

Emotional Alienation and Loneliness in Kiran Desai's *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines emotional alienation and loneliness in Kiran Desai's *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny*, exploring how personal, familial, and socio-historical factors converge to shape profound experiences of isolation. In the novel, loneliness is depicted not merely as physical or social separation but also as an inherited emotional condition intensified by generational trauma, class consciousness, and displacement. The characters' alienation stems from fractured family bonds, inter-generational silence, and unresolved parental trauma, highlighting how intimate spaces can become sites of psychological confinement. Sonia and Sunny's struggles reveal that emotional distance often persists even within families, where repression, fear, and unspoken histories dominate. Beyond the domestic sphere, Desai situates loneliness within broader postcolonial and diasporic contexts, showing how migration and societal pressures reproduce feelings of estrangement and a sense of belonging. Through narrative techniques such as fragmented storytelling, shifting perspectives, and internal monologues, the novel vividly portrays the characters' inner isolation, emphasizing that emotional alienation is both personal and collective. This study argues that Desai presents loneliness because of historical, social, and psychological forces that shape identity, relationships, and human conditions. By examining the intersections of trauma,

displacement, and familial dynamics, the paper demonstrates that confronting inherited pain and unresolved histories is essential to breaking cycles of isolation. Ultimately, *The Loneliness of Sonia and Sunny* suggests that emotional alienation is a central lens through which one can understand the enduring impact of generational suffering and socio-historical upheaval.

Keywords: Emotional alienation, Loneliness, Inter-generational trauma, Migration and displacement, Postcolonial identity, Familial relationships.

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