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SujathaBhatt's *The Peacock*: An Interpretation

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Abstract:

Sujatha Bhatt is a well-known poetess. Her poem *The Peacock* is the countenance of her inner feeling and contact with her nativity. As far as the nature of poetry is concerned, according to Wordsworth's opinion "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Poetry has its origin in the internal feelings of the poet. In *The Peacock*, the powerful feelings of the poetess are expressed and at the same time when we read the poem our mind will unconsciously accept the poetess' concept. The main aim of interpreting this poem is to show how the reader joins with the writer's thoughts and also the gentleness of peacock is simply conveyed directly without any explanations by the author. When we read the poem, we can relax ourselves like reading books or sitting in a balcony and we can also get imagery of bird's attractive, mind blowing, valuable, glorious appearance without seeing it directly.

Keywords: Nature – Inner feeling –Nativity -Imagery –Gentleness.

Sujatha Bhatt is an Indian poet, a native speaker of Gujarati. She was born on May 6, 1956 in Ahmadabad. She was educated in USA and now lives in Germany. In 1988, she published a collection of poems under the title *Brunizem* from which *The Peacock* is taken. In 1991, the famous volume, *Monkey Shadows*, in 1995 *The Stinking Rose*, in 1997 *Point No Point*, in 2000 *Augatora* and in 2002, *The Colour of Solitude*, all her famous books, were published. She has also translated Gujarati poetry into English. She received the Commonwealth Poetry Prize (Asia) and the Alice Hunt Bartlett Award for her first collection, *Brunizem* (1988). Subsequent collections include *Monkey Shadows* (PBS recommendation, 1991), *The Stinking Rose* (shortlisted for the Forward Poetry Prize, 1995), *Point No Point* (1997), *Augatora* (PBS Recommendation, 2000), and *A Colour for Solitude* (2002). She received the Cholmondeley Award in 1991 and the Italian Tratti Poetry Prize in 2000. As a writer, her contribution to English Literature, especially to Commonwealth, is enormous and she brings laurel to Indian English Literature.

The Peacock typically exposes the beauty of nature. So far as the nature of poetry is concerned, Wordsworth is of the opinion that "poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Likewise, when we read the poem *The Peacock*, we can easily get images of natural beauty. The poet hears the sound from the nearby place of her veranda, which is presented in the poem lines,

His loud sharp call

seems to come from nowhere (lines 1 and 2)

Somewhere the narrator hears the voice of the peacock and at that very moment her eyes start searching for the bird. The poet, when calls the peacock as "a flash of turquoise", the mind of the reader is filled with the colorful image of the peacock. Suddenly she gets pulled by a burst of greenish blue in a particular direction. The peacock's advent is like a flash light with sudden greenish blue light among the branches of the pipal tree. It expresses the richness of nature and greenish atmosphere of India. This concept is expanded in the following lines from *The Peacock*,

Then, a flash of Turquoise,
in the pipal tree. (Lines 3 and 4)

Now, the narrator sees the peacock's narrow neck "arched away" from its viewer. The peacock suddenly comes out from the bushes and it diverts the whole attention towards its glorious look. The phrase "the slender neck" portrays the sleek figure of the peacock and the grace with which it poses. "A blue shadow" again casts a wonderful image of the peacock. The line 'the very end of his tail' tells that the poet is able to see the full beauty of the bird. That is explained in the poem as,

the slender neck arched away from you
as he descends
and as he darts away, a glimpse
of the very end of his tail. (Lines 5-8)

She compares her looking at the peacock to reading a book. How one gets immersed in reading, to delve deep and to live in the book, and in the same way the peacock's appearance attracts the mind of the poet. The blue shadow of the peacock focuses her concentration on its graceful appearance. That is understood from the poem,

I was told
that you have to sit in the veranda
and read a book,
preferable one of your favourites
with great concentration.
the moment you begin to live
inside the book.
A blue shadow will fall over you

the will change direction,
 the steady hum of bees
 in bushes nearby
 will stop. (lines 9-20)

It explains the mind of the poet. When we get deeply engrossed in any interesting work, we will not get diverted. In the same way, we are not diverted when the peacock's presents itself. It is a never ending experience and also an everlasting one.

the cat will awaken and stretch.
 something has broken your attention;
 and if you look up in time. (lines 21-23)

She illustrates in her own words that if someone is reading an interesting book and something irritates the reader, like the sudden blowing of the wind, a steady hum of bees, or a cat that stretches itself lazily would break your attention from what you are reading, is like to take away the engrossed view forcibly from the peacock. The exposition of the peacock distracts the whole area, and the poet announces that now the peacock is completely visible.

It is a feast to anyone's eye to see the glorious appearance of the bird. When it spreads and displays its tailfeathers; the whole area is surrounded with purple and 'golden amber'.

you might see the peacock turning away as he gathers
 his tail
 to shut those dark glowing eyes,
 violet fringed with golden amber.
 It is the tail that has to blink
 for eyes that are always open. (lines 24-29)

"Those dark glowing eyes violet fringed with golden amber"- the poet talks about the beautiful eye- like pattern in the tail of the peacock- the eyes that do not blink. Rather, the tail when contracted appears to give an illusion of numerous eyes blinking together. This adds beauty to the descriptive details of the poem. This kind of image explains that the peacock is described as an optimistic creature.

Sujata Bhatt appreciates the royal, fascinating, mind blowing, precious, magnificent, gorgeous features and appearance of a peacock. A peacock is referred to as India's national bird

and all that she appreciates is of India. The word 'pipal' mentioned in "then, a flash of turquoise in the pipal tree" refers to her Indian origin.

"A blueshadow" again casts a wonderful image of the peacock. A loud sharp call, flash of turquoise, a disappearing tail end, a blue shadow, the wind changing its direction and the awakening of the cat and its stretch are signals that a peacock is in the vicinity. The poem figures out the calmness of the peacock and the descriptions of its activities signal its presence indirectly. For example, in the opening line of the poem, we hear "His loud sharp call", or in the last line of the first stanza we get a "glimpse of the very end of his tail". If someone tries his best to get a glimpse of this elusive bird, he "might see the peacock turning away as he gathers his tail". The poem captures the various colours of the peacock's plumage by the use of expressions like "turquoise", "blue shadow", "dark glowing eyes" and "Violet fringed with golden amber". These expressions, as we can see, are representations of the colours associated with the peacock.

To sum up, the poetess elucidates the God's creation, the peacock, which makes us to lose ourselves from the worldly activities. She has visualized the imagery of the peacock with gentleness. The peacock's exposition is like a bright flash light of greenish blue colour. It symbolizes that the silent arrival of something with profound knowledge and admirable outward appearance would arrest us completely. The poet describes the peacock not as a bird, but a kind of everlasting image of the creature which will never get away from our inner conscious. It is noted that though the poetess is a diasporic writer, she has not forgotten her nativity and it is understood through her mentioning of the pipal tree in the poem, which belongs to India. To conclude, *The Peacock* is a small poem but makes a great influence on the reader's mind.

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