Chapter I

Introduction
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Canadian Literature, like Australian, African and Caribbean Literatures is a relatively new literature in English. The definition of literature as “Creative Writing” with an accompanying body of “Creative Criticism”, came about gradually in the last decades of the 19th Century, and has been more fully developed in the 20th Century. Progress in Literature in Canada is related to the progress of the entire society:

... the progress of Literature has been co-equal with that of the settlement of the wilderness: and if the latter has been made to bloom and blossom as the rose, the literature of Canada likewise blooms and blossoms beauetiously

(Literary Gerland, January 1943)

As for the history of the present-day Canadian Literature, it should be said that Modern Canadian Literature began with the arrival of the
European explorers and settlers who introduced the popular modes of literary forms like journals, letters, chronicles, documentary records and a great wave of Jesuit conversations. Travellers' reports came to replace exploration journals. Soon it was the turn of the map-makers like Alexander Mackenzie, William Combe and Thomason. Next were the missionary journals of the Jesuits and their "revelations" was a set of annual reports.

Towards the end of the 18th Century, there was the quest for a home in Canada and the quest gave birth to the springing-up of more journals and diaries. Women were popular diary-writers, greatly attracted by the Canadian wilderness. The Struckland family will be remembered for its contribution to diary-writing, with Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Trail standing out as the most important ones. Susanna Moodie's *Roughing it in the Bush* and Trail's *The Backwoods of Canada* and *The Canadian Settlers Guide* have been considered landmarks in the development of English Canadian Literature.

The novel appeared on the literary scene of Canada in 1824, when for the first time a native born Carter, Julia Catherine Backwith wrote *St. Ursula's Convent*. It is about a shipwreck and it describes the seigneurial of Quebec. One dominant theme in the early
20th Century writing was Nelligan of Irish and Quebec roots, living for the most of his life in prison, who became one of the most striking influences on 20th Century Quebec culture.

The latter part of the 20th Century saw the arrival of literary compositions/expositions. Treating realism as one of its major themes as exemplified in Sinclair Ross, Gabbrielle Roy and Ethel Wilson, Early Birney, MacLennan, Mavis Gallant, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Lawrence, Alice Munro, Rudy Wiebe and Audrey Thomas emerged and dominated the Canadian literary scene. In 1864 an Upper Canadian clergyman named Edward Hartley Dewart published an anthology entitled Selections From the Canadian Poets, and in his introduction declared:

... A National Literature is an essential element in the formation of natural character. It is not merely the record of country's mental progress: it is an expression of its intellectual life, the bond of national unity and the guide of national energy (1).

Literature is not created by a collective act of will; and, for many years, Canadian writers displayed the pioneer mentality, which sought
to recreate in a hostile wilderness the institutions and the cultural patterns of the lost homeland.

Early Canadian Literature was only a literature in English, produced by British immigrants whose mother tongue was English. In fact, the British immigrants and settlers had carried with them not only the British way of life and culture, but also its literary traditions. In other words, British writers like Montaigue, Susanna Moodie and Catherine began to emerge as a small community in Canada in the early stages of immigration and settlement. By and large, these writers were writing within the English literary tradition, following mostly the English models.

After 1763, the English found themselves in Canada with a large number of Europeans belonging to different religions, cultures, and speaking many tongues.

The inhabitants of Canada, whether they were explorers, settlers, colonisers or immigrants brought in their train their native religions and cultures. And such a confluence of conflicting religious beliefs and cultures was bound to give rise to conditions inimical to peaceful co-existence among the members of this heterogeneous composition at the social-cultural level. The variety of cultural and regional backgrounds represented in these multi-voiced fictional works would
seem to argue against any coherent concept of Canadian women's fictions.

Canadian novelists have successfully survived with their identifiable voices in fiction that is truer than fact. They have employed words through specially adopted voices that project the Canadian themes in the most articulate manner.

Like other colonial literatures, Canadian literature was slow to develop. It started assuming significance in the early 20th Century. The two early important novelists were Morley Callaghan in English and Gabrielle Roy in French. Hugh MacLennan was another novelist who became aware of the real problems facing the Canadians. The central theme in Sinclair Ross's fiction is imagination and its failure in Canadian fiction.

The writings of Canadian women novelists have been chosen as the broad area of study, as this offers a specific perspective on a specific human experience. The works of the 20th Century Canadian women writers incorporate certain thematic reflections on the status and condition of women in Canada in relation to several dimensions of relationships ranging from the interpersonal to the environmental.
Women's fiction is insistently double in the recognition of contradictions within the selves and the perceptions of incongruity between social surfaces and what is hidden beneath them. It is interesting to find Gothic fantasy and the old devious literature of female dread and desire, surviving in the fiction of Atwood, Munro and Heberts alongside thematic and technical complexity and its original virtuosity. Women's writing often celebrates the power of the female imagination.

Yet such celebration is frequently accompanied by a deep unease about the activity and the purposes of writing.

Canadian women's fiction in the 1970s and 1980s faced the problems of duality as signalled in Professor Lotta Gutsa's very title *Wilderness Womb, The Emergence of Canadian women writers*. Origins are important but so also are the varieties of narratives through which Canadian women's fiction has emerged.

The female spiritual quest assumes a more different form than the male heroic quest which is generally linear and involves separation, achievement and the conquest of culture. Like women's speech, women's writing is not only subversive but marginal, regardless of whether a specific piece of writing conforms to the current dominant style or not. That is, regardless of form or content, the voices of women's
narratives are never those of the dominant patriarchal discourse because women’s relationship to that discourse is different from that of men’s. The 20th Century Canadian women writer’s fictional works have been chosen as the broad area but the specific perspective is on Audrey Thomas and her novels which have become a dominant force in Canadian writing. Hence this was considered a promising area for research investigation. Audrey Thomas, a living English Canadian woman writer, reveals in her novels an insistent perception of the conditions of women’s existence in diverse capacities and relationships.

Compared with other Canadian women writers, Audrey Thomas’ works highlight the diverse conditions of narrative possibility. These possibilities are rooted in the best of several worlds. She is a psychological realist and has a strong natural scholarliness. She is primarily interested in questions of perception and perspectives. This marks her different from many contemporary Canadian novelists. The study of this woman novelist has been related to the emergence of women writers on the Canadian literary scene. As Dr. K.S. Ramamurthi (1994) has observed in his paper “The Feminine Space in the Changing Scenario: India and Canada”, it was only in the colonial space, that is in commonwealth countries, that women acquired their freedom to
participate in public life and to express themselves through their writings much earlier than in their parent countries like England or France. A brief note on the well known women writers who emerged on the Canadian literary scene will be helpful in one’s understanding of this aspect of women’s writing. According to Coral Ann Howells (1984), the question repeatedly asked outside Canada about Canadian fiction is, “why are there so many good Canadian women writers?”. If Canada has produced so many good women writers in all those years, it is more so during the 20th Century. The flowering of women writers of such international repute as Mavis Gallant, Ethel Wilson, Alice Munro, Margaret Laurence, Gabrielle Roy, Margaret Atwood and Audrey Thomas, to name only a few, has attracted global readership. That is, Canadian fiction has become a global phenomenon in terms of critical and reading response to it.

Audrey Grace Callahan was born in Binghamton, New York, U.S.A. Audrey Thomas was educated at Smith College and at St. Andrews University, Scotland and she taught in England for a year before moving with her husband, Ian Thomas, to Vancouver, Canada in 1959. She received an M.A. in English (1963) from the University of British Columbia. From 1964 to 1966, she lived in Ghana and since 1969 she has alternated
years of writing at her home on Galliano Island, British Columbia and holding a post in creative writing at universities in British Columbia and Montreal. She has won a National Magazine Award (1979), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Literary Contexts (1979), (1980), (1981) and the first Ethel Wilson Fiction prize in 1985.

Since the late 1960's, Thomas has produced a series of books of finely crafted short stories and post-modern novels. Her first story, "If one green Bottle ...", which won an Atlantic Monthly 'first' in 1965, is the lead story in her first book Ten Green Bottles (1967). In this volume she introduces continuing concerns, a preoccupation with perceptions on the act of writing, the interface of culture, subjectivity in flux, and an experimental use of language and form. All her works are linked to form a network of motifs, constantly reworked from new perspectives, leading many critics to consider her an autobiographical writer, especially in the light of her predilection for a first person focalizer in the act of replacing the past. Her fictional works are personal. The interest for the reader lies in the interpretive puzzle or play between fiction and reality and in the exploration of representations constructing gendered subjects.

Best known of Thomas fictional works are the Isobel trilogy, in which she deploys the strategy of multiple focalization. The epic

The post-modernist form with its fragmentation and self-referentiality is reflected in Thomas’ works. Thomas’ internationalism
complements and redefines the nationalist definition of Canadianness in terms of life-style and literary style. The cultural codes interweave and dissolve truth and certainty into a matter of perspective.


Rudy Dorsch, 1985). The metafictional dimension of novels like Latakia,
Munchmeyer and Prospero on the Island and Intertidal Life has been
discussed and analysed by a few critics (Beddoes, Julie Davidson,
Different types and functions of monologue, such as the imaginary monologue
and opening monologue, as used in novels like Latakia and Intertidal
Life have been examined by some critics (Gottlieb, Lois, C and Keitner,
Wendy, 1982, Quigley, E, (1980-81). Split technique and collage technique
as employed in the structure of Mrs. Blood and Munchmeyer and
Prospero on the Island have been discussed by a few (Barfoot, Joan,
1987, Potvin, Elizabeth, 1987). The use of the first person and the third-
person narration has also been examined by a few (Gottlieb, Lois, C. and

According to Audrey Thomas "All my novels are one novel in a
sense", "Each one extends in a different style, offering more information,
from a different perspective, what is basically the same story". (Hofesess,
17). Audrey Thomas offers her habitual play on the duplicity and
multiplicity of language. Clashes between perspectives are signalled by
disjunctions in language. The problematic nature of language, has
been used metaphorically by Thomas in many novels to indicate a character's comes drift on cross-cultural confusions and the character's being swayed in the welter of multiple meanings. Thomas' "versatile style" and her rich and variegated language-use have been pointed out and discussed by a few. (Boil, 1975, Diotte, Robert, 1980, Dorscht, Susan Rudy and Barfoot, Joan, 1987, Hales, Leslie, 1984, Hutcheon, Linda, Potvin, Elizabeth, 1987, Quigley, Ellen, (1980-81)).

In Audrey Thomas' novels women undergo a slow transformation. The mutation extends from being native and ignorant about the male world's motive and outlook to awakening to the realization that it is time for them to be on guard so as not to fall a prey to the victimizing designs of man.

Audrey Thomas has siezed upon the best of several worlds. She is a psychological realist, as Frank Davey (1974) once remarked, of "an extreme kind". But, in addition, as Davey has also said, she is a "technical adventuress". She turns metafictional devices to the service of psychological realism.

Audrey Thomas' writing is self-reflexive and "autobiographical". Much of Audrey Thomas' fiction is nearly autobiographical. Anthony Boil (1972) notes that one of Thomas' principal themes is art and artist. In
Mrs. Blood Jason is an art teacher and Tom Lodestone in Munchmeyer, Fred in Prospero on the Island. Alice’s husband Peter in Intertidal Life and Rachel’s lover Michael in Latakia are all artists. These characters, by and large, seem to be yardsticks against which are to be measured the artistic aspirations of the central characters. Audrey Thomas explores the relationship between the sister arts of writing and painting, discerning the differences between them in respect of their powers for representing life.

Travelling becomes a metaphor for the process of metamorphosis and of self-discovery just as Africa becomes often a metaphor in her works like Mrs. Blood, Blown Figures, Latakia, Coming Down From Wa and Graven Images for the paradoxical intermingling of dream and reality. Journey becomes a metaphor for exterior and interior explorations as evidenced in Latakia, Mrs. Blood, Blown Figures and Coming Down From Wa.

Much of the power of Thomas’s writing is said to be created by her dense style. Connections between the dislocated parts of the story (and between stories) are effected through recurring symbols and incidents which function as motifs. The recurring images are masks,
games, blood, flowers, ghosts and the journey by or the movement through water as process of discovery.

Allusions function in a similar manner to effect associative links even as they expand the boundaries of the stories to encompass the range of literary history. Thomas' allusions to the biblical myth, where the divine presence is identified with spoken language extend the implications of the narrative situations of a woman's experience and relate them to the broader question of creation in the ordering and meaning of existence. However, the biblical myth of the incarnate word invoked invites the reader to see the word set adrift because, backed by the fiat of a male God, it is antithetical to women's realities and has become "empty" for them (Coldwell, Joan 1982, Bellette, A.F.1975, Julian, Marilyn, 1975, Quigley, Ellen (1980-81) Hutcheon, Linda 1985, Potvin, Elizabeth 1987, Davey, Frank 1986, and Barbara. Godard).

The novels of Audrey Thomas reveal a thematic preoccupation with the experiences of joy and sorrow, loss and fear (Hutcheon L. 1985); with innocence and guilt (Quigley E. 1980); with sanity and madness ( Dennis D. 1982); with diverse problems of personality and identity (Cynthia F. 1985); with creativity and confessional analytic modes of existence (Ann H.L.1987); with the fractured nature of contemporary life
(Kareda U. 1985); and, with the nature and conditions of women's existence (Hutcheon L. 1987). The style and narrative strategies of the novel and the psychological process of the characters have also been bestowed critical attention (Joan 1982. Barfoot. J. Potvin. E. 1987).

The foregoing analysis of secondary sources shows that the psychological and physical problems of women in the novels of Audrey Thomas have been dealt with elaborately by critics. The loneliness of the women in the novels has also been discussed. The metafictional dimensions of Audrey Thomas' novels and their narrative innovativeness have also been accorded sufficient critical attention. The survey of relevant criticism also reveals how the binary structure of themes has also been examined in a significant manner. The scan of relevant literature has also shown that alienation has been but briefly examined. But a study of primary sources shows that there is sufficient scope for examining how in the novels of Audrey Thomas the alienation of women protagonists falls into a significant pattern. Thomas' female protagonists inevitably experience exclusion, alienation, in a search for identity, which is a continuing process, even as her novels remain open-ended and are, accessible to further exploration. The fragmentation and alienation of a number of Audrey Thomas's protagonists could well be
the result of the author's own immigrant sensibility that is not tethered to any one central, prolonged certainty. Since all the protagonists experience alienation, it was decided to focus research attention on the different aspects of alienation and to elucidate the underlying patterns. It is proposed to study how Audrey Thomas' characters' emotional ties with other persons, group(s), institutions(s) or belief(s) are disrupted, how the sense of alienation seeps into the psychology and behavior of women characters, how it causes a conflict between the self and the society and how the normal being comes to feel alienated from itself and the world. It is proposed to investigate the patterned dimensions of alienation that forms a central thread that runs through all the novels of Audrey Thomas. Mrs. Thing, Miranda, Rachel, Alice, Sandy and other women protagonists feel that they are excluded from the society and from all relationships cherished as authentic and inviolable. This leads to their experiencing frustration which, consequently, leads to a sense of alienation that ranges from the social, psychological, and economic dimensions, through the religious to the metaphysical dimension.

_Songs My Mother Taught Me_ (1973), _Mrs. Blood_ (1970) and _Blown Figures_ (1974) are novels that are linked through the experiences of
Isobel, and they trace her shift from childhood and adolescence to adulthood and marriage. Her self-division and alienation, linked to a traumatic past, increases through the novels, climaxing in total disintegration in the last novel.

Characters in the unnerving grip of alienation may become disoriented or hostile. They may feel helpless and withdrawn from themselves, from the society and from the environment, and may reject the values of social institutions. All the factors that lead a character/characters into the tunnel of alienation are proposed to be identified and analyzed. The debilitating consequences of alienation and the various efforts made by the characters to overcome the condition of alienation may point to certain patterns of resistance to alienation. These aspects, in terms of responses that fall into certain patterns, are also proposed to be analyzed. Thus viewed, alienation is a dynamic force rather than a static condition of existence. Since alienation is an existence-defining and existence-changing force and since it is a major preoccupation of Audrey Thomas' novels, it becomes necessary to have a knowledge of alienation as a working force and as a concept in its full range of implications.
The twentieth century has been called "The age of alienation". The modern man is doomed to suffer the corrosive impact of alienation, which manifests itself variously in the forms of generation gap, loss of credibility, compartmentalization of life, a stunning personal development and the conspicuous absence of a sense of meaningfulness of life.

Though alienation is the most dominant theme in Canadian writing, it is there in almost all modern writing, because alienation has become a major component of twentieth century life and civilization. In fact, man in the modern world is essentially a lonely creature and is very much subjected to the condition of loneliness, which makes it difficult for him to establish satisfactory relationships with others. This is what Raymond Williams calls "the essential loneliness" of man in the 20th century and every sensitive individual suffers from this condition though basically man is a "Zoon politicien" or a social animal.

Alienation as an existential component and as an abstract concept, has been discussed from the social and sociological perspectives. (Charts. 1970, Burrows D.J. 1969) Alienation has also been examined from the perspective of economics with focus on financial self-sufficiency or lack of it in relation to the nature and condition of
in an existence dominated by purposelessness and despair, was the central problem of alienation.

Alienation, in Marxian theory, is a state of isolation and separation from one's life work as a meaningful expression of self, or of one's relationship to fellow humans and nature. To Marx, this idea expressed the condition of the workers in a capitalist society.

Alienation is basically a physical and social dislocation. The patterns of its presence in the Canadian novel are primarily sociological. But they are also of moral or psychological or some other order of significance.

An individual may feel alienated from his or her family, from other people in general, the society in which she or he lives (for example American or Soviet Society), from oneself (perhaps especially one's body or some particular aspect of one's character or of one's past) or from nature. One may also feel alienated from the universe, from what one does (from one's activity, work or love) or from things (such as the products of one's labour).

Some of Audrey Thomas's recurring themes are quest for female space and creativity, imperialism, metafiction, ambivalence, searching for the self and the theme of alienation. Of all these, it is alienation that
structures the vision of the world in each novel and unifies all the novels into a single larger structure.

Audrey Thomas's fictional work is concerned with the complex relationship of individuals to society. The chief problem the characters encounter is how they face the situation of alienation and whether they make any attempt to overcome alienation. It is not surprising that alienation is the predominant theme in Audrey Thomas' novels.

On the thematic level, the discussions focus on the enforced alienation of women under patriarchy, on the patriarchal attempt to annihilate the selfhood of women, on the gradual carving out of female space by women through various strategies, and, on women's quest for identity, self definition and autonomy.

Audrey Thomas insists on certain values of love, faith and humanistic inter-relationship in every novel where people seem to live out an alienated life. But, these values are not all that powerful or omni present to eliminate alienation. The characters find themselves victims of alienation and many of them make an attempt to be relieved of the sense of alienation.

The characters' movement from alienation to reintegration or dealienation in Audrey's novels could be analyzed by first identifying
Isobel, and they trace her shift from childhood and adolescence to adulthood and marriage. Her self-division and alienation, linked to a traumatic past, increases through the novels, climaxing in total disintegration in the last novel.

Characters in the unnerving grip of alienation may become disoriented or hostile. They may feel helpless and withdrawn from themselves, from the society and from the environment, and may reject the values of social institutions. All the factors that lead a character/characters into the tunnel of alienation are proposed to be identified and analyzed. The debilitating consequences of alienation and the various efforts made by the characters to overcome the condition of alienation may point to certain patterns of resistance to alienation. These aspects, in terms of responses that fall into certain patterns, are also proposed to be analyzed. Thus viewed, alienation is a dynamic force rather than a static condition of existence. Since alienation is an existence-defining and existence-changing force and since it is a major preoccupation of Audrey Thomas' novels, it becomes necessary to have a knowledge of alienation as a working force and as a concept in its full range of implications.
The twentieth century has been called "The age of alienation". The modern man is doomed to suffer the corrosive impact of alienation, which manifests itself variously in the forms of generation gap, loss of credibility, compartmentalization of life, a stunning personal development and the conspicuous absence of a sense of meaningfulness of life.

Though alienation is the most dominant theme in Canadian writing, it is there in almost all modern writing, because alienation has become a major component of twentieth century life and civilization. In fact, man in the modern world is essentially a lonely creature and is very much subjected to the condition of loneliness, which makes it difficult for him to establish satisfactory relationships with others. This is what Raymond Williams calls "the essential loneliness" of man in the 20th century and every sensitive individual suffers from this condition though basically man is a "Zoon politician" or a social animal.

Alienation as an existential component and as an abstract concept, has been discussed from the social and sociological perspectives. (Charts. 1970, Burrows D.J. 1969) Alienation has also been examined from the perspective of economics with focus on financial self-sufficiency or lack of it in relation to the nature and condition of
existence (Zabloki B.D 1980: Weiskopt W.A1971). Alienation has also been viewed against the background of history, the history of family, class, society, race, nation and the political-social-economic perspectives. This historical perspective of alienation has also been studied in detail (Marx.C.1960.Edn.Moss.J.1974). Alienation as an inescapable component of human existential condition has been discussed in relation to religion as an institution and religious faith as in individual trait (Robert.K.1965). Alienation has also been analyzed from the psychological and metaphysical perspectives, where the focus is turned inward into an individual. It focuses on the internal organization of the psyche, on the organization or disorganization of an individual mind and the consequences there of (Deborah. K. 1990. Ignace. 1978).

All human relationships are inadequate. Basically everyone is solitary. Involvement in human relationships in this world invariably leads to disaster. The pervasive sense of alienation has corroded human life from various quarters. The modern man has shrunk by languishing in confusion, frustration, disintegration, disillusionment and alienation.

The highest degree of estrangement is a complete break and an unbridgeable gulf, and the lowest degree is where no feeling of difference is left or is seldom realized. It is between these extreme limits
that the pendulum of our feeling oscillates. There is a limit to our understanding of other persons and the world even as there is a limit to our understanding ourselves.

Richard Schacht (1971) explained alienation as a term that is derived from the root word ‘alenus’ which means belonging or pertaining to another which in turn is derived from ‘alius’ which signifies ‘other’ or ‘another’.

For about a century (1840 to 1940), the term was used to denote either the transfer of ownership or title of a piece of property or a quality of mental dearrangement or insanity. By the 1950’s the new meaning became widely established and alienation has become a central term of contemporary sociology. Alienation is inevitably produced by a shallow and depersonalized society. Alienation reached its peak with the “generation gap” of the 1960’s.

Edmund Fuller (1972) said that man suffers not only from war, persecution, famine and ruin but from an insidious inner problem— the conviction that isolation and meaninglessness of life beset one. Soren kierKegard (1966) who stresses the importance of subjective experience over objective knowledge, held that attaining an adequate sense of self
in an existence dominated by purposelessness and despair, was the central problem of alienation.

Alienation, in Marxian theory, is a state of isolation and separation from one’s life work as a meaningful expression of self, or of one’s relationship to fellow humans and nature. To Marx, this idea expressed the condition of the workers in a capitalist society.

Alienation is basically a physical and social dislocation. The patterns of its presence in the Canadian novel are primarily sociological. But they are also of moral or psychological or some other order of significance.

An individual may feel alienated from his or her family, from other people in general, the society in which she or he lives (for example American or Soviet Society), from oneself (perhaps especially one’s body or some particular aspect of one’s character or of one’s past) or from nature. One may also feel alienated from the universe, from what one does (from one’s activity, work or love) or from things (such as the products of one’s labour).

Some of Audrey Thomas’s recurring themes are quest for female space and creativity, imperialism, metafiction, ambivalence, searching for the self and the theme of alienation. Of all these, it is alienation that
structures the vision of the world in each novel and unifies all the novels into a single larger structure.

Audrey Thomas’s fictional work is concerned with the complex relationship of individuals to society. The chief problem the characters encounter is how they face the situation of alienation and whether they make any attempt to overcome alienation. It is not surprising that alienation is the predominant theme in Audrey Thomas’ novels.

On the thematic level, the discussions focus on the enforced alienation of women under patriarchy, on the patriarchal attempt to annihilate the selfhood of women, on the gradual carving out of female space by women through various strategies, and, on women’s quest for identity, self definition and autonomy.

Audrey Thomas insists on certain values of love, faith and humanistic inter-relationship in every novel where people seem to live out an alienated life. But, these values are not all that powerful or omnipresent to eliminate alienation. The characters find themselves victims of alienation and many of them make an attempt to be relieved of the sense of alienation.

The characters’ movement from alienation to reintegration or dealienation in Audrey’s novels could be analyzed by first identifying
the causes of alienation, then the ways in which alienation manifests itself, and then the reintegrative efforts made by the characters to overcome alienation.

The discussion also focuses on how the major characters like Mrs. Thing, Isobel, Miranda, Rachel, Alice and Sandy feel that they have been excluded from the society in some way or other. This sense of alienation leads them to existential isolation, but the women in the novels make efforts to break free of their isolation.

Hence, it is decided to explore the novels of Audrey Thomas from the perspective of alienation. The analysis would focus mainly on the factors that cause alienation, on the ways in which alienation manifests itself and on the protagonists’ response to the condition of alienation and their struggles to overcome alienation and to reintegrate themselves with the surrounding or with themselves.

Further, alienation could also spring from an inadequate or broken relationship between the expectations and ambitions of characters and their environment consisting of the members of the family, friends, relations and society in general (as it is evidenced in Songs My Mother Taught Me, Intertidal Life and in Latakia). Alienation could also arise from a sense of frustration a character experiences when her or his
expected/cherished norms collapse (as evidenced in Mrs. Blood and Blown Figures). Such a collapse might be the consequence of a perceived collapse of norms in others and of the unperceived or unperceivable reasons causing the collapse. The latter constitutes the element of suspense and mystery, the inability to resolve which might lead to alienation. This could result in a character feeling alienated from herself or himself and also from other characters (as evidenced in Coming Down From Wa). The sense of alienation could also emerge from a sense of guilt or sin which constantly undermines new relationships that have been built up in order to overcome the sense and condition of alienation that had resulted from the collapse of old relationships (as evidenced in Latakia and Mrs. Blood). A character could also feel alienated when she or he perceives a new condition of life, but is unable to accept the new (as in Intertidal Life).

Alienation might also be paradoxically found in individuals with the creative impulse, even though generally the creative impulse is viewed as a means by which one can pull oneself out of alienation (as in Munchmeyer and Prospero on the Island).

Thus, it is proposed to study the factors that cause the protagonists in the novels of Audrey Thomas, most of whom are women, to
experience a destabilizing sense of alienation and to attempt to identify whether there are specific patterns in the causal factors. Broadly speaking, alienation could be self-imposed, or forced, or be the result of the characters' failure to integrate themselves with the different aspects of the environment, including other persons and the society.

It is also proposed to analyze the different manifestations and consequences of alienation. The focus will be on examining whether alienation manifests itself in specific ways like withdrawal (from oneself and into oneself, and from any of the aspects of the environment) and the potential / actual termination of existing relationships.

It is also proposed to study the underlying patterns of response of the women-protagonists to the consequences of alienation, such as structuring new relationships, accepting or combating the new condition, resigning oneself to the process of disintegration, or launching into the process of self-discovery through creative analysis of one's psychic dynamics.

The thesis has been divided into five chapters. The introductory chapter indicates how the characters in the novels of Audrey Thomas are involved in, and it projects and experiences and problems of women within the male culture. All the alienated characters' conflicts
among themselves, like not being the member of the family, society or any particular circle, are analyzed as seen in the novels of Audrey Thomas.

The second chapter takes up for analysis the factors that cause alienation. A character's psychological condition at a given time may make the character become alienated from things and persons around. This chapter also examines the social, domestic and regional factors that cause alienation. The chapter makes an attempt to examine whether the casual factors of alienation fall into a pattern. The chapter also focusses on the essential disharmony between the characters' need for union integration with other people and their equal and complementary need to preserve their distinct self from threats from without (and sometimes from within). This chapter also addresses the issue of tension in social life between the subjective and personal on the one hand and the increasingly objective and anonymous on the other hand, which throws one into an alienated condition in life.

The third chapter studies the consequences of alienation in the lives and attitudes of the characters and examines the ways in which alienation manifests itself. A character who becomes a victim of alienation may become disoriented or hostile. Feeling helpless, the
character withdraws within herself or himself. Or, she or he may reject
the values and norms that the society has established. This involves a
conflict of great psychological intensity. In the course of the struggle,
the character may lose her/his accountability and credibility. She or he
is consequently left alone and loveless. And there is no one to love her or
him and so she or he is locked up in her or his own inescapable shell.
It is also evident that psychological, rather than physical conflicts, are
largely responsible for the decadence of the characters. The alienated
character does not find fulfillment in life and, consequently, develops a
feeling of misery, of not well being. The character is physically
exhausted and mentally depressed.

The fourth chapter examines the reintegrative strategies adopted
by the characters in their effort to overcome alienation. Though some or
many of the characters may succeed or fail in their effort to triumph
over alienation, the fact remains that they do not passively suffer the
impacts of alienation and that they try to reorient themselves towards
reintegrating themselves with the environment (which may be the
family, specific members of the family, society etc). The strategies
adopted by the characters may involve questioning, retrospection
(recollection), seeking freedom, striking a new connection, and communication through writing.

The fifth chapter discusses the major arguments of the preceding chapters. It also presents the findings of the study and discusses them.