Female Alienation is an existential experience and condition that has frequently been encountered in women's literature, but it happens to be an area that has either been ignored or neglected as much as women, as a race have remained subordinated, marginalized and suppressed as a voice. In Sociological terms ‘Alienation’ means loneliness, the absence of relationships, the feeling of disassociation from others or the explicit rejection of social values and norms, the sense of both powerlessness in the face of existing social structures as well as the sense of their meaninglessness. On the other hand there is alienation 'from the self' the failure to experience oneself, may come from an excess of conformity or a lack of individuality and spontaneity.

Alienation as an attitude, behavioral pattern, a state of mind, a concept, philosophy experience, epistemology, thought and perception or a theory has been much in existence in a number of classical texts written by the male writers. But female alienation which is essentially very different from the one experienced by the patriarchy has been an area less researched and not fully explored either holistically or comprehensively. 'Female Alienation' requires a specifically different definition and understanding. Always viewed and treated as the Beauvoirian 'The Other', it is because of the woman's identity as 'The Other' and her fundamental alienation derived in part from her body-her reproductive capacity- and primitive order of division of labour due to childbearing and rearing function that results in women alienation from any other creative activity. What renders the situation tragically pathetic is that most women are not aware of their state of immanence, that their alienation stems from their sex. As a woman, she is systematically denied any kind of status, identity, individuality, rights or values.
She is mostly viewed as a shadow and she is never a person in her own right but is essentially 'The Other' who is dependent on some male member all through her life. A serious attempt has to be made to study the female confusion, frustration, disintegration and estrangement of women.

A comparative study is often an effective tool and provides the methodology for comparing two female minds writing across the continents from different cultures and social background. While female alienation is a universal condition also unconditionally faced by women across the globe, there are emerging patterns which differentiate one from the other. As a leading woman writer of her era Toni Morrison (18th February 1931-) deals extensively with the existential dilemma which a black woman suffers due to her marginalization and secondary position. Anita Desai (24th June 1937-) a diasporic writer, portrays the Indian Women's psyche as she is severed from her moorings as a person and undergoing a trauma of severe identity crisis which results in an alienation from the self and others.

This thesis attempts to critically analyze the two writers - The Afro American Black writer, Toni Morrison and the immigrant Indian novelist Anita Desai and how they deal with alienation as an existential condition which women wallow in and whether they transcend the given state at some point in their lives. Female alienation is a theme that runs concurrently in most of the modern feminist fictions and alienation of a woman may be defined as a dislocation, an estrangement from the existing values and society. Women alienated express symptoms involving anxiety, withdrawal and other internalizing disorders as depression, fear, obsessions, psychosomatic complaints and schizoid fear. Most of
their internalizing syndromes are associated with the traditional categories of neurotic psychological and psychosomatic disorders.

In a woman these aspects intensify as she is subject to multi-factors of alienation that threaten to destroy her essential womanhood. The study is based on philosophical findings of writers like Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Sigmund Freud, Bernard Murchland, Albert Camus, Jaspers, Fuller, Ionesco, Spengler and others who have richly contributed to the theories of Alienation. It also has as its base the analytical viewpoints of feminists, philosophers and psychoanalyst critics and writers on the female alienation theory.

The methodology used is to analyze these novels contentwise and contextually and to study the extent of alienation of these women characters created by these writers. For Toni Morrison, the issues focus more on race, color, class, sex and gender. For Anita Desai it is on sex and gender. However as diverse as both the writers are, there are points of convergence and uniformity in their writings and creativity as well as divergent points on which they strongly disagree and are artfully different in their portrayal of women characters. Their commonalities and differences would be critically compared and their contrastive features would be outlined in the final chapter.

The study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter gives the conceptual definition of alienation- female alienation in particular and the parameters and features which essentially differentiates Female Alienation from the patriarchal one. It outlines the theories on female alienation and attempts to apply the same to the women characters in the select novels of Toni Morrison and Anita Desai. It studies the socio cultural circumstances in which the two novelists
lived and wrote. Both are the products of their respective cultures and their experiences of the culture they belong to by ancestry and the other they arrive at by choice or design makes them belong to two cultures—the past and the present simultaneously and hence their writings are interfused with cultural complexity and social diversity which is the very composite of some of the women they structure in their novels.

Chapter II, strives to explore the concept of alienation in select novels of Anita Desai. The analysis deals with the study of three novels *Cry, The Peacock*(1963), *Voices In The City*(1965) and *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*(1975). Alienation serves as a basic theme and acts as a recurrent motif webbing the different concerns of the novels into a singular unit. It is undoubtedly the most dominant trait of several characters delineated in them. An Indian novelist who has inscribed the theme of alienation in her novels in a systematic way is Anita Desai. We find in her characters, self-examination—an exploration of the alienated human psyche. The chapter elaborately analyses the characters of Maya, Monisha and Sita as they struggle through their inner trauma and dilemmas to survive the ordeals surrounding their lives.

Chapter III deals with a Black woman writer Toni Morrison and the alienation, that her women characters were subject to, are multifold—race, colour, class gender and sex. The women characters from select novels such as the *The Bluest Eye*(1970), *Sula* (1973), and *Beloved* (1987), are steeped in an alienated state generated by some social, political or cultural factor. Toni Morrison’s novels depict a range of characters who are essentially strong in themselves but who are ostracized from social moorings. More than simply creating them as stereotypes, Toni Morrison individualizes them giving personal attributes and characteristics
that vitally distinguishes them, one from the other. This chapter also analyzes the alienation aspect that stems from certain facts such as race, colour, class, gender and sex.

Chapter IV exposes the study of select aspects of female alienation in Anita Desai and Toni Morrison. The problem of alienation is intimately related to the loss of and quest for one's identity. The dispossessed personality's search identity is a common place theme in modern fiction. Most alienation is a result of the historical and cultural dislocation of individuals. The sense of rootlessness and deprivation makes most creative artists depressive and they are also victims of the angst and alienation that they experience in their lives. As a remedy to get rid of their deceased mental state, writing itself becomes a therapeutic outlet which helps them to retain a sense of sanity in a rapidly alienating environment. The emerging women characters are studied as 'Role Models' who provide for the making of a strong consciousness in women, who easily succumb to the external grind of onerous existence of daily life.

The chapter V deals with a comparative cross cultural analysis of the two writers, writing across the two cultures and the dual cultures that they have themselves experienced-the one they have left behind and the other culture which they have to accommodate. It outlines the findings of the study, implications for further research and also attempts strategies and methods to resolve to find a solution to the existential alienated dilemma faced by women in general and women characters in particular.