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ISSN:2278-9529

# GALAXY

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal

Vol. 3, Issue - V September 2014



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## A Psycho- Analytical Re-Appraisal of Predicament of Indian Women in *Cry, the Peacock and Wife*

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Modernist movement in literature lays emphasis on the quest for identity on the one hand and internal rather than external realities that lie hidden and repressed on the other and prescribes psychic exploration of characters and feelings to focus the real reality in life which they undergo in different relations and situations. The great European stalwarts like Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson and DH Lawrence have devoted much of their energy and technique not only to find out the apparent social realities but to a great extent to find out the realities lying hidden in the recesses of the mind of their characters. The characters prior to the emergence of stream of consciousness technique were deployed merely as a vehicle for the communication of apparent social realities even at the cost of suppressed individual selves. The great Indian and Indian expatriate novelists like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Nayantara Sahgal and R.P. Jhabvala and Bharati Mukherjee have won world wide recognition in exploring the suppressed selves of Indian women through different female characters and are regarded as champion of feminity in Indian context. Maya of Anita Desai's novel *Cry, The Peacock* (1980) and Dimple of Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Wife* (1990) act and behave abnormally, after their marriage, in different relations and situations even with their own husbands. Both the novelists have tried to concentrate at the fact that they are not born abnormal but assume abnormality with the crippling effect of social relation, cultural morality and ethical values on the one hand and failure of fulfillment of their fantasy on the other. The conflict in the life of Maya results because of temperamental differences but it shouldn't be looked upon as social and domestic discard but it is deeply rooted in the fantasy of childhood experience and the prophecy of albino astrologer regarding death of one of the partners four years after marriage and it gets aggravated at the death of a pet dog toto. Dimple of *Wife* on the other hand dreams of freedom and love, which marriage might confer upon but she is ambiguous regarding love and freedom, as she could not visualize the fact that freedom and love also have certain limitations and find her dreams and aspirations shattered and unfulfilled. Both Maya and Dimple fail to grasp the real vision of life and are led to neurosis and become morbid due to vast gap between fantasy and reality. The present paper concentrates at the causes of morbidity and the ways how to come out of the mess to make the life blissful and of worth living.

There lies great similarity in the deeds performed by the heroines of both the novels *Cry, the peacock* and *Wife*. In both the novels heroines go the extreme of killing their husbands. Maya of *Cry, the peacock* is born in post Independent India but her up-bring-ing is undertaken very much in accordance to the culture and morality of Pre- independent India where female child is considered to be the esteem of the dynasty, a typical but one of the most rigid of middle class moralities, and even the slightest deviation from the set ethical values may damage heavily the grace of dynasty and so are given utmost care accompanied with a lot of restrictions and superstitions. Maya is married to Gautama, a man of academic pursuits and contrary to her romantic and fanciful nature, it was almost a marriage of contradictory temperament hand-picked by her parents. Now Maya becomes victim of two fold conflicts, social and matrimonial on the one hand and on the other internal conflict rooted in the child- hood memory and fantasy over shadowed with the prophesy of an albino

astrologer regarding the death of the either of the partners four years after marriage Death of the pet dog toto aggravates her fear of death and becomes the prominent concerns of her consciousness Now obsessed with the feelings of death she develops brooding attitude and turns to be introvert and neurotic. Maya's unhappiness can be traced in part to external circumstances, her over protected childhood and adolescence which makes it difficult for her to face the realities of adult life, Oedipus complex for excessive love and dependence on her father which makes her seek his substitute in her husband and obviously could not succeed Anita Desai explores the tormented consciousness of Maya with stream of consciousness technique evoking both, the positive and negative images . All her moments of present are closely attached with her memory of the past and she appears to be eternally entrapped with her past. Maya's agony and despairs aroused out of unfulfilled emotional relationship of married life is expressed through several symbolic associations like frenzied dance of the peacock for its mate, the call for love and mating given by the "pigeons etc. Maya's fascination for "Pigeon's nests that were filled with babies", (Cry, the peacock p.35) is suggestive of her longings for motherhood. Her unfulfilled marital relationship has transformed her feelings of fascination into fatal call of separation in the bird's love making and mating . Consequently we discover her fanciful world transformed into chaos under the the severe impact of prophecy of impending death and the resultant anguish.

Dimple , the protagonist of wife has very immature view about marriage which she thinks bring out freedom and love, completely unaware of the concept of freedom and love and because of her ambiguous attitude she always feels incomplete and "She thought of Pre-marital life as a dress rehearsal for actual living"<sup>2</sup> (Wife, P.3). She finally gets married to Amit, after painful waiting a middle class, un imaginative, young engineer who dreams of making fortune in America and after retirement to live a comfortably rich life in Calcutta, India. Soon after her marriage Dimple feels cheated because her adolescent mind can not grasp that freedom too has certain limitations. She finds a very big gap between the world of her fancy and reality that she faces in the real world. She behaves resentfully with her in-laws and resents her husband for she finds him unable to fulfill the fantasy she has nourished from child hood, so aggravates her depression. At this stage when she reconstructs the image of ideal man from faces from magazines, she finds herself unable to identify with anyone in the family and gets frantically enraged at the prospects of becoming mother. One of the most blessed moment of life to complete the meaning of womanhood appears to her an outrage on body and wishes to dispose of the "tyrannical and vile" thing deposited in her body, through abortion In such an overwhelming situation she decides to start afresh in America leaving behind all the sources of her depression and despair and to live an exciting and fanciful life. But once again she finds her aspirations frustrated for Amit collapses inwardly because of the temporary joblessness in America and shuns the life of fancy and luxury once again, earlier she has met disappointment because of the marriage against her dream of marrying a neurosurgeon and to relish the luxuries of consumerist society. Infact "Dimple's problem is her utter rootness"<sup>3</sup> and she could not succeed in adapting with either of the cultures, inherited or acquired and appears to be on the cross-roads of life with utmost perturbation. Another shocking situation that Dimple discovers is that America with all its glitter allows Indian wives only to create little India but doesn't allow either freedom or fulfillment as evident in the case of Ina Mullick who, despite her desperate attempts at becoming a total American remains a frustrated individual. After such disturbing realization Dimple feels isolated inwardly so much that she finds herself unable to welcome the new prospect after Amit gets a job. She makes certain pathetic attempts to get merged into the new culture through practicing the trick of flirting with Americans but discovers complete estrangement from herself and her surrounding as well. Now she is discovered to be caught into a very conflicting situation where her mind is conditioned by the commercials on T.V. and

magazines so much that she is unable to distinguish it from the world of reality. Dimple is now emotionally caught into two world, Indian culture questions her outrageous adultery but her present self aspire to become American by any means and just to suppress her guilty conscious on the one hand and on the other to feel American like characters of T.V. Serials kills Amit her own husband. The best aspect of the novel lies in “the tension and balance between the personal and the social”<sup>4</sup> but certainly not in estrangement from society and dissociation not from reality rather real reality of life.

To conclude we discover that both the characters Maya and Dimple are living a life justified by the metaphorical implications of their names, like illusion and depression and always find themselves away from the elixir of life, a life of love and consummation. What they need utmost is to enlarge their outlook and vision of life that life is more a matter of adjustment; than achievement and through this moderate attitude they ought to have exerted for the fulfillment of their aspirations but it could not be denied that people is society should also rise higher from petty gender distinction and to some extent equal opportunity and freedom to female child should also be given.

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