Anita Desai has probed the areas of concern that pertain to modern man, irrespective of the boundaries of race or nationality. The issues raised in her fiction are contemporary and concern the present day human beings. Anita Desai talks of problems related to personality, ego, identity, etc. in her fiction focussing marginally on the philosophical or social behaviour pattern of a character. She deals primarily with individuals, their motivation, their consciences and consciousness and their tensions. Being a sensitive novelist gifted with power of observation, the capacity for penetrating analysis and a skill to paint with words, she creates a rich galaxy of characters. The most prominent feature of Anita Desai's art is the delineation of characters. She is primarily interested in the portrayal of female protagonists as living in separate, closed, sequestered world of existential problems and passions.¹

The fictional world of Anita Desai is limited and restricted. Her characters are from the well-to-do sections of Indian society. Their problems are psychological or spiritual, not social or economical. The ordinary problems of everyday life are never really touched upon by
Anita Desai. Hunger, starvation, poverty, mute misery of the millions of Indians are never touched upon. "Desai's characters are not ordinary, nor their problems concerned with food, clothes and shelter. Her characters are rebels and the rebellion could be against one's spouse, children and relations." She highlights the miserable position of highly sensitive and emotional women, tortured by a humiliating sense of neglect, of loneliness and of desperation. So, sensitive young women generally become the major characters in her novels. In her fiction, we may not find the customary strains of rural poverty, caste and class conflict, but she has fascinating stories to tell about individuals who have to traverse a ground too tricky and treacherous to handle smoothly.

Anita Desai's fiction moves from outer to inner reality and by carrying the flow of the mental experience of its characters. She probes the psychic life of the characters and for this she is rated as the most gifted woman novelist by William Walsh. Most of her protagonists are alienated ones. She portrays her characters as individuals "facing single-handed, the ferocious assaults of existence." Her concern as an artist is with "only the individual, the solitary being." Thus the problems and plights of alienated individuals caught in crisis of changing society are depicted in her novels. For Anita Desai literature is neither means of escaping reality nor a vehicle for parading her political, social, religious and moral ideas but an exploration and an enquiry. She is concerned with the portrayal of psychological reality. For her each character is an embodiment of some unexplained mystery.
which the novelist's task is to peel and unravel layer by layer. She is a painter of moods, of wills, of conflicting choices and inner experiences. Almost all her novels portray female protagonists who are hypersensitive, solitary and introspective. They are the people who are always quite aware of living on the brink, who show a marked tendency towards neurotic behaviour. Withdrawn into a life of seclusion and loneliness, these women have their mental and physical needs taken care of by wealth and servants but their emotional needs remain unsatisfied. Characters are portrayed as engrossed with the present, looking backward in time and visualising future as well.

Anita Desai opts for portraying various themes at a time in her novels and in each novel these themes occur again and again. She usually starts by presenting persons who are different from others around them and who resist the demands of society and turn out to be rebels. They do not find a proper channel of communication and thus become alienated and start brooding about their lives. All their wanderings and reflections finally bring them into new vistas of understanding which they had formerly ignored or rejected. Her novels express the labyrinths of human mind and indicate the ways to psychological fulfilment. Each aspect merges with the other and sometimes a number of themes seem to be woven together.

Anita Desai is a mastercraftsman situating characters in a particular social set up and evaluating them in the light of the whole network of relationships that they find entangled in. The individual is a part of society and society consists of individuals. It is a different
matter that some individuals find it difficult to get along well with the society for a number of reasons. Anita Desai says, "There are those who can handle situations and those who cannot. And my stories are generally about those who cannot. They find themselves trapped in situation over which they have no control." She, therefore, records the dilemma faced by an individual in the Indian urban set up and is more interested in analysis and portrayal of human relationships.

Her novels project the difficulties faced by her characters in shedding their fears and insecurities, which result in the disruption of their familial ties. Their psychological turmoil creates psychic imbalances which in turn, handicaps them in establishing harmonious and gratifying inter-personal relationships. B. Ramachandra Rao feels that in her novels, environment only adds to presenting "each individual as an unsolved mystery." Her protagonists possess a defiant individuality. They fight against the commonplace conformity and stick to their own vision of life. Anita Desai is as much interested in life with its hopes, frustrations, negations, rejections and the chaotic flow of events, as she is concerned with art to give shape, purpose and wholeness to life. Life provides the matter, that is, the reality of lived experience around which Anita Desai's characters are woven.

Anita Desai is constantly concerned with the problem of interaction between man and woman, between the individuals and the social world. We notice an elaborate description of the break-down of channels of communication between husband and wife. This snapping of communication link is mainly due to the incompatibility of
temperament between the two. She prefers to delve "deeper and deeper in a character, a situation or a scene rather than going round about it," and also "the intolerable grapple with thoughts, feelings and emotions." Her novels focus on the inner climate, the climate of sensibility. Her main concern is to depict the psychic states of her protagonists at some crucial juncture of their lives. So, the most recurrent themes in her novels are "the hazards and complexities of man-woman relationships, the founding and nurturing of individuality and the establishing of individualism of her characters" as well as "inner world of sensibility - the chaos inside the mind."

Following the flashes of her individual vision, Anita Desai’s creative imagination takes into its ken such themes as - clash of cultures, the east-west enchantment and disenchantment, maladjustment due to family environment, class conflict, alienation and loss of identity, the Indianness of Indian society, violence and death, human relationships. Despite the variety of themes in her novels, the problem of human relationships remains essentially central and all other themes and issues finally get subsumed into the skeins of this problem.

Characters in the novels of Anita Desai are generally neurotic females, highly sensitive but sequestered in a world of dreams and imagination and alienated from their surrounding as a consequence of their failure or unwillingness to adjust with the reality. They often differ in their opinion from others and embark on a long voyage of contemplation in order to find the meaning of their existence.
Some of Desai's characters suffer from various complexes and psychic diseases. There are some traits in their temperaments which, when developed out of proportion with the rest, check the healthy growth of personality. Anita Desai shows her depth in human nature by depicting the gradual conversion of a trait into a psychic block which assumes the form of a disease, making her characters neurotic.11

In the novels of Anita Desai, the most common theme is the theme of communication and harmony. This theme presents the complexity of human relationships particularly the man-woman relationship and this theme has been as old as the novel itself. But, now, the issue of man-woman relationship becomes more important due to rapid industrialization, growing awareness among women of their rights and individualism and the westernization of attitudes and lives of the people. Emphasizing the importance of such a relationship D.H.Lawrence points out: "The great relationship for humanity will always be the relationship between man and woman. The relation between man and man, woman and woman, parent and child will always be subsidiary."12

Twentieth century novelists treat this subject in a different manner from that of earlier novelists. The twentieth century novelists portray the relationship between man and woman as it is, whereas earlier novelists concentrated on as it should be. Christopher Hanson thinks that the modern writer:
... is concerned with the quality of life and people, with world and value. His investigation of a number of unsatisfying lives has its basis in the deep conviction that it is man's sacred duty to fight for a life that will express the inherent dignity and worth that he is capable of. He is aware of that pain and pathos and failure but sure of the values of the struggle towards fulfilment and perfection.  

This theme has been popular with Indo English novelists as well and Anita Desai explores minutely the psychic depth of her characters and analyses thoroughly their motives. Her characters are diametrically opposed to each other and she shows in her novels that the main reason of conflict is different temperaments of men and women. There are other reasons of conflict also - as, over attachment or detachment, childlessness, country life versus city life, male dominance and reality versus fantasy.

The themes of withdrawal, alienation, loneliness, isolation and lack of communication also occur most frequently in the novels of Anita Desai. These problems are inter-related in a way and exist as a corollary of disruption of good human relationships. Originally alienation referred to some sort of mental illness but later on to man's estrangement from God. For Marx, alienation meant man’s dehumanization and his estrangement from other fellowmen, even from the product of his own labour. Sidney Finkelstein defines alienation as "a psychological phenomenon, an internal conflict, a hostility felt toward something seemingly outside oneself which is
linked to oneself, a barrier erected which is actually no defence but an impoverishment of oneself."¹⁴ For Erich Fromm, the term "meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself."¹⁵ This means, alienation refers to man's estrangement from someone or something with which he was attached or identified - his family, his society and even his own self.

This theme has been dealt with by American novelists like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Henry James, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Saul Bellow etc. Arun Joshi and Anita Desai are among Indian novelists in English who have dealt with this theme extensively.

The theme of East-West encounter is quite common among Indo-Anglian novelists. It refers to "the conflicts and reconciliations of two cultures"¹⁶ mainly Indian on one hand, and American and European, on the other, on personal and social levels, in the matters of love, sex and marriage. Almost every Indian-English novelist, who has been exposed to foreign cultures, has handled this theme, either on surface level or very deeply depending upon his having been influenced by it. Raja Rao, Bhabni Bhattacharya, Manohar, Malgonkar, Nayantara Sahgal, Arun Joshi are among these writers. Anita Desai too has discussed this problem.

Another theme in the novels of Anita Desai is the theme of rebellion. This theme is associated with feminine sensibility. In her novels, women are portrayed as rebels. They revolt against their
circumstances, thus questioning the stereotypes. They do not want to face reality. They want to escape - escape the responsibilities of life, society and sometimes their home and family. Though at last, they come back to reality, to the fold of the stereotypes, but as completely changed persons. They accept the fact that life cannot go without society and family.

Another theme in the novels of Anita Desai is a symbolic theme - the theme of annihilation. In Anita Desai’s novels the presence of violence and death is always felt. Violence has been a part of primitive world as also of nature. The ancient epics describe frequent incidents of violence, bloodshed and death. Homer’s The Iliiad and The Odyssey, Virgil’s The Aeneid, Milton’s Paradise Lost, the Indian epics - the Ramayana and the Mahabharat have incidents of violence and death. The ancient history or the history of any country is also full of violence and death, but the treatment of violence and death in Anita Desai’s novels is different from others. In her novels, it reflects the situation and mind of the protagonists. Since the characters of Anita Desai are quite sensitive, the definition of violence is bound to change. For a sensitive person, muffled whispers, a leaking tap, creaking shoes, groaning beds, moaning fingers and tick-ticking clocks can be more disturbing than ear splitting blasts, deafening trumpets and earthshaking explosions. Anita Desai’s protagonists are also affected by such things.

The novel *Cry, the Peacock*, is mainly concerned with the theme of disharmony between husband and wife relationship. Anita
Desai looks into the reasons for marital discord and illustrates how such discord effects the family. Sometimes, the inability of an individual to be responsive to the behaviour patterns of her partner leads to strain and tension in the relationship, while sometimes it is on account of varied levels of sensitivity that strained relationships occur. In this novel, Maya and Gautama have strained relationships because of their incompatible temperaments. Maya is dreamy, sensitive and emotional, while Gautama realistic, insensitive and rational. Maya is poetic and high-strung; Gautama detached, philosophical and remote. Maya has tenderness, softness and warmth, Gautama is hard and cold. Maya is a hypersensitive woman, an introvert. Usha Pathania tracing the cause of disharmony between the characters remarks: "Marital relationships are established with the explicit purpose of providing companionship to each other. However, the element of companionship is sadly missing in the relationship between Maya and Gautama."\(^17\) One is the creature of instinct; the other that of intellect. The matrimonial bonds that bind the two are very fragile and tenuous, "neither true nor lasting" but "broken repeatedly and repeatedly the pieces were picked up and put together again."\(^18\) The growing tension reaches its climax when Maya kills Gautama and then commits suicide.

Maya is a young woman married to Gautama, a promising, prosperous and overbusy practitioner of law nearly twice her age. Gautama's sensibilities are too rough and practical to suit Maya's. She is a pampered child brought up in an atmosphere of luxury. She lives to use her own words like 'a toy prince in a toy world'. Though Gautama
is a faithful husband and takes care of Maya but she is never satisfied and happy. She is a prisoner of the past, lives almost perpetually in the shadow world of memories which engulf her, wave upon wave. Gautama lives in the present and accepts reality and facts even though they are ugly. On the contrary, Maya never tries to accept the facts, reality but wants to live in her beautiful illusions, fairy world. She keeps on remembering her childhood days or the treatment her father meted out to her. She feels that no one else loves her as her father did. Unable to bear a child, Maya is alone all the day, whereas Gautama is very busy with his cases during the day and tired at night. Maya yearns for love and Gautama finds little time to express love to her. Whatever is minor or normal for Gautama upsets Maya. A minor incident is forgotten by Gautama but it possesses Maya and she keeps on contemplating on it. She is so terribly upset at the death of her pet dog Toto that she loses her mental calm. According to B.R.Rao, the "...heroine is sensitive, highly strung, young woman tottering on the brink of insanity is suggested by a detached description of Maya's highly emotional and hysterical response to the death of Toto." Being childless she is much attached to the dog and it seems that the dog is a child substitute. "Childless women do develop fanatic attachments to their pets, they say. It is no less a relationship than that of a woman and her child, no less worthy of reverence and agonised rememberance." She is so sensitive that she cannot bear the sight of the corpse, she is shown "rushing to the tap to wash the vision from her eyes." Gautama, a practical man takes the event in his stride and
makes arrangement for its burial, consols Maya in his own way and says that he would bring another dog for Maya. His practical rationality hurts Maya. Toto’s death may be trivial for Gautama, a rational and professionally busy man, but it matters a lot to Maya, "...Gautama neglects emotional yearnings of Maya, though they live together yet, as a matter of fact, Gautama knows very little about her." In order to console her he offers a cup of tea without realising about Maya's shattered state of mind. For him drinking tea is a sensible solution to Maya's problem. This mechanical gesture only makes her brood over Gautama's insensitivity:

Showing how little he knows of my misery, or how to comfort me. But then, he knew nothing that concerned me. Giving me an opal ring to wear on my finger, he did not notice the translucent skin beneath, the blue flashing veins that ran under and out of the bridge of gold... telling me to go to sleep while he worked at his papers, he did not give another thought to me... it is his hardness - no, no, not hardness, but the distance he coldly keeps from me.

On one occasion Maya says that she would like to go to the South to see Kathakali dance performance in "semi-darkness", "all out in the open, at night, by starlight... they dance by torchlight." Gautama tells her to wait till a troupe came to Delhi. He adds that it will be less expensive, underlines once again the difference between the two attitudes.
The contrasts in the novel are very sharp - Gautama versus Maya, detachment opposed to attachment and imagination. Maya's slow advance towards insanity is "the theme of the novel, and the main pattern is the contrast between ... woman's response to the world through her senses, and her husband's response through his intellect."25

In *Cry, the Peacock*, Anita Desai also portrays lack of communication as a predominant motif resulting in detachment, solitude and mental imbalance. Maya's tragedy is mainly caused by her loneliness, lack of proper response from her husband, non-reciprocation of feeling between husband and wife, her childlessness and her hypersensitivity. Gautama fails to understand her emotions. This temperamental incompatibility results in lack of communication. Maya likes to go to the hills to escape the summer-loo, as she used to go in her childhood, but Gautama remains busy and is never perturbed by the scorching heat around. He is indifferent towards her feelings. The healthy relationship between spouses is possible only if both of them realise their mutual interests and act accordingly. But in this case, the gap of communion between husband and wife, well developed, is felt throughout the novel. "Although their marriage has been an utter fiasco, they continue to be together, leading an explosive life of incommunication."26 Maya thinks of her marriage as "the hopeless regret"27 and "a broken affair."28 She feels "torture, guilt, dread and imprisonment - these were the four walls of my private hell,
Maya is found in several roles discharging different familiar duties. She is a spoonfed child, brought up in a fairy world, ill-equipped to cope with reality. All the worse happens, when she is married to a down-to-earth rational husband. Besides, being motherless, she does not grow up into a balanced personality and her predicament becomes all the more acute. With a busy husband, uninterested in her feelings and emotions, she is totally out of tune with her surroundings. She is in dire need of familial relationship but unfortunately everyone is too pre-occupied to spare time for her. Her mother-in-law visits her and Maya wants her to stay back to alleviate her lonely existence but she refuses as she is a social worker involved in several activities. Being motherless Maya wants a mother figure which is available in her mother-in-law and in her she seeks a mother substitute. What Maya looks for is contact, relationship, communion which make life possible. Her intense longing for contact expresses this spiritual need - a need which remains unfulfilled most of the time. "Emotional alienation is the central problem of the novel and Maya."

Being the coddled daughter of her father, Maya has developed a father-fixation problem and after her marriage Gautama happens to be a poor substitute for it. When she fails to find a father substitute in Gautama, she feels alienated. Even Gautama tells her that she has "a very obvious father obsession" which made her marry him - a person almost twice as old as she herself is. For her Gautama is not a loving
husband but a father-substitute, a medium to reach her father in the unconscious. "The excessive love she gets from her father makes her have a lop-sided view of life. She feels the world to be a toy made specially for her, painted in her favourite colours and set moving according to her tunes."\(^32\) The past in her father’s house was a "bliss of solitude."\(^33\) When the present becomes a burden to carry, the thought of the past is always a solace to her wounded spirit. She has been brought up in such a way that her husband later accuses her of living her life as in a fairy tale: "What have you learnt of the realities? ... all that constitutes life for the ordinary man... What wickedness to raise a child like that!"\(^34\) Having lived a carefree life under the indulgent attentions of her loving father, Maya desires to have similar attentions from her husband Gautama. When Gautama fails to meet her demands she feels neglected and miserable. When Gautama fails to satisfy her intense longing for love and life, she is left to the solitude and silence of the house which prey upon her. Maya fails to grow out of her childhood. "Maya’s tragedy psychologically lies in this inadequate transference from the father to the husband."\(^35\)

Maya’s childhood world of fantasies and adult world of realities clash, producing more imbalances in her life. She wants to perpetuate the fairy-tale atmosphere, at the same time, she is aware of the demands of a grown-up mature world of a woman. The poignant cry of Maya "His coldness... and incessant talk of cups of tea and philosophy... not to hear me talk, and talking, reveal myself. It is that - my loneliness in this house... I was alone... I am alone"\(^36\) is reflective
of her urge to express herself and to be understood by her husband. She yearns for Gautama's companionship. But Gautama never feels the necessity of it. Maya reflects on their unsuccessful marriage as:

It was discouraging to reflect on how much in our marriage was based upon a nobility forced upon us from outside, and therefore neither true nor lasting. It was broken repeatedly and repeatedly the pieces were picked up and put together again, as of a sacred icon with which, out of the pettiest superstition, we could not bear to part.\textsuperscript{37}

Her sensitive nature and intense emotions are smothered under the heavy weight of formal life that she leads with her husband.

Maya feels ecstatic when Gautama recites an Urdu couplet to her and this one small gesture of tender understanding from him makes Maya feel fulfilled. But Gautama is no romantic and he forgets about it afterwards, though Maya continues to turn the couplet over and over in her mind. She finds herself unable to relate to the realities of married life. Inner demands and outer realities create a conflicting situation. Maya feels alienated even in the family as Gautama's family is charged with intellectual, social and political discussions. Here:

one did not speak of love, far less of affection. One spoke - they spoke - of discussions in parliament, of cases of bribery and corruption... of political treaties... of distant revolutions. They had innumerable subjects to speak on and they spoke incessantly.\textsuperscript{38}
Maya is left out of it "with a naturalness I had to accept for they knew I would not understand a matter so involved and I knew it myself." She feels inferior and when a person feels inferior, the strongest desire is to raise himself above others: "If he had a sense of belonging, his feeling inferior to others would not be so serious a handicap. But living in a competitive society, and feeling at bottom - as it were - isolated and hostile, he can develop an urgent need to lift him above others." Maya tries to establish her own identity in such an atmosphere and when she finds no company, she turns more and more inward, her inner consciousness takes her backward to the past. The memories of childhood provide a safe resort for Maya, making the present still more difficult to bear. The utopia that Maya craves for is unattainable. Her quest for perfect relationship and real love must remain unfulfilled because no human relationship is perfect and at best offers only partial fulfilment. Through the character of Maya, who is not ready to accept the world as it is and wants to live in her fairy world cocooned away from reality, Anita Desai depicts the theme of rebellion. It is natural that Maya feels upset at the death of her pet dog Toto, but to be so carried away by this unavoidable incident, that she has to wash her hands and eyes just to keep away the vision, is symbolic of her desire to rebel against and reject what is not acceptable to her.
Death, murder and suicide, become the recurrent motifs in *Cry, the Peacock* with the novel beginning with the death of Maya's pet dog Toto and ending with the death of Gautama and Maya's suicide. Throughout the novel Maya is deeply affected by the astrologer's prediction of the death of one of the spouses four years after their marriage. This assumes the form of an ominous fixation. She associates herself with the peacocks and their knowledge of life and death and begins to fear her own death. "I am in love and I am dying. God, let me sleep, forget, rest. But no, I'll never sleep again. There is no rest anymore - only death and waiting." Maya's intense love of life makes her murder her husband and become the instrument of her own cruel destiny. She feels that she has greater justification to live because she has hunger for the real, the close, the living and is committed to life. On the other hand, Gautama, she feels has never really lived and never will because he is detached and indifferent to life. Her emotional instability makes the borderline that separates a nervous sensibility from an insane imagination thinner and thinner. And her love of life and obsession with death leads her to the final crack up and she herself kills her husband in the blinding moment of unbearable agony.

In *Voices in the City*, Anita Desai's concern is primarily with human relationships and how in the absence of meaningful relationships the individuals suffer. She probes the psychic compulsion that may effect an individual in forging long term and significant relationships and how an individual is effected if he is unable to forge
such relationships. *Voices in the City* also focuses on alienation and loneliness that individuals experience on account of various reasons inherent in their situation or personality. Like a psychoanalyst, Anita Desai explores deep into the psychology of various protagonists and their responses to the people and the world around them to lay bare for the reader an incisive view of how different people are affected differently by the circumstances of their life and respond according to their own individual psychic compulsions. Nirode, one of the main characters, is obsessed with the relationship of his mother with Major Chadha and considers her a she-cannibal. She is having an affair in Kalimpong which itself is a consequence of dissonance in husband-wife relationship. In the eyes of Amla her mother is "the most beautiful woman in the world and very accomplished. None of us is like her, so polished and balanced and contained like a well-cut jewel." She has refined taste for flowers, music and good food. But the father is a kind of sadist who derives pleasure in hurting her. So, when he dies, she becomes free. There is no restriction on her and she carries on an affair with the refined Major. Nirode’s relationship with his mother is a love-hate relationship. We have veiled suggestions of his mother fixation and according to psychologists hatred often is a defence mechanism of the psyche to stop one from committing incest. Nirode’s adoration for his mother in his boyhood changes into hatred in adulthood and since:

His childhood is conditioned by his love for her and hatred for his father. After his father’s death he wishes to be protective
force for his mother, a husband substitute for her, but as he suspects her of an intimate relationship with and amorous overtures towards Major Chadha, he grows jealous of his rival and is completely alienated from his mother. He begins to hate her.44

If Maya’s tragedy (Cry, the Peacock) emnated from her obsession with a father figure, Nirode’s tragedy lies in his love-hate relationship with the mother and here "the mother figure is not merely a person, it symbolizes in Nirode’s psyche a complex cluster of dream and fantasy in which he is inalienably entangled and to which he returns-psychically and emotionally after every encounter with reality."45 The trauma of having lost the affection of his mother to Major Chadha keeps haunting him like "some ancient fury"46 and this fury keeps him always disturbed, dissatisfied and angry. It erects between him and his mother’s brilliant territory "... a barbed wire fence, all glittering and vicious."47

The novel also deals with the incompatible marriage of Monisha and Jiban. Monisha is married in a middle class family, so grossly unsuited to her inclinations that her sister Amla finds herself wondering if throwing their daughters into such alliances "fathers did, unconsciously, spite their daughters who were unavailable to them?"48 Jiban, Monisha’s husband, is the prisoner of conventional culture. He believes that a woman’s most important roles besides child bearing are cooking, cutting vegetables, serving food and brushing small children’s hair under the authority of a stern mother-in-law. Monisha feels that
her privacy is denied to her. She loves loneliness but feels trapped in the house of her in-laws. There is no escape from it for her and Monisha feels 'whole' only when she is 'alone'. She leads an emotionally starved life and neither her husband nor her in-laws sympathise with Monisha. Just like Maya, Monisha is childless, sensitive and a victim of ill-matched marriage. The overcrowded house makes her uneasy. The mindless, meaningless monotony of empty sound, hour upon hour, unnerves Monisha. She is an intellectual and her personal library contains no light reading or pulp literature but only serious books. However, nobody in the family can appreciate or respond favourably to Monisha's love of reading, her husband is busy with his middle rank government job with no time for Monisha and no desire to share her feelings. On account of her intellectualism Monisha is unable to take much interest in religion, whereas had she been a believer in religion, her anguish and plight could have been reduced, but it is not so, and she writes in her diary: "If I had religious faith, I could easily enough renounce all this. But I have no faith, no alternative to my confused despair..."49

In Voices in the City, "the theme of alienation is (also) treated in terms of mother-children relationship which itself is a consequence of dissonance in husband-wife relationship."50 The theme of loneliness, of aloneness alone pervades the story. One of the major problems in the novel is the inability of character to interact with one another and also the reluctance to make any attempt to overcome the hurdles that block the channels of interaction. All the characters in the novel are
misfits caught in the cross-currents of existential dilemma and suffer from alienation. They - Nirode, Monisha and Amla - are alienated not only from society but also from their mother. Mother, herself leads an alienated life at Kalimpong and their father is most of the time drunk. One brother Arun goes to England for higher studies, Nirode works in a newspaper office as a simple clerk. Monisha gets married to Jiban. Amla has received training as a commercial artist in Bombay and has come to Calcutta to join an advertisement firm.

Nirode's life is a succession of failures, from bringing out a magazine called "Voice" to writing of a play, opening a book stall and even selling spurious antique art pieces. He is a sensitive and talented artist, shirks from doing a meaningless and mechanical job, experiences an emptiness, meaninglessness and alienation in life and knows "by instinct that he was a man for whom aloneness alone was the sole natural condition, aloneness alone the treasure worth treasuring."\(^5^1\) One single factor which damages and destabilises Nirode's personality is his mother-fixation. Nirode represents the people who are never satisfied in life. He has disowned his family and does not bother at all about his mother and does not even read her letters addressed to him. He is torn between the two worlds: the ideal and the real. Nirode leads the life of a middle level journalist whose job is to "cut out long strips of newspaper and paste and file them, occasionally venturing out to verify a dull fact in some airless office room."\(^5^2\) But he hates to be subjugated into doing any meaningless job for another individual and therefore he resigns his job and edits a
magazine "Voice". It frustrates him further as he comes into contact with people he does not appreciate. The intricacies of relationship-approach, recompense, obligation-these aroused in him violent distaste and kept him hovering on the fringe of the world that invited and spurned by turns and for which he daily cared less.53

His main problem seems to be his inability to communicate. Jasbir Jain comments, "The magazine "Voice" is a voice in the wilderness failing to build any contact between him and the world."54 He avoids company shutting himself from the world and moves from failure to failure. He says "I want to fail quickly. Then I want to see if I have the spirit to start moving again, towards my next failure. I want to move from failure to failure..."55 He does not want to take anything by way of tradition and inheritance. He is unwilling to make the most necessary compromises. The habit of withdrawal has become very strong in him. Silence and solitude is everything for him. "Nirode is on a restless, unending, but futile, quest and wants to understand his identity. But his quest is thwarted by his own nature and predicament."56

Monisha leads an equally fragmented and starved life. She is alienated from her mother as well as her husband. The graph of her mental life can be constructed from her long searching and self-confronting entries in the diary. Her diary serves as the only reliable means of communion in an atmosphere of distrust, envy, ignorance, monotonous drudgery and lack of privacy. If Maya is lonely in her family, Monisha feels uneasy in the overcrowded house. She yearns
for a few moments alone, which are never granted to her. Though she has a room of her own but her sisters-in-law always without any hesitation barges into her room evoking in Monisha a feeling of being trapped in an uncongenial atmosphere. She cries, there is no escape from it, and reacts with such a hysterical intensity that even her emotionless husband is surprised. Monisha is mentally shattered and suffers from emptiness. Her relationship with her husband is characterized only by loneliness and lack of communication. He reckons his wife as worth nothing in consequence. He does not bother to ask his wife, when he finds some money missing from his pocket. On the contrary, he feels that she has stolen the money. Monisha finds her life a virtual imprisonment. "Is this what life is then, my life? Only a conundrum that I shall brood over forever with passion and pain, never to arrive at a solution?" She is always haunted by her sense of "a life dedicated to nothing" - a life teeming with "these trivialities, these pettinesses of our mean existence." Meena Shirwadkar assigns Monisha's sufferings to her childless state. Shantha Acharya comments: "One of the salient features of her work is the supreme privacy of the self. What are constantly encounters in the violation of this sacred space of the self." Monisha's ill matched marriage, her loneliness, sterility and stress of living in a joint family with an insensitive husband push her to the breaking point and she commits suicide by self-immolation. The element of love is missing in her life. She remains an exile in her two families - mother's as well as
husband's. In her struggle for liberation against a basically trap situation, death becomes a release into liberty and peace - a departure.

Amla on the other hand is an extrovert and in order to communicate with Monisha, she visits her joint family house but only to encounter the damp pressure of critical attention and innumerable personal questions. "Despite all the stimulation of new experiences, new occupations, new acquaintances and mild sweet winter air, (Amla experiences a sense of hollowness and futility of her life and) this sense of hollowness and futility persisted. Daily it pursued her..."61 Despite some meaningful glimpses of life, she is finally sucked in by the vast meaningless swirl, though in her situation throughout there is a vein of protest against family, against situation, not direct, but implied, not obtrusive but coalescent.

*Voices in the City* presents a full galaxy of alienated individuals suffering in their own isolated worlds. They lead a miserable life "unmitigated by any sense of human relationship."62 Arun's marriage to a "clean efficient, blue eyed nurse in England, Monisha's suicide, Nirode's relentless efforts to obliterate self-identity and Amla's apathy compel their mother to recognise the degree of their alienation from her."63 She decides to keep herself aloof. Jit Nair thinks that all Nirode, Monisha and Amla involve themselves in tragedies of their own making. All of them drive themselves deliberately into that end where they imagine they will find some divine solution. But there is none, not in life time.
In *Voices in the City*, the image of violence and death is related to the city. The city of Calcutta is called a "monster city" or "death's city"\(^64\) whose presiding deity is Kali. This city troubles Nirode, drives Monisha to suicide and turns Amla's art to commercialism.

This is the city of Kali, the goddess of death, the city from which three main characters try to escape. This is the city of the dead and the dying, of the doomed and the damned, which constitutes the challenge to the characters. Almost all the images of the city are those of oppression, of decay and of death.\(^65\)

Thus at another level the theme of the novel is the clash between the city and its voices. It is a struggle between unequal forces and the three voices need all their resources, their cleverness and even deception to combat the city. They revolt against the sordidness, the brutality, and the sheer dreariness of the physical world. They respond more sensitively to the dreariness of everyday life that the city of Calcutta offers to them and react even more sensitively to the city than those around them.

All the three characters look at the city in different ways. The city to Monisha has two faces: its devilish face and its dull, vacant, hopeless face. Nirode looks at the city washed into its true ugliness by the rains and floating in its own filth. To Amla, the city is a monster, which has laid its hands upon Monisha. She feels that her brother and sister are being gobbled by a monster. All of them make spiritual journeys. From doubt, frustration and disillusionment they travel
through suffering and stumble their way to solutions of their own. It may be acceptance, abject self-surrender or self-annihilation.

Mohisha burns herself to death and because in her yearning for liberty, for eternal darkness beyond sleep and in her struggle for liberation, death becomes a kind of departure, a release into liberty and peace. Even Nirode wants her dead body to be taken home so that "she could lie in the quiet house in undisturbed solitude." He wants her to get rid of this world which is not suitable for her and thus to the reader "Monisha's suicide communicates most powerfully the tragedy of human existence in a dehumanized society."67

In Where Shall We Go This Summer? Anita Desai chooses marital discord as the subject matter of this novel and highlights how the inability to lay bare one's soul and express freely one's fear and anguish results in the snapping of communication between husband and wife. Different attitudes, individual complexes and fears add to this distancing between the husband and the wife resulting in conjugal disharmony. Raman and Sita have irreconcilable temperaments and attitudes to life. Unlike the legendary Rama and Sita, this couple does not represent an ideal husband-wife relationship. The ill-assorted couple of Raman and Sita is confronted with the same problem of "husband-wife discord, inadequacy of their mutual love relationships and dissatisfaction of some sort" with which Gautama and Maya are faced in Cry, the Peacock. Sita represents a world of emotion and feminine sensibility while Raman is a man with an active view of life and the sense of the practical. This leads to their unbridgeable
stop. Maneka tells her that they are just playing. At this Sita says, "That is no way of playing... Get up, Get up stop it." Raman accepts rather than reject the dictates of society. He thinks that money, a flat, luxuries should make Sita comfortable. But she does not find any mental comfort in these things. Her approach is negative and she does not want to face reality, so when reality grows insufferable to her, illusion is the only alternative. If her life, day to day world becomes intolerable, she thinks of the magic island - as a refuge, as a protection, as of release. That is why, when she gets fed up from the world and does not want to give birth to a child, she goes to the island in the hope that it would hold her baby safely unborn. This is mere madness in the eyes of Raman. Sita suffers from an ill-matched marriage where, though her husband is considerate and tries to make her happy in every possible way but her pathological sensitivity always keeps her highstrung. Madhusudan Prasad observes that this novel brings out "a recurrent favourite existential theme.... that lays bare the agonized modern sensibility of an Indian woman." Sita's non-conformity and failure to acclimatize herself to her surroundings is the root cause of her anguish. She cannot adjust with her in-laws. Their's is a traditional Hindu family where even men do not smoke openly, but Sita smokes openly just to spite her in-laws. "Her temperamental incapacity to adjust herself to the norms of society, make her treat all people around her as 'animals'." She finds that the majority of the members of society live lives full of dullness, boredom and deadness. She puts it melodramatically. "They are animals - nothing but appetite
and sex. Only food, sex and money matter."\textsuperscript{74} To avoid daily tensions, when Raman shifts to a flat, even then, she is not happy and becomes irrational childish and petulant. In a way, her relationship with her father affects her relationship with her husband because "Sita's alienation from her husband was inherent in her relationship with her father."\textsuperscript{75} During her childhood days, on the island of Manori, the experiences she had were, more of nature of fantasy, dreams, myths and miracles which have a little to do with the world of reality. Raman lives and believes only in the world of reality.

Sita's situation is just the reverse of Maya. Maya's father is over-protective and loving, whereas Sita's father is neglectful and partial, which does not allow her to develop a sound foundation of proper loving relationship with her husband. A good husband-wife relationship is based on mutual trust but there is no such thing between them and they constantly doubt and suspect each other. The episode of the hitch-hiking foreigner brings into sharp focus their contrastive attitudes because when the hitch-hiker who does not know which side of the road to wait is dismissed by Raman merely as "a fool,"\textsuperscript{76} Sita admires him and considers him brave for "not knowing anything but going on nevertheless."\textsuperscript{77} She confesses "I would like to travel like that myself"\textsuperscript{78} and this simple desire makes Raman go to the extent of suspecting Sita of infidelity just because she has expressed admiration for the hitch-hiker.

In \textit{Where Shall We Go This Summer?} the theme of alienation and lack of communication in married life is discussed by Anita Desai.
Sita the protagonist, is a nervous, sensitive, middle aged woman. She finds herself alienated from her husband and children. She remains an ignored personality since childhood. She is the product of broken family. She yearns to have the attention and love of others but her father remains busy with his *chelas* or patients. Her mother has deserted her father a long ago. So, Sita is brought up in an atmosphere which cannot be called a family. Her only company is her brother who afterwards runs away from home. Since childhood, she becomes habitual of loneliness and always wants to escape - escape reality and society. She is unwilling to grow up and accept the responsibilities of adult life.

Even after marriage, she remains lonely. Her husband remains busy. He fails to fulfil her expectations. As a result, there is marital discord, tension between husband and wife. Though she is a woman with four children and pregnant with the fifth child, she has a sudden, strange feeling of loneliness, restlessness at this stage. She feels, all the more, that no one cares for her. She considers her flight to the island as a pilgrimage for, "she had come on a pilgrimage, to beg for the miracle of keeping her baby unborn." Sita faces the moments of pure terror and void in her life. In such a mood of desperation she goes to Manori. The pent up misery of her isolation and neglect in the family has spilled over. A busy, indifferent husband and grown up children, distrustful of her melodramatic outbursts have driven her to the edge of precipice, exactly similar to the present day situation. In the island she tries to muffle the ache of void within depicting "the boredom and
loneliness experienced by married woman when they feel ignored and unwanted."

The problems and unhappiness in the life of Sita spring from her constitutional inability to accept the values and the attitudes of society. One Sunday morning she sees a number of crows attacking an eagle who is wounded or too young to fly. She tries to scare away the crows with her son's toy gun and save the eagle. The situation objectifies for Sita the conflict in her own life. She identifies herself with the eagle. Like Maya in *Cry, the Peacock* for whom the dance of peacock is the symbol of love and death, Sita sees herself a wounded eagle and crows represent the callous society around her. But to her husband and her children, her actions appear to be nothing but a carefully arranged and wilfully created act of drama. That is why the death of eagle is announced with a tone of triumph by her husband and he says, coming out with a morning cup of tea "They have made a good job of your eagle. Look at the feathers sticking out of that crow's beak" indicating the absence of a loving relationship between husband and wife and the wide gulf that separates Sita from others. Owing to her strange and unusual childhood experiences, she develops certain complexes which turn her into an alienated and morose character incapable of facing the realities of life boldly. She is unable to grow to maturity and turns into a complete social misfit. As motherless child, she had experienced partiality, neglect and uncertainties right through her childhood. She, like Maya of *Cry, the Peacock* is unable to cope with life and life's realities, "the tragedies of
these two women are rooted in their father's influence on their individual psyche which is far from conductive to healthy growth.\textsuperscript{82} Usha Bande writes "The strangeness of Sita's behaviour and the uncertainty of her temperament which irk Raman, her children and others is partly due to her insecure childhood."\textsuperscript{83} Her father is responsible for ingraining insecurity in Sita by his neglect. He is a public figure. People respect him but he is too distanced for Sita to approach. There is always an "impossibility of talk between her and her father."\textsuperscript{84} Her father is mostly in jail and she has no mother to look after her. Thus her parentage comprises of a mother who is a fugitive and a father who is an overbusy politician. She has never heard any melodious lullabies, instead all she hears are fiery speeches. She gets hard benches instead of comfortable bed. Such an unfulfilled childhood and a similar adolescence converts her into a human being who requires much more than an ordinary human being does to feel happy and contented. Her high sensitivity and explosive temperament make it impossible for her family to establish any intimacy with her. The void within her tries to keep her away from society but she begins to realise that the bonds that bind her to it cannot be easily broken. She feels that the gap of communication is not unbridgeable and that carrying on the mundane affairs of life also demanded courage. "Life must be continued and all its business - Menaka's admission... There was courage... in getting on with such matters from which she herself squirmed away, dodged and ran."\textsuperscript{85} In D.H.Lawrence's verse she finds
an answer to her problem. The push in Sita's spirit, at this stage is towards developing a harmony in personal relationships.

In *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* also there is an element of escape. Sita always wants to escape reality and society. This weakness is revealed in her character even in her childhood. She always seems unwilling to grow up and accept the responsibilities of adult life. When she has to bear the responsibilities of a family she gets fed up - so fed up from the world that she does not want to give birth to her child. She wants to be alone and seeks to escape to the island where she was brought up hoping that the island, which has magic powers, would hold her baby safely unborn, but here, on the island, she comes close to the reality of her situation and realises that escape from human bondage is not possible which enables to return back to her family fully prepared to give birth to the baby.

The theme of violence is also delineated by Anita Desai in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*. The protagonist Sita is so sensitive that she does not like violence of any kind whether in nature, society, domestic or in personal life. Even a minor roughness upsets her. When she sees greedy crows attacking a young eagle she realizes "There are always much black drama in this crow theatre - murder, infanticide, incest, theft and robbery." Even the usual fights and quarrels between the children annoy her. She becomes upset even after reading the newspaper which is full of the news of brutality and violence and destruction all over the world.
... her husband casually handed her the newspaper on his way out to office. They all hammered at her with cruel fists - the fallen blocks, the torn watercolours, the headlines about the war at Vietnam, the photograph of a woman weeping over a small grave, another of the crowd outside a Rhodesian jail; articles about the perfidy of Pakistan... frightened certain that civilization had been created by the god like efforts of the few, in the face of a constant, timeless war of destruction that had begun with time and was now roaring around her, battering her, and her fish foetus so that survival seemed hopeless. How could civilization survive, how could the child? How could she hold them whole and pure and unimpeached in the midst of this bloodshed? They would surely be wounded, fall and die.\textsuperscript{87}

Being sensitive to violence and brutality in the world is one thing but to be affected by it so much as not to lead a normal life is a different thing. Sita is so affected by witnessing cruelty everywhere that she is reluctant to deliver her fifth baby. She is unwilling to deliver her baby into a world where "the creative impulse had no chance against the overpowering desire to destroy."\textsuperscript{88} She is haunted by a strange idea: "By giving birth to the child now so safely contained, would she be performing an act of creation or by releasing it in a violent, pain-wrecked blood-bath, would she only be destroying what was, at the moment, safely contained and perfect?"\textsuperscript{89} She, therefore, tells her
husband, "I don't want it to be born." Though ultimately she comes close to reality and realizes that life must go on.

In *Clear Light of Day*, Anita Desai depicts how domestic violence effects the anima of the inhabitants of any home especially young children who become vulnerable to mystic disorders. Anita Desai uses the image of sickness, violence and death to draw emotional trauma of her protagonists and traces how a turbulent childhood has left permanent scars on their mind. These children Bim, Tara, Raja - are the victims of parental neglect and witness to their mother's long drawn illness and demise. They are also deeply effected by their father's violent death in a car accident and experience the fear and insecurity of being orphaned. Mira masi who begins to look after them further aggravates their insecurities by becoming a drunkard and resorting to furious and irrational behaviour when she does not get her drinks. Through these incidents Anita Desai probes the innermost self of her young protagonists to show how want and neglect in childhood on one hand forges a bond of togetherness in the young brothers and sisters, but on the other hand leaves indelible marks on their personality which effect their relationship with others. For instance, Bim begins to expect a lot more from one of her brothers Raja than it is possible for him to give and this leads to a lot of anguish and frustration in Bim's heart and strains her relationship with Raja for a long time. Similarly by using the image of a drowning cow, the mutilated dead bird shot during the day Anita Desai conveys to the readers how neglect, disease and irrationality wrought all normal
human responses. Brutality and death is also present in the novel in the form of partition rioting with the images of burning city’s dead people and general sense of fear and chaos that pervades in the milieu.

The problem of man-woman relationship one of the major theme in the fiction of Anita Desai assumes a different form in Clear Light of Day. In this novel, Bim carries a childhood image of her brother Raja - romantic, poetic, dreamy - whereas Raja is rational, pragmatic and materialistic. She gets angry with Raja as she feels that he does not reciprocate towards her feelings normally because during childhood they had close emotional relationship which she feels as an adult Raja is shunning. Bim is Raja’s admirer and she encourages him in every act and ambition. They want to be the heroine and the hero when they grow up and go away into the big world, away from their old parental home. In this way they have greater mental and temperamental affinity with each other than with the other brother and sister. Both Bim and Raja are bold, independent and possess a fiery impetuous spirit. When Raja is sick, Bim takes care of him with love and devotion thinking that he would take her father’s place the day he recovers, but to her utter dismay, when Raja gets well, he decides to go away to a distant place. "I will go - go to - to Hyderabad. Hyder Ali Saheb has asked me to come... I have to begin my life sometime, don’t I? You don’t want me to spend all my life down in this hole, do you? You don’t think I can go on living just to keep my brother and sister company, do you?" And Raja runs away to Hyder Ali in Hyderabad, marries Benazir, Hyder Ali’s daughter and begets five
children. Bim is left alone with Baba in the crumbling house. Raja abdicates his responsibility towards Bim and Baba entirely. So, their relationship changes. Tara too, later on understands the significance of time and comes to realize how human relationship - even the intimate relationship between a brother and a sister -- changes with the passage of time. In Hyderabad, Raja becomes a landlord in a short duration of time instead of a dependent brother. He never recalls the old days, the love and sacrifice of Bim, her taking care of his health. So, Bim is treated most cruelly by her own brother. Utterly neglected and treacherously deserted, Bim muses painfully on how the passage of time has ravaged the old relationships of childhood and created a changed pattern of relationship in the family. Raja never thinks of how Bim will pay the rent and feed the family with her small earning. Feeling badly let down by her brother, Bim says only this: "No, that's only for me to worry about... rent to be paid on the house, and five, six, seven people to be fed everyday, and Tara to be married off, and Baba to be taken care of for the rest of his life, and you to be got well again and I don't know what else." Everyone is busy in his or her family. Inspite of her renunciation at the familial altar, she gets only acrimony and bitterness. Being deprived of the warmth of human relationship or familial relationship books are her only solace and refuge. After a long span of time, Bim decides to patch up with Raja who was probably not even conscious of the hurt his letters have caused Bim. She purges herself of the intense hatred for ultimately she realises. "No other love had started so far back in time and had had so
much in which to grow and spread than she felt for her family. Bim lives in the dreamy world of the past but wakes up in the clear light of day to mend her relations with her brother.

In *Clear Light of Day*, Bim leads an estranged life. She, being sensitive, wants to live in the romanticized world of the past, whereas her brother Raja becomes pragmatic and realistic. She feels that no one cares for her inspite of her surrendering her life. She is angry, particularly with Raja, who, she feels, has not reciprocated her feelings normally.

In *Clear Light of Day*, the parents are quite indifferent towards their children and spend all their time in the club playing bridge games. Thus the children have to cope with a diabetic mother and a father who is nothing but "a master of entrance and exit." The boredom prevailing in the house is linked with monotony prevailing in Old Delhi. "Old Delhi doesn't change. It only decays... it is a great cemetery, every house is a tomb. Nothing but sleeping graves... And here, here nothing happens at all..." The novel is about growing up in an absurd world where indifference, disease and irrationality seem to thwart all normal human responses.

The parents play no significant role in their children's lives during their life time and after their death, all responsibility falls on Bim because she is the eldest member of the family. So she assumes the role of father, taking care of brothers and sisters and later marrying them. She becomes so busy in carrying the responsibilities that she finds no time for her own love and life. Though she is emotionally
attached to a doctor, she does not marry him and even sacrifices her ambition, talent and aspirations which are thwarted by the sudden change in her life and family. Being burdened with responsibilities she cannot think of her own happiness. She marries Tara, nurses her ailing brother Raja, attends the aged, alcoholic and invalid aunt and looks after her mentally retarded brother Baba all alone. When aunt Mira dies and Raja becomes healthy again she becomes all the more alone. Raja, on whom Bim has pinned hope for help leaves her and Baba with callous indifference. Utterly neglected and treacherously deserted, "Bim begins to muse painfully on how the passage of time has ravaged the old relationships of childhood and created and changed pattern of relationship in the family." Raja does not even provide a rent free accommodation to Bim. Instead, he pretends as if he were suffering a great loss for her stake. Otherwise, he would have raised the rent or sold the house and made profit. The unhappy experiences through which she has passed and the estrangement from those whom she has loved drain all her enthusiasm for their past. In her need of utter disgust she thinks that all her relations - Tara, Bakul, Raja and Benazir - had come in her life like mosquitoes only to torment her and mosquito-like sip her blood. "It must have been good blood, sweet and nourishing. Now, when they were full, they rose in swarms, humming away, turning their backs on her."  

She finally achieves identity in togetherness, acceptance and positive commitment when she interprets her past as meaningless and insignificant. Faced with the dilemma of whether to act in complete
isolation or to reconcile her actions with the reality of others, Bim oscillates between alienation and confirmation almost losing herself in the struggle of her own consciousness. After a long period of frustration she recognises the importance of forgetting past hurts. She perceives that the meaning of being can be achieved through a love for others.

In *Clear Light of Day* the theme of escape emerges through the character of Tara who wants to escape from her own home and family. She feels suffocated in her surroundings and desires change and sophistication. It is another thing that when she escapes, she escapes only physically for mentally she cannot escape as the past haunts her and she feels guilty that she could not help her sister Bim when her brother Raja was ill and Mira masi was to be taken care of. Even Bim wants to escape. She wants to escape from her past because she is wearied of it, she wants to escape from relationships because they have disillusioned her.

In *Bye-Bye Blackbird* Anita Desai portrays the feelings of alienated individuals who suffer from cultural clash. Such individuals find it quite difficult to adjust in a foreign country as the natives do not accept them. They keep on considering them as foreigners irrespective of their feelings and the time spent by them in a country. They neither belong to their own country nor to the other. The problem of conjugal harmony also arises due to different cultures.

In *Bye-Bye Blackbird* the problem of conjugal harmony is also taken up for study as in most of Anita Desai's novels, through the
protagonist of the novel, Adit, an Indian, who has settled abroad. He marries a British girl Sarah, who has an inborn curiosity and fascination for India and Indian way of life. Though she becomes familiar with the Indian culture, she cannot obliterate that part of her personality which has been shaped during her childhood and early youth spent in an English country-side. She is unable to understand how to reconcile her earlier self with the new self. Their relationship becomes tense when Adit gets fed up of wearing the label 'Indian Immigrants'. He is no longer Mr. Sen but a 'wog' 'Asiatic' or 'Indian Immigrant'. He cannot understand who is he? Where is he? At this stage he yearns for India, Indian food, Indian festivals, music and clothes. He becomes obstinate, assertive and begins to impose his views on Sarah. He completely ignores her individuality, likes and dislikes. When Sarah asks him as to where he wants to celebrate his wedding anniversary he chooses 'Veeraswamy', a place where Indians celebrate their functions. He does not bother to ask Sarah, her choice. She though a highly sensitive and a determined lady, acquiesces to her husband's decision:

... she would sacrifice anything, anything at all, in order to maintain, however superficially, a semblance of order and discipline in her house, in her relationship with him. If she allowed this chaos to reflect upon their marriage, she knew its fragments would not remain jangling together but would scatter, drift and crumble.98

Sarah, in every way, tries to check the growing tension threatening their harmonious relationship. And Sarah fears disruption
of their relationship if she did anything contrary to his wishes, "... he might start screaming accusations to her, he might shut himself up and weep,... anything was possible in his highly strung and dramatic condition." 99 Even when Adit decides to go back to India, she does not oppose him.

In *Bye, Bye Blackbird* Anita Desai lingers in a leisurely manner on the mental agony of those who by choice, or under circumstantial compulsion find themselves alienated. 100 In this novel the problem of conjugal harmony is not discussed extensively but another theme is explored. Anita Desai focusses on alienation and lack of adjustment encountered by Indian immigrants in England. The tension is build up when the hypersensitive characters are situated in an alien culture. They undergo bitter experiences and are unable to identify themselves with the natives and their values of life. The incomers are denied this identification by the natives also and they in direct or indirect form show their resentment and distrust of the immigrants, who thus keep on brooding over their loneliness and lack of belonging.

Dev comes to London and feels alienated from both Indians and Englishmen. It is because the Indians have become used to the condescending attitudes of the natives, which he is not and the Englishmen consider him an outsider. So, he does not feel at home in England. His sense of alienation begins when he does not get a cup of tea in the morning. He misses the hospitality offered to the guests in India. Rising early in the morning he becomes painfully conscious of "the cup of tea that would have been brought to him if he were at
home in India now by a mother, fresh from her morning prayer, or by a
servant boy scorched and sooty from a newly made fire. By no stretch
of imagination were his host Adit Sen or his wife Sarah likely to do this
for him."^101 He is confronted with the initial problem of adjustment in
the foreign land and feels shocked to see the kind of treatment the
immigrants are given. He gets the first shock, when he is called 'a
wog' by a damson-cheeked boy. He feels surprised to note that Adit
does not find anything unusual in it, but he himself is deeply hurt by
the contemptuous and somewhat bullying attitude of the Britishers
towards Pakistanis and Indians. They are abused and discriminated
even in the use of lavatories - Ladies, Gents and Asiatics. This gives an
indication that Asiatics cannot form a part of the whole community.
Once a pedlar refuses to tell him the price of a Russian icon, thinking
that he is too poor to buy it. "Yes, how much?" repeats Dev. "Oh,
very much. I would not even name the price to you."^102 Dev is
nauseated by the racial prejudices. He dislikes the sheepishness of the
incomers and their abject loss of self respect. He says, "The trouble
with you immigrants is that you go soft."^103 He becomes aware
through all the incidents that the Indians or the Asians are not
welcome to be merged into the main stream, no matter how educated
they are. Hence his diversion from others and from his own self is
natural and "the tension in the novel between the white locale and the
immigrant blackbird involves issues of alienation and accommodation
that the immigrant has to confront in an alien and yet familiar
world."^104
Dev faces chaos and confusion in himself caused by the outside pressure and faces emotional upheavals. When abandoning the idea of further studies he seeks a job, he finds that the jobs are strictly prohibited for the coloured immigrants. "Floor walker in self service store. Coloureds need not apply." The jobs that are available are disheartening. Dev can not get accustomed to the silence and emptiness of the houses and streets of London. He, rather feels uneasy and worried. "Another thing to which Dev cannot grow accustomed, in all his walks and bus rides through the city, is the silence and emptiness of it..." What hurts him most is the indifference of the people and this makes him feel as insignificant as a particle of dust. He feels very strange and perturbed when he sees lovers making love at Hyde Park and he comments "I think those people are really a bunch of exhibitionists."

Adit too, who is happy in the beginning, later on begins to feel like an outsider in England. He leads a self-satisfied and comfortable life, but suddenly he starts yearning for Bengal food, family and nature. He does not appreciate "this business of always hanging together with people like ourselves, all wearing the label Indian immigrants never daring to try and make contact outside this circle." He feels suffocated and is fed up of wearing the label Indian immigrants. He feels hurt when he has to follow the code of conduct laid down for him by the natives. Everywhere he is hunted out by the black sensation of not belonging. He feels he has become homeless. The occasional insults and slights directed against him as a stranger, a non
belonger does not pinch him in the beginning, but finally it proves too much for him. He is tormented by such questions as Who am I? Where am I? because he is no longer Mr. Sen but has become a wog, Asiatic, Indian immigrant. His marriage to an English woman introduces new conditions of living. He seems temporarily happy in his freedom from Indian conventions and poverty, but this freedom creates more problems and grievances which are more depressing. He is an outcast in the flock. The rejection and the realization that the surroundings and the adopted culture are bound up with a civilization radically different from his own, result in tremendous frustration making M.E. Derret observe about Indians that: "Their new self awareness makes it impossible for Indians to go back, their cherishing of Indianness makes it difficult for them to go ahead."  

Sarah too suffers a great deal. She marries an Indian and becomes stranger in her own country. She suffers at the hands of her own countrymen. They make fun of her for marrying an Indian and taunt her at every step. She has to bear all this. She yearns for freedom - freedom from the self, not from any conventions or traditions. She tries to hide, conceal and escape from the self Mrs. Sen. It is this Mrs. Sen at which people leer at and she has become suspicious of her acceptance anywhere. She has fascination for India - "Sarah has a fascination for India. She will construct the dream of India in silence and will share it with Emma, but she is never crazy" but her suffering is all the more because it is from her own
countrymen. She does not know where to go if she is a stranger in her own homeland.

Sarah, too, is a victim of cultural clash. She finds that she is not liked by her own countrymen. She acts two different roles and fears losing her identity.

Who was she - Mrs Sen who had been married in a red and gold Benaras brocade sari one burning, bronzed day in September, or Mrs Sen, the Head's secretary who sent out the bills ... When she briskly dealt with letters and bills in her room under the stairs, she felt an imposter but, equally, she was playing a part when she tapped her fingers to the sitar music on Adit's records or ground spices for a curry she didn't care to eat.111

She doubts if outside these two roles, she has any existence or identity of her own. She wonders "if she would ever be allowed to step off the stage, leave the theatre and enter the real world - whether English or Indian, she didn't care, she wanted only its sincerity, its truth."112 She is uncertain of her identity. She feels totally lost and the conflict becomes, sometimes, unbearable for her. She wants to be her real self. When Adit tells her to leave for India, she decides to accompany him. She musters courage to live only her Indian self by settling in India. "It was her English self that was receding and fading and dying, she knew, it was her English self to which she must say good-bye. That was what hurt..."113 It is difficult for her to obliterate that part of her personality which has been shaped during her
childhood and early youth spent in an English country-side. She is at a loss to understand how to reconcile her earlier self with the new self. She feels stranded on a strange turn of life and shuttles between reality and unreality. Her predicament is more intense because Adit and Dev have their roots and they will be accepted there, but she is uncertain of being accepted even in her own homeland. Her dilemma is that of being uprooted. Her personality disintegrates, and she begins to prefer solitude and starts avoiding her friends. She feels as if she has been cast out of her home. "Sarah undergoes the suffering of daily duality as a result of her having to inhabit two incompatible worlds."114

In _Bye, Bye Blackbird_, the theme of east-west encounter is presented quite prominently. Anita Desai makes "a heroic... attempt to present the whole gamut of emotions of Indian immigrants in England."115 The Indian immigrants are seen brooding over their states of hollowness, loneliness and their lack of belonging. Dev goes to England, but cannot adopt her culture. He is a misfit in England and feels discriminated against everywhere. The two racial cultures of wholly different origin clash. He does not feel at home in England. He is puzzled by his friend's adoration of a country which hardly belongs to him. He faces the state of chaos and confusion in himself caused by outside pressure. The great turmoil inside him splits him. He fluctuates between uncertainty and certainty though ultimately the things change and he gets accustomed to such an atmosphere.
In *Bye-Bye Blackbird* violence is in the form of comments, taunts and behaviour which the Englishmen use for the Indian immigrants. It can also be seen in jokes, irony and sarcasm, taunts, ribaldry with which Indians hit at each other's accents, languages, customs, religions, myths, prejudices, eating habits and intellectual limitations.

In *Fire on the Mountain* Anita Desai probes the theme of alienation and quest for identity. She probes the feminine sensibility and a woman's inherent desire to know herself in terms of not only her relationship with her family but also in terms of her individual identity and its relationship with the world at large. The feminine aspiration for the harmony between the cosmic and cosmos thus becomes one of the major themes in the novel and Anita Desai delineates how in the absence of the achievement of such a state of mind the individual feels lonely and alienated and sometimes become a recluse in his search for identity. Through her protagonist Nanda Kaul and the girl child Raka Anita Desai portrays both aspects of feminine sensibility - the physical and that of nature.

In *Fire on the Mountain* Nanda Kaul and her husband Prof. Kaul, the Vice-Chancellor do not have a warm relationship. Prof. Kaul has basically cared little for Nanda or the family. He carried a life long affair with another woman. Here, we are reminded of that "men being polygamous in nature he at times carries on life-long relationship with the other women." Nanda Kaul recalls that her husband "had only done enough to keep her quiet while he carried on a life long affair
with Miss David, the mathematics mistress whom he had not married because she was a Christian but whom he had loved, all his life..."¹¹⁷

Nanda could not belong to the family and her position is no better than a house keeper/mistress. Prof. Kaul is responsible for this. He is such a coward that he could not marry a Christian because he could not dare break social conventions. Outwardly the Kaul's are an ideal couple for university community but from inside their relationship is all barren, the whole social role and socializing being a mere sham. Because of Prof. Kaul's cowardice and selfishness Nanda Kaul has to suffer. She readily discharges her duty towards the family but in doing so loses her individuality. Fire on the Mountain thus, unfolds Anita Desai's tragic vision of life, in which the innocents suffer. They pay a heavy price for their sincerity and innocence, as ordained by an unkind fate.

In Fire on the Mountain, Nanda Kaul and her great grand daughter Raka, both suffer from alienation — the former because she was tired of her busy life and the latter by her instinct. Nanda Kaul, after the death of her husband, comes to live at Carignano, a house built on the ridge in the hill town of Kasauli, in search of solitude and feels happy in the barrenness and emptiness of the house. "All she wanted was to be alone, to have Carignano to herself, in this period of her life when stillness and calm were all that she wishes to entertain."¹¹⁸ She wants no one and nothing else. "Have I not done enough and had enough? I want no more, I want nothing."¹¹⁹ Nanda Kaul resents any kind of communication from outside. In the evening
of her life she is happy in her seclusion. Her freedom is only in the house that she owns. "Everything she wanted was here... Whatever else came, or happened here, would be an unwelcome intrusion and distraction." As the wife of the Vice-Chancellor and the mother of several children, she has lived a very busy and tiring life, being an important figure in society as well as in her vast family, discharging the duties of mother, housewife and hostess with pleasure and pride. "The care of others was a habit Nanda Kaul had mislaid. It had been a religious calling she had believed in till she found it fake." Now, she aspires for a quiet, retired life. She longs to free herself from all the stifling encumbrances and irritating involvements. She withdraws from the world of "bags and letters, messages and demands, requests, promises and queries."  

Nanda Kaul's retreat is partly voluntary and partly circumstantial. "Nor had her husband loved and cherished her and kept her like a queen... And her children - the children were all alien to her nature... she lived here alone because that was what she was forced to do, reduced to doing." The reason of this detachment is that she had led a very busy and tiring life. Now, she is sick of leading a life of duty and obligation and seeks a detached secluded life. Nanda Kaul's indifference is born out of "vengeance for a long life of duty and obligation." The intensity of feeling with which she treasures her privacy and the care and concern with which she guards it give an impression that it is her defence against the intrusion of some unhappy experiences of life which still haunt her and which she wishes to ward
off, but is unable to escape her past. Although she detaches herself physically from contact and sound but her mind is still involved in the past memories. The memory of her husband's infidelity keeps assaulting her.

Nanda Kaul feels that her privacies would be intruded with the arrival of Raka, the uninvited guest. It does not matter that the person coming to her is her own flesh and blood. To Nanda, Raka was an unwelcome intruder "a mosquito flown up from the plains to tease and worry." She fears that her solitude will be shattered, but her apprehensions that her privacy is going to be threatened by the presence of Raka, are soon allayed when she finds her great-granddaughter, a strange, isolated child whose own wish for reclusiveness is as intense as her own. Like Nanda Raka wants to stay hidden. "She had come to Carignano to enslave herself again. She had come to Carignano to be alone. Stubbornly alone..." Raka avoids communicating with her great-grandmother. They live together but each resenting or avoiding the presence of the other. "If the old lady loves a life of aloneness, the young nymph desires it no less." If Nanda Kaul defends her privacy fiercely, Raka too is absolutely independent, satisfied with her own self and never bothering her grandmother, but there is a difference "If Nanda Kaul was a recluse out of vengence for a long life of duty and obligation, her great granddaughter was a recluse by nature, by instinct." The reasons appear to be rooted in some of their very bitter experience of life.
Raka is most unchildlike child. She never plays games, is an introvert by nature as a result of her traumatic childhood. Her mind is flooded with the unpleasant memory of her childhood days.

Somewhere behind them, behind it all, was her father, home from a party, stumbling and crashing through the curtains of night... beating at her mother with hammers and fists of abuse - harsh filthy abuse that made Raka cover under her bed-clothes and wet the mattress in fright... mother lay down on the floor and shut her eyes and wept...129

Raka is not a born recluse. Her upbringing is responsible for this. Her parents have no time or inclination to cater to the emotional needs of their child. Her withdrawal into herself has been occasioned by the memory of a drunken father beating a cringing mother. It is this traumatic childhood experience that has such a dehumanising effect on Raka's mind that she becomes apathetic to find any interest in childish games and there is nothing childlike in her character. Her traumatic experiences deprive her of a child's innocent trust and feeling of joy in the company of others. The disrupted marital life of her parents and her long illness during which she listened to the stories read by her mother in her "sepulchral" "martyred voice" make her averse to any need "to socialize."130

In Fire on the Mountain, the violence is in the form of rape and beating. Ila Das, a childhood friend of Nanda, one day, visits her. They have a long chat about their early days and their experiences. Ila Das is a social worker. She dissuaded Preet Singh not to marry his minor
daughter with an old man. This irritates him. In his anger he strangulates her and later rapes her, when she is on her way back. Nanda's grand daughter, Raka's agonizing memory of her drunken father and the domestic violence forms a recurrent motif depicting disharmony which agonizes the young girl's psyche and effects her being negatively.

*In Custody* focusses once more the theme of marital discord with Anita Desai depicting for the reader two major reasons for it. One of the major reason for marital discord can be lack of trust, suspicion and varied levels of sensitivity. Sometimes one partner in marriage may be totally oblivious of the emotional and spiritual aspirations of the other and may become so self-centered as to cause irreparable damage to the relation. Another reason for marital discord is the economic condition of the individuals. Sometimes in the absence of the fulfilment of monetary desires and the inadequacy of the other to provide for the fulfilment of these aspirations, relations get strained snapping the chains of communication. While monetary aspirations are very natural to human beings an obsessive desire for their fulfilment may harm the individual as well as his relationship with the others.

In *In Custody*, Deven and Sarla lead an unhappy marital life. They are quite different from each other in their temperaments. Deven is a Hindi lecturer in a college in Mirpore. Sarla, though the wife of a lecturer, has absolutely no interest in literature. She is so ignorant that she concludes her husband's frequent visits to Delhi as a ruse for meeting his girl friend. Sarla is a "plain penny-pinching, congenitally
pessimistic" woman who presents "the picture of an abandoned wife." As a young girl and bride she had the usual aspirations of monetary comfort and luxury, but by marrying a lecturer and by living in a small town, all her dreams are swept away. "Deven has been more a poet than a professor when he married Sarla... and for the wife of a poet she seemed too prosaic. Of course, she had not been his choice..." Deven is also aware of his inability and knows that he is incapable of fulfilling his wife's dreams and desires on the material level. For this, he feels apologetic because he cannot do better. He believes that he is chained to the necessity of "earning a livelihood" in order to "support his family.”

In Baumgartner's Bombay Anita Desai portrays loneliness and alienation that a man suffers in a foreign country. In the novel, there is also a temperamental incompatibility between the father and mother of Hugo Burngartner. Like Nanda in Voices In the City, Hugo, as a child, too, notices the difference in the taste and personality of his parents. His father is a well-settled businessman, always preferring expensive ashtrays, cigarette cases, table lamps and shelves of volumes of Goethe, Schiller and Heine because all these show the air of prosperity and satisfaction. In contrast to this, his mother prefers those things for her house which contain living quality that "prevented the rooms from becoming showrooms." His mother is an epitome of grace, beauty and sensuous aspects of nature who has been made a prisoner by the strong husband who imposes his will on her as well as the others. Hugo finds that her mother has no freedom of thought and action and
she tries to shrug off her disgust and frustration by singing songs. When Hugo goes with his mother to Grunewald, only there he realizes a "rift, a break between his parents that might have existed for all these years but of which he was only now really aware... he felt exposed and vulnerable."135

Even Boumgartner’s Bombay is the portrait of loneliness and of alienation. Like Bye-Bye Blackbird, in this novel also, the constant quest for identity is the theme but the difference is that, in Bye-Bye Blackbird, Adit can resolve his dilemma and overcome his alienation by returning to his own country, whereas Hugo Baumgartner’s predicament is beyond solution. He is a real nowhere man. He belongs neither to Germany because he is a Jew nor to India because here he is a 'Phirangi'. Hugo has come to India in search of a living and has left Germany during the days of Hitler. In India his features and language act as a barrier in his way to develop a sense of belongingness evoking in him a sense of fear and anxiety, similar to what he had known as a child, with an uncaring father who refuses to take him along to the course leaving Hugo feeling sore at heart and trapped in an unhappy situation. His father fails to infuse trust, confidence and inspiration in him. When his parents, unlike other parents, did not send him any Christmas gift on one Christmas day, he feels neglected and he retreats into his own thoughts and feels that "he didn’t belong to the radiant, the triumphant of the world."136 He feels sad and sullen. When his teacher tries to give him a gift he does not accept. Even at that young age he feels that "... he didn’t belong to the picture-book world
of fir, tree, the gifts and the celebrations."137 Being cut off from the outer world, not having an opportunity to enjoy the company of his father and having no friends of his own age group he becomes immensely attached to his mother. When he comes to India, he finds it difficult to forget his mother, while the political upheavals in India make it impossible for him to keep in touch with his mother. This makes him all the more lonely because she has been protector, a companion, a friend, a guide in his difficult times. This sense of alienation and loneliness increasingly surrounding him from all directions even during his stay in India makes him feel all alone and lack of social acceptance also produces in him a sense of insecurity. He tries his best to adjust, to accept and be accepted, but fails miserably. He tries to forget his past, but the past becomes an obsession with him. The more he tries to forget his origin, his own country, the more he finds himself involved with them. He, even, keeps a distance from other Europeans in Bombay because their queries remind him of his past, his Jewish background and the humiliating circumstances from which he tried to escape.

Ever since his arrival in India, Hugo is unable to get any information about his mother, and it is only after a long time that he comes to know of her death. This makes him very sad as he could not even perform any rites because of his ignorance and distance from her place of death. His realization that he was unable to return to Germany his native land was out of question, further intensifies his anguish.
Hugo Baumgartner is the one who does not belong, one who prides in nothing, neither his Jewishness, nor his history, nor in himself. This makes him withdraw deeper and deeper into himself and his introverted self seems more like a self-made prison where he feels secure. This prison life further intensifies his forlornness but he feels safer in this incubus. "He knew it was craven not to desire freedom, but it was true that captivity had provided him with an escape from the fate of those in Germany, and safety from the anarchy of the world outside."\textsuperscript{138} He worships aloneness and aloofness to such an extent that he does not want to interact with the outside world "even if only by sight."\textsuperscript{139} At times he is afraid of any human presence around him. Once he goes to the countryside and there, he sits alone brooding, but he feels that his desolation is being threatened by the presence of the village women. These women are talking to each other freely and quite intimately. This makes him feel, all the more excluded "a mere foreigner, a firanghi."\textsuperscript{140} He gets relief from his mental agony and the sense of seclusion only after his death.

In \textit{Baumgartner's Bombay}, just as in \textit{Bye-Bye Blackbird}, Anita Desai depicts how the perverted socio-political and communal values make the life of the individual a hell. The dislike of the native for the foreigner leads to tension between the individual and the perverted social forces and in that sense, "The novel covers both Europe and India. It is the study of an uprooted Jew... too dark to be accepted in his own country and before the Second World War when he comes to the British India in search of a better future he is too fair-skinned to be
accepted by the Indian society."  Baumgartner’s tragedy is his homelessness and rootlessness. In India, he tries his utmost to adopt the ways of Indian life and make sincere efforts to develop a sense of belongingness, yet he remains an outsider. He is never accepted as a native. "Baumgartner is not only the victim of political power but more so of perverted social values and biased attitude." Baumgartner accepts Indian society, but he is not accepted by it. Throughout his life he remains a ‘firangi’, a stranger and is always suspected wherever he goes and he always remains conscious of his outlandishness. Almost about fifty years of his long stay in India makes him familiar with the land, "... yet the eyes of the people who passed by glanced at him who was still strange and unfamiliar to them, and all said: firangi, foreigner." His existential despair leads to fragmentation of consciousness, confusion and conflict and the fact that remains torturing him is "Where could we go.... there was nowhere to go. Germany was gone... Europe was gone. Let us face it... there is no home for us. So where can we go"? His predicament, unlike Adit, is beyond solution. "He always remains the victim of society; of specific perverted social values, whether in his native country Germany or his adopted country India."

In Baumgartner’s Bombay, the theme of rebellion comes into being when Baumgarter is not accepted by the natives of India. He becomes disappointed with human company and tries to escape. "In Baumgartner’s Bombay Anita Desai brings into focus.... The existential conflict... common to almost all Anita Desai’s protagonists... all make
unsuccessful attempts to survive through these indirect methods like escape, withdrawal, or denial of reality..."146 Baumgartner, too, tries to lead his life by escaping human company, especially Europeans in Bombay.

His long stay in internment camp renders him incapable of dealing with a challenging and disorderly world. After his release, when he comes to Calcutta, he notes the marks of decay and destruction caused by war. In that sight of the city he sees the reflection of his own inner self. So he wants to escape. He wants to "return to that enclosed world ... the release from the pressures of the outer world."147 He nurtures the negative impulse to run away from the present.

Disappointed with the human company he withdraws himself quietly in a small flat. He lives in the company of cats and kittens. He comes out only to beg leftovers from restaurant’s owners, for cats. Having left the larger humanity, consciously, unconsciously or wilfully, he builds a new world for himself. So Baumgartner escapes from everything; memories, humanity and race.

Thus a study of some of the major novels of Anita Desai shows that her primary concern is with the probing of human psyche especially the psyche of women characters in their search for harmony and balance in life. She looks intuitively at and portrays remarkably well the agony, search and fate of such characters who experience loneliness, alienation and a sense of being different from the others in their life. Anita Desai also brings out the human and more specifically
man-woman relationship and its functioning. She probes the human desire for communication and harmony in life. Another theme probed deeply is the cultural disparity and its effect on human relationship. In the novels of Anita Desai there is a constant questioning of the stereotype and to a great level rebellion against the unquestioning acceptance of the stereotype. Her protagonists look at various avenues available to them in their search of communication harmony and balanced relationships. Sometimes they reject the established, sometimes they long for self-annihilation and sometimes they escape from their situation into a situation or a relationship which offers them the promise of the fulfilment of their aspirations. All these protagonists, however, cannot become recluses and reject in totality the known and the established. So they come back to the fold of the stereotype but as chanaged individuals, having acquired a much higher level of sensitivity and a better understanding of life. Those who refuse to come back and strike a balance with the accepted and the tradition do not acquire any understanding of life and often suffer tragic ends like Monisha in Voices in the City. Thus Anita Desai talks of the middle path - the striking of a balance between the known and accepted and the aspired for. Anita Desai accepts human need for individual aspirations but does not suggest the rejection of the tradition as a means for the fulfilment of these aspirations. The themes of Anita Desai's novels form a well established pattern with her characters moving towards the fulfilment of the self through various avenues available to them and their ultimate coming back into the fold of the known, the established but as changed individuals.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2 Srivastava, Perspectives on Anita Desai xxviii.

3 Anita Desai, "Interview by Yashodhara Dalmia," The Times of India 29 Apr. 1979.

4 Desai, "Interviewed by Yashodhara Dalmia.


11 Srivastava, ed., Perspectives on Anita Desai. xxxix.


13 Christopher Hanson, "Conclusion", Sons and Lovers (Great Britain: Basil Blackwell Oxford, 1966) 82-83.


20 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 10.

21 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 5.


23 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 9.

24 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 48.


27 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 174.

28 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 174.

29 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 88.


31 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 146.


34 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 99.

36 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 8.

37 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 35.

38 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 40-41.

39 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 42.

40 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 42.


42 Desai, *Cry, the Peacock* 98.


44 Srivastava, ed., *Perspectives on Anita Desai* 38.


46 Sharma, *Anita Desai* 63.

47 Desai, *Voices in the City* 27.

48 Desai, *Voices in the City* 198.

49 Desai, *Voices in the City* 122.


51 Desai, *Voices in the City* 24.

52 Desai, *Voices in the City* 08.

53 Desai, *Voices in the City* 62.


55 Desai, *Voices in the City* 40.


57 Desai, *Voices in the City* 124-125.
58 Desai, *Voices in the City* 121-122.


61 Desai, *Voices in the City* 157-158.


63 Desai, *Voices in the City* 64.

64 Desai, *Voices in the City* 233.


66 Desai, *Voices in the City* 247.


68 Dr. Tripathi, *Mind and Art of Anita Desai* 66.


70 Anita Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1975) 50.

71 Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 44-45.


73 Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 47.

74 Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 32.


76 Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 52.

77 Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 52

78 Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 52-53.

79 Desai, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 31.

80
Atma Ram, "A View of Where Shall We Go This Summer?" 74.

Desai, Where Shall We Go This Summer? 41.

Bande, "Father-Daughter Relationship in Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock and Where Shall We Go This Summer?" Contemporary Indian English Fiction - An Anthology of Essays of Kamal N.Awasthi (Jalandhar: ABS, 1993) 23.

Bande, "Father-Daughter Relationship" 23.

Desai, Where Shall We Go This Summer? 79.

Desai, Where Shall We Go This Summer? 138-139.

Desai, Where Shall We Go This Summer? 38.


Desai, Where Shall We Go This Summer? 46.

Desai, Where Shall We Go This Summer? 56.

Desai, Where Shall We Go This Summer? 35.


Desai, Clear Light of Day 165.

Desai, Clear Light of Day 53.

Desai, Clear Light of Day 5.


Desai, Clear Light of Day 153.

Desai, Clear Light of Day 200.

Desai, Clear Light of Day 200.

R.S.Singh, Indian Novel in English 175.


113 Desai, *Bye-Bye Blackbird* 255.


115 B.R. Rao, *The Novels of Mrs. Anita Desai* 47.


118 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 17.

119 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 17.

120 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 03.

121 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 30.

122 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 03.
123 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 145.
125 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 40.
126 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 80.
129 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 71-72.
130 Desai, *Fire on the Mountain* 64.
140 Desai, *Baumgartner's Bombay* 111.


147 Desai, *Baumgartner's Bombay* 162.