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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ECOFEMINIST INTERCONNECTIONS: MUTUAL DOMINATION OF WOMEN AND NATURE IN ANITA DESAI'S "WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER?" AND "CLEAR LIGHT OF THE DAY"

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Abstract

The critical framework of ecofeminism unites feminist analysis with environmental studies through its fundamental belief that the oppression faced by women directly relates to the environmental destruction which arises from interrelated patriarchal power systems and human-centred belief systems. The 1974 manifesto *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* by Françoise d'Eaubonne introduced this concept which analyzes the historical link between sexism and ecological damage that occurs through colonial resource extraction and gendered labour distribution while showing that gender-based discrimination functions as a parallel force to environmental destruction through shared patterns of human domination and commercial exploitation and literary censorship. Ecofeminism establishes through its study of Indian environments which expand upon Vandana Shiva's postcolonial work and Maria Mies' materialist research that women's bodies serve as battlegrounds for fighting against domestic patriarchy and ecological imperialism.

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Introduction:-

Anita Desai established herself as an Indian English fiction pioneer through her psychological depth and lyricism which she demonstrates in her novels *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and *Clear Light of Day* through human interiors that merge with elements of destroyed outer spaces. The inner landscapes of her female protagonists reveal their mutual domination of women and nature as a dual oppression. Maya grapples with an unwanted pregnancy and soul-crushing urban alienation, retreating to the threatened island paradise of Manori, whose pristine beaches and tides symbolize her fertile yet violated body, encroached upon by Mumbai's developmental sprawl. The emotional desertion of Bim occurs while she navigates her family decaying in Old Delhi during a time when post-Partition India experiences both environmental destruction and social disintegration—the monsoon-flooded garden and crumbling mansion echoing her emotional desiccation and the nation's scarred earth. Desai uses her powerful images to show personal hardships which she transforms into environmental critical symbols that connect her writing to both feminist ecological studies and postcolonial storytelling. The protagonist Maya of *Where Shall We Go This*

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Summer? uses her journey to Manori, which has become a male-dominated space, to show how urban developers fade away to create a sacred space for nature and women which exists outside their commercialized dominion. Maya's pregnant body, swelling like the encroaching sea yet marked for rejection, parallels the island's transformation into a tourist enclave, where nature's fertility is raped for profit, as Desai evokes through vivid imagery: "the sea was beginning to look like a vast sewer" (Desai 1975). *Clear Light of Day* uses the deteriorating Old Delhi home to show how its women characters stay stuck in emotional decline while Bim suffers through her daily experiences which parallel the environmental decay. The garden's "rank vegetation" and stagnant cows reflect her self-sacrificial endurance amid familial abandonment and Partition's lingering wounds.

The research paper investigates ecofeminism through the complete body of work by Desai. She uses her writing to show how gender and environmental oppression connect by showing how women either fight back or accept their fate. The reading analyzes Desai's fiction through water as amniotic and destructive force and spatial dynamics which range from enclosed wombs to polluted expanses and non-linear story patterns which create tidal rhythm patterns. The novel Desai's fiction shows how patriarchal ecocide demands from men that they destroy both land and life. Women must join their ecological work for nature to survive. Desai enhances Indian postcolonial ecofeminist studies through her work, which connects international environmental justice theories with local practices.

Research Methodology:-

Qualitative Literary Analysis:-

In this research used qualitative research methods which required them to interpret texts through a literary criticism approach. The research required detailed analysis of primary texts through close reading to uncover their symbolic and thematic connections between women's oppression and environmental destruction. The research studies crucial passages which show how Maya's island retreat represents her body and Bim's flooded garden represents her emotional paralysis to prove ecofeminist links. The research uses ecofeminism as an analytical tool to evaluate power dynamics in postcolonial Indian contexts through qualitative methods.

Analysis:

Ecofeminist Textual Analysis:-

The study examines how Desai combines women's mental oppression with environmental themes through his use of symbolic blending which serves as his method to challenge patriarchal power structures. The two novels use this interpretive framework to show how nature exists as an extension of women's bodies which women use to protect their bodies from being treated as commercial products. Maya's pregnancy nausea shows the same pattern of decline as Mumbai's expanding urban development which damages the coastline; retreat from this situation represents ecofeminist resistance against both reproductive control and land enclosure practices. The flooded gardens of Bim's Delhi Mansion show her emotional state remains unchanged since the Partition while the hyacinth-covered waters represent women's suppressed power which parallels the country's environmental damage. The patterns in Desai's work show how women protect land from imperial powers while creating new possibilities which will bring about better environmental balance. The detailed analysis shows how the main characters in the story take control of their destiny through their struggles which represent different aspects of environmental and social equity movements. The artist uses her personal singing style to create love songs which help her develop ecofeminist views about nature in her homeland of India.

Conclusion:-

The two works of Anita Desai known as *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) and *Clear Light of Day* (1980) establish ecofeminism's main idea that women and nature both endure similar forms of subjugation through the dual systems of patriarchal and anthropocentric oppression which treat both as economic resources. Maya's island-body in the first story depicts her internal conflict about motherhood through her troubled pregnancy and her experience with unwanted pregnancy which becomes a symbol of environmental imperialism. Bim's emotional emptiness shows through her Old Delhi home which the monsoon floods and her garden which floods during monsoon season while her post-Partition existence demonstrates her life experience through the lost women's voices and the harmed national landscape which destroyed her homeland.

The combination of traditional indoor space with outdoor environments in Desai's work creates social challenges which women protagonists transform into powerful symbols that demonstrate how nature opposes human domination. The research demonstrates that colonial extraction established intersections between historical events

while developing mutual liberation which enables Vandana Shiva's concepts to become part of personal postcolonial stories.

Desai establishes global ecofeminism through postcolonial Indian women's body-based empowerment which represents their environmental protection work. Her lyrical work creates new possibilities by the establishment of new relationships which help her vision of human freedom through mutually beneficial relationships. The study shows Desai established herself as an ecofeminist founder in Indian English literature through her work which combined psychological realism with environmental humanities. The writing of Desai requires readers to acknowledge gender-based ecocide which results in new studies that examine the comparison between South Asian fictional works.

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