

## **Sita's struggle for self in Anita Desai's "Where Shall We Go This Summer?"**

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**Abstract:**

This research article focuses on Maya's struggle for self in Anita Desai *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Anita Desai is a prominent Indo-English novelist. She has added a new concept to Indian English fiction. Desai has published novels, collections of stories, and books for young readers. In all her works Desai has set about interpreting her country for outsiders. The word of Disaffection is largely domestic. She is interested primarily in the lives of women in modern India. Since, independence the lives of women in the modern Indian nation-state. Her novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Focus in various ways on the disharmony, and alienation that women frequently experience in marriage. Her main concern is to depict the psychic state of her protagonist at some crucial juncture of their lives. Her novel *where shall we go this summer?* Brings forth the agonized self and feminine sensitivity of protagonist Sita. The study focuses primarily on the emotional exploration of the inner mind of Indian women and the mystic tension of women seeking their identity in a male-dominated society.

**Keywords:** struggle, harmony, alienation, feminine psyche, Crucial Juncture.

**Introduction:**

Anita Desai is one of the most important voices in modern Indian English fiction. Her novels are subsequently different from those of other prominent Indian women novelists her writing has drawn wide-reaching critical attention due to its psychological treatment and her protagonist's quest for self. Her writing is the process of discovering the fact that lies concealed in reality. All her writing is an endeavour to ascertain and communicate the true significance of self. Her protagonist suffers from the anguish of existence in an antagonistic and male-dominated society. They are seen undergoing distressing psychic experiences due to the collapse of the value system and lack of fitting alternatives.

In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Anita Desai presents a sense of alienation; Sita's state is a representative of the alienation of women, a wife, a mother- a loneliness conditioned by family and society. Marital incoherence clearly strikes us here. Sita is oppressed and depressed with loveless wedlock with Raman.

### **Sita's Struggle for Self:**

The purpose of the present paper is to discuss the struggle of Sita the chief protagonist in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Anita Desai has portrayed the feminine psyche of neurotic women. The cause of their mental misbalance is different *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Focuses in various ways on the disharmony and alienation women frequently experience in marriage and the limitation the patriarchal world places on them as daughters, wives, or mothers. Most of Anita Desai's work engages the complexities of modern Indian culture from a feminine perspective while lightening the female pursuing her identity. Her novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Centres on an aspirate wife looking to escape her marriage this illustrious novel is a story of an oppressed mind. This novel also illustrates the loneliness isolation and alienation of the middle -class woman, Sita the female protagonist of the story.

This novel is divided into three parts. Part 1 'Monsoon 67' deals with the present and earlier past of the protagonist Sita. Part 2nd 'Winter 47' with her remote past and Part3 'Monsoon 67' with her present and near future. The central character Sita in this novel feels frustrated and wants to take refuge from her marriage at the Utopian Land of Magic Island. Protagonist Sita is anticipating a baby soon. Though she is pregnant she does not want to deliver her newborn in a poisonous surrounding city. The city in which she lives is fully polluted with chemical waste. So she doesn't want to deliver her newborn in the city. She felt bad because her other children were fully addicted to the modern world. She wants her newborn to enjoy the beauty of nature as she enjoyed so she wishes to go to her Island village called Manori. But her husband is against her ideas. Because on the Island there is no medical facility to aid her delivery. So he refused to send her.

However, Sita is determined and moves to Manori with her kids. While on the Island Sita remembers her childhood days of fun and lively activities she remembers her father who used to bring her and her siblings to the Island and then narrate the stories about nature. At the Island she wants her children to immerse themselves in the same natural beauty. She is very happy to see the kids interacting with nature. However, she misses her husband. She wants her whole family to enjoy the benefits of such a simple and clean lifestyle. She dislikes the fast-paced, mechanical city life.

In the end, her husband comes back to Manori. He consoles Manori but asks her to go back to the city to get proper medical care before the birth of the baby. She accepts and the whole family returns to their city life after regaining an experience of natural therapy on the Island. Anita Desai's captivating novel dwells on the lives of women seeking to find their true identities challenging social expectations and carving their path. Women face the burden of conforming to societal expectations limiting their pursuit of self-discovery. The pressure of fulfilling marital responsibilities impedes the women's desire for personal growth. Her character Sita compromises with her inner conflict because of the pressure of society. Sita turns down accepting the rule imposed upon her by traditional social conventions marriage or the joint family are farcical and coercive matters to them. As Sita does not have a family she has no feeling of belongingness. Sita's mother in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* had run away from home leaving her children to the care of her father whose concern was life outside the family. A deep seed of insecurity is shown in her life. In the most in the midst of this, after her father's death Raman is a person who supports her emotionally. Sita accepts readily Raman as a manager of her life and hopes that Raman will be the man who will help her come out of her complex, offer her the needed security, and fill the gap in her life.

The tragic predicament of Sita, her total absence of communication with Raman and her children, and her utter intolerance of any sort of violence and destruction are meaningfully depicted in the Eagle-Crow incident like Maya in *Cry, The Peacock* for whom the dance of Peacock is a

symbol of love and death. Sita sees herself as a wounded eagle and crows symbolize the society around her in this incident, Sita finds a group of three crows joyously screeching and pecking at the wounded eagle on the ledge below the balcony of her flat. She knows inwardly that the wounded eagle has really no chance of survival against the attack of the crows though she does not admit it openly. Here the eagle symbolizes the helpless and fragile condition of Sita, struggling hard to survive amidst the hostile and destructive assaults of the modern society rather than the modern industrial setup symbolised by the crows of which Raman and the children from an inseparable part.

*“In this crow theatre, there was always much black play murder infanticide, Incest, theft, and robbery, all were much practiced by these gruff, boisterous rasping tatterdemalions.” (Desai p.38).*

Sita said the right “No”, her expectation of emotional and psychological fulfilment was shattered “*To certain people there comes a day when they must say the great ‘Yes’ or great ‘No’*” (Anita Desai 1982 page 37). Shiplaps social role as a wife and a mother for many years but failed to carve out a destiny for herself which she always wanted as an individual. Her desire to escape to Manori is actually ascribable to her deep-seated reverence for life and all-pervasive violence which she knows she can’t stop. The word appear violent to her, in a scene Sita, extremely, upset by the sight in front, is seated on her balcony holding a pop-s, trying in vain to keep away the crows that were attacking a wounded eagle on a neighbouring rooftop. The process of alienation, thus, which Sita experiences while living with Raman had its roots very early in her life. Earlier she was unable to compromise with anybody but now she sees things in a circular form. All the elements of negation vanish and Sita’s journey starts fresh. She starts discovering herself she gets acquainted with the image she had cherished of herself but was not aware of it. The way she gathered things, birds and packs things reflects her harmonious self. At last Sita’s acceptance shows growth, triumph of life over chaos. She has resolved all dilemmas and saved herself. The novel ends with a positive note of acceptance and not rejection. Her quest for self would find its true meaning by reuniting. Desai’s heroines often act violently, but here is a positive change. Sita reconciles herself to her lot. She strikes a balance between her inner self and outer world, her prosaic self and her poetic sensibility, herself, and the social consciousness ‘Only Connect’ says Desai recalling Margaret Wilcox in Foster’s Howard’s End Wilcox remarks “*Only Connect the prose and the passion, and both will exalted, and human love will be seen at its highest. Live fragments no longer. Only Connect, and the beast the monk, robbed of the isolation that is the life to either, will die.*”(Froster.pg 188).

Sita’s final decision is a compromise. She decides to return to her husband is not a failure. On the contrary, she returned with a new perception and a new understanding. She realizes now “what a fear marriage was all human relationship.”(Anita Desai, 1982, page no 105).

*Where shall we go this summer?* is a symbolic question in and of itself the protocol is scepticism and anguish are depicted Desai has experimented with symbols and images by associating persons, situations, surroundings, and landscapes in Manori her utopian paradise to escape the shifting of Bombay House to make the narratives distinctive, she has carefully ordered her circumstances using the aforesaid devices.

The novel masterfully employs images and symbols to depict the character’s subconscious levels. Desai’s style of writing from the perspectives of characters allows her to delve into the subconscious which she accomplished through her distinctive use of interior monolog and

flashbacks with the use of these literary tactics. She delves inside the character's thoughts and uncovers the underlying reality. As the novelist seeks to convey the genuine value of things small objects and attitudes take on great significance for her.

Anita Desai threw her protagonist character shows that women are exploited by male culture and these horrible and vast images from the world of animals have been utilized for communicating the cruel nasty and vindictive nature of human beings colour contracts are utilized to portray the duality and Dearness in women existence alongside animal imaginary and imaginary borrowed from neutral phenomenon Desai uses her paintbrush to paint her manuscript beautifully on the convoys pie dipping it different colour utilize the colour white to describe the status and light of Sita's house the white colour is associated with death the walls of Sita's heart are pale white and collarless just like the walls of house they reflect the shear drabness and monotomy of her life in this house. The picture of white walls dark foliage white pillars and lifeless palm trees are utilized to emphasize the lack of freshness and delight a 3 is normally associated with fertility but the lifeless palm tree predicts Sita's barenness because she does not want to give birth to 5<sup>th</sup> child in some way she is ant fertility more importantly the title of the novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is also meaningful since it possesses a question it is a symbolic inquiry Sita the protagonist is a perplexed nonconformist dissatisfied and unsettled person and the title implies a lack of clarity as she is unsure of actions and methods that will lead to unhappy and healthy married life Desai wishes to raise the issue of female integrity and individuality under the thumb of male-dominated authority by these questioning statement or topic as female constantly depend on the male guardians they are brought to be mentally incapable of making independent decisions.

## **Conclusion**

In this way, Anita Desai's novel nature plays a very essential vital and dominant role it participates in human drama and reflects the protagonist's desires and agonies. Natural imagination depicts the psychological and symbolic importance of female character and asserts that female emotion can only told to nature as both nature and women have a common oppressor, that is, the male. Here novelist presents and demonstrates her or his topic and ideas as well and it gives effective voice to thoughts but it also adds the readers in developing more critical thinking and point of view on a certain idea issues and argument. Desai employs a variety of huge natural imagination and metaphors to emphasize the marginalization of alienation of women living on the margins she also depicts the partial societal mistreatment of females mistreatment impact on women's psychology and mental health and their escape or comfort through natural objects and pictures it is her 4<sup>th</sup> novel which portrayed the internal and external weakness of women who are fed up with her daily routine and tries to get her existence by visiting Manori Island. Desai has explored different aspects of feminine relationship.

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