

**HUMAN SUPREMACY IN ANITA DESAI'S *WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER?***

S.Veyilkandhal

Ph.D Research scholar

Department of English

Annamalai University

Chidambaram

&

Dr.A.Selva Raj

Associate Professor

Department of English

Annamalai University

Chidambaram

**Abstract**

*Throughout the history there is a dichotomy among human, non-human, nature, and culture. According to the philosophy of Old Testament, the whole universe was created for human. The sense of supremacy over other comes in the early stage of enlightenment. It means a period during human activity has been dominated on earth system. Human ability to master over nature and technological development made him feel supreme over everything. Utilization of technology along with the power of sixth sense, he rules over other for the betterment of his own self. The central concern of this paper is to highlight the human supremacy over others through novels of Anita Desai. I would like to focus, how Anita Desai's Where Shall We Go This Summer? depicts human supremacy. And in what way the younger generations are spoiled by the modern technological development which keeps their mind far away from the nature.*

**Keywords:** human over human supremacy, human to nature supremacy, human supremacy with technology

Nature and culture explains the interface between human and non-human world. When we analyze it we can understand human domination over the other living and non-living things even co-human. The whole world was created out forsake of human according to the Christian philosophy. The psychology of supremacy poured into men by God as his unique capacity. Genesis in the Old Testament explained how man created in the image of god himself by god and, He places him as the master of all creation to rule over the world.

And G-d blessed them, and G-d said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over ... every living thing that moved upon the earth. And G-d said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. (Genesis 1.26-69)

These lines prove that the notion of supremacy is poured into the mind of human by god himself. In the genesis, Adam names and identifies all animals, other non- living organism and defines its characteristic from human perspective. With the help of his ability of master over other man, he begins to dominate over the universe and he begins to utilize the nature for his own betterment. With the help of his wit he invents different kinds of technology to become more civilized. When, this sense cross its limits and man begins to dominate co-existing human for his own survival. Those who have sound mind rule over the weak minds.

Anita Desai is one of the few Indian writers in English in the post colonial era, constructs nature in his fictional works by using interweaving legends, experience, myth and cultural history. In some of her works, the setting shows a pen picture of physical environment and human interaction with it, especially the feminine characters. But while examining the critical outputs on her works we realize that we have yet to investigate his works from eco-critical point of view to establish her intrinsic concerns about environmental calamity and man-nature interface.

Where shall we go this summer? This question of Raman would become title of Anita Desai's novel. That would become a turning point in the life of Sita. Not like mythical Sita, she decides to separate from Raman on her own, to live among nature. The novel consist of three parts, named as monsoon 67, winter 47, Monsoon 67. The novel starts from the rowing boat journey from Minerve beach to Manori and it sets in Manori and end with the vacation of Sita from the island to leave there with her husband.

Human to human supremacy.

Human supremacy exposed in different ways. That is dominating his fellow human, the environment, and dominating with scientific technology. In the very beginning of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Moses an able bodied man begins to dominate other fellow friends those who physically weak in person and treat them as his subjects. His attitude is often compared to a male chimpanzee. He announces the arrival of Sita to the Manori Island who is the daughter of the person whom they adored as God and a great healer. When his fellow friend Ali charges him for stealing the property of the Sita's father as "your wife has built a bathroom out of the fallen bricks..." he uses his physical supremacy as if a male orangutan "grew to the size of two, three Moses" and shout "Let the policemen come let them come and count the bricks". When Sita tried to take the seaweeds from the water to show that it is just seaweed but not the snake to her son. Moses shouted at the top of his voice to sit straight. Sita has sent twenty rupees to arrange the house for their arrival. But he spent

it on something else. When Sita scold him for not arranging even the oil lamp in the house for their arrival he is very stubborn in his attitude he brings a lantern and light the house. He didn't even buy the milk for children. He didn't even clean the house he simply answered that "it will take much time to clean".

Sita's father begins to empower over the ignorance of the native people, launches his intellectual supremacy through his little scientific knowledge. He made Manori as an island of magic and miracles. They praise him for his mysterious power "He rids my house of snakes and scorpions and no one was bitten again...He made my wife bear who had been barren for twelve years, and she bore sons...He treated me for my fits and boils with powdered pearls and rubies and charged nothing..." (WSWGTS 11) The people in the village begin to fetch water in their round vessel from the well which was digged by her father give sweet water. Actually the water in the well isn't sweet. But the people in the village were foolishly following the voluminous person and their quoths. They were foolishly enough to tell salt water well, as "the only well in Manori that gives sweet water?" Though Sita pleased with pregnancy, she came to Manori "for the miracle of keeping her baby unborn" by the spirit of her father twenty years after his death who is carrying seven month baby of her fifth pregnancy. He did some inglorious acts for his survival in alien islands. Thus the natural life of the Manori people disturbed. His influence in the ecosystem felt even twenty years after his death. Sita's father empowering the land reminds us Shakespeare's Prospero rule over Caliban and Ariel spirit in the play *The Tempest*. He did good deeds as well as harm with these spirits. Sita is like the Miranda looks innocent, amazed at the beauty of the Manori Island, and rescued by Raman. Now she revisits the island just like the continuation of *The Tempest*.

One fisherwoman named Champa confessed that after drinking the water from the well, her boils were cured. So she brings two moss-covered crabs to her father as a gift to offer him. Phoolmaya, a fisherwoman married to Raju, they had been childless for past ten years. After consulting her father, she got a son.

Old Kanti – amma came with a complaint that her child has beaten by scorpion which fell on the floor from the rotten thatch of the hut. There is a drain around her house she kept the pigs in its. Her father treated that boy with something dark, the poison ooze out and dribbled out from the child's body.

Babaji is a figure of barefoot, dressed in homespun, self – dependent, who is adored, admired and respected never found without Rekha to whom she could not talk and he keep her silent at his side as a slave to him. Rekha unlike Sita and Jivan didn't resemble their father. But she had the glorious gift of singing. All days heralded with her "spinning out the silken thread of a morning raga" (WSWGTS 70). Rekha resembles Babaji than Sita and Jivan whom they resembles their mother. As a matured girl Sita found some underlit aspects in her father. Babaji has a control over his older daughter. He used to place his arm upon Rekha's shoulder and went into casurina grove to watch the sun's melting into the sea. Sita begins to observe

how her father stretched out his hand to Rekha and how he squeezed her fingers. Her father kept her elder sister under his control as his devotee he "placed his arm- lightly, momentarily- on their elder sister's shoulder, as if urging her to see and approve the site of island. His servant s and chelas works for him always. They used to bring tray of pomegranates, sweetlimes and bananas, he named the house as Jeevan Ashram means the Home of the Soul. He hailed Moses and Miriam the "original inhabitants of our paradise".

One day Sita woke up in the middle of the night. She watched Babaji rolling, mashing some gritty objects in a tiny pestle and mortar. He used to grind herbs roots, pills and powders together in a black mortar and give that to the villagers. But he grinds some small pellets glass- like thing in this mortar. They are gold pearls diamond and rubies in the mortar. Baba ji friend Deedarenquers him that, "don't tell me you believe pearls and gold have therapeutic value?" "I treat their boils and tumours? They believe it does them good and then it really does" (WSWGTS 75).

The Britishers empowers us and rules us. Our freedom fighters had suffered a lot to get independence. They abandoned their family they sacrifices everything for sake of freedom. Babaji is hailed as the second Gandhi. Sita grew among crowds without proper shelter in the home as years together. She is always among mass of people, and hearing continuous speeches upon Indian swaraj subject. "children of the independence movement whose chins were chucked by chuckling freedom fighters in homespun, who had spent hours at a stretch, mosquito- bitten legs dangling, at the edge of the dais on which politicians-in waiting sat cross-legged before lowered microphones, addressing vast crowds beneath them." (WSWGTS 76) Sita didn't go to school because she participate the swaraj meetings after meeting without a home. She sits on the dais with leaders. She used to watch the huge mass of people. She fell asleep against a bolster and carried away to always different someone's house to sleep. She is like a homeless wanderer she belonged to anyone. Her pshyhe developed as she belonged to everybody. She saw "no reason why she should belong to one family alone."

Human to nature

In the city crow represent the civilization. It occupies its flats and alleys in the city. In the city there is a fight for food one has to destroy other for their survival. This is what the crows in the city do they are waiting on the rock and clownishly act to get a rotten fish or "scraps of edible flotsam left by the waves to stink in the sun". It used to sits even on the "ledges and balcony rails of the flats, waiting for the lazy cooks to throw out a bucketful of kitchen garbage into the alley - scraps were caught by them in mid-air, expert for all their clownishness. Tattered wings holding them aloft as they twisted and flapped to get the largest bits. There was always much black drama in this crow theatre- murder, infanticide, incest, theft and robbery, all were much practiced by these rough, raucous, rasping tattered malions". (WSWGTS 34)

Sita shoot the toy gun towards the crows because its gang hunted up a weak eagle in a way to protect it. Sita pop up the toy gun. Her son watched on her activities. The bird lay still. Her elderson claimed that it is dead. But Sita alone claims that it is still alive. She spends her whole day to protect the bird. Next day there is no evidence for its alive. Sita alone claims that it flew away.

Raman places Sita in nuclear family. Sita gets a view of the sea water splashing over a rock, Her house in the mainland which is full of rotten carcass of fish, stinking seaweeds, and inexplicable objects like plastic, rubber shoes, bones and frayed tins”throwing them up at her, the sea ran out hissing , fold upon the fold drawn back, drawn back till she shuddered to think what else it might reveal.”

Mata and her husband saw a cobra near the well, ”it had a black hood and its eyes glittered- like jewels. It was ready to strike.”(WSWGTS 66) Her husband wanted to kill it with a rock. But her father forbids him from doing so. And Babaji show the lantern in steady without a shake. Then the snake slipped backward into the hole. Mata scared to think about when it return the place but Babaji told “No, Mata, it will never come again” but Babaji controlled the whole village with his magical power.

He quoths to everyone around that he is like them he told them he used to fetch water with barefoot, bareheaded from the well and deny the help offered by others.”I will fetch my water from the well, like you” (WSWGTS 66) chelas hailed him as saint, his critics as charlatan the villagers as a wizard. Babaji also give medicine to their soil also. He suggests some medicine to their soil when they grow brinjals and fish manure on the root for the coconut trees. He also shows how to space the rice seedlings to get a good crop of rice. The pest did not bilighted that beautifully planted crops. Any how he won the village over the ignorance of the people”the island belonged to him”. This reminds that Shakesphearses’ Prospero empowers the island partly with his magical power and also partly with his love and concern.

Sita scared at the younger generation in city. The drama of her distress with her husband, when her only daughter, Menaka ”torn all those drawings of her’s. I’d kept so carefully; the *ayah* taking Karan to that-that roadside dump where all the ayahs sit and gossip and fight; the way you laughed because I tried to keep the bird alive; the people here all round us, living here, all around...”(WSWGTS 32).

Younger generations activities also changed from the keen observation to the unthinking destruction. menaka unthinking destroys the plants in that was taken care by very carefully by Sita. menaka destroys her Mansoon painting because it is not look pleasant but its isn’t worth destroying. To Sita “they’re not worth destroying”.

According to the Old Testament all living creature made forsake of human being. Karan was interested in eating fish the old lady give shrimps as her gift to Sita. Forsake of his own benefit destroys the other spices. Karan and Menaka laughing happily when Miraim spread out her legs an “tearing the transparent shells off the pink, trembling bodies of the



infant shrimps” thus she indulged in the act of violence. She ask for tobacco to Sita she informed that Babaji used to give tobacco to her. Sita in great eagerness drags the cigarillo which is prepared by Mirianshe say she is prepare death with the cigarillo of Miriam.

Menaka hates her Sita’s drama of distress. She wants to keep herself away from humanness and likes to be practical. She wishes to become a doctor. Doctors should be unemotional then they can perform their duty. And being a person of unemotional, it is Sita responsibility to create humanness in her daughter’s mind so she point out a wet crow which seated in the rain in fully wet and says ”poor thing, how wet and sorry it looks”. Her nature is away from nature, love, compassion etc. On the other hand Karan is little bit like Sita with love and compassion.

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Sita don’t want to give birth to the baby but there is no magic in the island. Adding to this there is no proper hospital specialty in the island. The thought of Miriam delivering her child with “her fat, smacking hands “ scared Sita. The strange stories of women are giving birth in tree-tops, during floods, in the middle of the earthquake or inside the aeroplane published in the newspaper.

Human with technology

Babaji was an ardent follower of Gandhian principal. Self- effimacy, while the other villager prefers for tubewell with the help of machinery, Babaji affirms that “machinery is not essential to civilization,...For Indian civilization, I think it is fatal. Gandhi taught us that” (WSWGTS 62) .And then, he dugged out he spade full and all other followers and the villagers follows him. They begin to dig the well everyday morning two hours and everyday evening two hours after the prayer. Its sides were built with stones and Pulleys were attached to it for the village people usage.

The island people life is very close to nature Anita Desai beautifully sketches the scene of women fetching water from the pond. But the modern girl, like Menaka ”Oh! Will they really drink that stinking water?” The Main Land is eluminate with radiant electric lights, on the other side, the Island with real light that is lanterns. There is no motar boat, only rowing boat. These things show that the island is away from human technological development.

The city –bred children find it difficult to live in such place without modern technological development. There is no proper safety and security. Karan misunderstood seaweed as “there are snakes in the water.” Menaka said “If there had been a storm, we wouldn’t have been about to cross that bit,” Karan followed her “Father said we would all be drowned.” There is no doctor no hospital and no telephone in the island it is very difficult to stay in such places like with her fifth pregnancy in her forties during the middle of monsoon.

That is very difficult to have a baby there. But it is very tough to Sita to stay in such a place where crows attacking a wounded eagle. It is very critical to get the baby abort. Sita is shocked about this she doesn't want to abort the baby on the otherside, she wants to keep the baby unborn.

Technology affects the mind of the younger generation for example the Film industry they also. The younger generation those who watched it they think that everything shown on the film is real the continual watching of these affect their natural activities. This is unconsciously changed their life style. Films affect the natural and normal life style and culture of the people. Sita is in great distress. Raman comment on her drama of her distress "so you're running away-like the bored runaway wife – in a film." She retreat to this "it can happen in real life, Raman" he mocked her "an immaculate conception in reverse." For that she kidnapped her daughter and one of her son.

While her two elderson fight with each other by quothing "this is how they did it in the fil-um", "They are only playing" to Menaka. Sita scared at community ecology of the younger generation, which was on predation, herbivory, competition and parasitism and mutualism. Scientific inventions deviate, their life path from autecology. Sita "...lost all feminine, all maternal belief in childbirth, all faith in it, and began to fear it as yet one more act of violence and murder in a world that had more of them in it than she could take 'I won't have the baby'" (WSWGTS 50). Bad behavioural ecology of Sita insists to relax herself in Manori Island.

The quest for identity is in Sita she is searching for something more in herself 'only food, sex and money matter animal.' She scold the younger generation in general "they are like pariahs (refers the crows that killed a wounded eagle) you see in the streets, hanging about drains and dustbins, eating to pounce and kill and eat ".

The jewels belonged to her mother she ran away to Banres before twenty years, leaving her daughter and son. Babaji was a notorious politician Sita and Jivan brought up among the crowd meetings for India's independent movement. He spent many days in the jail where he used to read as self- education. Even now those books are in the attics in the damaged condition. Their life in the Island brings happiness to Sita and Jivan. She likes to search for her mother after the marriage Raman pursuit her mother for sometimes. They abandoned it because Sita didn't have the photograph of her mother. so they can't advertise it in a newspaper. Sita like to free herself from her father's magical power on the contrary she became the "slave to his undefined magic" though there are many biographies are there about Babaji a lady in homespun request Sita to write biographies about her father.

Survival of the fittest is natural law of the universe. Weak one attacked by the voluminous is natural in that ankle, a wounded eagle is attacked by a group of crows. Sita want to protect the eagle with broom stick and with her son pop gun to threaten the crow. But it ended in vain. During the night they kill that eagle. Next day some crow's beak is stucked with eagle's feather.

Greed of empowerment, and love luxuries life leads men away from the path of humane. The influence of humans is of world extent and is so profound. Radical transformations in ecosystem occurred by human impacts on modern-era. [Earth](#) will lead to great environmental changes. Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Was evidence to Anthropocene, this is also known as human supremacy. Human tries to dominate the dichotomy, between human and nature still going on forever. Survival of the fittest war will go on forever.

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