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## PSYCHIC FURORE OF MAYA IN "CRY THE PEACOCK"

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### ABSTRACT

*There is an unwritten law which considers that a woman is an asset who bestows honor to the family, rear children, obeying all the necessary standards and norms fixed by the community to which she belongs. Life for many women is convoluted, challenging and fatiguing. In this process, they become a prey to mental and physical violence. There are many kinds of women who are portrayed by women writers. Now this paper explores about Maya a youthful and responsive married girl, whose psychic furore is portrayed by Anita Desai in "Cry the Peacock".*

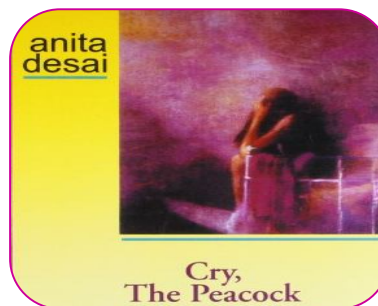
**KEYWORDS:** *protection and financial system , women writers.*

### INTRODUCTION

Women have attained a pedestal where they govern a decent freedom, due to the augmentation of their responsible role in the regime of education and employment. Time's transcendental clasp of women empowerment has paved way for the women to procure necessary strength and vision to feel unrestricted. Women did not have the opportunity to express their ordeals to the world as they had been lodged, in the precincts of shackled suppressions from generations. Being underprivileged of the fundamental necessities of life like victuals, protection and financial system, these women do not have specific entity. Livelihood is more important than this so called identity. Almost many women are brought into limelight only through the perspectives of women writers or through the writers who write about these women. One such woman is our Maya who is preoccupied and obsessed by a prophecy she had come across during her childhood. The prediction that the astrologer had given was that she had to encounter a worst situation either for her or for her husband through death within four years of their married life.

### The Reason for the Plight of Maya

Maya is motherless. The importance of a woman especially a mother in the family is highly indispensable. If there is no mother in the family the child, who is brought up without the mother and her affectionate guidance will feel highly insecure and gradually become a prey to this insecurity. To just discuss regarding a real life example, a famous political leader who became a prime minister at the age of 81, was not able to provide the emotional security what the girl needed. Her father is an advocate who is well affluent. She has a brother who has gone to America. Since she is motherless, her untold ordeal of vacuum is filled with her father's affection. She thinks and believes that her father's affection is unsurpassable and it is the ultimate cause of all the mishaps in her mind. She led a relaxed life under the generous and non judgmental attitude of her father which she expects it even from



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her husband Gautama.

### **Juxtaposed Reality**

Maya wishes to have the same sort of affection, care and understanding from her husband Gautama. Gautama is a flourishing and successful lawyer, always very busily occupied in his professional affairs. In his busy schedule he doesn't have spare time for Maya. She has a feeling that she is being neglected; her feelings are not catered to due to which she feels highly fed-up and despondent. She feels the terrible hands of loneliness chocking her neck. The silence that prevails in the house eats her up. She is left to her own world. The unconscious and insensible words that were sown by an astrologer create havoc in her life. The caring consideration of her father makes Maya unaware of the lethal gloominess; but as Gautama falls short to gratify her passionate yearning for love and life, she is left to the seclusion and hush of the domicile which she falls a victim.

Maya cogitates over how Gautama is deficient in love for her. In a fit of strong desolation and anguish, encounters him saying that he knows nothing of her and how she loves. She says that love is important for her; she says he has never loved and also he doesn't love her. Inferring her plight as mental sickness Gautama warns her travelling towards schizophrenic regime and he holds her father responsible for petting and pampering her with excessive affection.

### **Unrelenting Obsession**

Unrelenting obsession of the prophecy by the astrologer about death keeps Maya haunting throughout. It is not the ardent affection of her father that made her neurosis but this prophecy of this astrologer that obsessed her mind and brought havoc to her inner peace. The dreadful words of the astrologer which specified that either Maya or Gautama would die within four years of their married life. On the verge of completion of four years, she thinks that either she or Gautama would be a prey for the prediction. She has an additional hallucination of a vivid picturesque of the drumbeats for which mad demons dance like that of Kathakali that reverberates within her and frightens her.

She is aware of the fact that she is obsessed by an evil entity which is her fate and she thinks that, that is the time which the astrologer had mentioned. Unpredictably she is highly stung and excitable, whereas Gautama on the other hand is highly professional, practical and doesn't deal with any of deeds that consumes time in futile. As her name symbolizes her inner conflict, she lives only on illusions. There is obviously a distinct variation in their temperaments and we could infer a clear disharmony. Gautama has flourished as professional personnel but undoubtedly failed as a husband. She tries to divert her mind by being with her albino astrologer's prophecy. Her attempts to divert herself by visits to her friend Leila and Pom. Mrs. Lal's party doesn't give her the sense of belonging. Neither the restaurant nor the cabaret, are able to chase away the engulfing fear in her mind. Her destiny is that the affection she ought to have had from Gautama is not available for her. This drives her crazy. We have to understand that as a motherless child, she had all her affection from her father. Now that after marriage, there is a vacuum in her life which remains unfulfilled. The untold ordeal she undergoes is something terrible.

### **Unpredicted Climax**

At this juncture, Maya's mother in law and sister in law visit her. Their visit gives her a great relief and solace to her mind. It does bring a brief breathing space to her. She takes pleasure in their companionship. This pleasure of her is temporary and she falls a prey to the nightmare of seclusion. Empty house haunts her and she is filled with emptiness again. She is reminded of that haunting astrology when he happens to hear the cries of peacock in the rainy season. Her chase for life drives her away from life.

When she asks to herself if she is becoming insane, she enquires who is her savior and she emphasizes who is need of that she says she is dying, and she says she is in love with living. She proclaims that she is in Love and she is dying. She pleads to God saying "God let me sleep, forget rest. But no, I'll never sleep again. There is no rest anymore - only death and waiting." At this juncture her psyche is in acute

suffering. She undergoes severe headaches and gets tormented by her own feelings of rage and terror. She becomes schizophrenic visualizing lizards, rats snakes and iguanas crawling over her. Her house appears to be a tomb for her. She is getting tranquilized by the negative thoughts clubbed along with fear over her life. All of a sudden it dawns in her mind, that it might be either Gautama or herself who would be destined to death and not necessarily herself. She justifies her thought of death wish being transferred to Gautama, specifying that he is detached with life and he would mind if he doesn't live.

In her obstinacy and capriciousness, she is even casual with the word 'murder'. He is engrossed in his work and forgets his own self in his work that Maya overlooks him and forgetting of the dust storm that has raged earlier in the afternoon he accepts to her request. Then she asks him to go along with her to the roof of the house to enjoy fresh cool air, he goes along, lost in his own thoughts.

As she passes out of the room, Maya glimpses at the bronze statue of dancing Shiva and prays to protect them. While climbing the stairs encounter her cat suddenly crossing past them in a state of great alarm. They strole towards the end of the terrace. Maya looks beguile at the pale hushed blaze of the rising moon. As Gautama moves in front of her, she is unable to see the moon as he is hiding the moon from her view. She vigorously pushes him over the parapet. In the end her mother in law and her sister in law take Maya from the tragic scene of her father's house.

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