, she becomes poetic and hurls down Gautama from the roof. The mirror for Maya becomes a window to see the world outside, "The mirror that reflects the window I saw no rain, no clouded sky, no promise, no sweetness, but only the summer heat and summer sky" (149). It also symbolizes the future death and destruction.

The zoological images in the novel are used to explore the psychic state of Maya. A bat evokes Maya's imprisoned self, "I felt as though a bat were caught in the same room with me, and shrank involuntarily" (25). For Maya the lizard Gautama becomes on insects to be swallowed, "The lizard with glazed eyes, glared sullenly. The tail no longer twitched, but it had done so once. That was the warning the threat" (159). The dog images is central to the novel. It bring back the idea of astrologer and his horoscope, ultimately leading to the couple's death. The owl is an image of death

is insistent in the novel. Before Maya pushes Gautama, she significantly draws her attention to the owl, "Listen I said, stopping at a sound. Do you hear that? It's an owl" (78). Within similar implication, the peacock is used. Its cry is the image of her yearning for love. Born out of this urge, she tears Gautama as peacock's do in love making. Moreover, its cry evokes the death wish in Maya: "It was I. I who screamed with peacocks, streamed at the right of the rain clouds, screamed at their disappearance, screamed in mute horror" (151).

Maya is confused by the horoscope. The close and suffocating psychic state does not help her to see the meaning of life. Therefore, even the light blinds her, "The light from the open window was too bright, it hurt my eyes like a giant, red thumb pressed into the sockets of my eyes, and lid up Gautama's face luridly" (124). Her neurosis evokes Maya as a serpent swimmer in the sea. The sea leaves her flabby and loose, "the sea yes, it was as though I had been bathing too long in a high and hectic ocean" (13). It evokes her fight with her inner self. The window for Maya becomes her journey back into the past. Ultimately she gives up hunting for the windows: "I gave up my hunting of the windows – not even a ghost was left there" (159).

Her transition from neurosis to psychosis is powerfully understood in the scene of the dust storm in which she is shown as running, "On and on, from room to room, laughing as maniacs laugh once the world gives them up and surrenders them to their freedom" (190). Maya's shutting herself in as a measure of protection for the raging dust-storm is symbolic of her total withdrawal from the world of purposeful action and meaningful relationships. The exact point of her plunging into the abysmal depths of 'psychosis' however, is her act of violence itself. Maya's pushing Gautama off the prophet of their house is not fortuitous. There are simply no accident in psychic life. Behind Maya's final indulgence in violence there has been prolonged

psychic struggle which she has not known herself. Having done the deed and having taken recourse to 'psychosis' she relaxes and openly declares that unlike her, Gautama has not been in love with life and so according to the prophecy he had to die, "it had to be one of us, you see, and it was so clear that it was I who was meant to live. you see, to Gautama it didn't really matter. He didn't care, and I did" (215–16).

Governed by the primary process thinking she doesn't camouflage her thoughts by drawing on her linguistic resources any more. Her adult life with all its responsibilities and anxieties has become a sealed book for her. She is faithful to herself and the social and moral consequences of her actions do not matter to her any more now. Her superstition belief thus helped her immensely in the process of unconsciously identifying her problems and their source. From a shadowy figure the albino sprang to life and has come to mean much to her during her neurotic struggle. After she embraced 'psychosis' what the Charlatan said years ago has become gospel truth to her. But for him she would not have perceived Gautama as her foremost enemy and would not have considered the possibility of violently working out her equation with him.

To conclude, the essence of the novel's development is to be found not in gradual unfolding, of the protagonist's consciousness, but of her neurosis. Out of this arises an encounter of the self and world outside. The novel deals with the problematical rather than comfortable answer to the question of 'neurosis' nightmare, and subconscious world. Maya's attempt to liberate herself from fear of death becomes a writing down of the stars this week, horoscope, blind superstitions, that many of us make a hell of our lives. In the ultimate analysis Maya's fear is for death, and so her choice of flight and consequently that leads to death and destruction of life.

At the heart of the story fear exists by virtue of concrete facts of consciousness. This consciousness as depicted by Anita Desai, is dependent upon the look, through which conflict in human relationship and domination of the object are also brought out in bold relief. Death as a theme has been one of her concerns. Since fear of death is also the fear of unknown, the effective emotional awareness of it is brilliantly dramatized in the story.

IV. CONCLUSION

In the novel *Cry the Peacock*, Anita Desai has depicted the failure of marriage between Maya and Gautama. Maya marries Gautama who is quite senior in age to her but two are entirely opposed to each other in their temperament and emotional responses. The novel is about Maya's cries for love and understanding in her loveless marriage with Gautama. The "Peacock's Cry" is symbolic of Maya's agonized cry for love and life of involvement. While Gautama is practical to the core, she is highly sensitive and emotional type of woman. She is neither able to get company from him nor physical sexual satisfaction. Her involvement is opposed to Gautam's philosophy of detachment, while Maya believes in a life of total absorption and involvement.

The novel begins with the death of Toto, the pet dog and ends with the death of Gautama. Maya, the protagonist, is deeply moved by the astrologer's predication of the death of one of them. She associates herself with the peacocks and their knowledge of life and death. She is obsessed by death and her death wish issues out of her frustration and dejection in life. Bitterly disappointed with Gautama, Maya has none or nothing to turn to even when she consciously tries to divert herself from pain, she is not helped by Gautama at all. Once when she suggest Gautama to take her to south as she wants to see Kathekali dances. Gautama refuses to do so.

This physical mental and emotional separation torments Maya who struggles in a pursuit to relate to Gautama. They live in a loveless cage of marriage in which Maya's emotional urges usually get defeated by Gautama's rudely philosophical gibberish. Maya groans under the weight of Gautama's borrowed wisdom as he often quotes from the *Gita* to prove to her his intellectual superiority. When Maya demands from him his love for her, Gautama resorts to a bewilderingly frigid explanation of a matter that needs tender, emotional treatment.

To make matter worse, all Maya ever pines for perishes quickly. Her life appears to be an endless tale of separation and lovelessness as she begins to lose everything just after her marriage. Having once enjoyed a prince like a sumptuous fate of the fantasies of the Arabian nights, the glories and bravado of Indian mythology, long and astounding tales of princes and regal queen, she now seems to face the quick reverse of fortune. She misses the company of her father, his positive affectionate attitude but is painfully shocked to see him turning immune to her after her marriage to Gautama. She plunges deeper into problems as she fails to do or deliver anything meaningful. Her household is run by the servants around leaving her idle and more turned to developing her neurosis. The lack of activity thus renders her unoccupied and more conducive to mental nervousness and anxieties.

To add to her misery, she happens to be a childless woman deprived thus of an opportunity, spontaneous outlet of her feelings. Her life thus suffers from a terrible eventlessness. Unoccupied, unloved and alone Maya begins to hallucinate things. The world of her aspiration falls part around her and she begins to lose her sanity. A sense of gloom, a threat for an imminent disaster chokes her as already in secure and alienated, she is dogged by the prophecy of an albino astrologer who predicted her husband's or her own death in the fourth year of their married life. Maya would have shrugged aside the fear of the prophecy. But the fact that her life seems to be an endless tedium with nothing significant taking place at any time leaves her extremely vulnerable, her deep into a life of miserable existence of bizarre fantasies and nightmares. Her obsession with the prophecy gains further consolidation as Gautama remains callously indifferent to her feelings and fears. Maya's life thus reveals a subtle pattern of the protagonist's journey from a state of expectation to that of disappointment. Finally this disappointment of hers takes her to the final disaster.

Nervously crumbling under the weight of her obsession, she grows more and more certain of the prophecy made by an albino astrologer long back. The novelist gives a befitting climax of her own destruction as pushing first Gautama from the balcony one night, she kills herself afterwards.

Cry the Peacock thus depicts movement from disappointment and defeat to disasters. The atmosphere of this disaster is craved throughout the novel and when it reaches its climax of this journey which seems like a blossoming balloon bursting in the end. This is then a journey from defeat to disaster that Maya, the protagonist is shown to undertake in the novel.

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