travel through a world of fantasy in order to reach the reality of situations. Jain in his article titled: *The Use of Fantasy in the Novels of Anita Desai* comments that “Desai uses fantasy not only for creating an alternative reality but also for contrasting the two or more visions of reality projected in a particular work of fiction” (Jain 227).

In *Bye-bye Blackbird*, three characters search their identity in the alien soil. At first Dev hesitate to accept but finally he changes his mind. Adit also diverts his mind by flying to his native land. Desai focuses self-alienation of these characters in their alienated countries. By placing her characters in certain human situations, Desai makes them on self-analysis. They often find themselves alienated and they tries to make self-discovery. Erich Fromm his opines: “By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which a person experiences himself as an alien … The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person” (11) Identity is a state of mind that is accepted through self-analysis. In the novel, the journey ends in self-acceptance of three characters.
CHAPTER V
SEARCH FOR SELF: WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER?

*Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) is another example of Anita Desai’s exploration of alienated self. It emphasizes the triumph of life over chaos and of art over life. Meena Belliappa observes: “What is new in Anita Desai is the effort to delineate a sensibility to locale, as it operates within the consciousness of her characters” (27). Anita Desai powerfully depicts the theme of feminine sensibility in this novel. It is the fourth novel which has appeared twelve years after the first novel *Cry, the Peacock*. It also repeats the theme of marital discord between husband and wife. Here Gautama appears in Raman and Maya in Sita, a mother of four children, unwilling to give birth to the fifth. Perhaps it is the shortest novel.

Desai depicts the boredom and loneliness of a married woman Sita. She is nervous, sensitive and middle-aged woman who finds herself isolated from her husband and children because of her emotional reactions to many things that happen to her. She is an introverted character and her suffering springs from her constitutional inability to accept the authority of the society. Usha Bande rightly observes, “Anita Desai’s characters reveal her vision of life, they share her perceptions and set out in quest of meaning and they love solitude and privacy” (20). Hence, Sita’s alienation is natural and dispositional.
Desai’s *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* describes the tension between a sensitive wife Sita and the rational husband Raman. The novel deals with “the story of young disillusioned woman, Sita” (Naikar 118). The maladjustment between Raman and Sita is based on the clash of values, principles and of even faith. P. F. Patil in his article titled “The Theme of Marital Disharmony in the Novels of Anita Desai” comments that the novel provides “a passionate commentary upon the maladjustment that spiritually renders Raman and Sita totally homeless. Disaster inclines from the very beginning” (Dhawan136). Anita Desai writes about miserable plight of women suffering under their insensitive and inconsiderate husbands. So man-woman relationship brings characters into alienation, withdrawal, loneliness and lack of communication that frequently occur in her novels.

Desai’s *Where Shall We Go This Summer* is about two journeys—one is undertaken to escape from immediate surroundings and another is to move towards something of the future, created out of the illusions which have the hold of the past. In her journey, she reveals the agonies the journey very openly. At last, she discovers herself. Sita’s search for self ends in wholeness of life. For Atma Ram the novel “seeks to unravel the inner mystery of life, to discover the energy that nourishes the spirit, and discards pettiness, horror and hypocrisy of everyday life” (Halpirin133). The title *Where Shall We Go This Summer* is highly sensitive. The interrogative feature of the title is symbolic of the uncertain state of the heroine’s mind, of her awareness and of her indeterminate fate. Obviously, Sita re-establishes her contacts with the soil and gets over her loneliness by
learning to laugh. It is the story of the boredom and lonely experiences of a sensitive, over-emotional middle aged married protagonist, Sita, who is alienated from her husband and children and who refuses to give birth to her fifth child in a world of destruction. She is an introverted character whose suffering is from her constitutional inability to accept the authority of the society. Hence, her alienation is natural and dispositional. She escapes to the island where she realizes the life in spite of its nastiness, brutishness, madness, tedium and boredom. Prasanna Sree emphatically comments that Desai “penetrates psychologically deep into the inner working of women and externalizes their passive reaction” (22). The island forms the core of Sita’s conscious existence. In short, the novel is an exploration of the vital source of life and consciousness.

The novel is divided into three parts: The first part, “Monsoon ’67” deals with the present and earlier part of the protagonist, Sita. It is heavily loaded with image of brutality and violence not only in acts and incidents but also in forms of behaviour. Sita takes the extraordinary step of going to the island of Manori where her father had created ‘magic’. The second part, “Winter ’47” concerns with Sita’s remote past. She begins her journey to the island and fight seems to be a pathetic imitation of her vain attempt to save to a young one from the rapacious sorrows. The final part “Monsoon ’67” deals with her present and near future. The protagonist remembers her contact with the soil. In short, it is a story of sensitive young wife torn between the desire to abandon and boredom and hypocrisy of her middle class life.
Desai sometimes uses the third person narrative method. She apparently attempts to use the stream of consciousness technique but she is unable to capture the psychic process in a continuum. Sandhyarani Dash in her *Form and Vision in the Novels of Anita Desai* says, “The narrative mode of Anita Desai’s fiction is controlled by the characters, who in their freedom to act and think weave a pattern of existence and form of meaning through the various strategies of triptyche structure, first person and third person narrative, fantasy and poetic intensity” (17).

Under separate headings, she brings back the past image in a new way. “one small incident (WSS 38) to narrative the crows and eagle fight: another small incident (41) … recalling the fight and play of her children. The tripartite structure of the novel- Monsoon’67(7-58), Winter’47(59-101) and Monsoon’67 (102-157) in its circular movement signifies disintegration, integration and reintegration. The past sandwiched between two structural portions devoted to the present is the hinge that binds the two present portions. The present goes back to the past just by an arabesque movement then comes back to its original position artistically minds, and it reveals the feminine vision of art that is more abstract and more symbolical than masculine.

The first part in *Where Shall We Go This Summer* starts with the protagonist, Sita’s journey from the mainland, Bombay to an island, Manori, and the final part ends with Sita’s return from island to the mainland. The entire action and the meaning of the novel revolve round the island. To convey the tumult in Sita’s mind, Desai adopts the pattern of Monsoon winds: “I wanted the book to follow the pattern of the Monsoon
together darkly and threateningly, to pour down wildly and passionately, then with draw
quietly and calmly” (Ram 97-98). The mainland-island contrast is central to the novel
though it includes contrasts such as the sea and the sky, illusion and reality, Winter and
Monsoon, past and present. But only the contrast is obvious and there are ambiguities all
the time.

Sita is sick of everything and everybody-her husband, her children’s film way of
fight, Menaka’s cutting of flower buds and tearing of Sunday water colours, Karan’s
senseless joy, at the dismantling of the tower of clocks by throwing his body over it and
the servants’ talk in the kitchen-disturbs her mind. She expresses her resentment through
smoking, abusing her children for trifles and losing her temper at the servants’ talk. None
of these leaves any impact on her husband. Another incident which accentuates her sense
of alienation is the street fight of the ayahs. Sita’s own servant maid, Rosie, fights with
two other ladies in the street. She is irritating to hear those words and she rushes to the
street where she drags her aya out of the knot. At the same time, she places Karan at a
safe distance. Sensitive Sita feels distressed to narrate the whole incident to her husband.
But Raman takes it as another instance of her drama and asks her to stop the story.
Besides this, there are many incidents which intensify her sense of alienation and search
for identity. Sita can no longer endure the violence around her. So, she decides to search
for a place to have a peaceful life.

Desai dramatizes the conflict between two irreconcilable temperaments and two
diametrically opposed attitudes of life. Sita is highly sensitive, emotional whereas Raman
is sane, rational and passive. He ignores Sita. Desai’s protagonists are, “tormented souls who, in their death-in-life aspire towards life-in-death” (Sinha 30). Sita’s state is representative of the alienation of a woman, a wife and a mother. She is oppressed and depressed with loveless wedlock with Raman. So, she takes a holy pilgrimage to Manori, an island, and it is a journey for spiritual purification and a search for identity. S.P.Swain and P.M.Nayak emphatically comment that “Sita is an uprooted woman who wants to regain her primitive self. Ironically, her pilgrimage with its promise of renewal and regeneration are the result of her social alienation”(23). She gets physical and mental courage in the island. She is an introverted character, whose suffering springs from her constitutional inability to accept the authority of the society. Like Maya, she is also unable to put up with her in-laws.

Sita tries to escape from her duties and is dismayed at the attitude of her husband Raman. It seems to be an absurd plan that a pregnant woman is leaving for an unreal place. She expects her new vision of life in the remote island and her dream of island is unbound:

She had escaped from duties and responsibilities, from order
And routine, from life and the city, to the unlivable island.
She had refused to give birth to a child in a world not fit to
Receive the child. She had the imagination of offer it an
Alternative- a life unlived, a life bewitched. (128)

Sita’s main problem is maladjustment with her husband. Raman ignores her desires and there is misunderstanding between them. She is fed up her husband, his
business, surroundings and also his friends. Raman’s lack of love and feeling brings her to the verge of insanity. A great change takes place in the proud mother of four children. At first, she is emotional and also sensuous. Then, she becomes a woman of “rage, fear and revolt…For control… had slipped out other hold” (130). So, she searches a best place for peaceful life.

Analysis of the whole situation reveals that Sita has more psychological problems which result from her unfulfilled desires. She expects her husband to treat her with love and affection. Unexpectedly, her dreams of getting love and affection from her husband end in nightmare. As a result of her escapism, the husband-wife relationship is dragged into difficulties. It comes in the form of identity crisis—both Raman and Sita stand for binary oppositions.

In fact, her visit to Manori helps her only to fuse into one the span of present, past and future and life-span of childhood, youth and adult age, but does not provide any answer to her questions. She searches for her identity in the island. Sita’s life is re-defined in the island where she realizes her husband and decides to go with him. Sita’s return to the mainland is the result of her realization that her sense of alienation is rootless. Sita, therefore, returns to the mainland with a sense of renewed awareness with reality rather than living in the illusory dream world like Manori.

Sita is unable to reconcile herself to the destructive world. So, she takes an extraordinary step of going to the island. Her flight from experience originates implicitly
from her reverence to her life and her willingness to accept violence that seems to be inseparable from all existence. Sita realizes that her own married life and all other relationship around her are based on compromise with their duties and selfishness only and this is the cause of ugliness, disharmony and increasing violence in life. She accepts reality of life instead of illusions. Unlike Maya in *Cry, the Peacock*, Sita comes out of her illusionary world. Maya always thinks about the childhood prophecy of disaster. But Sita realizes her mistake in the magic island. Her voyage ends with the discovery that she has some responsibilities in her life. She also discovers her hidden aspects of her real life. So, the illusionary world gives way to her real world and her duties. Desai, through her female protagonists reveals that everyone has some duties or responsibilities in his/her life and he/she must accept them in any way.

Desai deals with the entry of Sita into the island after living a life that was “a crust of dull tedium, of hopeless disappointment” (52). In fact, Sita’s journey to the island is a quest for integration of the self. Actually, the island is a heaven to Sita which wonderfully holds the master key to her final liberation from the existential anxiety, hopelessness and suffering. She believes that her problems are magically solved in the island. She relieves from her mental anxiety and will be calm and comfortable in the island. The psychological cosmos of Sita’s life mingles with her father’s fantasy. Before her marriage, she led a glorious life in an island. She remains the lovely company of her sister Rekha, Jeeven and her mystic father who had always been surrounded by his disciples.
Sita escapes from her real world and goes to the illusory island, Manori. Her father made it as a place of magic and miracle. Their old house is still “in the green tinge of the night shadows, the sudden slam of a wooden shutter, the crepitating of rein on the roof” (28). This house was gifted to him by a Parsi millionaire, Mr. Dalwala who is one of his admirers. The house was given as a token of respect for his part in the independence struggle. After her father had retired from his political life, he decided to put his social theories into practice. He believed that Manori was an ideal village to experiment with his ideas into practice. So, he named his home as Jeevan Ashram- the ‘Home of the Soul’ (57). Even after her father’s death, he is regarded as a ‘wonder worker’ among the local people who are very soft and believe in tradition. So, Sita also tries to escape to the world of blind faith and magic.

The island Manori is symbolic in the novel. Sita sees “the island as a piece of magic, a magic mirror-it was so bright, so brilliant to her eyes after the tensions and shadows of her childhood” (63). It is the central image in the novel by connecting life of Sita from past to future. It also affects the present dilemma of the protagonist. The magic island gives relief to her mental sufferings and pictures her inner psyche beautifully. Moreover, it is surrounded by the sea, waves, sky and the rugged, rustic characters which symbolize time- its flux and fixity and in a broader sense, “the island... seemed flat, toneless, related to the muddy monsoon sea rather than to the sky and cloudscape which steadily grew more gorgeous and brilliant” (21). Most of the relatives are in the island. They are only minor characters in this novel. Moses, Joseph and Jamila are shocked to
hear the arrival of Sita. No one is happy to receive Sita in the island. Moses has been the caretaker of the old house from the time of Sita’s father. He expects the same affection and respect from Sita. But he finds that “she did not have it-had nothing, in fact, not even one piece of valuable luggage, seemed quite empty, vacant, stumbling” (13-14). This is suggestive of the emptiness in her life, which is devoid of her love and care from her children and husband. All the members of the family are ridiculous in their life and have their own view about her. They do not bother about her sentiments. She suffers from father fixation. Sita’s intention is to explain to her children that she promises to show them the magic island – the island she promised herself. But the island does no longer hold the magic sparkling and glorious in her memory and she feels that the destructive forces of urban milieu, with the passage of time, have polluted the atmosphere of this island, too. Even, Sita sent money for cleaning the house. But they could not show any interest to work for her.

Sita and her family come to the island by car which denotes their luxurious life in the Mumbai city. In the island, they reach their historical house only by bullock cart in the storm. Sita’s children are frightened to look at the storm and the strange atmosphere in the island. They are afraid of snakes in the water and also the darkness: “snakes! the woman scoffed in exasperation- the child’s imagination perverse and pessimistic” (18). The Manori village is an evil mass of overflowing drains, gaping thatched roofs and mud huts that are battered and awry. Children cannot tolerate bad smell and they are ill at ease.
They sit near muddy naked pigs. Sita expects some miracle in the island. When she enters the island, she has very bad experience physically. Children also suffer like anything.

Sita comes to the island with foolish hope. She already has four children. At the age of forty, she conceives the fifth one. But, she would not like to deliver her child in the destructive land. So, she comes to Manori in order not to give birth to the fifth one, “she had come on a pilgrimage, to beg for the miracle of keeping her baby unborn” (31). But her visit to Manori helps her only to recreate the past. She remembers her father’s helping tendency among the villagers, his prayer and way of giving medicine to the poor people. She reminiscences her young days in the beautiful island and her different games which she had played with her friends. She also remembers that the villagers joined together to dig sweet water well: “the well was dug- no more a miracle, perhaps than the wells in any village… Sweet! They cried, ecstatic, they cupped their hands beneath the ladle and drew in mouthful of water, Sweet!” (68). She always tries to soothe her feelings and thoughts with the enjoyment of the natural scenery on the island and the adolescent bewilderment about the strange relationship between her father and her sister Rekha and her dead and forgotten mother. She does not know much about her mother.

In her early childhood, Sita leads a holy life in the Jeevan Ashram. She rarely spent her days with playing games or sharing sweets with her friends. She obeyed the words of her father and always involved herself in the prayers. Her life in ‘Jeevan Ashram’ is described in full detail in the second part which narrates the activities of ‘chelas’. She gets influence both from her father and Manori. However, her childhood
experience is formed by the strange sensations on this island. She led a strict and straightforward life in the island. She gradually notices her life in the darkness. When she thinks about Jeevan, she remembers father figure rather than mother figure. Even her elder sister Rekha resembles her father. Her father’s fondling of Rekha, putting his arms across her round shoulders, further alienates her since she does not have any parental figure to identify herself. There is a lack of communication between Sita and father. Islanders admired, respected and adored her father but he was an enigma to everyone. He used to crush herbs, pills and powders together in a small black mortal during nights and distribute this medicine to the islanders.

Sita brings her two children, Menaka and Karan to the island where they start their journey in the bullock cart. The unevenness makes the bullock stumble and leave, the cart totter and lurches. Unexpectedly, they are thrown off backwards into the slush. They clutch at the floorboards by digging their fingers into the cracks for a hold and their feet are stuck out against the slats. Their bones are aching and her son is crying a lot. They decide to enter the room in the night. The children are afraid of the darkness: “Dark! Dark! He kicked and twisted and would not let her enter the dark house in search of a lantern or candle. She stood helplessly feeling perspiration creep down he skull her arms aching with his weight but unable to part with him” (27). Children do not like the darkness in the island. Sita assures, “Yes, it is so dark on the island. At night, you see stars that you never can see in the city… there will be lamps” (18). They are not ready to accept the bad condition in the island.
The island forms the core of Sita’s conscious existence. There comes a change in Sita’s identity. She has four children and now she is reluctant to deliver the fifth one. The reason is that she has fear of violence in the world. However, Sita wants to escape from the forces of fear and destruction in the world. Sita’s escape is an escape from the ‘madding crowd’ from the dictates of her social conscience. To her, urban life means all that is destructive, sterile and sensate in life. However, the bestial civilization seems to her as ‘black drama’ in the crown theatre, murder and aggression any longer. So, she decides to escape from the clutter and boredom of urban life. As R.K. Shrivastava rightly observes: “Unlike a photographer concerned with the portrayal of surface reality, she is a painter of moods, of will, of conflicting choices and inner experience” (Sali 121). In the novel, Desai paints mood of her characters in every page.

Sita has an unusual childhood “full of large meaningful happenings, but also very trivial, full of disappointments. It comes as a tremendous to her” (Jain 11). Sita, in her childhood, sensed an illicit relationship between her father and Phoolmaya. She also ponders about the real nature of her father and cause of her mother deserting her children. At that time, she never belonged to a single family but to the whole society: “She belonged, if to anyone to this whole society that existed at this particular point in history like a lamb does to its folk and no reason why she should belong to one family alone” (WSS 85). Sita is a symbol of nature and so she is unable to adjust the mechanical life. She feels difficult to survive in the destructive urban world. She has not been able to identify herself with the urban milieu and she feels lonely when she sees the incidents of
violence in the urban life. N.R. Shastri rightly says that Sita’s pilgrimage to Manori is both “an escape and a return: an escape from the destructive forces of the urban milieu and a return to the magic island” (Sharma 87). Her sense of alienation is because of her emotional imbalances.

Symbolism plays an important role in Anita Desai’s novels. Desai uses the symbol of eagle to paint the emotional feelings of Sita and to bring her inner dialectics. Here, crows stand for modern civilization and eagle stands for nature. Through these birds, Desai pictures how modern civilization is destroying: “Leaning far out over the rails she made out, after a while - dazzled by the crumpled that the tortured creature cowering unshaded in that sun was an eagle, wounded or else too young to fly. With glee the crows whistled - whee; in ecstasy they waved their wings; crra-crra, they laughed and rasped as they whipped it with their blue-bottle wings and tore into it with their scimitar beaks… Get a gun” (35). The crows represent the unsympathetic society around her. She is exasperated at the crows and drives them away with the help of a toy gun. She understands that the wounded eagle has no chance of survival against the attack of crows. Desai skillfully depicts the imminent tragedy of Sita through this incident. It also highlights the total lack of communication between Sita and the society.

Anita Desai stresses the landscape and correlates it with the psychic states of her protagonist. She also symbolically presents natural events which denote the mood of the characters. Sita and her children reach the island only in the monsoon season. The monsoon symbolizes Sita’s mental and emotional disturbances. It also symbolizes the
hardships and obstacles of life. Sita is reminded of the sordid and harsh realities of life by the continuous monsoon. Physically and mentally, she is greatly disappointed and depressed by the monsoon. Even though she reaches the island for spiritual purification, her children also suffer in the island. They have only bad experiences. Sita feels, “Where was the magic of the island that she had promised herself, promised the children?” (24). Even she is unable to get any fish to serve good food to her children in the monsoon. The ceaseless monsoon becomes an apt symbol of the continuous shattering of Sita’s belief and dreams. There is nothing to do with it but watch it and listen to it. They go to the sea without caring for the drizzling which symbolizes Sita’s emotional upset. Children feel very happy in the beach. They come across a jelly fish which is struggling in the water. It symbolizes Sita’s unborn child and it is also mindless and helpless like jellyfish. Sita feels that child is unable to live in this cruel world. Her mental state is symbolized by the ebb and flow of the sea and also the appearance of the sea: “… the sea which although churned and tormented by the monsoon, storms till it was muddy and full of long, floating sea weed ripped from the sea bed was calm now, as if exhausted by the storms”(18). Sita enters island with some expectation but she suffers unexpectedly.

The eagle-crow fight also symbolizes clash between Sita and Raman. Sita withdraws herself from her husband Raman which is suggested through crows preying on the eagle. Sita is the eagle and Raman is symbolized by the crow that attacks the helpless eagle “on the ledge that jutted out below their balcony” (34). The crow represents the callous society around her. She is infuriated at the crows and tries to drive them away
with the help of a toy gun. She knows that the wounded eagle has no chance of survival against the attack of crows. But she doesn’t admit it openly. Desai has very skillfully suggested the impending tragedy of Sita through this incident. It also highlights the total absence of communication between Sita and the people around her. The conflict between two polarized temperaments and two discordant viewpoints represented by Sita and Raman, sets up marital discord and conjugal misunderstanding as the leit-motif of Desai’s novels.

Sita has been presented as a shattered and frustrated woman who feels trapped in the monotony of her house. Her neurotic fears and anxieties make her terrible. She experiences dullness and boredom and deadness in the people whom she meets and they pose the greatest threat to her existence. As a result, Sita cannot even treat her husband’s friends, guests, colleagues, business associates and visitors with tolerance and understanding. They appear to her “nothing but appetite… animals” (32). Perhaps, Raman stands for the conformity, sanity and prose of life whereas Sita is all sensitivity, feverish imagination and vague romanticism.

Sita’s irony lies in the fact that she constantly dangles between self-realization and self-delusion. Her family members think that she is waiting for someone or something. Her waiting symbolizes several things. At first, she is waiting for some magic to happen in her life. Secondly, she expects good relationship with her husband and so she is waiting for the day when her husband will be able to understand her emotionally. Thirdly,
she is waiting for some wonderful thing to happen in the fifth pregnancy. She believes that the creative act would bring happiness and peace to her.

Towards the end of the novel, Sita accepts affirmation of life and reconciliation. Her expectation gets fulfilled in the island after twenty years of her visit. She feels that the gap of communication between her and her husband can be bridged. Thus, Sita’s journey is from imbalance to balance. Her husband arrives at the island to fetch their daughter back to Mumbai for her further studies. At first, Sita doesn’t show any interest in him. When they visit seashore, they see a lovely couple. It happens in the Hanging Gardens where they visit the seashore and she sees a dying Muslim woman in burtha, lying on the lap of an old man with spectacles and grey beard. The man touches her face so tenderly, so lovingly unmindful of the people around him. Sita enjoys that scene and she bursts into laughter. It is the happiest moment in her life. Obviously, Raman feels that her happiest memory is not of their children or of their house but of strangers, however, some lovers in the park. At the moment, she understands her husband’s love and naturally, she follows the path which is trodden by her husband and she places her feet on the foot prints of Raman. It symbolizes that her redemption lies in the following Raman through the web of reality:

Like the freed sea-bird evening, she wheeled round and

Began to circle about and then dropped lower and lower

Towards her home, she lowered her head and searched

Out his foot-prints so that she could place her feet in them. (WSS 150)
In the island, she realizes her husband and decides to go with him. Her return to the mainland is the result of her realization that her sense of alienation is rootless. After her reconciliation with Rama, she realizes that “her time on the island had been very much of an episode on the stage” (152). Sita returns to the mainland with a sense of renewed awareness that though reality is oppressive to bear. It is good to live with the illusory dream world that Manori represents. She searches for her happiness and peaceful mind in the island. Even though she has the sense of alienation, she identifies herself with the magic land. Her indefinable alienated life is re-defined in the island. Thus, N.R. Gopal notes: “The novel ends establishing victory of reason over fantasy” (40). Sita is a name which in Hindu mythology is synonymous with troubles, tortures and separation from her husband. In this novel, Sita is presented as the very embodiment of misery, agony and alienation.

Unlike Maya in Cry, the Peacock, Sita finds the answer to her question as to where she shall go this summer. It implies that she should go back to the main city and take her responsibilities in her family. Anita Desai holds mirror of Indian society before us in the form of her novels. It is our Indian tradition that wife should live with her husband at any place, as Raman’s place is the Sita’s Ayothi. However, Sita’s change in attitude marks a positive acceptance of life and of the man-woman relationship in the traditional way. Sita finds herself in the heart of her husband in the magical land. Desai stance in Where Shall We Go This Summer is a clear indication that “she does not advocate gyno-centric struggle, leading to woman’s liberation in western feminist terms”
(Piciucco 143). The familial bond of which woman is the crux has to survive. The bonds of Indian tradition have to be preserved.

Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* is disturbed by the albino astrologer. But Sita is unable to come to terms with her past, a past which is mysterious and casts dark and disturbing shadows. Unlike Maya, Sita finds out answer to her questions. She should go back to her society. Like Monisha, Sita also has a prominent streak of neurotic pride in her. She thinks that everyone around her is leading an animal existence. When this pride is hurt, she turns vindictive and openly rebels against all social and familial norms in order to feel triumphant. Raman has an admirable capacity for accommodation and compromise, but Sita’s melodramatic manners disappoint him and her children. As he has a high sense of responsibility, he compromises and continues his relationship with her. Sita’s condition is symbolic of the unrealized loneliness of a modern woman. Her insanity is the direct result of clash between the hypocritical outer world of her wedlock and her inherent honesty that resists any opportunistic compromise.

In *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, Sita and Raman face the problem of inadjustability and incompatibility due to their temperamental polarities. In order to overcome the boredom of her life and to save her fifth child, she goes to Manori island. However, this decision had been arrived after a lot of deliberation and she becomes painfully distressed at the tedium and ugliness of a meaningless life. She tells about city life from her own experience: “their lives had been lived inside jails, in crowded assemblies, in mobs, in slums, tenements... and they had known all the tensions of
political life although only on the brink of it and its cruelties. They had been long separations and dark seclusions” (63). In spite of her best efforts, she had failed to find a solution to the confusion of her life. At the end of her pilgrimage, she is tired, disheveled and vacant.

Sita fails to respond to love and affection of her husband. She treats, in such moods of despondency and melancholy, emotional and affectionate reassurances. After marriage, Sita feels completely disgust with the surroundings. She also suffers from the anguish of failure with her husband and her in-laws like Maya and Monisha in Anita Desai’s early novels. The lack of communication and understanding with her family members increases her agony. Raman is a business man. He has completely business attitude to life. He is neither an introvert nor an extrovert; he ignores Sita and her desires. He never tries to realize his wife. He has some business minded friends. They used to visit his house and talk about business alone. Sita does not like their business-mindedness. She once stated about his friends. Raman is neither an introvert nor an extrovert-a kind man. He is dedicated unconsciously to the middle way. He never tries to know about Sita. Though they live together, they never understand the fundamental fact of her existence that she is bored, dull, unhappy and uncontrolled. He surprises to hear that Sita is bored:

Bored? He had exclaimed in genuine surprise why? How? With what? And looked so puzzled so pained. Then it was her turn to be puzzled and pained she could not believe that he had really believed that all was well, not known that
she was bored, dull, unhappy, frantic. She could hardly believe that though they lived so close together, he did not even know this basic fact of her existence (144-45).

Sita’s survival, her existence and her adjustment are symbolical of the entire humanity. Her rebellious mood is indicative of thousands of sensitive souls who do not find peace in disturbing environs and corruption spawned by material advancements of all sorts. Her problem of maladjustment is symptomatic of hundreds of thousands of people in the world. They all adjust except Sita.

Sita feels liberated at the sight of a pale, weak Muslim lady being loved intensely by her anxious husband. The lady is about to collapse, but the husband embraces his hands around her in order to provide her strong protection. Sita regards these moments of love and sympathy as truly divine attributes and life spent during these fractions of time and as an immortal bliss. For some time, she forgets all her anxieties and cares about Menaka and Karan. She treats life as not a lengthy span of right and wrong actions, but as small but beautiful, resplendent but satisfying experience. Raman, her husband, appears to her not as someone to be hated and despised but as a life-partner of very low and dull responsibilities. Here, Sita realizes that her own married life and all other relationship is based on compromise, duties and selfishness only and this is the cause of ugliness, discord, incoherence, clashes and increasing violence in life.

Imagery plays an important role in the novel. The house imagery symbolizes the psychological character of Sita. The house with the darkness inside symbolizes Sita’s
inner emptiness. In Anita Desai’s novels, fantasy plays a key role in the interaction of the two worlds - the world of reason and unreason. In this novel, she uses fantasy as a means of interpreting life. The magic island, Manori, Sita’s father as a representative of the island like Prospero in *The Tempest* and Sita’s desire to keep the child in her womb are the main references for using fantasy in the novel.

Desai uses same technical device in this novel too. For example, the novelist presents a series of incidents to highlight the theme of marital tensions. The number of incidents effectively reveals the secret inner life of the heroine. Sita’s chance of meeting the foreigner the quarrelling and the crows savagely attacking the injured young eagle - each incident significantly reveal the secret and suffering of the inner self. The journey of the heroine to the island is structurally significant because it symbolishes the attempt on the part of the heroine to recapture the magic of the past. Sita has tendency to withdraw from the outer world into “the chrysalis of childhood for longer than is unusual for most” (63). Most of the artistic elements, rapid development of plot through chronological arrangement of events, love interest, traditionally accepted mode of characterization, reversal of fortune tend to characterize masculine fiction. Sita keeps on swelling till her final acceptance of her husband’s world. Momentary impressions, reflections, memories of the past, twenty years of Manori island in a kind of broad and free association of ideas and spatial narrative style are emphasized through symbols, imagery, metaphors and other kind of poetic prose.
The island symbolizes a lost paradise and also the dreamy and individualistic side of man while the city life of Bombay is symbolic of the safe, logical side of human life. The sea situated between the city and the island stands for the mysterious way of life. Also, the city is the symbol of the conscious mind, the island of the unconscious and the sea of the subconscious. The house on the island is symbolic of the condition of the island itself as the house looks dead and forlorn. The names of the characters in the novel are instances of conscious symbolism. Sita is presented as the very symbol of misery. Her whole abhorrence of life in Bombay is triggered off by the violence around her. She does not want her fifth baby to be born for she has lot of her faith in life’s ability to continue, “for happenings were always violent” (37). She expects that the magical island gives protection against the violent life in the city:

She saw that island illusion as a refuge, a protection. It would
Hold her baby safely unborn, by magic. Then there would be
the sea- it would wash the frenzy out of her, drown it. Perhaps
the tides would lull the children, too, into smoother, softer beings.
The grove of trees would shade them and protect them(91).

Sita goes to the island to get rid of the emptiness of her life, at least partially. But she is shocked to see the miserable condition of the island which used to be a golden place to her. All things in the house look lifeless. She discovers that the old magic of the house, which has brought her to it, is gone forever. She feels the need of staying on the island away from Bombay because she finds the violence of the big city intolerable.
Patiently, she feels that in the lap of nature on the island, she can fulfill her innermost urges and desires. She thinks that if she goes to the island, she will be able to achieve her goal. She believes that civilization is growing more and more cruel and violent, while nature is still very tender and loving. Things seem natural to her husband and her children but not to Sita.
The sense of alienation from her husband as an existential problem is greater in this novel than in the others. The state of Sita’s spiritual impasse and hopelessly bruised life is beautifully suggested by the novelist. Desai pictures the dynamics of suffering in this novel. Not only the protagonist but also the minor characters suffer physically and mentally. In Manori, no one expects the arrival of Sita, asking question why she will come after twenty years. She escapes from the mainland with her children. So, children also suffer in the monsoon. She takes her children from reality to the illusion. Her husband, Raman, advises her to stay in the city where the physicians are there to save her child. But her intension is to save her child in the womb. So, she packs her things to avoid confrontation.

The rhythmic relationship between identity and alienation eludes Sita till she discovers that undifferentiated life is nothing more than a jelly fish – live, objective, but formless: “Sita remained at a distance and regarded the creature, spilling across the shell-scattered sandbar, reflectively and with some surprise at finding it, in the end… It resembled so little anything that had ever breathed or moved” (114). She identifies her quest for undifferentiated life in the jelly fish and with this identification she realizes that all reality is existence, that there is no reality beyond the one that one lives. The sea and the island are the main unifying symbols in the novel. In fact, the entire action of the novel takes place against the background of the sea, whether it is the sea that Sita watches from the city blocks or the sea that she watches from her island cottage.