



**A Psychoanalytical Study and Feminine Sensibility in Anita Desai's
“Where Shall We Go This Summer?”**

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➤ **Abstract:**

A well-known Indo-English author is Anita Desai. She has given English fiction a fresh idea that is the analysis of the human mind. Her major goal is to reveal the human mind's inner workings layer by layer. She is captivated by her characters' psychological lives. The protagonist, Sita, in the novel ‘Where Shall We Go This Summer?’ analyse her psyche and feminine sensitivity. The paper seeks to analyse the novel in order to identify examples of feminine sensitivity in Sita's life. The paper aims to highlight the marital discord between Raman and Sita. The major goal of this essay is to demonstrate how Sita's loneliness and subsequent decision to distance herself from her family and society are caused by feminine sensitivity, marital discord, family relationships, and sociocultural environment. Finally, to illustrate how Sita flees the big city for an island after becoming the victim of psychological chaos.

Keywords: Feminine Sensibility, Psychoanalysis, Marital Discord, Neuroses

➤ **Introduction:**



One of the best-known authors of Indian English fiction, Anita Desai is renowned for giving the genre a fresh perspective by sensitively capturing the inner thoughts and disturbed psyches of her female heroines. Indian English language and literature have established a strong reputation both domestically and internationally. The Indian novels depict a microcosmic India that is stuck in the midst of societal change, tradition, and convention. A fresh idea was introduced to Indian English literature by Anita Desai.

Psychoanalysis is a collection of ideas and therapeutic practises used to treat mental problems by exploring the unconscious mind. In the early 1890s, Sigmund Freud founded psychoanalysis. Both psychoanalysis and literature are narrative-based and examine the complexity of the human soul. Feminine sensibility refers to a woman's attitudes and feelings in reaction to her personal challenges and hardships. It helps people to understand the female psyche.

➤ **A Psychoanalytical Study of Anita Desai's "Where Shall We Go This Summer?":**

Psychoanalysis is theory and is given by Sigmund Freud. It seems to provide hints about how the protagonists in the novels act. Sigmund Freud identified the neurotic symptoms as replacements for sexual fulfilment in his book A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis (1920). He gave lectures on the theory of neurosis and the whole psychoanalytical theory. Freud identified "libido". Libido is when you are eager to fulfil your wish like sex, and he saw neurosis as a condition brought on by self-restraint. In the third section of the book, he defines neuroses and describes their causes. As Freud writes

“The neurotic symptoms then have their meaning just like errors and the dream, and like these they are related to the lives of the persons in whom they appear.” (Freud 221-222)

By constructing a literary key for decoding, psychoanalytic criticism confirms the relevance of literature. Every character in a piece of literature is commonly thought to be the manifestation of the author's mind. The link between literature, our unconscious minds, and conscious behaviours and ideas is the subject of psychoanalytic literary criticism. It analyses a work of art using the psychoanalytic approach:

1. Researching the author, their biography, and their literary work.



2. Examining the character's actions and intentions.
3. Examining the appealing characteristics and motivation of the audience.

Sita, the protagonist of the novel “Where Shall We Go This Summer?” flees to an island where she spent her youth even though she is unhappy with her relationship with her husband and the responsibility of raising children. In the end, she tends to come to deal with life and its troubles. At the beginning of the story, Sita is unhappy with her difficulties and makes an attempt to flee from the Bombay in an effort to protest her boring life. The work is divided into three portions, and each section describes Sita's circumstances and her escape.

Sita is a middle-aged lady who is pregnant with her fifth child. She escapes to the island of Manori, where she spends her youth since she is scared of giving birth to her kid. Sita does not want her child to grow up in a world filled with devastation and futility. But after some time she she ultimately turns back and accepts life whatever it is. The novel's three parts depict the three stages of Sita's emotional development. In the first segment, "Monsoon 67," Sita makes a disobedient decision to travel to Manori.

“What I’m doing is trying to escape from the madness here, escape to a place where it might be possible to be sane again.” (Desai 32)

The second section, "Winter 47," recounts Sita's existence twenty years earlier during her early years, during which she developed into an accepting adult. Sita's life has been impacted by the fact that her father showed no regard for her. In the third part of the novel, She has challenges as a result of this prior life in her later years. The first portion is continued in the third section, "Monsoon 67," which captures Sita's love for nature. Sita returns to her regular life with her husband and children as the book closes to an end. The example of Sita provides light on a wide range of topics, including the pursuit of love, the quest for a place to call home, the lack of family, particularly the mother in Sita's case, alienation, and a parallel sensation of belonging to someone all of which may be examined in the context of neurotic theories.



➤ **A Study of Feminine Sensibility in Anita Desai's "Where Shall We Go This Summer?":**

In Desai's works, the investigation of Feminine sensitivity and the mind's inner workings take on importance. Anita Desai is fascinated by her characters' inner lives, and her works show that her true interest is in the study of the human psyche. In her fourth novel, 'Where Shall We Go This Summer?', the main character, Sita, expresses her tormented self and feminine sensitivity.

A global cultural movement known as feminism works to ensure that women and men are treated equally in all aspects of life, including ethical, spiritual, political, social, educational, judicial, financial, and other rights. It denotes a feeling of strength within. The awareness of victimisation is part of the feminist consciousness. It aims to identify and address the more basic and pervasive factors that contribute to women's oppression as a way of life. It rejects the social and familial subjugation of women to males. It is a revolutionary and universal philosophy. A feminist is someone who has become aware of and concerned about women's issues. Anita Desai often uses female characters in her writing. She is fascinated with the subject of unhappy marriages. The novel "Where Shall We Go This Summer?" shows Raman and Sita as a completely opposite married couple.

Sita, her husband Raman, and her four children reside in the large metropolis of Bombay. She is pregnant with her fifth child. She is not content with her surroundings right now. She thinks that violence and chaos characterise modern existence. Additionally, Raman, her husband, seems unconcerned about her sentiments. She disapproves of the activities her children are participating in. The situations that angered her include the battle between the chef and her ayah, ayahs fighting in public and Menaka breaking paintings into strips and throwing them on the ground. Sita is outraged and terrified by all of these events. It arouses Sita's delicate femininity. It sets up a mental struggle for her as a result. To protect her fifth child from the hustle and bustle of city life, she makes the decision to leave Bombay and travel to the island of Manori. She doesn't want to have her baby in such an environment.

The story has an eagle-crow combat episode that highlights Sita's extremely feminine sensibility. She observes a group of crows assaulting an eagle from the balcony of her



apartment. The eagle is fighting to protect himself from the crows' onslaught. She makes the decision to protect the eagle from the crows after seeing this scenario. Karan is asked to fetch the toy gun as she calls out for her sons. Karan cuts his chin while attempting to get a toy, but Sita ignores him and goes for the toy gun herself, firing it at birds. This demonstrates her desire to rescue the eagle. To check if the eagle is alive or dead, they reach out to it. It is declared dead. The next morning, just scattered feathers and some blood traces remain on the ledge. It suggests that the crows consume the eagle. Raman addresses her as he drinks his morning tea, saying,

“They’ve made a good job of your eagle.” (Desai 37).

She replies to him **“perhaps it flew away.” (Desai 37)**

However, she is confident that it might not have taken flight. The author of this episode wants to highlight Sita's feminine sensibility. At a deeper psychological level, this incident represents Sita's fight with her husband and her struggle for dominance. Here, the eagle represents Sita, while Raman represents the crows that assault the defenseless eagle. Sita's struggle against the male ideals embodied by her husband Raman is seen in her desperate attempt to preserve the eagle from the crows.

Sita, becomes further compelled to leave Bombay and travel to Manori after this event. She quickly gathers everything she has and departs for Manori Island in utter disregard of her husband's harsh and contradictory surroundings. He has won her over, and she goes back to her father's island. She is making one more attempt to save her individuality by demonstrating her belief in her father's magical universe. There is a bigger mention of marital discord in this novel. Raman and Sita's marriage has its challenges. Anita Desai's female protagonists are almost universally the victims of unhappy marriages. Desai has depicted marriage problems as they occur in traditionally male-dominated Indian homes. Desai's women experience a terrible sense of alienation due to their emotionally unfulfilled relationships, which have a deadly effect on the beautifully shaped feminine psyche.

The struggle between Sita and Raman's two drastically opposing temperaments and worldviews is the cause of the marital discord. Sita observes that her husband ignores her sentiments in favour of his work on a regular basis. Sita thinks her life is boring and



repetitive. She expects Raman to be her life partner, which will let her see how important she is to her husband. But Raman fails to accept her demands. Raman devotes all of his attention to his business and turns into an escape master. He conforms to his own ideals and principles. The personalities of Sita and her husband continue to be opposites of one another. At one time she says:

“They are nothing--nothing but appetite and sex. Only food, sex and money matter. Animals.” (Desai 43)

Sita notes that Bombay residents only care about the materialistic aspects of life. Sita begins smoking because she realises that Raman isn't in love with her life. It suggests that Sita's psychological balance is disturbed. Sita spends a few days with Raman's family after being married. However, she is uneasy with her in-laws. Raman moves into a modest flat after becoming aware of Sita's illness. She is sick of her businessman husband, whose total lack of empathy has pushed her to the point of madness. She almost lives on the balcony, smoking and observing the ocean. Sita observes that her husband disregards her desires, and she wishes he would treat her tenderly and gently, but he is unable to do so. Raman receives visits from friends, clients, coworkers, and other acquaintances.

➤ **Conclusion:**

Desai's research lays a strong emphasis on the lives of characters who suffer from neurotic disorders and find it difficult to deal with their relationships, which results in unsuccessful marriages. As important as they are to the analysis of Desai's fictional characters with their demands, nervousness, disappointments, and inability to cope with circumstances, the theories and justifications on neurosis developed by Sigmund Freud is closely related to these explanations. We can better understand this if we examine this topic in Anita Desai's novels and try to draw a connection between neurosis and failed marriage in her works. Desai's protagonist highlights the psychological world. Desai deliberately put psychological instances to show the psychological world of the characters.



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