

Research Plan Proposal

A Thematic study of Alienation and Displacement in Anita Desai's Select Novels

For Registration to the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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The major themes in Anita Desai novels are the sense of alienation, displacement, detachment and human relationship. A concerned social visionary, Anita Desai is a keen observer of the society and the position of the women in the contemporary society and draws her special attention. The concept of alienation involves a complex chain of development. It is not a recent coinage. It is as old as the society itself. In common, alienation means turning away or keeping away from one's immediate surroundings. Alienation is a painful feeling felt by human in several positions. Displacement not only leads to separation but it also leads to alienation and rebirth in a new country, new culture, new society and new adjustments in an alien land.

The seed of Indian Writing in English was sown during the period of the British rule in India. Now the seed has blossomed into an evergreen, fragrant flower and ripe fruits. The fruits are being tasted not only by the native people, but they are also being 'chewed and digested' by the foreigners. It happened only after the constant caring, pruning and feeding. Gardeners like Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, R.K.Narayan, Raja Rao-to name a few, looked after tender plants night and day. In modern times, it is guarded by a number of writers who are getting awards and accolades all over the world.

Women writers in India are moving forward with their strong and sure strides, matching the pace of the world. We see them bursting out in full bloom spreading their own individual fragrances. They are recognized for their originality, versatility and the indigenous flavor of the soil that they bring to their work. Indian women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Bharathi Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahal and many more played a pioneering role in conveying the readers a wild range indigenous Indian issue, punctuated by a strong feminist outlook. Anita Desai is a women novelist of great repute and provides an interesting study into the female psyche. Among the later women novelists she occupies an important place since she shows a preoccupation with the form of the novel and its narrative technique. There is a shift of emphasis in her novels from outer realities and hence she has been compared to psychological novelists like Virginia Woolf. She has written fourteen books to her credit that included ten novels, two collections of short stories and two books of children.

Anita Desai is one of the best known and celebrated Indo-Anglican novelists of Post-Independence era. The major themes in Anita Desai novels are the sense of alienation, displacement, detachment and human relationship. A concerned social visionary, Anita Desai is a keen observer of the society and the position of the women in the contemporary society and draws her special attention. Her works are *The Zigzag Way*, *Marie Arana*, *Diamond Dust*, *Fasting, Feasting*, *Journey to Ithaca*, *Baumgartner's Bombay*, *In Custody*, *The Village by the Sea*, *Clear Light of Day*, *The Peacock Garden*, *Where Shall we go this Summer?*, *Games at Twilight*, *Fire on the Mountain* *Bye-Bye*, *Blackbird*, *Voices in the City*, *Cry*, *the Peacock*.

Her novel 'In Custody' uses English to depict the decay of another language Urdu, and the high literary culture which lived in it. In Anita Desai can be examined as the manifesto of female predicament 'Cry the Peacock' explores the turbulent emotional world of Maya, The

Protagonist. Desai's second novel, *Voices in the City* is also highly psychological. 'Where Shall We go this Summer?' also depicts the theme of alienation and lack of communication in married life. In 'Bye –Bye Blackbird', to find the theme of alienation and frustration of the immigrants in an alien country. In *Fire on the Mountain*, the forest on fires is symbolic of the suppressed fire in Nanda Kaul's heart.' *Clear Light of Day* highlights the theme of the effect of the remembrance of the past on Bim and Tara. In 'Fasting and Fasting', about balancing the two contrary spheres.

Desai is praised for her broad understanding on intellectual issues, and for her ability to portray her country so vividly with the way the eastern and western cultures have blended there. She has received numerous awards, including the 1978 National Academy of Letters Award for *Fire on the Mountain* the first of her novels to be brought to the United States. The story is of a remote, isolated woman and her equally withdrawn great-granddaughter as they are forced together in hills surrounded by violence and fire. In 1983 she was awarded the Guardian Prize for Children's Fiction for *The Village by the Sea*, an adventurous fairy tale about a young boy living in a small fishing village in India.

Anita Desai has deep psychological insight into her characters. She uses symbols spontaneously. She uses evocative symbols. She is also concerned about the predicament of women in male dominated society. Her novels feministic concerns very artistically and effectively. She is a gifted stylist. Her diction is rich, sensuous and suggestive. There is also musically in the sound of words, she chooses. Anita Desai has earned unique place in Indian English Fiction by her rich contribution. And I also think that alienation and displacement themes are always changing because of the changes in the world. And alienation writing is considered as a creative one.