CHAPTER V

ALIENATION OF FEMALE AND COMING OF THE SELF

Alienation, as we know, is an important feature of the post second world war literature. The figure of the outsider looms large on the horizon of the Euro-American literature of this period. Added to this phenomenon of alienation is the socio economic reality of the 'colonized' world of the black American characters who have their being in the technological American empire with a "will to technology," that is a will to dominate the world around. The black American female characters, doubly colonized (as argued in the fourth chapter of this thesis acquire alienation.

Racism being an everyday reality, these black characters are denied the real attributes of citizenship and hence have no reliable community and support system. Celie (**The Color Purple**) and Pecola (**The Bluest Eye**) are but two examples of this kind of alienation. Having born in a disjointed society, these characters yearn for a real human contact. Its need becomes all the more acute because they are, generally, away from their homes and natural communities in pursuit of their individualistic goal which they cannot attain due to the colour of their skin and their being women. Alienation therefore becomes a defining feature of these characters. Though having real sociological roots, their alienation tends, to be existential in nature because they are living in the technological empire of the U.S.A.

Though the main cause of alienation of the blacks in the U.S.A. is political, it however, operates because of the psychological, social and cultural conflicts between the two contrasting world views of the whites and the blacks.

Black women are often initiated into the white cultural norms and values through the media and the world of 'silver screen'. Consequently they look down upon their own culture and develop a 'morginal' personality. A marginal heroine is a product of two or more social worlds and is poised in psychological uncertainty of these worlds. The female protagonists are denied political and economic power and remain alienated in the hierarchical society.

Of all the themes in literature, the theme of alienation is the most appropriate for discussing female protagonists. It is an outcome of oppression at several levels as studied in the last chapter of this thesis.

Morrison's **The Bluest Eye** conjures up an image of a lonely, fragmented and ultimately demented Pecola. She represents several young black girls in the urban ghetto, neglected and alienated in white America. The despair experienced by Pecola is so profound that it threatens the wholeness of her spirit. She is the invisible person in the eyes of the white store owner, Mr. Yacobowski. Erich Fromm has defined, as a form of alienation the 'relationships' among people who "see each other not as human beings but as objects which can be used to achive their own goals" (126-27). Pecola inhabits a world which denies her

participation in the act of living. The storekeeper does not see her. "... because for him there is nothing to see" (TBE 42). Pecola's isolation from the larger society and the insensitivity of the white shopkeeper benumbs her, as it is the "total absence of human recognition—the glazed separateness" (TBE 42). As a sensitive young girl, she is keenly aware of the world around her. She feels and sees, senses and fears, but is unseen by her parents, peers in school and the black community of Lorain, Ohio. This reveals her alienation at interpersonal level. She is actualy aware of a universe in which her very being is discounted, nullified, denied. Collier observes: "To be both inside and outside of one's world, to see what one cannot share: this is invisibility: this is alienation" (16).

Alienation proves devastating for black women in white America. Away from their native land and reduced to roles of a breeder, a maid and a domestic, black women endure, the most vicious form of racism and sexism which results in their uniquely agonizing alienation.

Pecola is accepted by few: by the three friendly prostitutes: China, Poland and Miss Marie who dwell in an upstairs apartment, and by Claudia and her sister Frieda. Even these befriending sisters have problems of communication with grown-ups like their mother at times. They find it hard to gauge the values of the adult world. There is none to convince or reassure Pecola of her self worth. A fundamental principle in existentialism is that as Sartre notes, 'existence precedes

essence' (26), that a man's experiential knowledge drawn from existence is superior to any principle or philosophy in its theoretical essence. Her interaction with other human beings serves only to reinforce Pecola's self-image of worthlessness. Thus, her perception of the unbridgeable gulf between her aspiration and reality plunges her towards existential alienation.

Black women like Pauline Breedlove experienced an isolation in northern cities during the black people's migration in late thirties and early forties. Pauline's alienation is the outcome of her struggles to achieve the white bourgeois social model (in which she worked but did not live) which is itself produced by the capitalist system of wage labour. She leads a schizophrenic life, working as a housemaid in a wealthy lakeshore home. Her marginality is constantly confronted with the world of Hollywood movies, white sheets and tender blonde children. She feels isolated at work where she separates herself from her own kinky hair and decayed tooth. Even in her childhood at her Alabama home she had never felt at home anywhere, or experienced a sense of belonging to any place. Her constant general feeling was that of 'separateness' and 'unworthiness'. Thus, the tragedy of Pauline's alienation has its dire impact on her role as a mother. She never develops a positive relationship with Pecola. Polly shower, tenderness and love on her employer's child, and rains violence and disdain on her own.

Pecola is alienated from her own mother as she addresses Pauline as Mrs. Breedlove, a most formal, westernised practice of

addressing one's mother. The intimate touch of mother-daughter relationship is non-existent between Pauline and Pecola in the novel. Occasional fights between her parents makes her dream of an impossible wish for a pair of the bluest eyes. Her isolation from other members of her family and friends at school is aggravated by problems of appearance and self-image. Devoid of friends at school or in the neighbourhood, she experiences a sick feeling which she always tries to prevent by "holding in her stomach" (TBE 39). Her brother Sammy is not a playmate at home or outside for Pecola. Besides:

> She had long ago given up the idea of running away to see new pictures, new faces, as Sammy had so often done. He never to tool her, and he never thought about his going ahead of time, so it was never planned (TBE 39).

Pecola's isolation is so complete that she desperately wants to be liked, to be accepted. She is amenable to everthing. Yet she becomes an easy prey to everyone's disdain, be he a black boy or a yellow dream child-Maureen at school. She proves to be the scapegoat of the black boys' own humiliation and pain.

The epigrammatic opening of **The Bluest Eye** reveals the trauma of young black Pecola. The familiar opening of Dick-and-Jane reader foreshadows Pecola's devastating alienation. Jane, in red dress wants to play. She approaches all the members of the family. The mother who is described as 'very nice.': ironically, laughs at Jane's proposal to play with her. So does the smiling

father. Even the cat and the dog are no playmates in the story. This picture ironically reveals Pecola's destiny. She is left lonely at family level, as well as without friends in the society. This accentuates Morrison's point at the centre of her novels-isolation of young black girls and disruption of the black cultural heritage-as revealed in **Sula, Song of Soloman** and **Tar Baby.**

Pecola's tragedy is due to her alienation from family, friends and the black community of Lorain, Ohio. The so called society of the small black town either poles fun at Pecola or derives sadistic pleasure in her ruined state. Even Claudia and Frieda do not remain close to Pecola after she is raped by her father, Cholly Breedlove. These sympathetic, friendly sisters are distanced from Pecola. Frieda and Claudia see Pecola sometimes after Pecola lapses into madness: "after the baby came too soon and died. ... She was so sad to see. Grown people looked away; children, those who were not frightened by her, laughed outright" (**TBE** 158). Her social alienation from the people thus paves the way for her existential alienation.

Pecola's isolation is complete when she retreates into her own world of madness in which she deludes herself that her drunken father had not raped her. In this dreamland, an imaginary friend is her only comfort and reassurance. She loves this newly won friend who assures her that she has the bluest eyes in the world. Pecola's deranged nerves say a lot about the socio-economic and political oppression of little black girls as they get alienated from the black and the white American societies.

In **Sula**, Morrison depicts the camaraderie between Sula and Nel. Simultaneously, these growning teenagers are:

> Solitary little girls whose loneliness was so profound it intoxicated them and sent them stumbling into Technicolored vision that always included a presence, a some one, who, quite like the dreamer, shared the delight of the dream (S 51).

Like Pecola, Sula too lives a solitary life in her house. Her mother Hannah is hardly aware of her only daughter Sula's need for emotional nurturance. After the death of her husband, Rekus, Hannah refuses to live without the attention of men. Thus, Sula is the daughter of a distant mother. Nel's mother, Helene Sabat, is class conscious and precise about her manners. She manipulates her daugher and husband. Helene turns young Nel into an obedient daughter, driving her imagination 'underground'. Much like Pauline in **The Bluest Eye**, Helene in **Sula** violates Nel and rubs down her imagination to a dull glow. Thus Sula and Nel are isolated from their own mothers.

Neither Sula nor Nel have any brother or sister. So no companion is within their easy reach. Further, both the girls are daughters of 'incomprehensible fathers'. Sula's father is dead. Nel's father, Wiley Wright's presence is hardly felt in the family. He is a cook on one of the Great Lakes'Lines. He visits his family "only three days out of every sixteen" (S 17). His absence from home affects Nel's growth severely. Hence Sula and

Nel both resemble each other in their emotional isolation from other people. Their alienation from larger society paves the way for Sula's rebellion against the set norms a woman is supposed to follow in the black community. She remains at best a social outsider, as she defies the role she is supposed to play, socially. Sula is a rebel by nature. This rebellious spirit of Sula alienates her from her only friend Nel.

Sula feels isolated when she overhears Hannah's remarks that she does not like her. So she seeks refuge in Nel's companionship, that 'version of herself'. After Nel's wedding, Sula searches for experience outside the Bottom for ten years in cities, colleges and in the company of men. Her quest is to fill the empty spaces, both without and within. Sula also suffers isolation after the accidental drowning of a playmate, Chicken Little. A sense of guilt haunts Sula through out her life, which does not allow her a respite.

The two experiences: Hannah's remark and Chicken Little's drowning teach Sula that: "there was no other that you could count on." ... and " ... there was no self to count on either." Her alienation grows intense as Sula "had no center, no spark around which to grow" (S 118-119). No common denominator like ambition, affection for money, property or things, greed, desire to command attention or compliments or ego conjoin her with other women or men. Hence her isolation is deeper. As she refuses to undergo the usual rite of marriage and become a wife and a mother, she is outside the fen of black women at the Bottom.

Sula wants to live her life, she wants 'to make' herself. In her quest for self, she realizes that "no one would ever know that version of herself which she sought to reach out to and touch with an ungloved hand" (S 121). The monotony and malaise of modern life in cities accentuates her alienation in urban centres. Her experiences are vividly described:

> All those cities held the same people, working the same mouths, sweating the same sweat. The men who took her to one or another of those places had merged into one large personality: the same language of love, the same entertainments of love, the same cooling of love. Whenever she introduced her private thoughts into their rubbings or gropings, they hooded their eyes. They taught her nothing but love tricks, shared nothing but worry, gave nothing but money (S 120-121).

Thus, Sula is a heroine who realizes the dire consequences of alienation. Even in love making, which seems to her, in the beginning, the creation of a special kind of joy, she gradually feels that "in the center of that silence was not eternity but the death of time and a loneliness so profound the world itself had no meaning" (S 123).

After love making she wants her partner to turn away, and leave her "to the postcoital privateness in which she met herself, welcomed herself, and joined herself in matchless

harmony" (S 123). Such isolation of Sula culminates in her confession to Nel while dying. Sula's life may not be a tale of success. Yet she leads an independent life, pursues her own course to freedom. In doing so she gets destroyed, yet she achieves a rare personhood which none of the Bottom women ever dared to achieve by defying the role models set for them. In last conversation before she dies, she reveals to Nel that she is alienated. All the same, she is aware of what goes on in her mind. Nel's response to Sula is typical of a woman shackled by phony values. She senses Sula's isolation and tells that her's had been a lonely life. Sula's reply to this evinces her sense of being as she replies; ... But my lonely is mine. Now your lonely is somebody else's. Made by somebody else and handed to you. ... A secondhand lonely" (S 143).

Like Pecola, Sula is also alienated from the black community. Although the Bottom community proclaims Sula a pariah, after her death the very community changes like chameleon. Ironically enough, Sula's alienation sets the pace for a reversal in the life of the Bottom community. The compassion and warmth of a neighbourhood no longer sustains the Bottom. In the sixties, after the war, a new order in the society gets established.

"Now there weren't any places left, just separate houses with separate televisions and separate telephones and less and less dropping by" (S 166). The malaise seems all pervading under the guise of progress. Alienation of human beings, reflects the sickness in all societies.

In Klapp's analysis, societies are divided into three categories on the basis of its technological advancement. He calls these societies as: (i) traditional / tribal society, (ii) transitional society (iii) technologically advanced society. For a traditional society with a closely knit village, tribal and family life, there are very few indenkity probelems. In the transitional society due to extensive introduction of technology, the group solidarity is weakened. It therefore faces the problems of redefining its identity. The individual in this society is divided in his loyalties to himself and to his community. Hence he faces problems at the individual level.

There was no perceptible change in the social structure due to colonialism in India. The Hindu ethos and the British policy of indirect rule after the Indian war of Independence of 1857, also helped in retaining the age old caste system and social structure. Due to constant onslaught of various alien cultures, the Hindus, especially the Brahmins, became more traditional, rigid and ritualist in their outlook, as examined in the first chapter. As Alladi Uma notes the patriarchal "joint family system consolidated the position of the man" (2) by denouncing that of the woman. The signs of disintegration of an individual are seen due to the impact of scientific and technological advancement. Women in the middle class families have an access to education and achieve an awareness of their predicament in joint families. Like their black American counterparts they remain marginal, as they have little power in the joint, patriarchal family system.

The female protagonists of Indian English women novelists can be called social outsiders within the matrix of their small world. Even if seen from the perspective of the third world countries, heroines like Monisha (**Voices in the City**) and Saroj(**Storm in Chandigarh**) remain social outsiders. They do not accept the life being lived by their fellow beings. They reject the respectability, the philosophy, the religion and even the value system of their community because, they realise, that they are living, as Joneja quotes Wilson, an "ordinary dull life at low pressures" (8). The women protagonist thus are alienated from their own family and society at large.

Within the parameter of Indian joint family, there exists inherent hierarchy of elderly women. The young daughters-in-law do not have any power. Hence these women are social outsiders. Thus, the heroines of Desai and Sahgal discover their alienation in their peculiar social reality. These Indian novelists seek new patterns to articulate these newly experienced inner and outer realities in the fictional universe of their heroines. Desai transmutes authentically her culture's uncertainties, its complexities, and its paradoxes through her heroines. Sahgal too depicts the predicament of women in her novels as they undergo harrowing experiences of alienation.

In the novels of Indian women writers', female alienation stands out in bold relief. Anita Desai's heroines show a study in female psyche. alienated due to lack of a compassionate companionship, their predicament is all the more touching as

these female protagonists long for a human touch (sensitivity and companionship of their husbands. Maya in **Cry, the Peacock** reflects on her husband's non-attachment whereas she fervently longs for his affection. Right from the start she intuitively feels that "he (Gautama) knew nothing that concerned me." (CTP 9).

Gautama, for the most part, is hardly aware of Maya's misery. He does not know how to comfort her when she experiences agony after her pet Toto's death. His relentless attitude to Maya's needs is voiced by Maya: "Telling me to go to sleep while he worked at his papers, he did not give another thought to me, to either the soft willing body or the lonely, wanting mind that waited near his bed ... "(CTP 9).

Repeatedly Maya realises her loneliness in the house. Her agony and pain of being left all alone after Toto's death reminds us of Sula. Both these heroines associate the impact felt by them of the past experience. Maya remembers her pet's wild, thrilled bark as Toto sees her returning home. Affectionately, he flings himself upon her and the feel of his body is endearing to Maya. Likewise Sula cannot disremember Chicken Little's laughter as she swings him. The warm, hard touch of his little fingers on her palm before he gets drowned into the river remains in her memory. To Gautama such moments and experiences do not matter. Thus, there exists a gap between Maya and Gautama. Maya never asks him whether such remembrances are as important as his 'facts'. She just thinks privately in her inner thoughts and "having thought them was sufficient" for her. This instance gives an idea of

Maya's psychological alienation from her mate. Maya's meandering thoughts reveal her alienation as she broods over the prophecy of albino magician and death. Toto's death brings her fear of an early death of one of them (her's or Gautama's). Gautama is no romantic, hence she feels forlorn under the dark space and starlit sky. The lyrical rendering of Maya's alienation enhances the poignancy of her predicament. As she lives through the fourth year of her married life; the prophecy of the albino haunts her day and night. Gautama, being a rationalist, does not share Maya's sentiments or her fear. As a result, Maya has to face 'ferocious assaults' of her existence single-handed. Her despair and isolation ultimately drives her to insanity, in the same way as Pecola loses her mind. Maya remains on the horns of a dilemma. She cannot reveal the secret of the prophecy to her lawyer husband. They live in seperate universes, Maya, a very sensitive and imaginative person and Gautama, a fastidious person like Buddha beneath the Bo tree.

Even at the familial level, Maya experiences a void, as her brother Arjuna has run away from home long ago, and her father is on a long tour to Europe. At Gautama's house neither his mother nor his sister are compassionate enough to share Maya's sorrow. Instead they mercilessly suggest that Maya needs a therapy.

Maya knows that her friend Leila inspite of her tubercular husband leads a full life. Maya is denied such fulfilment in marriage. Likewise, she is denied the warmth and the nurturance of motherhood that Pom, her other friend has achieved. Besides, both these friends are preoccupied with their own lives and no

longer serve as anchors to Maya anymore. Again and again, the albino's dire prophecy drums in her fevered brain. She is unceremoniously dismissed by Gautama when his friends gather to appreciate Urdu poetry. There is no one to ward off the horror of the prophecy. Maya, thus feels totally defenceless and utterly lonely. Maya feels alienated in his family as "... one did not speak of love, far less of affection" (CTP 46). In a house full of several members, Maya does not see a single member to whom she can express her joy at the sight of a "great moon of hot, beaten copper, of molten brass, livid and throbbing like a bloody human organ, ..." (CTP 51). At that point, Maya resolves that she will never visit those relations. When she experiences utter alienation she longs for the same household teeming with "many voices, their gay inflections, their varied tones, their loud, quick rasping" over her ear-drums (CTP 52). She is overwhelmed by the shadow of the dancer coming to life. She realises there was no time left, no time left at all.

At every juncture Maya feels alienated from the society. The battle between the two worlds, the receding one of grace and the approaching one of madness, breaks her physically and mentally. She is aware of her schizophrenic state. The pathos lies in the fact that Maya loves life intensely and it is not easy to give it up. She recalls her father's soothing reassurances, the golden girlish days spent at Lucknow and Darjeeling. When she can no longer bear her isolation she thunders at Gautama: "the world is full-full, Gautama. Do you know what that means?" (CTP 118). In the end, what is left of their marriage is a feeling of pity, of

regret, a wanton waste for she is conscious of "the great passage that always had and still existed between us, like an unpassable desert" (CTP 201). As Rao sees the "predatory instinct in Maya is to save her own life" (213-214). Her alienation reaches its high point when she argues within herself, "she had more right to live as she rejoiced intensely in the physical world that was mobile, vivid, explosive, full of sounds, senses, movements, odours, colours, tunes to all of which Gautama was insensitive" (Rao 213-214).

Maya goes insane when Gautama dies. The cause of her anguish lies in her alienation. She has no human contact, no friendly touch to tide over her spiritual crisis and she passes before our eyes as agitated As a nightmare, An illusion. Desai has aptly named her heroine 'Maya' that is illusion as her quest for a more meaningful life proves to be illusory.

Monisha in **Voices in the City** is also a study in female alienation. Against the backdrop of the huge, palpitating city of Calcutta, Monisha stands out as a modern Indian woman, uprooted from her natural surroundings in Kalimpony. She has no fun in her new abode at her in-laws' house. As she is educated, intelligent, sensitive and well read she cannot fit into the worn out pattern of joint family. A woman at her in-laws' house is regarded in terms of her utility value and as a progenitor of future heir and not a living, pulsating human being. As Krishnaswamy observes, Desai deals sensitively with "...the social problems caused by the tensions of modern womanhood rather than the crisis in mental

health as such. The remedy lies not in individual therapy but rather in social reconstruction" (252).

Monisha's alienation ensues as she, like Bim and Sita, lives not in defeatism but in absolute negation. She confesses in her diary that she does not have faith in religion like Maya. In olden times women in India were bolstered by faith to endure in order to survive. With urbanisation and industrialization in modern India the lack of devout faith and the ceaseless questioning and questing pave the way for women's annihilation. Women like Monisha and Sita, Bim and Nanda Kaul endowed with ability and feminine sensibility are disposed to battle against the degradation in store for them. What Desai depicts is the very essence of female existence in Hindu society where women, either out of ignorance or intent, offend against the relentless requirements of religious and social order. Finally their subversive independence stands trapped.

Monisha and Maya, Sita and Nanda Kaul can be interpreted as symbols of female imagination and sensibility. These protagonists are pitted against the dehumanising forces prevalent in the Indian Society. When these heroine- seek a higher communion of free spirits, they are compelled to conform and yet are denied even the ordinary comforts in marriage and motherhood that lesser beings are blessed with. The compulsion to succeed in conformity leads them to despise themselves. Monisha too like Maya and Sita is faced with negation. She too becomes an image of isolation, fear, bewilderment and potential violation.

Monisha is alienated from her equally sensitive brother Nirode and younger sister Amla. Hers is not a marriage by choice. Her servile existence within the rigid and stifling confines of a traditional Hindu family, robs her privacy. Finally, Monisha feels so crushed and alienated that she commits suicide. Her husband Jiban is hardly a companion for Monisha. He is totally unaware of the needs and aspirations of his wife. Her 'round and secure keepers' do not allow any respite while Nirode and Amla visit her. Her communion with her affectionate brother and sister is monitored so closely that both of them are aghast "at the damp pressure of critical attention impossible to avoid in any corner of this house" (VITC 159).

Monisha has no friend at her in-laws' house. She feels cut off from her kin and the outside world. Often she catches herself thinking about Kalimpong. She longs for the "solitude of the jungles there, the aqueous shadows of the bamboo groves and the earth laid with great fallen leaves" (VITC 116). She prizes the solitude in her house. Besides, silence, privacy, space and time for meditation, all those, her prized friends, are lost to her when she returns to Calcutta.

There does not exist any female bonding in her new environs because her sisters-in-law crave more for material possessions than for intellectual pursuits. Monisha is of an intellectual cast among philistines. The women in Jiban's family while away their time talking about their dowries, saris and jewellery, babies and blocked fallopian tubes. Their's are 'indoor minds,

starless, darkless'. Monisha despairs, but has no support or emotional outlet. She is so alienated that she pours out her feelings in a diary, in which she notes:

> "... I do not like a woman who keeps a diary. Traceless, meaningless, uninvolved-does this not amount to non-existence, please ?" (VITC 140). Alienation is reflected in every phrase she writes in her diary.

She has no patronage even from her mother. Her association with her mother is tinged with an inbred and invalid sense of duty, honour and concern. Monisha discounts her mother from being her emotional balustrad, as her mother does not remain faithful to her father. Monisha faces a despair. Congenital associations with brother, sister, mother, have withered and died in her heart. Like many other heroines of Desai, Monisha's self-awareness leads her to anguish and suffering.

She realises that the drama of life has gone by, neither birth nor death has touched her and there is complete void: 'an empty white distance' between her and her fellow beings. She feels she has been put away in a steel container, or a thick glass cubicle without a touch of love or hate or warmth on her. Such a state of affairs throws a flood of light on women's woes and hideous social hierarchy existing in Indian society. Monisha's death does not solve any more the problem of female alienation.

Sita in Where Shall We Go This Summer" is another heroine in Anita Desai's novels who is alienated. She is over forty, greying and awaiting the birth of her fifth child. Her distress at the tedium of a blank, meaningless life is not perceived by her businessman husband, Raman. He is unaware of the essential aspects of Sita's emotional existence. Her alienation results from a lack of communication between herself and her husband at one level. At another level, there is hardly any give and take of ideas and thoughts between Sita and her children.

Sita's relationship with her adolescent daughter Menaka is of great interest. Though not much explored a theme in Indian English fiction, dissent between a mother and a daughter is an important theme in the fiction of black women writers. Menaka considers herself much above and different from her mother. She hardly shares any common ideas with Sita. The conflict between mother and daughter is a focal point in social alienation of Sita.

Even Sita's childhood and adolescent days bear no filial bonding either with her mother or father. She is alien to her mother, because when Sita was young her mother had disappeared to Benares. Her father, a nationalist hero is always surrounded by his admirers and followers. Her elder sister sings sweetly, and is favoured by her father. After her father's demise Sita's sister becomes a radio star. Her brother Jivan is the only companion during her rough childhood days on Manori island. But later on, he too disappears in search of an adventurous life. She hardly has any sustained relationship with any friend or

relative. When her father passes away, Raman, his friend Didar's son, takes her to the main land: Bombay.

Sita as a young girl has no chance to be intimate with her father. There is an aura around her father which always makes Sita shrink from approaching him. Her early life is that of a wanderer. As her father moves from one place to another, addressing vast crowds, Sita fell asleep on the dais, "against a bolster and was carried away to someone's house to sleep, always a different someone it scarcely mattered which one" (WSWGTS 85). Thus, Sita's early childhood days are not warm with mother's fondling or father's affection. She is simply alienated from the feeling of a home, a sense of place or a bonding with any of the members of her family. Her association with her mother is non-existant. She does not remember wanting or waiting her mother. The rubies and pearls crushed in the mortar, by her father to be given to sick people on Manori, is all she had seen of her. After Sita's marriage with Raman, she feels crushed in the violent atmosphere of her Bombay flat. Her alienation from her kith and kin compels her to go back to the magical Manori island of her childhood home. Deprived of a mother, Sita struggles through adolescence without "a true elder sister or girl companions" (WSWGTS 73). She struggles along with infirmity "as a cripple without crutches." After her father's death, Deedar's son comes and takes her with him. "...out of pity, out of lust, out of sudden will for adventure and because it was inevitable--married her" (WSWGTS 99). This union with Raman does not contribute to her emotional life.

Thus, Sita like previous heroines, Maya and Monisha longs for full participation in life with her husband. As she cannot shake off her traditional role of a mother and wife as Waller's heroine Meridian does, she gets alienated.

Sita needs a purpose, a meaning in her life. Raman proclaims that she has no worries in his house and her happiest memory ought to be of her own children or her home. But she has the happiest memories of strangers seen for a while in a park. She is alienated also from her children. To her: "children only mean anxiety, concern-pessimism. Not happiness. What other women call happiness is just-just sentimentality" (WSWGTS 147). Her children are alien to her needs and her likes and dislikes. In her relationship with her children, Sita often feels affront, neglect and disrespect.

There was a time when Sita thought that she could live and travel alone-mentally, emotionally with Raman. She however realises that she has to stay whole. Sita could not fully make Raman understand her inner feelings, hence she suffers alienation. Desai beautifully expresses Sita's isolated state using a metaphor: She is "only like the jellyfish washed up by the waves, stranded there on the sand-bank" (WSWGTS 149).

Nanda Kaul is a sociological outsider who is bored of the society. Nanda Kaul's life as a Vice-Chancellor's wife was not free from tensions. Her life is that of duty and sacrifice which she finally finds out to be fake. Hence after the death of her

husband she decides to settle at Carignano in Kasauli where "unobstructed mass of light and air" abounds. She longs for some peace of mind, to be alone, "to have Carignano to herself, ... when stillness and calm were all that she wished to entertain" (FOTM 17).

Desai portrays Nanda Kaul's inner life simultaneously with a pretentious outward life as Vice-Chancellor's wife. She tries "to shut out sound by shutting out light". One perceives the intimations of her social alienation in her crowded social life. In the midst of busy, occupied life, Nanda hardly had a moment of quiet repose. Mr. Kaul has a liaison with Miss David. As a result, Nanda Kaul is estranged from her husband and remains a social outsider. This proves 'the boundery situation' of existential philosophy in Jaspers' concept which hurls Nanda Kaul down the abyss of social alienation.

Thus, in Nanda's pared and reduced life enters Raka, her great-granddaughter. She feels so shaken by the news of her arrival, her equanimity and her self-confidence seems to have evaporated before Ram Lal, the cook. Interestingly enough, Raka is a strange child, isolated herself, who wishes for solitude as fervently as her great-grandmother. Nanda Kaul is a case study of the effects of social alienation on Indian women. She, like what Monisha wished to do, has pared her life to its minimum necessities and lives a lonely life, in Kasauli, on the ridge, away from friends and relatives.

Raka's isolation is the result of a broken home, a drunkard

father and a mother recovering from nervous breakdown. Her early childhood has hardened her into a hard little core of solitary self-sufficiency. After her arrival at Carignano she is like an intruder in the tranquil world of Nanda Kaul. In Rala's perception, her great granny is like another pine tree. Nanda Kaul and Rala work out the means to live together. But "...each felt that she was doing her best at avoiding the other but found it was not so simple to exist and yet appear not to exist" (FOTM 46-47). Nanda had harboured much spite in her heart against Rala as she arrives to turn her clam life taut. Rala's existence is a self sufficient. She ignores Nanda Kaul so calmly, so totally that it makes her breathless. The elderly lady regards the young child with apprehension and wonders at her total rejection, so natural, instinctive and effortless when compared with her own planned and wilful rejection of the child. Rala is "the finished, perfected model of what Nanda Kaul herself was merely a brave, flawed experiment" (FOTM 47).

Rala's alienation is unique as she seems a freak by virtue of never making a demand. She appears to have no needs, not unlike her own great-grandmother. Rala craves to be left alone and follows her own secret life amongst the rocks and pines of Kasauli. Desai deftly brings out the contrast between the isolation of Rala and that of Nanda Kaul:

> If Nanda Kaul was a recluse out of vengeance for a long life of duty and obligation, her great-granddaughter was a recluse by nature, by instinct. She had not arrived at this

> condition by a long route of rejection and sacrifice-she was born to it, simply (FOTM 48).

Gradually, Nanda Kaul tends to admire Rala's aloofness. The alienation of Rala and her great-grandmother can be ascribed to a lack of communication between the two and a sickness of soul due to several restrictions imposed upon females in the sexist, patriarchal society. Nanda Kaul has lived a kind of life which did not involve her 'self'.The house she lived in was not hers, but that of her Vice-Chancellor husband's. Her life was full on the surface but empty at the core. This accounts for her self-estrangement and social alienation.

Rala's trauma of battered childhood, on the other hand, blunts the native thrust of her soul. Thus, their alienation, is due to their exclusion of what they need most-the security and fulfilment of love. Desai suggestively brings out Nanda Kaul's warming up for Rala, which reflects her need for Rala's affection. Very poignantly yet firmly the novelist projects Rala's indifference to Nanda which in turn accentuates her desire for the tender bond of love.

Finally, as Nanda's little defences disappear under the pressure of Rala's human presence, there is a change in Nanda's attitude towards Rala. Rala's neglect of her great-grandmother hurts Nanda. Besides, Rala disregards her own dependency and isolation:

> ... Watching her wandering amongst the rocks ... Nanda Kaul wondered if she at all realized how solitary she was. She certainly

never asked nor bothered to see if there were a letter for her or news. Solitude never disturbed her. She was the only child Nanda Kaul had ever known preferred to stand apart and go off and disappear to being loved, cared for and made the centre of attention (79-80). Thus, Nanda finds that Rala's solitude is natural.

Through her sleepless night Nanda Kaul wishes no one to come to Cartignano. Simultaneously, she wishes fervently "no one to go either-certainly not Rala" (FOTM 80). This suggests a possible female bonding which may help them fight the dominant male discourse alienating them from the world. This is suggested symbolically by Rala's lighting a forest fire, destroying the obstacles in the path of women like Nanda and Ila Das.

Clear Light of Day delineates Bim's struggles to be whole, inspite of her alienation. She too is like other heroines of Desai, intelligent, sensitive and level headed. Bim remains perturbed, angry, dejected and gingery throughout the summer during Tara's and Babul's visit. Such a state of her mind is due to Raja's irresponsible attitude towards his family. Bim feels alienated as Raja deserts his old aunt Mira and his retarded brother Baba. Bim's pursuance of her studies and her excellence in academic career obviously alienates her from Tara, the younger sister who is interested in jewelry, finery, saris and such paraphernalia. Bim wishes to live the ideals of Joan of Arc and

Florance Nightingle. The inner life of Bim is at a higer plane. This obviously paves way for her social alienation.

In their immediate social group, Bim is a misfit. She cannot sustain, like Tara, a friendship with the Misra girls. Neither does she crave and seek, like her brother Raja, for familiarity or friendship with their rich landlord Hyder Ali Sahib or his young plump daughter Bonair. Bim emerges as a self conscious, conscientious, committed Indian woman, who is an intelligent, sensitive, aware of her responsibilities towards retarded brother Baba and invalid MiraMasi after the death of her parents. Her ties with her brother Raja are severed because the two live different types of life.

Bim is a social outsider, but not bitter like Nanda Kaul or Monisha. She achives a sense of wholeness and freedom from the clutches of crushing, traditional social obligations, almost compulsive for a Hindu woman. Like Sita, she too wants to remain whole which she achieves. Bim's wholeness of spirit is achieved through her self-search and truthful acceptance of her own limitations. After many years of fury and resentment, Bim tares the letter Raja had written to her which she never answers. Anita Desai's portrayal of Bim is most affirmative of her heroines. She unequivocally enkindles a hope for Indian women, imbued with feminine sensibility. Though, hampered by obstacles of oppression and preferential logic in the male dominated society, Indian women can pave their way through dense sexist domain and carve out a niche for themselves.

Alice Walker's women too experience alienation. Mem and Margaret Copeland to Nettie and Celie, all the heroines suffer a heart rending female alienation. Celie, in her utter exploitative sexist set up feels so estranged that she has no outlet either for her creativity or a means of expression for emotional eruptions.

Her alienation is so astounding, that she resorts to writing letters to none but God. In her adolescent days she has seen poverty and suffered alienation, as her father molested her. Celie also witnessed the predicament of her mother's continuous pregnancies, culminating in her death. All these forces alienate her from the very sense of being herself. Her only moral support and emotional strength lays in her sister Nettie. But she gets alienated from the soothing company of Nettie. As long as Celie hovers over the house, Nettie is safe. So Celie is married off to Albert to tend his four children and a farm like a mule.

Celie's utter helplessness in cruel surroundings is given vent by her letter writing, initially to God and later on to Nettie. Just as Monisha in Dosai's novel **Voices in the City** writes her diary, Celie writes letters to God as she is separated from Nettie and from her familiar social ethos. Her female person is desecrated by the patriarchal, sexist societal set up and practices. One positive aspect of Walker's heroine Celie is her bonding with Shug Avery whom she initially admires, feels jealous of in between, and finally proves catalytic to redeem her from sexist, patriachal bondage. If one looks at Walker's heroines one

finds that. Celie experiences a sense of liberation, while heroines like Meridian and Mem Copeland struggle to attain, but do not achieve it.

Celie experiences a sense of exaltation in spite of her alienations. It is a proof of woman's innate capacity to struggle and overcome the forces which thwart women in society. On countless occasions Celie experiences the razor edge of isolation, but the spirit and moral strength of Celie-the woman, gets better of herself. **The Color Purple** is characterized by the aesthetic of the 'sisterhood of woman' which provides a focal point to Celie to overcome her alienation.

In an age of fragmentation of families as Tate notes, Walkers fiction warns the wayward men and women that 'family relationships are sacred' (175). In **The Third Life of Grange Copeland** Grange and Brownfield desert their families due to overwhelming racial oppression. They vent out their frustration on their wives. As a result of this process there is the spiritual and physical devastation of Grange and Brownfield. Later in the novel, Grange's regeneration brings forth hope, whereas Brownfield gets destroyed in this process Mem's isolation from Brownfield is a moving portrayal of female alienation. She fights sordid poverty single handedly. Probably in Grange's realization 'self-respect and family esteem' as Tate observes, "can be gained by assuming absolute responsibility for one's action" (175). We can surmise that Mem's isolation gets redeemed in Celie's female camaraderie with Shug, Sofia and Nettie in **The**

Color Purple. Walker asserts that if black women are to survive, they must have mutual trust on each other.

Meridian is a sensitive heroine who experiences alienation right from her childhood, because her mother feels that her children have robbed her of her emerging self and serenity. Thus, Meridian has no warmth from her mother. Even with her father, except the experience of the ecstasy at the mound of the Sacred Serpent, Meridian has no ties.

At Saxon College, Meridian perceives the decadent values. Such institutions perpetuate these values under the guise of training the young girls to ladyhood. Except Anne-Marion, other fellow students hardly recognize the rebellious Meridian's soft glow of spiritedness. Even her compassion and association with 'wild child' alienates her from other girls in the 'honors house'. Later on, Eddie marries her but he hardly bothers to reckon her aspirations for higher intellectual or emotional ardour. As Das feels "In her self-conscious, self-imprisoned quest for identity and freedom, Meridian chooses the way to self alienation" (38).

Meridian passes through a thorny path as she tries to overcome the social and sexual categories ascribed to all women, particularly the black women. When she gets an opportunity to study at Saxon College, Meridian leaves behind her son Pundi. The thoughts and nightmares about Pundi break her mentally. Walker graphically describes Meridian who feels guilty because she fails to live up the standards of motherhood prescribed by her

community. At Saxon she feels torn because of her spiritual degeneration. Then we find Meridian on the horns of a dilemma. The 'Battle Fatigue' numbs her: she feels guilt ridden and suffers from an obsession that "motherhood is an obstacle to a woman's emergence in her 'true self', her-self-preserving identity-in-itself. ... To her, her baby, as Das notes, is the disturbing 'other' (37). Thus, she is totally alienated in spirit from her son, parents, and faithless husband.

Though politically aware, socially conscious, Meridian confronts challenges throughout her life. In the end she attains personhood. Walker redeems the isolation of Meridian and Celie by the presence of trees, stars, clouds, stones and birds. When Meridian feels lonely, she draws comfort by sitting beneath the musical tree, 'The Sojourner'. Meridian immerses herself in the Atlanta Movement in her second year at Saxon College. She participates in the movement, the 'outer World'. An order to escape the inner world. Her various experiences during the movement reveal her inner universe. She feels ecstasy. Alienation no longer torments her. She feels , she "was a beloved part of the universe; that she was innocent even as the rocks are innocent, and unpolluted as the first waters" (M 119).

As mentioned earlier Meridian's struggle is within herself and against heterosexual relationships. As Susan Willis remarks:

> ... The tension produced by love and jealousy is the ground on which Walker examines social categories and defines the process through

which Meridian eventually liberates herself from male sexual domination (127).

Storm in Chandigarh by Nayantara Sahgal delineates the lives of Jit and Mara, Saroj and Inder with Vishal Dubey as the protagonist. The mutual relationships which are central to human life are portrayed graphically by Sahgal. Men and women are caught in the web of modern life and suffer from alienation.

Saroj is an educated, sensitive woman who is a social outsider. By and large, Indian women, once they get married no longer remain individuals. Saroj's portrayal provides a picture of the inner landscape of a married woman, as a wife. Her psychological and emotional life does not bloom. Inder, her husband, develops extra-marital relationship with Mara, Jit's beautiful, 'feminine' wife.

Sahgal portrays two diametrically opposite women characters: Saroj and Mara in the novel. If Mara is a 'gallant, oddly fearless creature' (SIC 58), Saroj is a homely housewife, preoccupied with herself, her children, and the house; a common pattern in the life of an Indian woman. She longs for a deep, passionate relationship with Inder. But her yearnings for his affection and understanding as well as emotional nurturance go unfulfilled.

Saroj has no interest in furthering Inder's career. Her 'preoccupation" with herself unnerves Inder. Such a trait of Saroj recalls Maya and Gautama of **Cry, the Peacock**. Inder, an enterprenuer, hardly ever bothers to build a sustaining

companionship with his wife. Something which does not pay any return is not amenable to his interest or attention. Mara perceives him as an embodiment of strength and resolution. Like many of Sahgal's women characters, Mara though not an Indian, longs to become a part of the mainstream Indian Society.

Saroj has no access to the outer world. In spite of her education, there is no pastime which might occupy Saroj creatively. She is more concerned with her day-to-day existence with "the curious concentration of her spirit upon whatever came her way " (SIC 56). Compared to Saroj's, Inder's isolation is of a different nature. Mara, without uttering a word "made him aware (that) he was isolated, that the distance between him and any other person was an infinity..." (SIC 63). Instead of granting a full-fledged personality to Saroj he considers her as "one half of an enterprise the complaint partner who presided over home and children and furthered her husband's career" (SIC 55). This idea of Inder suggests woman's low worth in man's reckoning. Saroj feels all the more alienated as Inder hardly confides in her, be it a problem at his ~~work~~ family or his own sense of alienation. Besides he "never cared for Saroj's family ..." (SIC 63). Thus, their basic thinking processes differ. This results in Saroj's alienation.

The recurring motif of a tree, as a friendly reality, is common in the narratives of Walker Morrison and Desai, as well as Sahgal. Images from nature reflect the feminine sensibility of these writers and reveal the homogeneity of their heroines.

in spite of their being from different cultures. Thus, certain phenomena are commonly discernible in the fiction of Indian English women writers, Desai and Sahgal and black American women writers, Morrison and Walker.

Like Desai's heroines, Sahgal's Saroj too reveals women's changed expectation in their marriage and their disinclination to accept the dual moral code and the resultant ambivalence in the attitude of the husbands. Premilla Kapur, a noted Indian sociologist writes: "There has been a shift in importance from self-sacrifice on part of the wife to satisfaction in marriage but this generates tension" (67). One of the causes of the tensions appears to be an attitudinal duality of the man. "The modern husband", says Kapur, "is experiencing a value conflict as he is being pulled in two opposite directions by images and expectations of the traditional' and the 'modern life'" (67).

Saroj's life with Inder seems a void, because he denounces Saroj more often than not for her revelation of her sex experience prior to her marriage. Often in their daily life, Inder's black boots torture Saroj with his harsh voice, as it seems: "remote and dangerous, unpredictable as a rawhide whip, flicked at her nerves" (SIC 96). In an utterly isolated state Saroj, like many a black heroine, discussed earlier, prays to God (as Pecola Breedlove, and Celie do). Saroj does analyse this state of mind and feels that "terror was not external catastrophe. It was the failure of reason" (SIC 96).

Inder's anger and indifferent attitude paralyses Saroj. She

feels all the more alien in her own home. The husband wants her to apologise, but Saroj does not consider herself to be a sinner. Inder's inflexibility seems impossible to penetrate. Though Saroj whole-heartedly and honestly confessed her affair before marriage, her right to lead a full life gets forfeited. We discern the tribulations of Indian women like Saroj in patriarchal society, who surrender their self-respect and dignity to terms and conditions of patriarchal order. Afterwards Inder stands between her and the 'light'.

Sahgal probes into the inner thought process and feelings of Saroj and reveals the alienation of the heroine. The sexist male dominated society prevails in **Storm in Chandigarh** as one discerns the wretched inner life of Saroj with Inder. Her efforts to enliven Inder prove futile like "a bird against a window pane, trapped in a futile frenzy" (**SIC** 79). The simile renders verity to Saroj's despairing alienation.

Saroj's only aspiration in life is to be a virtuous woman, but it is derided by Inder. The irony of their relationship is that she tries to satisfy his every whim even then Inder fails to comprehend her worth as an affectionate and sensitive wife. His own extra marital relationship even after their marriage does not smart him. He often tortures Saroj by reminding her of her affair. Moreover, he expects his wife to be a virgin before marriage and faithful after the marriage. The disparity between Inder's expectations of Saroj and his behaviour results in Saroj's total alienation. Finally she leaves Inder.

Sonali in **Rich Like Us** is a budding administrator in the government with a brilliant academic record and commitment to her duty. Through this protagonist, Sahgal presents a real picture of the position of women in modern India. It is her success in her career which paves the way for her alienation from colleagues, sister and one time friend and lover Ravi Kachru. She feels isolated from the main stream of society on account of her idealism during the emergency regime of 1975.

A patriotic, committed and sincere officer, Sonali Ranade in **Rich Like Us** experiences sudden shock which paralyses her mind and body when she gets transfer order. She, who performed her duty by not granting a licence to a useless Happyola drink factory, she gets demoted. She becomes a victim of bureaucratic machinery, where, as Narayan notes, "democratic ideals are only skindeep" (80). Ravi Kachru, an Oxford educated officer stands by the clannish, dynastic succession. He "would get through any charade with finesse" (RL 31). He replaces Sonali as the joint secretary in the Ministry of Industry. Those who performed their duty sincerely generally get estranged in such a set-up. Thus, Sonali's fate is sealed. She neither has a sympathetic colleague nor an idealistic father. Keshav Ranade, an I.C.S. officer, is shocked by the new breed of I.A.S. officers who abdicate their responsibilities towards the people. Thus, Sonali has none who can understand her mental agony and isolation since the death of her father:

> The alienness of what had just happened, the midnight knock at midday, for no reason I

> could understand, paralysed me, until I realized that nothing new or shattering had happened after all. No malign fate had singled me out for punishment. The logic of June 26th had simply caught up with me (RLU 32).

Sonali feels bitter as the yardstick of the society imparts more importance to those in power. Her alienation is complete as she not only feels haggard but also determined that she will not "grovel and beg favours and act like a worm instead of a person. ..." (RLU 37).She decides that she has no use of a career in the crumbling unprofessionalism that bowed and scraped to a bogus emergency" (RLU 35).

The strength of Sahgal's narratives is in the honesty of her upholding of the human worth. Sonali feels more human after she talks to Rose from her desk before she bids adieu to her office. Later on, her compassionate friend Rose loses her life through her step son Dev's hired men because of her judgements. This tragedy reveals the bitter truth that women are mercilessly murdered by their own relatives. This was also the case with Sonali's greatgrandmother in 1905. Thus, women in India are not prized, they fall an easy prey to patriarchal, sexist traps. Rose's death bereaves Sonali much more than it does Dev or Nishi. As Sonali and Rose shared certain ideals, Rose gives meaning to other people's lives even after her death.

When Rose feels alienated, Sonali rescues her. Sonali too

feels relieved at the end when Ram's old flame Marcella offers unstinted help and hope to Sonali's clouded future. She and Brian, her husband encourage Sonali to take up a research project on seventeenth and eighteenth century India. The novel **Rich Like Us** closes on a note of hope and Sonali too perceives a better future for her aspirations. Thus, inspite of her alienation and several disappointing factors, Sonali's sincerity and commitment gets lauded. This assures us that, however dim the flicker of hope for feminine sensibility may be, a better tomorrow will ensue.

With Morrison's Pilate in **Song of Solomon** alienation takes a different form. She too like Sula and Pecola is isolated but loving. Her navel-less belly is the symbol of her alienation. Like Sula, Pilate is also endowed with a unique physical feature. Her alienation at the physical level from the bourgeois black society is, as Merrett observes, "the ultimate cause of her radical, individuality" (198). She exerts power and has an aura of mystery. These attributes keep her "just barely within the boundaries of the elaborately socialized world of black people" (SOS 150).

Pilate's initial experiences of alienation were harrowing. Like many a heroines of Anita Desai, Pilate in **Song of Solomon** has no sustaining relationship with her mother. Her mother died before she 'was born". The first intimate contact of the child after its birth is with the mother. Because Pilate's mother died before she drew her breath, she could not even see her face. She does not even know what her name was. Pilate recollects memories

of her early childhood: Motherless from birth and bereft of the loving father since twelve, Pilate's agony of an alienated being marks deep furrows on her psyche. One can well imagine Pilate's isolation as she was almost an orphan since her adolescent days.

As her name reflects her head strong qualities, she takes side with truth, breaks off with her affectionate brother Macon and abandons gold near the cave. Since then, she led a solitary life. Her early life was the life of a wanderer with a penchant for geography. Except for three years spent in relative bliss on the island off Virginia, Pilate lived in isolation. Due to her 'navel-lessness' and men's weird idea about it, she is denied, "partnership in marriage, confessional friendship and communal religion" (SOS 149).

Thus, Pilate undergoes the trauma of alienation. It is the sheer strength of her character by which she overcomes alienation. She questions herself about the vital needs and necessities of living and leading a satisfactory life. As an outcome of her inquiry and struggle, she ripens with compassion for troubled people' (SOS 150).

Jadine in **Tar Baby** is haunted by a sense of alienation since the time she sees the African woman in canary-yellow robe in a shopping centre in Paris. To overcome her feeling of being: 'lonely and inauthentic', she retreats to Isle de chevalier. Obviously, Jadine's alienation is due to her being severed from her people, her family - Ondine and Sydney. Further her thinking is another cause of her being estranged because, "Nanadine and

Sydney mattered a lot to her but what they thought did not" (TB 41). Overtly, Jadine declares that she loves Ondine; her aunt, and Sydney; her uncle, but she hardly attaches any significance to their ideals, principles, thoughts or their way of life. Thus, her attachment to Ondine and Sydney is a means to an end. She feels alienated because she embraces white values. She does not regard her black heritage more precious than her training as a fashion model in Paris and her superficial success in the business world. Whenever Jadine thinks of her uncle and aunt, she hardly bothers to value their tremendous sacrifice for her sake. On her visit to the island, Jadine proposes to live together like a family at last. She will accept a small assignment in New York. Such a proposition smacks of vainglory. Because her uncle and aunt: "Smiled generously, but their eyes made her know they were happy to play store with her, but nothing would pull them away from the jobs they had for thirty years or more" (TB 41).

This shows Jadine's commitment and her alienation squarely. Moreover, like other heroines of Morrison, Jadine too has lost her mother early in life. Later on, she loses her father as well. After the age of twelve she has been living with her aunt and uncle. Studying in France, staying out of the homely atmosphere Jadine never experiences a sense of place. Placelessness is a defining feature of her character. It is this rootless existence of Jadine which disturbs her when she encounters "that woman's woman-that mother / sister / she: that unphotographable beauty" (TB 39). Jadine does not feel less alienated even when she runs away to Isle de le Chevalier.

She is so alienated from her native culture that the black stranger-Son-understands her dilemma. He creeps into Jadine's room every night and tries to breathe into her "the smell of tar and its shiny consistency before he crept away ..." (TB 102). But Jadine was far too removed from her original properties. Morrison symbolically uses tar as a property which joins things in the original African folk tale. Similarly, Son too wants Jadine to repossess this precious quality of tar by overcoming her alienation through attaining oneness with her Lith and Lin and her African heritage.

Tar Baby is a study in alienation of a Westernised black woman-in her values, outlook and her way of life. Partly the tragedy ensues due to thoughtless following and imitation of white, male values. Morrison discerns the hideous outcome of such a blind following and creates an exquisite epiphony in **Tar Baby**, reinstating the black values and heritage.

In the body of black American fiction and Indian English fiction written by women, crucial issues like female alienation and oppression are mirrored, and artistically dealt with. One hears and feels the chords of an orchestration too deep to be vocalized. Still the women novelists, under the study have engraved unique filigree in literary genre in their own right.

The next chapter is an attempt to study their vision and craft which embody their unique sensibility: both the black American and Indian English novelists'.

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