

**Symptoms of Paranoid Personality Disorder in Sita of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*****by Anita Desai****Dr. Anjan Kumar***Professor of English and Principal, G R Patil College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Dombivli (E), (M.S.) India***Abstract**

People with paranoid personality disorder view others with distrust and suspicion. Individuals with this disorder assume that other people will exploit, harm, or deceive them, even if no evidence exists to support this expectation. She perceives people around them as threat. Sita begins to feel tense and she begins to view her surrounding with suspicion and doubt. Sita does not want to give birth to the child. Sita tends to disappoint her friends and husband by her arrogant and vindictive behavior. She considers even her husband as hostile to her.

**Key Words:** disorder, threat, hostile, suspicion, wound etc.

The word 'paranoid' refers to a kind of disorder in which a person feels extremely nervous and worried because he believes that other people do not like him or are trying to harm him. People with paranoid personality disorder view others with distrust and suspicion. Individuals with this disorder assume that other people will exploit, harm, or deceive them, even if no evidence exists to support this expectation.

Individuals with Paranoid Personality Disorder are generally difficult to adjust with the people around them. They tend to remain aloof. They at times enter into hostile arguments with their close relations. They appear to be "cold" and lacking in tender feelings. Their combative and suspicious nature makes others hostile to them.

Individuals with Paranoid Personality Disorder lack trust in others. They are often rigid, critical of others, and unable to

collaborate. They have great difficulty accepting criticism.

In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Sita does have the symptoms of paranoid personality disorder. She perceives people around them as threat. She begins to harbor a terror about the child, which is yet to be born. She thinks that the strategies adopted by her to ensure detachment from the family would be frustrated. She considers her baby in the womb as a threat to her aura of superiority, which she has developed in the family, if the child is allowed to be born. People would think that she has not exercised self-control in sexual desires. So she suffers from a sense of self-reproach. She feels denigrated -

"It was as touch for seven months she had collected inside her all her resentments, her fears, her rages, and now she flung them outward, flung them from her" (33)

Sita begins to feel tense and she begins to view her surrounding with suspicion and doubt. She does not find the ambience pleasant - "She herself, looking on it, saw it stretched out so fast, so flat. So deep that she scrambled about it, searching for a few of these moments that proclaimed her still alive, not quite drowned and dead" (33-34).

Symptoms of Sita's paranoid personality disorder are found in the symbolic incident of crows attacking an eagle on Sunday morning. The crowd of crows has wounded the eagle. They have turned eagle to pieces with their beaks. The situation objectifies Sita's conflict in her own life. Sita identifies herself with the proud and defiant eagle. Despite all her attempts to protect Eagle, it is killed. The crows stand for the people around her who are persuadably attempting to destroy her. One of them, she thinks, is her own husband. Tearing eagle into pieces signify the triumph of her husband. Her husband and her son were watching this incident and were exulting over it.

The playing of her daughter does not make Sita happy. Mere play for Sita represents the excellence and hatred, which she finds all around her in the society. Other day-to-day incidences are looked at by her with suspicion. Her daughter Menka destroyed the drawing, she had so carefully made – the ayahs fighting like animals represent to her mad and violent society.

On the one hand, she poses herself as helpless and a suffering, seeking for the love of Raman; on the other hand, she behaves like a rebel. There is an inability in Sita to view her in wholeness. For Sita everything

is gloomy and life is meant for waiting alone;

"It was not a pure colour. It was tinged at times with anxiety. At others with resignation, other with frenzy, patience, grimness through her, flowed along every smallest capillary till she herself was turned to the colour of the waiting, was turned a living monument of waiting" (54-55)

There is a clear contrast between the character of Raman and that of Sita. Raman is normal; the normal for Raman is represented by regularly in life and by familiar patterns. Whatever is abnormal and shocking for his wife is normal and natural for Raman. Raman has developed a sense of acceptance ; "To certain people there comes a day when they must say the great yes or no, he who has yes ready within him, reveals himself at once, and saying it crosses over to the path of honor and his own conviction" (101). Sita on the other hand has adopted an attitude of defiance and noncompliance because she looks at all of them with suspicion and doubt. She refuses to meekly accept the authority of society. "He who refuses does not repent. Should he be asked again, he would say no again. And yet that no... the right no.... crushes him for the rest of life." (100)

Sita does not want to give birth to the child. Her desire to keep the child inside her is meant to continue her suffering. She hopes that the birth of her child could be prevented. Once conceived the woman has to deliver her child. The child cannot be held inside beyond the prescribed time limit. Any

attempt of a man to defy the natural process may prove fatal. It may be possible that Sita wants to continue her suffering and suffering may be a part of her mental make up. Sita goes to Manori where she thinks the birth of the child could be prevented. She goes to the island at an advanced stage of pregnancy. She desires to prevent the biological process of delivery. She thinks she could achieve it by going the island. She has passed her childhood on the island, so the memory of the childhood and the island appear to her miraculous. She does not want to give birth to the child because she shudders at the thought of experiencing the birth pangs for her;

“Children..... through her mind flowed a white, flattening succession in nappies, vests ..... that would have to be gathered together. She could see the expressionless faces of the night nurses as she come in, ravaged by the first pains.... She could see the impassive face of nurses who would stay by her in the theater, now and then glancing at her large, flat watch, bored by yet another, woman’s panic stricken labour” (153-154)

Thus because of paranoid personality disorder Sita “continually broke apart into violent eruptions of emotions” (19). Her mental condition deteriorated day by day so much so that control was, “an accomplishment that had slipped out of her hold”(32). Her attitude, her outbursts of anger, her appearance all substantiate her whimsical approach. Moses asks, “is really Sita mad?” (32) Sita antagonizes her

children. As a result, the children gravitate to the side of their father.

Sita tends to disappoint her friends and husband by her arrogant and vindictive behavior. Her arrogance is a kind of defense mechanism for her. After twenty years, she goes to the island. This was her second journey. It symbolized her attempt to relive and recreate the past. She has in her mind the romantic and heroic picture of her father. Even year after his death Sita remembers: “the incidents some had related about her father” (66). Sita is incapable to understand her father, which is analogous to her inability to understand the past.

Her second visit to the island does not prove fruitful. The old charm of the island cannot be recaptured. Even the Moses who is much involved with Sita and her children is no longer young and handsome. The passage of time has ravaged the beauty of the small island. The violent eruptions of emotions of Sita cannot be subdued on the island, as she had expected. Sita does not find the island picturesque any more. The tank in the village is overflowing with dirty water. The old-house is full of dust and cobwebs. She had gone back to Manori in search of freedom from boredom and anxiety and the two is that she would prevent child from being born. But her hopes are frustrated. It is so because she fails to perceive the things and people around her in proper perspective. Sita does not have a healthy concept of freedom. For her freedom, means escape from reality. This escape from reality provides her only freedom from conflicts. She escapes just to forget her real self and to maintain the identity of what Horney calls ‘glorified self’ (Horney: 1950: 109).

Sita's husband Raman comes to take her back, she refuses because even Raman is considered by her as hostile to her. Finally, when Raman comes for the second time, she finds no other way than compromising with the situation.

Sita's character is a befitting example of paranoid personality disorder. Anita Desai has been credited with initiating a new trend of studying human psyche through her women protagonists.

**References:**

1. Anita Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1975
2. Karen. Horney. *Neurosis and Human Growth*, W. W. Norton & Company, United States of America, 1950