Chapter II

NEUROSION DEGENERATING INTO PSYCHOSIS

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Introduction:

The present chapter undertakes an assessment of the impact of Neurosis on the psyche of the human characters and evaluates how neurosis degenerates into psychosis. Psychosis is the extreme form of Neurosis. Psychosis can be equated with insanity and it is almost incurable. Maya in *Cry The Peacock* and Dimple in *Wife* are victims of this extreme form of incurable stage of psyche. Their perception of the world around is very unique, absurd and impartial. An attempt has been made to understand and analyse the way Neurosis affects the psyche of the female protagonist of the novels understudy and ascertain the amount of injury and loss that psychosis can cause to the victim and his associates.

Hypothesis:

Psychosis is an extreme form of Neurosis. It is a kind of psychological equilibrium which is almost incurably, violent and destructive. Psychosis is a
kind of disease. It causes damage not to the person concerned only but to those who directly or indirectly come in contact with the victims.

**Definition of the word *Psychosis*:**

The forerunner of psychosis is neurosis. Karen Horney (one of the neo-Freudians) in her book *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time* lists three characteristics that she found in nearly all neurotic individuals. The first is lack of sense of practicability, second, a discrepancy between actual achievement and the potentiality for achievement; and third, a pervading personal unhappiness and dissatisfaction with life. In addition to these three characteristics, she found that most neurotics are plagued by "feeling of inferiority and self-doubt" (Horney, 1951:63). Explaining neurosis Jung has used the concept of psychological equilibrium. "Neurosis arises out of check between an individual's attempt to adjust to some situations and his constitutional inability to the change." (Page, 1970:91)

Psychosis is defined as, "a serious mental illness that affects the whole personality" (Hornby and Turnbull, 2010). Psychoses are severe mental disorders that tend to shatter the integration of the personality and disrupt the individual's social relationships. The behaviour of the psychotic is too bizarre, unreasonable, and inappropriate to be understood by a normal person. Psychotic individuals are so unbalanced mentally that they are not legally responsible for their actions. In the eyes of the law, they are insane. In psychoses, normal inhibitions and cultural restraints are severed, and the patient indulges his whims and fantasies unchecked by rules of logic, common
sense, or social pressure. The wish is father to the thought, and the thought is omnipotent. The psychotic has only to think that he is a multimillionaire or the beloved of some movie star, and it is so.

Anita Desai's *Cry, the Peacock*:

Maya in Desai's *Cry, the Peacock* and Dimple in Mukharjee's *Wife* are the characters who move from neurosis to psychosis. *Cry, the Peacock* deals with the psychic turmoil Maya, the protagonist, undergoes during her marital and post-marital life. Several critics relate the novel to Freudian *libido* or Lawrentian *Oedipus complex*. The neurotic character of Maya owes its genesis to the situations and circumstances in which she is brought up. She is pampered from her childhood by her father so much that she is incapable of leading an independent existence. She is young, beautiful, sensitive and sensual with an undeveloped and immature mind-set. Mental immaturity prohibits her from taking any firm decision of her own. For every decision during her premarital period, she depends on her father. Virtually whole of her neurotic life is imperceptibly linked with the father's undivided attention. Being the only daughter of her father all the affection of the father is showered upon her. Even after marriage, she looks for a father in her husband. Her marriage to Gautama only serves to highlight her total involvement in father. It has been rightly opined by some critics that her neurosis has existential dimensions, her sickness almost...‘Kierkegaardian’ (Prasad, 1981:25). There are other critics who feel that Maya lacks “Virtue of grace and self-possession” (Weir, 1981:2). Her neurotic self is no doubt brought into existence by her father. Her father is
a 'benevolent despot' (Prasad, 1981:32) under whose guidance and love she grows. He is very protective and careful to his daughter. He offers her complete protection and love ever since she is born. The over-protective tendencies of her father tend to suppress and kill her own individuality. She is not allowed to grow as an individual who could muster courage to face all kinds of vicissitudes of life for understanding the realities of the world. Maya lives in a world of illusion. She thinks that love is a solution to all problems. She has a child-like longing for love. She always lives in utter helplessness. She thinks that this helplessness can be overcome when someone offers excessive love to her which her father always offered her. She thinks that clinging to love is the only way to actualize her idealized self.

Maya, too, deviates from normal pattern of behaviour because she fails to understand reality. She has been prevented from experiencing the different shades and nuances of life. Her father never leave her to wallow in trouble. She begins to think that it is her birthright to be loved. She develops a wrong perspective about life and living, and inculcation of this wrong perspective makes her a neurotic. Her character can be contrasted with that of Dimple in *wife*. In case of Dimple, it is withdrawal of love by her father that makes Dimple suffer in order to create her own idealized self in the society. *Freud* puts emphasis on childhood experiences, which determine and ordain the latter behaviour pattern of a person.

During Maya’s childhood, her father used to take her in arms, wipe her tears and pacify her irrespective of the gravity of the incident. He always comes
to her rescue. As a result, Maya does not get an opportunity to judge the things for herself. She cannot arrive at a correct self-evaluation. Maya’s psyche is shaped by the strict and orderly world of her father. Maya allows herself to be pampered. There is reason why she does not protest against her father’s love. The reason is that she has seen the fate of her brother Arjuna. He lost his father’s affection. She recollects that the father was terse, cold and grim with Arjuna. “With me he never was, no matter what I did..... even I noted the difference and felt uncomfortable.” (Desai, *CTP:* 1980:133)

There are two paramount forces which are instrumental in causing psychic imbalance in Maya: one, the strict and orderly world of her father and the second, her blind adoration of her father. Maya’s psyche result in creating in her what is termed as “basic anxiety” (Horney, 1965:198). Karen Horney has referred to “injurious influences” (Desai, 1980:87) which prevent a child from arriving at correct self-evaluation. In fact, Maya’s father does not give her the real love, what he gives her is his attention and protection. A critic like Jasbir Jain thinks that:

> Whatever he could give her as a semblance of love was a manifestation of power and the relationship fed on his own ego. Maya is the sacrifice offered at the altar of his own image. (Jain, 1987:117)

Consequently, Maya’s basic needs for love and belongingness are not gratified in the real sense. Her development is blocked and hindered. Maya continues to live in the world of fantasies. She is least worried about the harsh realities as a result there is imbalance in her life. She wants to live in a “Fairy
Neurotic Women Characters in the Representative Novels of Desai, Jhabvala, Markandaya, Sahgal, Mukherjee and Deshpande

Tale" (Desai, 1980:89) atmosphere. On marital front, she has to take care of her husband and her family, but she fails because she is mentally and psychologically unable to meet the requirements of young married woman. Explaining neurosis Jung has used the concept of psychological equilibrium. As:

\[\text{Neurosis arises out of check between an individual’s attempt to adjust to some situations and his constitutional inability to the change. (Jung, 1909:91)}\]

Maya’s psyche is shaped by her father’s excessive love for her. Maya’s father, Rai Sahib developed extraordinary liking for his daughter for two reasons-one, the premature death of his wife and second Maya’s submissive nature. Rai Saheb does not accept rebellion. He thinks ‘the source of disintegration is the human being’s variety in his power to act’ (Desai, CTP:1980:54). He appreciates Maya’s submissiveness. He thinks that in a daughter he has treasure. He likes her to become a ‘Daddy’s girl’ (Desai, CTP: 1980:159). Here again the protective feeling of a father to his daughter is revealed. Rai Sahib is very apathetic towards Maya’s education. Therefore, Maya does not get an opportunity to broaden her vision about the realities of the world. Maya finds it difficult to adjust to the way of the world. Rai Sahib advises her to sever her contacts with the world. Here, Rai Sahib appears to have adopted double standard and discriminatory treatment to his children. His attitude to his son is different from that to his daughter. He does not ask his son, Arjuna to sever contacts with the world. Rai Sahib says to Arjuna:
What is the matter Arjuna? Is this not good enough for you? Father asked once coming as close to a lilaze of anger as ever he did. Frozen anger frostbite ‘what did you go into those slims for? Why do you need to consort with butches’ sons? I have sent you to the finest college, where you can make worthy friends, and you turn to city loafers. (Desai, *CTP*:1980:137)

Such a discriminatory attitude to the daughter renders Maya unable to master her life. She has a tendency to depend upon her father and then after marriage on her husband, simply because for her the world is hostile and the two can provide her protection against it. That is perhaps the reason why Maya agrees to marry Gautama who is much older to her. She finds in him some of the best qualities – intelligence, understanding that she found in her a father. Rai Sahib also feels that a person of Gautama’s age and understanding will just fit into his own shoes and give a kind of fatherly protection to Maya. Even after marriage, Maya continues to fondly remember her father all through her married life. For her he is always ‘my gentle father’ (Desai, *CTP*:1980:52) and this is one of the reasons of Maya’s hold on the realities of life becoming weak. She does not understand how to face the different facets of her marital life. In her married life, Maya expects some emotional and physical satisfaction but both of them are denied to her. Gautama’s cold intellectuality and his advanced age are the factors that are detrimental to Maya’s pleasurable life and she remains a much disappointed woman. She does not get sexual satisfaction from her husband. At the beginning of the novel itself, Maya makes a frank admission of her sexual dissatisfaction born of Gautama’s unpardonable negligence:
Telling me to go to sleep while he worked at his papers, he did not give another thought to me, to either the soft, willing body or the lovely, wanting mind that waited near his bed. (Desai, CTP: 1980:9)

Frustrated by his coldness, she gives herself up to a fit of pillow-beating. As her disillusionment becomes a routine experience, she increasingly sexualizes her surroundings, perhaps by way of displacement. The papaya trees in the courtyard, for example, assume a new sexual significance for her:

I contemplated that, smiling with pleasure at the thought of these long streamers of birded flowers that flow out of the core of the female papaya tree and twine about her slim trunk and the firm wax petalled blossoms that leap directly out of the solid trunk of the male. (Desai, CTP: 1980:92)

As her grip over herself begins to slacken she begins to experience hallucinatory visions of lizards and birds copulating in weird settings.

Of lizards, the lizards that some upon you, stalking you silently, upon clawed toes, slipping their club like tongues in and out, in and out with an audible hiss...... They have struck you to the pillar of salt which, when it is motionless they will mount and lash with their slime dripping tongues, lash and lash again, as they grip you with curled claws, rubbing their cold bellies upon your, rubbing and grinding-, rubbings and grinding. (Desai, CTP: 1980:127)

What Maya experiences here seems to be a symbolic gratification of the sexual desire, which remains unfulfilled in actual life. The image of fighting and mating peacocks, apart from being the central motif of the novel, underlines Maya's sexual frustration too. The memory of her innocent enjoyment in her childhood becomes a foil to her present over-crowded mind, full of bird and animal imagery.
But sleep was rent by the frenzied cries of peacocks pacing the rocks at night—peacocks searching for mates, peacocks tearing themselves to bleeding shreds in the act of love. The night sky turned to a flurry of peacock’s tails, each star a staring eye. (Desai, CTP: 1980:175)

In spite of her total frustration, Maya’s moral scrupulosity does not allow her to cross the bounds of marital morality. Nor is she able to sublimate this powerful biological urge in the manner of her friend Leila who selflessly serves her tuberculos husband. Her married life ends up being emotionally and socially sterile. A continuous frustration of the body’s sexual needs can be disastrous to somebody like Maya. A healthy emotional and sexual life would have given her a sense of security and stopped her psyche form decaying. This view acquires validation from Freud’s observations:

experience shows...that women who as being the actual vehicles of the sexual interests of mankind, are only endowed in a small measure, with the gift of sublimating their instincts, and who..... when they are subjected to the disillusionments of marriage, fall ill of severe neuroses which permanently darken their lives. (Freud, 1985:47)

Freud attributes neurosis of women to sexual dissatisfaction resulting from the rigors of civilized sexual morality. Biologically speaking, marital unfaithfulness could be a viable cure for the ailment, however, such a thing entails perhaps the most severe indictment in the rigidly organized Indian society, Freud continues:

the more strictly a women has been brought up and the more sternly she has submitted to the demands of civilization, the more she is afraid of taking this way out : and in the conflict between her desires and her sense of duty, she once more seeks refuge in a
neurosis. Nothing protects her virtue as securely as illness. (Freud, 1985:47)

Maya, too, seeks a neurotic solution but only to find it inadequate. What she thinks actually is that love must be reciprocated. Lack of response from her husband is interpreted by her as rejection, and this sense of rejection contributes to make her neurotic. For Maya, love offered to her by her father was the ideal love and was the proper ambience for one’s growth. She was never reprimanded by her father; therefore, she could not become mature and practical women. Her father and father’s love were always remembered by her as being ideal and graceful. She remembers fondly how everything with his has grace and dignity.

......gracious and exact, where breeding, culture leisure and comfort have been brought into a nice where no single weed is allowed to flower, no single flower to die and remain on the stalk, no single stalk to grow out of its pruned shape. As the streams in a Moghul garden flow musically through channels of carved marble and stands love, so her thoughts, her life flow, broken into small exquisite patterns by the carving, played upon by uttering nuances of light and shade, but never once stepping their limitations, never breaking their bounds, always moving onwards, with the same graceful cadence. (Desai, CTP:1980:45)

Father’s over - protective nature and love do not allow her any independence to think and grow as an entity. She always remembers the special affection of her father. She remembers her father even in her married life whenever she is upset. In moments of distress she ardently desires to run to her father for assurance and for those: “mesmerizing words...... In his deep tones.” (Desai, CTP:1980:52)
Whenever she is in need of reassurance and love, she looks at Gautama not only as a father but also as a liberator and saviour. On seeing the caged monkeys at the railway station Maya’s reaction is typical:

My father might have come: I announced look for him. Look for him. Help me look for him, Gautama, He’ll open the cages and let them out. Hurry! (Desai, CTP:1980:156)

Maya’s neurosis arises out of her need for Gautama’s concern for either her “soft willing body or the lonely waiting mind that waited near his bed” (Desai, CTP:1980:8), but he is not bothered 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 helplessness arising out of neurosis is gnawing her. Therefore, she says:

So, rambling, he drew me away from my thoughts of anguish which rose, every now and then, like birds that awake from dreams and rise out of their trees amidst great commotion, circle a while, then settle again, on other branches. (Desai, CTP:1980:19)

Moreover, she is certain that in Gautama’s family “one did not speak of love far less of affection” (Desai, CTP:1980:40). 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 her these. Therefore, her neurotic behaviour is intensified. As a result of this she says, “…I wish I could see father again, it always helps… In his words, ‘It must be so’… he said to me, Come Now, we mustn’t fret. If it must be so, we must learn to accept” (Desai, CTP:1980:46-47). But Gautama can only express his annoyance for her sad mood by asking her “Help what? Whom “he asked puzzled…” (Desai,
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CTP:1980:46). She thinks that her neurosis has been intensified as a result of her recalling the episodes connected with these women. She is unable to give up the thoughts of the albino. Therefore, she consoles herself by bursting out: “God, Gautama, father, surely it is nothing but an hallucination” (Desai, CTP:1980:55). After this she hopes to be “same again” thinking that it is “nothing but a flagrant nightmare.” (Desai, CTP:1980:56)

Maya is extremely faithful to her instincts which, as is their nature, crave for unqualified and wild satisfaction. According to Freudian tenets normal people in her circumstances would have affected a withdrawal by influencing the instinctual urges at the psychic level. But tragically for Maya, her very life appears to be intricately woven with and highly dependent on her instincts. Given her instinctually Maya expects some emotional and physical satisfaction in married life but both of them are denied to her, one by Gautama’s cold intellectuality and the other by his age. Maya’s longing for the sensuous enjoyment of life is dampened by tenets of the Gita philosophy of non-attachment. Her effusive emotionality is always counterbalanced by Gautama’s analytical mind. While he views “nothing subjectively, nothing with passion” (Desai, CTP:1980:150) she is “flooded with tenderness and gratitude” (Desai, CTP:1980:11) when he merely touches her hair, falls “into the soft, velvet well of the primordial of original instinct, of first-formed love” (Desai, CTP:1980:11) when he draws a finger down her cheek, and takes to hating her own pretty face for failing to make any impact on him. She has to thus continually contend with unreciprocated emotionality and feels terrible on that
score. Maya feels secured when she remembers her father, Gautama’s remark that “You have a very obvious father – obsession” (Desai, CTP:1980:2) is not correct because that carries sort of libidinal reference but according to Horney Maya’s love to her father is not a libidinal instinct it is simply her search for glory.

Her father profoundly influences Maya. Even the gloomy prophecy of the albino astrologer that her husband would die during the fourth year of her marriage is rigorously repressed in her unconscious because her father dismisses the whole prophecy as mere fraud.

The father had managed to send the albino out of the town, and from that day, the world had not been uttered in my (Maya’s) presence, nor ‘astrology’ nor ‘palmistry’. ‘Hush’ he had cried if any such matter were mentioned and it was with fear that his commands were uttered and with fear that he had watched the little bits of paper, marked with fine Sanskari calligraphy and strange hieroglyphics, catch fire, curl up at the edges and turn to carlion black ash” (Desai, CTP:1980:75)

Arjuna, her brother seems to point out:

After all if father did not belong to that sheep fold of superstitious, hide bound Brahmins, there would never have been that absurd fuss over a horoscope that, I remember was once cast for you…..the trantruins, do you remember?(Desai, CTP:1980:141)

Maya keeps this prophecy repressed in her unconscious but when her marriage with Gautama enters the fourth year this takes the shape of an obsessional neurosis owing to the death of her pet dog, Toto. In the beginning of her neurotic application, she thinks that it was she herself who was fated to die. With the death of Toto, she begins to wonder whether it was not.
“Gautama’s life that was threatened” (Desai, *CTP*: 1980: 64). She does not disclose this prophecy to Gautama. Very soon, she is convinced that Gautama is certainly fated to die and therefore she wants to keep the secret for herself at any cost.

He must not know, not even guess, never, never, never. If he guessed new dangers would arise like sudden fires out of the cracked earth. Ah, if Gautama found out, would he not put me in peril of my life? Did he not love life too…… (Desai, *CTP*: 1980:151)

Maya does not reveal this secret for the reason that Gautama and his family would “hoot with derision at the mention of superstition” (Desai, *CTP*: 1980:75). She does not want to become an object of ridicule. She feels that she would be rendered helpless and her personal identity would be endangered and belittled. A neurotic would never allow himself or herself to undermine her personal identity. Therefore, she decides not to disclose it to Gautama and his family. The fact is that she has seen herself and the world from her father’s eyes. As a result, during her married life she cannot relate herself to the realities. She experiences a clash between the inner demands and outer liabilities.

Another reason why Maya’s tendencies of neurosis are more aggravated is that her own personal self is suppressed. Maya is treated as insignificant by Gautama’s family members. Therefore, she tries to retrieve her dwindling sense of significance. The psychologists have stated that, “when man feels inferior in society, his strongest desire is to raise himself above all others” (Horney, 1965:21). With Gautama’s family, Maya feels that her identity is threatened.
Identity for Maya rests, in fact, in her childhood. Therefore, she creates a child-like atmosphere by re-creating her “fairy tale world of Arabian Nights; and “lovely English and Irish fairy Tales... in which much was included, which grew steadily more restricted, unnatural even, and in which I lived as a toy princess in a toy world” (Desai, CTP:1980:89). Maya knows that this is all illusion removed away from reality but she is unable to come out of it. Gautama irritingly says to her:

Neurotic.... Neurotic, that is what you are. A spoilt baby, so spoilt that she can’t bear one adverse word.....Everyone must bring “present for little Maya – that is what her father has taught her. (Desai, CTP:1980:115)

In Maya’s opinion, Gautam is entirely different from her father. He is cold and feelingless, preoccupied with his work, efficient but indifferent to her presence, and someone who

saw no but indifferent to her presence, and someone who ‘saw no value in anything less than the ideas and theories born of human and preferably male brain,’ who remained ‘always untouched, unsalted.’ (Desai, CTP:1980:99-100)

But his orderly habits are very much like Maya’s father’s and there must have been some basis for the friendship that had existed between the two men, no matter, how different their worldly attitudes. Her father, Raisahib, having faith in acceptance did not permit discussion whereas Gautam was interested in appealing to Maya at the level of argument. Maya, through the act of marriage has transferred her love for her father and expectations of him to Gautam, thus attempting to thrust a readymade image on him. Gautam points this out to her;
He is the one responsible for this, - of making you believe that all that is important in the world is to possess, possess - riches, comforts, posies, dollies, loyal retainers - all the luxuries of the fairy tales. You were brought upon life is a fairy tale to you still. (Desai, CTP:1980:115)

The excessive love received in childhood clashes with the physical reality around and within her; as a result, her real self is destabilized. Maya tries to establish her uniqueness. She plants flowers: “Palpitating with living breath, open, wide, virginal” (Desai, CTP:1980:106). Maya considers any one inferior who does not feel the smell. She is disgusted when Gautama cannot distinguish between the fragrance of petunias and lime blossoms. She alienates from Mrs. Lal and other women because they do not come up to her expectation. She considers herself very different from all others - this is how a neurotic would view herself or himself. The sight of prostitutes terrifies her because they are engrossed in “gross and useless” (Desai, CTP:1980:91) they; “don’t see what really matters. All the truth is living just passes them by, and I am so sorry for any one.....who misuses it.” (Desai, CTP:1980:91)

Maya, the central character in the novel, is beautiful, intelligent and very sensitive as well as sensuous but she fails to grow out of childhood. She is married to Gautama who is many years senior to her. He is a successful lawyer practicing in Delhi. There is apparently nothing that is common to them-social status, educational background, intellectual training, emotional make up and religious and moral outlook. Yet, they have managed to complete three years of married life. The moment she enters the fourth year of her marriage, she remembers the prophecy of an albino astrologer who in her impressionable
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childhood, predicted that she or her husband would die during the fourth year of their marriage. During the period of four years of her married life, she fails to establish effective communication with her husband who is detached, rational and twice her age. Her husband's indifference to her agonised predicament and her childless life heightens her sense of marital dissonance and consequently she kills her husband, Gautama, by pushing him off the parapet of their house, in a fit of insane fury.

*Cry, the Peacock* has three parts. While part-I of the novel depicts the death of Maya's pet dog-Toto, and records Maya's feelings towards the dead dog, part-II hints at the death of the protagonist herself. Anita Desai chooses to avoid the details of the death pertaining to Maya. The last paragraph of part-III delineates the death of Gautama, Maya's husband. Anita Desai transforms the neurotic problem of marital dissonance into a moving study of the psyche of Maya who wants to seek love, sympathy and understanding but suffers intensely every moment. Marital dissatisfaction, an acute feeling of isolation and an obsessive fear of death aggravate her misery and cause in her a sense of utter marital dissonance.

Maya is a spoilt and pampered daughter of Raisahib, a wealthy Brahmin of Lucknow. Gautama is the protégé of Raisahib. He finds Gautama agreeable for marriage with his daughter on two counts: first he resembles himself in age and intelligence. Raisahib perhaps feels that a person of Gautama's age and understanding will give the kind of protection to Maya which he himself has been giving. Secondly, Gautama presents a complete contrast to Arjuna,
(Maya's brother) in his elitism and is similar to Maya in her submissiveness. Another mundane explanation is that Raisahib has to unburden himself of the responsibility of a grown-up daughter by arranging the marriage at the earliest, which is not surprising in India where a daughter is held to be a mortgage and a son a dividend. Reacting to this arrangement, Maya says, "... our marriage was grounded upon the friendship of the two men, and the mutual respect in which they held each other, rather than upon anything else" (Desai, CTP: 1980:40).

Their incompatible temperaments make it difficult for them to have a warm, harmonious relationship and subsequently pave the way for their estrangement. While Maya is dreamy, sensitive and emotional, Gautama is rational, insensitive and practical. Maya is poetic and instinctive, while Gautama is detached and philosophical. Gautama and Maya cannot have emotional bonds between them because of their incongruous natures. Frustrated, Maya rightly observes: "Our marriage was based upon nobility forced upon us from outside, and therefore neither true nor lasting. It was broken repeatedly, and repeatedly the pieces were picked up and put together again." (Desai, CTP: 1980:40)

Having had a carefree life in her father's house, Maya desires to have the same in her husband's. Gautama, who is almost treated as the father-substitute by Maya, is too engrossed in his own vocational affairs to pay her the attention that she expects. He has neither the time nor the concern for showing tenderness to her. Consequently she feels isolated, neglected and miserable. The alienation results from the sharp contrast between cold detachment and warm imagination. Besides this, Maya's problem is her existential predicament,
her feminine obsessions such as father-fixation. Whenever she is mentally perturbed or in crisis, she recollects her life with her father who brought her up very affectionately. Such moments of nostalgia intensify the rising frustration, despair and boost her drooping spirits. Maya's father had a lot of love for his daughter and gave her freedom to do whatever she liked:

> When I play battledore and shuttlecocks, using the small bright oranges as shuttlecocks that shoot, bird-like, through the air and are broken, egg like, on the grass he only laughs to see me leap and fly, leap and fly. (Desai, *CTP*: 1980:44)

Such a free life enjoyed by Maya turns into a life in a cage after her marriage. Maya is already obsessed with the prophecy of an albino astrologer in her relationship with Gautama, she missed the attachment with her father. Apart from these social factors, Maya expects a measure of emotional and physical satisfaction in married lives which are denied to her, one by Gautama's cold intellectuality and the other by his age and diligence in work. The following passage demonstrates her mixed feelings towards the fact of her being his wife:

> Poor man. Poor Gautama. My husband. I spoke these words in order to stop staring, to make myself feel something for him. Gautama, my husband rose and went up to him, beginning to feel as tenderly solicitous towards him as towards a departing guest who might never be encountered again, and I strolled with him slowly across the lawn, feeling that an unreal ghost stalked beside me—a body without a heart, a heart without a body—what was he? An unfair question, oh, grossly unfair, I chided myself immediately. He was a tired man, worn out by a day's hard, concentrated work. Age surrounded him, weariness steeped his limps. Grey, grey, all was grey for Gautama, who lived so narrowly, so shallowly.
And I felt sorry, infinitely sorry for him, for this slow, harmless, guileless being who walked the fresh grass and did not know he touched it. (Desai, *CTP*:1980:196-7)

Consequently, her longing for intimacy with Gautama leads her to the realisation that there is no bond left between them that would unite and hold them in love:

Had there been a bond between us, he would have felt its pull, I thought of him so deeply. But, of course, there was none. That had been proved to me tonight. There was no bond, no love - hardly any love. And I could not bear to think of that. (Desai, *CTP*:1980:108)

Sigmund Freud views that sex is not only an intensely and intrinsically pleasurable experience but it can act as a revitalising force in an otherwise sterile life. It is the prototype of all pleasurable experiences of life. Maya's earthly nature makes her well-inclined to derive the fullest satisfaction from this intimate experience. Unfortunately, Maya is often disillusioned in sex. There are several passages in *Cry, the Peacock*, which portray Maya's dissatisfaction in sexual life. Maya frankly admits her sexual dissatisfaction born of Gautama's unpardonable negligence:

Telling me to go to sleep while he worked at his papers, he did not give another thought to me, to either the soft, willing body or the lonely, wanting mind that waited near his bed. (Desai, *CTP*:1980:9)

Gautama also does not bother to notice the inner yearnings of Maya. She says:

I turned upon my side, closer to him, conscious of the swell of my hip that rose under the white sheet which fell in sculptured folds about my rounded
form. His eyes remained blank of appraisal, of any response. It was as though he had seen only what he had expected to see, nothing less, and nothing more. (Desai, *CTP*:1980:41-42)

For her unqualified love for Gautama she suffers from “a humiliating sense of neglect, of loneliness, of desperation” (Desai, *CTP*:1980:201). She starts sexualising her surroundings, perhaps by way of substitution. The papaya trees in the courtyard, for example, assume a new sexual significance for her:

I contemplated that, smiling with pleasure at the thought of those long streamers of bridal flowers that flow out of the core of the female papaya tree and twine about her slim trunk, and the firm, wax-petalled blossoms that leap directly out of the solid trunk of the male. (Desai, *CTP*:1980:92)

Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* tries to create for herself a separate identity but the erection of separate identity doesn’t give her sufficient sense of security. Her real self is suppressed and the false self does not generate healthy mental state. As a result, her personality becomes a dissociated personality. She had two selves – real and pseudo. Commenting on the conflict between the real and pseudo selves, which make a person neurotic, Usha Bande writes:

In his search for glory the neurotic starts making neurotic claims on the world. Whatever grandiose image he has created of himself must be recognized by the world. He cannot realize that he is harbouring an illusion. He lives in the world of fantasies. Side by side his “shoulds” make a claim on him. He “should” as he has visualized himself to be. There are inner dictates that enumerate his standards for him. All his energies which should take a normal person towards self actualization drag him to actualize the idealized self. The glorified images generate a structure of intra – psychic defense which Horney terms ‘The pride system.’ (Bande, 1988:32)
The neurotic claims cannot be practiced in real life. They stagger in face of realities of life. When they are shattered, the neurotic pride suffers a blow, the tension mounts and the neurotic aims at a vindictive revenge to restore it. Depending upon a person’s temperament he may hit harder to get back his imaginary grandeur; he may withdraw, feeling just disinterested; or may try to forget the same by wishing away the incident; neurotic pride is based on imagined attributes. It is “The Climax.... of the process initiated with the search for glory” (Horney, 1965:21). Neurotic may himself regard as a disembodied spirit; he may try to kill his hated-self. The onslaught of self-condemnation, self-accusation and self-hate are difficult to bear. Bonds with reality are severed and deteriorating process starts.

Maya’s self is an idealized self which is impossible to attain. She finds a hostile world around her. She is unable to adjust herself in such a surrounding. She finds that Gautama does not respond to her feelings. She tries to find in him the love of father, which symbolized for her protection and security. Gautama failed to provide the much needed love, admiration and sympathy to her. Gautama shows an aversion to much physical contact. Maya feels neglected, rejected, unwanted. As long as Gautama attends to her, she feels grateful. Gautama, for her is protector and guardian. Maya’s neurotic pride is hurt when Gautama does not respond to her in expected manners. She feels rejected Gautama does not respect her feelings of misery and loneliness.

The anxiety and despair develops in Maya because her desires are not fulfilled. There are moments when Maya shows an almost aggressive urge for
sexual union with Gautama but a sleep or wake Gautama is totally indifferent to her sexually, while Maya craves for love, Gautama feels it but does not respond positively. He is resigned and reserved by nature. He is very much influenced by the philosophy. He values detachment and wants Maya to understand the futility of worldly pleasures. Thus, what is seen is that Maya Gautama lives in separate worlds and “did not even agree on which points, what grounds. This closeness of mind was necessary” (Desai, CTP:1980:19). Basically, the real cause of Maya’s embarrassment is that she was never trained to see life in the right perspective. Even love, for her, is simply a way of fulfilling sexual urge. It is a means to relieve her anxiety. Maya does not think that love signifies full faith. Love is a commitment without any guarantee but Maya lacks faith. She angrily talks to Gautama, “you know nothing of me – and of how I can love. How I want to love. How it is important to me.” (Desai, CTP:1980:112)

A critic like Erich Fromm terms the love of Maya as “immature” (Fromm, 1960:25) love. This kind of love does not give a sense of sharing. Maya thinks that love cannot remain ideal in real life. Maya conceives of love as an ecstatic feeling perhaps as depicted in Keats’ Ode on Grecian Urn. When Maya’s love is not fulfilled, she suffers.

Maya’s neurosis is caused by two factors, one the albino priest’s prediction and the second Gautama’s lack of sympathetic understanding. Maya always puts the blame on Gautama. The “albino astrologer” (Desai, CTP:1980:39) was always near her consciousness. In fact, she has developed
the habit of blaming others for her calamities and failures. She could have rescued herself from such state of disillusionment by following Gautama’s therapeutic philosophy of Gita, Leela’s example of facing all vicissitudes of life, Arjuna’s rebellion, but she does not take recourse to either of them because of the stronger hold of her father’s fatalism on her. When she finds that the outer world cannot help her, she looks within but unfortunately the self within is the glorified self (pampered childhood) not the real self. She has created an exaggerated opinion of herself, which falsifies reality. She has fabricated a Fairy Tale, which is far removed from reality. She thinks that she is not one of those ordinary mortals who can be wiped away by fate. She has perfected her image as being different from others. Gautama advises her to look at the world from a detached angle otherwise; “Life will remain emptiness to you and you will continue to reach out and grope for everything.” (Desai, CTP:1980:116)

Horney says that neurotics think that their life should be as they visualize it. They cannot face facts. The neurotics always think; “Because I am something extra special. I am entitled to” be treated “in accord with his grandiose notions about himself” (Horney, 1965:41). Maya longs for preferential treatment from all but the pain and sufferings are harsh. Realities strike their wings which she is unable to tolerate. She is very much ordinary but to live ordinary life is beyond the scope of her neurotic claims. Maya prefers to live in illusion and reacts violently to anything that is real, definite and concrete. Time is definite – she abhors it. She thinks, of “only now” (Desai,
For Maya the safest refuge is illusion. She considers illusions to be real and treats the reality of the world as tyrannical. As a result, Maya is torn by strange turmoil within and without. She does not get safety and security in the world, which she longs for. Problems multiply when her neurotic claims make unreasonable demands on others. She thinks that all must attend to her. But nobody can provide her what she desires. She finally thinks that she has been betrayed and she says, “Whomsoever I turned for reassurance betrayed me now” (Desai, CTP:1980:64). She pities herself and thinks that world is no more; “Like a toy specially made for me, painted in my favourite colours, set moving to my favourite tunes” (Desai, CTP:1980:36). Commenting on the neurotic self of Maya, Usha Bande has rightly said:

As a morbidly dependent persons, Maya could not express her rage openly. That would not be commensurate with her self-image of a loving and selfless individual. So, she hides her aggressive trails behind herself. Effecting and self-minimizing process. She projects herself as a helpless women, gripped by the misfortune of her pets death. Her act of pillow – beating and crying piteously is what Horney terms the “Shrinking process” wherein she sees herself as a helpless child. These initial expression lead to self-pity. Psychosomatic symptoms, like slitting headaches and fever, followed by delirium occur. Maya becomes vindictive when finally the self alienates itself from the real centre and self-hate takes hold. (Bande, 1988:56)

In fact, a person is disposed to become neurotic when his demands are not fulfilled, particularly when there are stronger expectations for the fulfilment of such demands. In case of Maya, not only the demands are not fulfilled but also she is asked to suppress the desire for demands by Gautama. This leads to
complicating the abnormality of Maya. Maya is denied freedom to go to see even the ‘kathakali dancer’ which she has always relished. She requests Gautama:

I want – I want to see the ‘kathakali dancer’. I have heard of the ballets they have in their villages, they say, they go on for days and days and the dancers are all men, and they wear such fantastic masks and the drums……. The masks they wear you must have seen them ? and their customs and the special kind of music and it all out in the open, at night, by starlight and perhaps they have torches. Yes I suppose they dance by torch light. (Desai, CTP:1980:42)

As a matter of fact, Maya’s desire is dismissed without considering the intensity of her love for the ‘kathakali dancer’ (Desai, CTP:1980:42). Gautama tries to satisfy her by saying that during dancer’s visit to Delhi, she can go to see the performance. Such a callous attitude only tends to intensify the grief of Maya. Maya has a love for the beautiful, colourful, the sensuous whereas her husband dislikes all these things. As a result, Maya feels that she is alone and neglected. Maya thinks:

But there was a Moon. A great moon of hot, beaten copper, of Molten brass, living and throbbing like of bloody human organ, a great full bosomed woman, who had mounted the skies in passion, driven the silly starts away from her, while she pulsed and throbbed, pulsed and glowed across the breathless sky. I spun around, clutching the baby, toe stare at my relations, whose names I knew, whose moods of sensed whose hands I touched and found there was not one amongst them to whom I could cry ‘Look-look there is the moon in the sky. (Desai, CTP:1980:50)

Gautama does never understand her, he always rejects her. He calls her
‘neurotic’ (Desai, CTP:1980:115), a spoiled baby. He does not appreciate richness of her life. She says:

Poor Gautama, not to be able to notice the odour of lives, not to hear the melancholy voice singing somewhere behind the plantains, not to have time to count the stars as came out one by one to Gautama, my poor, poor husband. (Desai, CTP:1980:23)

Maya, too, fails to understand her husband, who suggests her to develop a feeling of indifference. But she ignores the suggestion and is driven into a desperate situation where her sense of reality is completely lost. Maya develops a sense of longing for outdoor life for relief. As a child she had enjoyed the scenic beauty and the cool weather of Darjeeling and now she longs to go there with Gautama. When she timidly suggests the possibility to Gautama, he responds in a cold tone, “Why don't you?...Your father would take you wherever you wanted to go. He can” (Desai, CTP:1980:40). The Kathakali dances played at night in parts of India hold great attraction to Maya:

I want—I want', ‘... to see the Kathakali dances. I have heard of ballets they have in their villages ...And the dancers are all men ...’ The masks they wear- you must have seen them? And their costumes. And the special kind of music. And it is all out in the open, at night, by starlight—and perhaps they have torches. (Desai, CTP:1980:42-43)

To her imploration to take her to the South, Gautama indifferently suggests that she should wait till a Kathakali troupe comes to Delhi. Gautama's pragmatism and unromantic attitude to life and callous behaviour intensifies Maya's mental suffering. Maya's preference about the romantic feelings clashes with Gautama's materialistic attitude. The death of Toto is a spiritual

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catastrophe in Maya's life. Maya feels miserable and isolated as she fails to receive Gautama's sympathy and understanding. "His coldness, his coldness, and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy in order not to hear me talk and, talking, reveal myself. It is that—my loneliness in this house" (Desai, *CTP*: 1980:9). Maya feels lonely, neglected and blames her husband for it. Maya's subjectivity and attachment is in sharp contrast to Gautama's objectivity and detachment. The irreconcilable temperaments of Gautama and Maya result in the lack of communication between them creating marital dissonance.

Maya develops a sense of depression due to the indifference of Gautama. She remembers the peacock's dance. During the dance when the peacock cries "Lover, Lover. Mio, Mio. I die" (Desai, *CTP*: 1980:5) symbolically suggests the "protagonist's love of life and obsession with death which leads her to the final crack up" (Desaai, *CTP*: 1980:5). Maya's life, like the peacock's dance of joy, also implies death. It is believed that at the sight of monsoon clouds the peacocks cry for their lovers and death. While dying they show their longing and love for life. The astrologer's prediction places Maya in an analogous situation. She is painfully aware of death while being alive. Maya's marital dissonance is symbolized in the peacocks' fighting before mating. Maya feels that the agony of the peacock is her own. Thinking of the prediction of the astrologer she becomes disturbed:

God, now I was caught in the net of the inescapable, and where lay the possibility of mercy, of release? This net was no hallucination, no. 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 the 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 saviour? I am in need of one. I am dying, and I am in Jove with living. I am in love, and I am dying. (Desai, CTP:1980:97-98)

Maya's predicament is worsened by the dust storm. The storm outside is symbolic of the rising storm in her mind. The dust storm is a physical manifestation of the struggle between life and death in the private world of Maya's soul. It is also the symbol of her release and liberation from her miserable predicament. Gautama is moved neither by the storm nor by her suffering. He is contented with a cup of tea and a cold shower and some rest. When Gautama fails to notice the storm, Maya feels that her unexpressed decision to get rid of her husband is right. She thinks that she is committed to life, whereas Gautama is detached and indifferent. She thinks “the man had no contact with the world or with me what would it matter to him if he died or lost” (Desai, CTP:1980:175). Maya thinks her life instinct is thwarted by his indifference and so she decides to kill him.

At several places in the novel, Desai hints at Maya's celebration of instinctual life by showing her keen aesthetic interest in nature. It is the life of instincts which takes one close to nature and strengthens the kinship with it. In the novel, Maya represents the world of instincts whereas Gautama represents the world of intellect. Thus they remain like two parallel lines which never meet. In the following passage, which is poetic and ritualistic, she wants to merge with the elements of nature, but finds Gautama a disgusting hurdle with
his stress on intellect, standing rock-like between her and the elements of nature. Therefore, she eliminates this hurdle by throwing him down the terrace:

....... I saw the moon's vast, pure surface, touched only faintly with petals of shadow, as though brushed by hma moth's wings, so that there appeared a great multifoliate rose, waxen white, virginal, chaste and absolute white casting a light that was holy in its purity, a soft, suffusing glow of its chastity, casting its reflection upon the night with a vast, tender mother love.

And then Gautama made a mistake—his last, decisive one. In talking, gesturing, he moved in front of me, thus coming between me and the worshipped moon, his figure an ugly, crooked grey shadow that transgressed its sorrowing chastity. 'Gautama', screamed in fury, and thrust out my arms towards him, out at him, into him and past him, saw him fall then, pass through an immensity of air, down to the very bottom. (Desai, CTP:1980:208)

With the death of Gautama, Maya's marital dissonance reaches the climax. Realities which are not immediately perceptible are reflected in the novels of Anita Desai. In Cry, the Peacock, she goes deep into the sources of marital dissonance in a male-dominated society. She depicts with great sensitivity the dissolution of feminine sensibility under the stress of marriage that finally destroys Maya herself. Maya's external world of society, her frustrated life with Gautama, friends and the inner world with her perceptions and physical needs are in conflict. Therefore, the barrier between the two worlds is broken with the killing of Gautama. Maya seeks her redemption in the killing of Gautama which turns her life into a tragedy. The neurosis degenerates into psychosis. Gautama is killed in a cold-blooded manner by Maya. This tragedy could have been averted had she received some sympathy.
and understanding from Gautama. The novel concludes with the suggestion of the suicide of Maya. The details of Maya's death are not given in the novel but the 'screaming' of Maya could be heard while “there was silence, and then both disappeared into the dark quiet. All around the dark was quiet then.” (Desai, CT P:1980:218)

The death of Gautama is the end of the story but not the end of the problem for Maya. The agony and frustration experienced by Maya due to marital dissonance finds its logical end in her own tragic suicide. The impact of marital dissonance is greater on Maya than on Gautama. Frustrated and allegedly rejected Maya like Dimple in Wife are driven into a desperate situation where their sense of reality is completely lost. Maya is unable to relate herself to the realities of life. She finds the world and people around them hostile. She feels helpless and defenseless in the hands of her husband and the surrounding. She feels weak, unsatisfied and frustrated and in order to retain her chance of remaining meaningful to herself she develops destructive tendencies.

Bharati Mukherjee’s Wife:

In Mukherjee’s Wife Dimple’s deviation from normal pattern of behaviour originates from her feeling of disapproval of being called Nandini by her in-laws, “My mother wants to call you Nandini. She doesn’t like Dimple as a name. What will you call me Nandini, Dimple....Said” (Mukherjee, W:1960:8). For Dimple the name Nandini has no significance. The name Nandini has psychological roots and it signifies prosperity and sanctity in

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Hindu religion. The name stands for a virtuous cow, which brings peace, prosperity and happiness. It has got association with divinity. But for Dimple, the name was meaningless and humiliating. Dimple said to Pixie, “The name just doesn’t suit me” (Mukherjee, W:1960:18). A neurotic would perceive even normal as abnormal and disgusting. Therefore the religious and pious name like Nandini appears to her as unsuitable and incongruous to her self-glorified self. Similarly other things, too, do not satisfy her heightened ego. After marriage she had to move to her husband’s apartment. Dimple disliked the apartment. For her, “The apartment is h-o-r-r-i-d.” (Mukherjee, W:1960:18)

Her disliking for name and house signified the abnormality of her psyche. Dimple was unable to adjust with the environment and people around her. She found all of them quite incompatible. The much desired marriage would not make her happy. Dimple’s talking to herself with the mirror image is most ironical – “Dimple Basu”, she repeated; “Dimple Basu is happy woman” (Mukherjee, W:1960:21). Even the members of Amit’s family appear to Dimple as disgusting and unaccommodating; “why doesn’t your sister like me?” (Mukherjee, W:1960:21) Dimple doubted the love of her husband and also the fact that her husband was not the man she had dreamt of:

She wanted to dream of Amit but she knew she would not. Amit did not feed her fantasy life; he was merely the provider of small material comforts. In bitter moments she ranked husband, blender, colour T.V., cassette, tape recorder, stereo, in their order of convenience. (Mukherjee, W:1960:113)

Amit appeared to be an ordinary object to her and not the man of her dreams. She is dissatisfied. Marriage had not provided all the glittery things she
had imagined and aspired for, "had not brought her cocktails under canopied skies and trees: Amit drives to dingy restaurant. Where they sold divine 'Kbabs' rolled in 'rote' (Mukherjee, W:1960:101-102). The cumulative effect of all these experiences or rather lack of them render her: "incapable of love" (Mukherjee, W:1960:131) and leaves her a neurotic. She was unable to enjoy the mating process with her husband because of her disturbed mind, “Sometimes in bed she thought of the baby lizard she found in her pillow case.” (Mukherjee, W:1960:21)

Dimple Dasgupta, the chief protagonist of Wife becomes neurotic because there is the existence of a wide gulf between desire and fulfilment. If anyone's psychological needs are not fulfilled, he or she tends to abandon his real self. Neurosis begins when the real-self is forsaken. The loss of the real self is the cause of the neurotic behaviour of a character. The basic need of Dimple Dasgupta was her long-cherished desire to marry a person of her choice and settle down happily. Dimple always-

Thought of premarital life as a dress rehearsal for actual living. Years of waiting has already made her nervous, unnaturally prone to colds, coughs and headaches. Wasted years – she was twenty – lay like a chill weight in her body, giving her eyes a watchful squint and her spine slight curve. (Mukherjee, W:1960:3)

She thought of marriage as something destined to bring prosperity and liberty- "Marriage, she was sure, would free her, fill her with passion. Discreet and virgin she waited for real life to begin" (Mukherjee, W:1960:13). She hoped that she would get all kinds of comforts after marriage "an apartment in
Chowringhee, her hair done by Chinese girls, trips to new Market for nylon saris” (Mukherjee, W:1960:3). Her expectations of happy married life used to be spoiled sometimes by her negative feeling about her own-self,

she worried that she was ugly, worried about the sitar - shaped body and rudimentary breasts. She thought of breasts as having destinies of their own, ruining marriage or making fortunes. (Mukherjee, W:1960:4)

Her mother would always come forward to support her during such moment of depression “Stop worrying” (Mukherjee, W:1960:4) Mrs. Dasgupta consoled, “Worrying makes them shrinks!” (Mukherjee, W:1960:4). Further she would say “you must be satisfied with what god has given you. But use it to your best advantage” (Mukherjee, W:1960:5). Dimple felt comfortable with the advice of her mother but she would not tolerate any delay in marriage. Once, Dimple had to be hospitalized and it took her almost five days to recover. For her mother, the illness was an indication of women’s readiness for marriage, “Mrs. Dasgupta read the illness as a sign of mysterious pains, headaches, nervous ties were mature ways of indicating a young woman’s readiness for marriage” (Mukherjee, W:1960:6). Dimple’s life was not a happy one. She could not find any hope of fulfilment of her desire. Even small matters began to worry and annoy her. She had written for herself somewhere. “The rebellion of 1857 was the result of a thousand small annoyances. Rumours of cow fat on the bullet-casings was the icing on the cake” (Mukherjee, W:1960:7).

The statement clearly revealed that discontentment was seething in her mind and she was going to rebel. She was going to rebel because life to her,
was dull and boring and it was, "but the waiting, the endless waiting" (Mukherjee, W:1960:7). She was so disappointed with life that she thought of killing herself, "She looked in the bathroom for her father's larf blades. She thought of death" (Mukherjee, W:1960:11). Her behaviour was quite abnormal. Her neurotic demands made her a self-effacing woman. She did not want to face the realities of life. She was incapable of accommodating with the adversities of life. Her demands were so unreal that no one could ever think of achieving them.

Dimple's neurotic tendencies have possibly been caused for two reasons: one that she hates herself because of certain defects and the second that she could not get her dream-husband. Her neurotic anxiety made her incapable to becoming a dutiful wife. The idea of dutifulness further made her uneasy and uncomfortable. One such incident is there in the novel when Amit upon his return from the office asked for a fresh lime and water. Which Dimple had not prepared. Amit cried; "But you know I like fresh lime and water when I come back. You know this little thing means a lot to me" (Mukherjee, W:1960:23). Dimple hated to be a dutiful wife. Amit expected her to be like Sita, to jump into fire if necessary" (Mukherjee, W:1960:23). Amit's attempt to rectify Dimple hurts her neurotic pride. As a result, she desires to destroy herself. The first incident of the vindictive nature of Dimple is perceptible when she tried to destroy her foetus. She thought that nobody had consulted her, "before depositing it in her body" (Mukherjee, W:1960:31). She disliked the change in her body. First, she attempted to destroy it through vomiting. She consumed
Freud contends that women become hostile because they feel neglected. But such statements cannot be generalized. In some cases, women are quite sacrificing by nature. Majority of wives do their duties assigned to them very sincerely without any expression of disapproval or groan. Rukmini in Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* always supported her husband even upon discovering his infidelity and disloyalty to her. But the case of Dimple was different. Dimple had developed an inborn hostile attitude towards life and also toward her married life. Like Sita, in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* She could not accommodate and adjust herself with the realities of life. She is torn into conflicts which had further degenerated into tendencies. As a result, she tended to destroy everything, which she disliked, even her own self.

Dimple wanted to destroy everything that would ruin her happiness. Carrying the child in the womb might spoil her prospects of going abroad. The baby in her womb is disliked by her for two obvious reasons; one is that her dislike of Amit, the second is that, her pregnancy would prove a hindrance to her much sought after freedom achieved through economic independence. Dimple protested against the natural process of pregnancy and delivery. She stands close to Maya of *Cry, the Peacock*. Maya wanted to hold back the child into her womb whereas Dimple did not want to give birth to it by killing it or destroying it in the womb. This was the greatest neurotic symptom of her mind. She makes all possible attempts to destroy her pregnancy. But she fails. When she finds that consuming pills and falling from the staircase are not enough to
destroy the pregnancy, she goes on to deform the baby, Dimple thinks that the baby could be deformed and says, “I had this bad dream last week..... he had no arms and legs. I didn’t want to tell you. I didn’t want to tell anyone so it wouldn’t happen” (Mukherjee, W:1960:43). Dimple was a little abnormal from the very beginning of her life as she tells Amit, “When I was a little girl, I pulled a snake by its tail. I pulled straight out of its hole! Can you believe that?” (Mukherjee, W:1960:39). Dimple’s life is with full of waiting before marriage. After marriage she tried to find happiness in the married life. Then, she waited to go abroad and anticipated a happy and prosperous life abroad. She failed miserably in both. When her expectations were not fulfilled according to her neurotic claims, she began to behave most abnormally. She began to suffer from insomnia. The persons sleeping in the room would appear to her as dead and their bodies would appear to her corpses. During her sleepless hours, she would look outside the window on empty streets and the streets would appear to her, “As badly healed scars on a grant” (Mukherjee, W:1960:97). Her friend Ina Mullick appeared in her dream as dead. Death recurred in Dimple’s thought. Being a neurotic, she was unable to face the reality of life and attempted to embrace death. Death was the only solution for her, which would save her from what Keats call “Fever and fret of the society”. (Keats, 1980:61).

She began to feel “collapsing inwardly” (Mukherjee, W:1960:110). She would not understand how to cope with the situation. She told Amit “I feel very tired this day. I mean, I don’t have the energy to bake the chicken every fifteen
minutes" (Mukherjee, *W*:1960:110). But as usual Amit did not care to her
worries. He gave a flat reply, "It’s probably because you eat so little"
(Mukherjee, *W*:1960:111). Amit’s love for her was interpreted as callousness
and indifferent. Dimple felt enraged and like Maya, she tends to consider
herself something very exclusive for her husband. When Dimple found that
Amit did not respond to her with the warmth and intensity of feeling, which
she expected from him, she burst out:

> I feel sort of tired inside and all you can do is read
the paper and talk to me about food. You never
listen; you have never listened to me. You hate me,
Don’t deny it, I know you do you hate me because I
am not fat and fair. (Mukherjee, *W*:1960:114)

She didn’t know why she behaved like that. She tried to find the
reasons for her miserable predicament but she was unable to reach at any
conclusion after he (Amit) had left the room. She gave herself what she thought
was probably half an hour, then switched on the table lamp, took a piece of
paper and a ballpoint pen out of a drawer in the night table and listed the
reasons why she was unhappy.

1. The plants were dying
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
It was no use ... (Mukherjee, *W*:1960:179-80)

Amit thought that the remedy to her sickness lied in making friends. He
suggested that, "she ought to go out more often make friends with the other
women in the building..." (Mukherjee, *W*:1960:111). But Dimple was unable
to interact with others. As a neurotic, she desired that others should give her
much value, which she actually did not get; hence her anxiety went on deepening,

How could she live in a country where she could not predict these basic patterns, where every other woman was a stranger, where she felt different, ignorant exposed to ridicule in the elevator? (Mukherjee, W:1960:112)

Dimple lived in a world of fantasy, cut off from realities of life. Amit could not fulfill her fantastic desires – “Amit did not feed her fantasy life, he was merely the provider of small material comforts” (Mukherjee, W:1960:113). She was often angry with Amit but she suppressed her anger. The suppressed anger kept seething in her unconscious all the time. She thought of dying. She desired to destroy herself. She devised at least ten different ways of ending her life like she got her head caught in the oven, sliced open her jugular vein, consumed pesticide, got suffocated in a garbage bag, starved, fell on the bread knife, got her head hit with shovels and finally got mugged and killed in the laundry room in the basement after midnight.

At this point, she stands in contrast with Maya. Maya passionately loves live. She does not find the world boring. She claims: “This world is full-fill, Gautama O you know what that means? I am not bored with it?” (Desai, CTP:1980:118) Maya thinks that since she has an ardent longing for life, she has the right to live and if one of the two must die, it should be Gautama. However, the fear of death, destruction and annihilation keeps on haunting her mind till end. Maya tries to save herself from the clutches of death because she loves life and it is because of her hypersensitive nature that she considers her

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existence is threatened. Therefore, she resorts to killing Gautama. This is how her neurosis degenerated into psychosis. Dimple, too, becomes a psychotic because her contact with reality is completely severed and she finds no way to continue her survival in this world. Already a neurotic, she looses balance of mind and begins to suffer severe mental disorder. She began to betray her husband. She seduced Milt. Milt was the brother of her landlady. She allowed Milt to enter her bedroom. Milt took all liberty with Dimple;

Milt bent over Dimple and put his huge hands on her shoulders and brought his face very close to (she noticed that he had acne scars on his nose) and she stood very still, leaning slightly against the wall, not sure if he was about to kiss her and what she should do if he did kiss her on the check or mouth. (Mukherjee, W:1960:168)

Dimple very carefully and tactfully hid from Amit her dalliance with Milt. Amit was very much puzzled with a sudden change in the behaviour of his wife. That night Amit looked up from his crossword puzzle and said, "You used to a lot of fun; you to pester me to take you out and get a pizza or a gaucho pie. But now you just want to stay at home and you don't have to watch television. What is wrong for God's sake? (Mukherjee, W:1960:176). But Dimple gave Amit an evasive reply, "there was nothing wrong?" (Mukherjee, W:1960:176). Beyond this, Dimple did not say anything. Her betrayal of Amit was more deliberate than spontaneous. Concerning Dimple's indulgence in such an extra-marital relationship Dimple felt directionless. She dreamt of herself as being dead;

An after dream persisted when she wakes up: someone had murdered her the night before and
concealed her corpse among the Bedouin brasses and baskets of indoor plants. She wrapped her blue bathrobe tighter around her breasts and hips and did all the things. She normally did between seven and eight weekday morning, but she knew that she was dead and that Amit would record from her as soon as he sat down at the table for his wheaties and two fried eggs. (Mukherjee, W: 1960: 43)

She further dreamt that she was not only dead but the post-mortem was also being performed of her body. She asked Amit once if she dies in New York can he helps himself. Amit goes on his usual reply, which was not understood by Dimple. This lack of understanding on the part of Dimple left her directionless. Her neurotic tendency becomes more pronounced and in a fit of imbalanced state of mind, she does not kill herself but she sills Amit. In a manner in which only extremely neurotic persons can do:

She sneaked up on him and chose a pot, her favourite spot just under the hairline, where the mole was getting larger and browner, and she drew an imaginary line of kisses because she did not want him to think she was the impulsive, foolish sort who acted like a maniac just because the husband was suffering from insomnia. She touched the mole very lightly and let her fingers brought her right hand up and with the knife, stabled the magical circle once, twice, seven times, each time a little harder, until the milk in the bowl of cereal was a pretty pink and the flakes were mushy and would have embarrassed any advertiser, and then she saw the head fall off. (Mukherjee, W: 1960: 212)

Dimple has to cope up with her traumatic mental condition all alone.

She had expected pain when she had come to America, had told herself that pain was part of any new beginning, and the sweet structures of that new life had allotted pain a special place. (Mukherjee, W: 1960: 116)
She turns towards Ina, Leni and ultimately Milt Glasser in her moments of crises. Ina and Leni fail her as friends. Milt proves to be a temporary transgression. The rebel in her is devising new means and ways to commit suicide. She is an alienated being undergoing the supposed after-effects of alienation-psychosis, psychosomatic disorder, delinquency and contemplation of suicide. The rebel in her is portrayed in the following way:

The image of Chimera, the fine-breathing female monster with a lion’s head, a goat’s body and a serpent’s tail comes to her mind. The image is a foreshadow of her upcoming action. Like a lion she would ooze out the blood from a spot just under the hairline of her husband. (Mukherjee, W:1960:209)

“I’m terrible in crises” (Mukherjee, W:1960:62) - she had told Meena and she is, in true words, in the moments of her crisis. Her extramarital relation gives rise to a growing feeling of guilt. Given the right opportunity she might have confided in Amit but Amit’s inattentiveness blocks the outlay. Torn by her psychic and emotional tensions, she takes the drastic step of murdering her husband thinking that she cannot bear this sort of life for even:

but he never thought of such things, never thought how hard it was for her to keep quiet and smile though she was falling apart like a very old toy that had been played with, sometimes quite roughly by children who claimed to love her. (Mukherjee, W:1960:112)

In a stunningly calm and cool manner she takes out the knife from the kitchen drawer and dives it down on a spot near his hairline repeatedly hitting at the same place seven times. Thus she punishes her inattentive husband for his lapses and unceremoniously ends up her disharmonious marital life.
Dimple and Jasmine, representative characters of Bharati Mukherjee, are antithetical to each other. Jasmine takes over from Dimple. Like Dimple Jasmine too is a rebel for quite different reasons. Her husband Prakash is shot to death in a Jullundhur shoe-shop by the Khalsa Lions. Jyoti, benumbed with grief, resolves to complete Prakash’s mission and thus avenge his death. This village girl, in a stunt-film-like manner lands is Florida as an illegal alien. On her very first day in the US, she does her rapist, Half-face to death with a knife. Unlike Dimple, Jasmine starts off her life in the US with a murder.

Dimple had an uncaring husband, so she butchered him. Jasmine had a faithful and loving husband who was mercilessly butchered by the terrorists, so she pledges to avenge his death. In the US during her sojourn in Florida, New Jersey, New York, Iowa and finally California she goes taking on new identities till her metamorphosis is complete. In *Wife* Bharati Mukherjee had portrayed the hollowness of the Indian institutionalized marriage; in Jasmine she is highlighting the impossibility of nuptial longevity in a country that thrives on change. In the US the Indian concept of formalized relationships and institutionalized togetherness hold no water.

**Conclusion:**

The neurotic stage of Maya in *Cry The Peacock* and Dimple in *Wife* arises out of their attempts to adjust to the situation and their constitutional inabilities to change. The situation in Maya’s life changes when she moves away from father’s home to her matrimonial home. She is mentally weak to adjust to the new situation because Gautama is not a
proper father-substitute. With Gautama she has experienced lot of difficult and unbearable times in life. Even her biological instincts are not satisfied. Maya is unable to live a normal married life. Moreover, the prediction of Albino astrologer that her husband would die in the fourth year of her marriage continues to haunt her. This prediction comes out partially truthul when her pet dog Toto dies. She holds her husband responsible for the death of the dog. She moves from Neurosis to psychosis. Her personal self is severed from normal inhibitions and cultural restraints. She becomes completely psychotic, and goes beyond cure. Her psychosis proves harmful not only for herself but also for her husband and for her husband’s family members.

In Dimple’s life there is acute discrepancy between actual achievements and the potential for achievement, there is also lack of practicability and her life is pervaded with personal unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Before marriage Dimple’s desire to marry a man with the body of someone and the face of some other, is something impracticable. Her sense of personal dissatisfaction and unhappiness in life emanates from her unfulfilled desire for good and beautiful physique. After marriage with Amit she goes abroad but her foreign trip does not yield much satisfaction and joy to her. She moves from Neurosis to psychosis. As a psychotic she develops self-destructive tendencies. She tries to kill herself and she finds out seven ways of committing suicide. As a
psychotic she is not only harmful to herself but to others also who come closer to her. She tries to kill her baby several times but the baby survives. And finally in a fit of uncontrolled self she kills her husband.

Thus in both the cases of Maya and Dimple neurosis degenerates into psychosis because of situations and circumstances in life and as a psychotic they tend to be harmful not only to themselves but to all others who come directly and indirectly in contact with them.
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