The aim of this thesis is to study the Theme of Alienation in the novels of Anita Desai. The scope of this work is strictly limited to her first published ten novels. The novels of Anita Desai are studied from a number of points of view. So far the theme of alienation in her novels is not delved in depth and in detail, even though many critics have made occasional observations.

This study is divided into twelve chapters. The first chapter is devoted to introduction which mainly deals with the position and popularity of the novelist, the selection of her themes, her technique of writing, characterisation, plot construction, symbolism and imagery in her novels and the meaning of alienation and types of alienation.

In the second chapter, Cry, the Peacock, Anita Desai, explores Maya’s Predicament, her obsession with the childhood prophecy of disaster, her psychological alienation, the reasons for her insanity and her domestic tragedy.

In the third chapter, Voices in the City, the novelist presents the miserable plight of Nirode, Monisha and Amla in the city, Calcutta and their total alienation from the main stream of the real world and from their own selves and the reasons for their alienations and Monisha’s suicide.

In the fourth chapter, Bye, Bye, Blackbird, the writer projects mainly the problems of Indian immigrants, Dev and Adit in London and their social and cultural alienation and Sarah’s social and psychological alienation and the causes for their alienation.
In the fifth chapter, Where Shall We Go This Summer? Desai magnifies the predicament of Sita and her alienation from her total environment, husband and children, her incapability to accept the authority of the society and her compromise with life finally.

In the sixth chapter, Fire on the Mountain, the author focuses on the existential ordeal of Nanda Kaul, the self-alienation of her great grand-daughter, Raka and the circumstantial and social alienation and the tragic death of Ila Das. It also underlines the futility of even silence and solitude.

In the seventh chapter, Clear Light of Day, the novelist underscores the integral vision of existence through love, self-sacrifice and accommodation. Alienation has been realised as an influence of time on the relationship of Bim with her younger brother, Raja. It is mainly about time as a destroyer, as a preserver and about what the bondage of time does to people.

In the eighth chapter, The Village by the Sea, Anita Desai clearly presents the problem of survival. It is the story of a family disintegrating under the pressures of poverty, illness and drunkenness, but not of alienation and self-brooding. The youngest protagonists, Lila and Hari are financially hard-pressed and materially alienated.

In the ninth chapter, In Custody, the novelist brings home the alienation of Deven and his wife Sarla from their present condition and environment. It also presents most convincingly the fundamental facts of existence that vanity of efforts and frustration of lasting faith is very much ingredient in the universe.
In the tenth chapter, Baumgartner's Bombay, the artist probes into the predicament, estrangement, exile, existential and social alienation of Hugo Baumgartner. He is condemned for a life long alienation.

In the eleventh chapter, Journey to Ithaca, Desai presents a nagging sense of alienation and quest for spirituality and mysticism of both Matteo and Laila and Sophie's involvement in life and her social and cultural alienation.

The last chapter, Conclusion, touches upon the biographical involvement of the novelist in her novels and sums up the salient features of this study. Focus is turned to her vision of ever changing society, the nurturing individuality of her protagonists, their problems and predicaments and the causes for their alienation.

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(C. SUBRAHMANYAM)