

**The Concepts of Marriage and Psychological Conflicts in Deshpande's *That Long Silence* and Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock***

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***Abstract***

Shashi Deshpande and Anita Desai are better than some of the best Indian women novelists in writing psychological novels with reference to the inner psyche of Indian woman. They explore the psychic depth of their novel protagonists and analyses in detail their motives. Their characters are renowned by the qualities of introspection, introversion, and a rejection to abandon their individual selves. The ideal wifehood in Indian context is that of chastity, purity, faithfulness, and sincere devotion are expected to preserve by the women despite their husband's rejections.

In India motherhood is usually elevated. But the mental anguish and trauma that a woman encounters during marriage are often overlooked by patriarchy who carves the images of ideal wifehood and so as motherhood. Deshpande protagonist Jaya in *That Long Silence* and Maya in Anita Desai's novel *Cry, the Peacock* includes the way for their emotional battles to establish their identity against the patriarchal norms who were forced into much trauma and agony. They kept their battle against the shackles of oppression until they reached their destination.

**Key Words:** Psychological Conflicts- marriage-husband- negative impact- trauma- loneliness- frustration-contrast-reality.

***Introduction***

Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality says that social conduct is the consequence of the collaborations among the constituent parts of the psyche: the ego, and superego. This theory, known as Freud's systematic theory of personality, places immense stress on the role of instinctive emotional contradictions in forming man's behavior and personality. Dynamic communications among these basic elements of the psyche are thought to progress through five diverse psychosexual segments of evolution. Over the last century, however, Freud's views have been touched with denunciation, in part because of his strange focus on sexuality as the key driver of socialistic personality development.

## **Freud's Theory on Humans Way of Thinking**

According to Freud, "one's personality develops from the connections among what he planned as the three basic forms of the human mind: the id, ego, and superego. Tensions among these three associations, and our struggles to find stability among what each of them "wishes," determines how we act and move toward the world. What balance out we strike in any provided state determines how we will settle the struggle between two all-embracing collaborative trends: our genomic cogent and joy-pursuing drives vs. our mingled internal self-management over those campaigns. With character reference to the central characters of the two authors Jaya in *That Long Silence* and Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* we can prove the shaping characters are always influenced by their way of upbringing by their parental figures which is relevant to the living society.

This leads to battle between the spouse and the wife which is a fight of emotions of the women's inner psyche and outer appearance's the traditional society restricted the growth of the women it opens a big debate for the equality of women which is a threw a challenge to the male society by the educated woman of progressive thoughts. The woman in the name of traditions is always suppressed and repressed by the Manu code of conduct which never allows freedom as she is always made into a over dependent in aspects and respects. Since India is a country with many traditional ties for women are not acceptable by the modern educated women as they feel the system is partial which is in favor of men. As a result, the women forced into drudgery though she is highly educated. Though the husband is less intelligence than the wife, the wife must pretend that she is always less when compared to her life partner to keep her marital bonds forever in a traditional bound Manu society. But since the woman is educated in the novels of these both novelists, they turn against the traditional society to establish their rights of equality which is beautifully portrayed by these women novelists of India which is their aim to project the problems of Indian women as they were the first-hand evidence. As they observed the traditional Indian circumstances with their very eyes, they made their efforts to bring the problems of Indian women into limelight through their women protagonists in their novels. The equality of women today is not a problem of one nation or continent, or arena and it is the universal problem which should be observed by the global culture to classify the distinction of woman as she is still reflected as a second-rate citizen in many countries which is the unwelcoming attitude of the male society.

## **Objective**

The objective of this research paper is to analyze the psychological conflicts with reference to the Indian educated woman whose 'self' is split between belief and modernism in Deshpande's *That Long Silence* and Anita Desai's *Cry the Peacock*. It is also based on the comparison of Eastern and Western culture which is the influence of Westernization in the name of education and modernity of the Indian woman who try to establish their identity. A short-term assessment is also made to find the women's compatibility with their male counterpart in terms of the unusual equalities like economic, and social context in marriage.

### ***1. That Long Silence***

Deshpande has emerged as a writer taking profound perception into the female psyche who focused on the marital relation and seeks to exhibit the tradition that a woman has been trained for ages to play a minor or a secondary role in a outdated home with reference to the Indian context reflect the conflict between custom and newness which is depicted in her *That Long Silence*. Jaya undergoes certain traumatic experience in her life, and she became utterly transformed and then expects to have a new rapport with her husband. She is not only silent, but also the sufferer. Her silence is socio psychic in nature. She had ample dreams about her life. She expects that, after getting married her way of life reaches a new path but unexpectedly her husband could not understand her emotional 'self' and her adolescent dreams utterly shattered. She failed to be closer to her husband mentally and emotionally. She realized the frustration and paved her way towards alienation. Jaya has the opinion, "a woman can never get angry. She can only be neurotic, hysterical, and frustrated. There is no room for despair, either" (*That Long Silence*-147).

Deshpande uses a beautiful image to describe Jaya's matrimonial lifeway observes, is a series of waiting that take you back her of the childhood game of "Keeping house" in which she plays a traditional wife waiting upon a husband. This is treated as an allegory for her experience in adult life, "Wait until you get married. Wait until your husband comes. Wait until you go to your in-laws' home. Wait until you have kids." (1993-30) The role of waiting given to the woman a permanent one in traditional society and Jaya is no exception. Over the years, she shapes herself "so resolutely to his desire" that in the end she is disappeared with no identity of her own, in her own words.

"Just emptiness and silence:"(ibid;144) Mohan is never really concerned about her feelings and emotions. He is happy if she fulfils the responsibilities of mother and wife as per social outlooks. Mohan indicts Jaya his wife of his troubles and is unconvinced with his wife's attitude. He walks out of the house leaving her feeling detached and deserted. She explores her rapport with Mohan: First there is love, and then there is sex that was how she had always imagined it to be. But after living with Mohan, she had realized.

In a talk to Shashi Deshpande, she declares what she has achieved through her writing is not a proposal of any substitute model for the conventional role models of Sita or Savitri. She thinks that through her writing, she is in a sense, analyzing the myth. "I am not saying don't take these women as role model. See them for what they are otherwise the weight on you is going to be very difficult, if you are expected to be a Sita, woman of chastity' in the sense of Sita, who never wrongs her husband, never does anything wrong. You can never be like that, and you will always feel guilty. I am just telling you that let us see Sita as a human being. (2003)"

Silence was there in Jaya's life which was a silence by force in her when she had refused to converse openly with those around her for, she feared that she would hurt them. Jaya, the protagonist in *That Long Silence* intended to be a writer, but she has not been successful in her favourite business. Her husband has been alleged with malpractice in his office and has been summoned to leave the job so beset with too many problems. She cannot even get away. She did once walkout of the house and went about aimlessly. Unexpectedly she came upon a beautiful garden and sat at a bench. But a man had come and sat next to her said, "Hello, sister!" with a

leering smile. She had got away from there and after some more aimless walking, had returned home. She was questioned where she had stayed for such an extended period and that the household partners were starving. She could have laughed at that time or have cried for herself when the strange man had said hello to her. She did neither but just got on with her living.

At this time of anguish, she gets the news of the disappearance of her son Rahul, who was holidaying with their family acquaintances. She feels totally shattered and lost as there is nobody to console and help her. In this state of terrible isolation, she realizes and understands what Kamat said to her that “pursuit of happiness is meaningless” and loneliness is the crucial condition of human existence. The days which she spends alone without Mohan in the flat give her a sense of perspective- she can evaluate her life calmly and see where she has committed errors. She feels a sense of liberty and selfhood. She gets the strength and courage to realize that the silence which she has kept in her XVII years of marriage has had a negative impact. And when she collects a telegram from Mohan that "All is well" and Rahul has also come back, she can see things in a brighter light and with support.

She is again in the danger of being caught in the shackles of marriage. Her innermost thoughts come out through this episode. And all the fears and doubts which she had suffered disappear. She decides that she will not restrain her feelings and try to communicate with her husband rather than give in to all his tendencies and ultimately intends to break her fourteen years long silence which is a mental conflict to choose between tradition and modernity.

Jaya 's willpower and intelligence besides her modern education equipped her to use her rights as a human being with the similar flesh and blood like a male creature is a welcoming aspect. She aspires to unshackle herself by admitting her sufferings, maladies, psychic or emotional imbalances and goals. Kamini Dinesh finds “Jaya moving out of the ‘cloistered self’ as she seeks to escape from the struggle of routine life and is forced to find innermost resources that will allow her to take back and engage more fully in her life and marriage” (1989-1996). Jaya’s optimistic view of life that changes are possible exposes the conversion she has undergone. Deshpande insists through this novel that women must fight opening for their human rights. The repression of women can be deep- rooted out only if women start breaking their long silence as in the issue of Jaya in her novel.

## **2. *Cry, the Peacock***

*Cry, the Peacock*, the opening work of fiction of Anita Desai, is a massive psychological analysis of Maya, the protagonist of the story. She is seen as a neurotic, introvert, and love-famished personality as well as a victim of the incompetence of human relationships. Maya's claustrophobia, isolation and dissatisfaction are effectively fetched by the narrator. Maya is a hypersensitive young woman "pursued and disturbed by the concept of early death foretold by an albino astrologer and her ineffectual lonely struggle against fate, that drives her to homicide, insanity and finally to suicide" (Meera;1996)

Fantasy develops a component of the overall work of fine art of the novel, and it is frequently showcased along with and in distinction to the realm of realism. Maya always clings to fantasy, as she is unable to relate herself to reality. Her connection to reality passes through three different phases— her childhood, marital life, and the final stage when she totally surrenders herself to the

world of insanity. She is seen as a disturbed, introverted and love-famished personality, a sufferer of the incompetence of mortal relationships. Maya's claustrophobia, solitude and frustration are successfully passed out by the novelist.

Anita Desai set up a new epoch of psychological novels and created a fresh volume to the world of novel in Indian English literature. Her women qualities unfold a new landscape with their unique nature of agonies. Through her work of fiction, she attempts to venture the anguish and dilemma of women folk in a man restricted old-fashioned society. A well-established critic, K. Meera Bai in one of her critical writings on Anita Desai tells, "Anita Desai breaks a new ground in the world of Indian English fiction by shifting the emphasis from the external to the internal world. She builds a world of her own which she fills up with extremely sensitive beings. She eschews social accreditation and preaching. It is not as though her novels are empty without social purpose. Her novels portray the inner souls of hyper-sensitive women who are in eternal quest for meaningful life in a way- the true weight of things" (1996). The women protagonists of Anita Desai endure a peculiar psychic experience and suffer from failures and pains since she is caught to select between customary and modern way of life. They experience shock due to their hypersensitive attitude and their unsympathetic husbands. Nearly All of the stars of Anita Desai are either ladies in the rich world or are ordinary home makers or housewives. The ladies in her work of fiction under study are not those who perform twin roles as that of a housewife and a career-concerned woman to agonies from the strain of being over-worked for her family but turned into rebels to satisfy their psychic emotions for their identity which is the identity crisis. The traditional bound or the constrained environments make the woman tolerate extremely, but this tendency ultimately react soundlessly or violently to satisfy her inner psyche fought against the male ego in a rebellious attitude, which is nothing but the feeling against the male superior feeling, led to the assassination of the protagonist's husband.

In the novel, *Cry, the Peacock*, Maya is the influenced personality whose father's excess. Maya, an introvert, and a pampered daughter of a wealthy aristocratic father is given in marriage to Gautama, a gentle man much of age than herself. The novel commences with the mortality of Maya's pet dog, Toto. In her state of agony and depression, she is reminded of the albino astrologer's prediction that in the fourth year of her marriage, there will be a death, either hers or her husband's. To make herself free from the burden, Maya recedes to her past and fantasizes her childhood days. Fantasy becomes a part of the total shape of the novel, and it is always predicted along with and in contrast to the world of reality. Maya always clings to fantasy, as she is unable to relate herself to reality. Her relationship to reality passes through three different stages—her childhood, marital life, and the closing time when she totally abandons herself to the world of insanity. Maya wants Gautama to love her very passionately. Gautama counsels Maya to exercise detachment, for attachment leads to self-desolation. Gautama's apathy towards her wishes and above all the albino prophet's prediction that either of the spouses would expire in the fourth year of their marriage ceremony results in the emotional trauma in Maya. Both Maya and Gautama have contradictory beliefs on life and are not able to see beyond their individual points of belief. Maya is dominated by strange neuroses and becomes oversensitive. It is Maya's desire to breathing and the apprehension of mortality haunts her that makes her to drive Gautama down the parapet.

“Like Lady Macbeth, she becomes a victim of hallucinations which speed up the process of disintegration of her perception. Gautama’s death took away even the last straw of hope without which life to her appears pointless. It is Gautama’s detachment from Maya and Maya’s detachment for more involvement in life leads to the killing of her husband. Anita Desai views Maya’s plight as an indivisible paradox of love and death. Maya must love to exist as peacocks do, and like peacocks again, she must tear the mate and be torn by him” (Paul;1998). *Cry, the Peacock*, is a work of fiction which portrays the eccentricity of Maya who grows into a psychic and pitiful figure and in the end slaughters Gautama her husband as she imagines that he is the cause of her grief. The female personalities in Anita Desai’s work of fiction are showcased to have sensitive and emotional environment which is too delicate to cope with the dehumanized and artificial urban backgrounds and with the hardened heartless spirit of the in-laws. It is a difficult condition for these delicate women to adjust themselves to the transforming situation, a disruptive journey from the defending shells of the parents’ family after their marriage to a totally separate family in the city surroundings. Maya’s hypersensitivity gradually turns in to craziness. The fear of death predominates in her along with her psychological trauma. In a fit of insanity, she homicides her husband thus making her conversion as a neurotic complete. Here unlike the persistent episodes of matricide Maya rages on her husband Gautama as it is, he who failed to satisfy her like her father. The image of her father riveted in her mind thus owes to her falling a victim to her dangerous destiny. Her fascinations for her father, her unnecessary adoration for him as a child hindered her from perceiving the insensitive personalities of her husband. She was instructed that the humankind sways to her own fantasies which proves to be an antithesis in the case of Gautama. This inability in her to accept the reality triggered her psychological disorder to an extremity where assassinating Gautama became the evident solution. Yet another thing that concerned her was that Gautama never became her father. He might not think of probably been the man who wove his world around her. The failure of Gautama to satisfy her obsession for her father turns her hysteric as she appreciates the memories with her father. Maya is a dissonant, despondent character who is isolated within the labyrinth of her psyche. Her sterility and incessant pain distinguish her retribution for her husband. She associates all that haunts her with Gautama’s incompetence to protect her. Gautama at regular intervals warns her that she is a prey to her fantasies by each passing day.

## **Conclusion**

Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande both the novelists produced an authentic plea to set free the women psyche from the conventional male control which has been existing in Indian society for ages. Both the novelists chose to fight against the age-old traditions which made the woman as a mere creature without flesh and blood. They realistically portray the emotional discrepancies and the internal conflicts of their protagonists and exposed the huge shift in attitudes and actions of the educated women to establish their self-identity. Today the egalitarianism of the womenfolk is the unquestionable and undebatable in all aspects and respects of the global society which gradually came out of the narrow feelings of superior and inferior.

Freud’s theory articulated that, learning to identify themselves with the same-sex parent plays a significant title role through the evolution process of a humans. In the hypothesis of psychosexual growth, the “libidinal energy” is focused on distinct “erogenous zones” in the

child's body during various stages of their advancement. An inaccurate advanced stage, causes an obstacle in the appropriate result of their psychosexual development, resulting in a kind of fixation". Freud asserted that such fixations, that hinders the primal stages of an individual's psychosexual development, often leads to certain apprehensions, ultimately leading to neurosis.

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